

*A Systematic Study  
Of  
Bible Doctrine*

*Thomas Paul Simmons*

**A Systematic Study**  
**Of**  
**Bible Doctrine**  
**A Logical Arrangement**  
**And A Diligent Treatment**  
**Of The**  
**Teachings Of God's Holy Word**  
**Systematic - Calvinistic - Baptist - Premillennial**  
**by**  
**Thomas Paul Simmons**

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Ron Cook of [pbministries.org](http://pbministries.org). When I decided that I was going to do this eBook conversion of *A Systematic Study Of Bible Doctrine* and was looking for a digital source (I wanted to avoid the labor of scanning it in from one of my printed editions if possible) he graciously granted me permission to use the one he had scanned in as the base text to begin with.

## Conversion Notes

The text of this eBook is essentially the same as found in the sixth (1979) printed edition and as found in the HTML version on the [pbministries.org](http://pbministries.org) web site. I have corrected some obvious punctuation, spelling, extra spacing, and Scriptural reference errors found in both editions. I have made no contextual changes.

However, I have attempted to consistently make the following formatting changes.

1.) All abbreviations of Scripture references have been changed to the full book name and appear in **bold face**.

2.) All Scripture quotes or partial quotes appear in **bold face**.

3.) Both the sixth printed edition and the digital edition I consulted use *italics font* for many complete Scripture quotes (as well as in some other portions of text of the book). In so doing (italicizing the entire Scripture quote or a portion of it) the importance of the use of *italics font* in the King James Version and the 1901 American Standard Version (both of which the author freely quotes from) to denote those words added by the Translators is lost to the reader. Therefore I have changed all partial or complete Scripture quotes to the form found in the current (1769) edition of the King James Bible or the 1901 American Standard Edition (whichever one the author was quoting from) to reflect those words added by the Translators. There are a few instances where the quote is not strictly from either the current (1769) edition of the King James Bible or the 1901 American Standard Edition. I suspect that this is simply due to a transcriptional error. At any rate in those few instances I left the wording as it is in the sixth printed edition and the digital edition I consulted.

4.) I have attempted to consistently use **bold face** type to denote the various chapter sub-headings and make them stand out to the reader.

5.) I have incorporated navigational links to allow the reader to easily go to every Footnote. These links are illustrated in the following form shown in the quote from Chapter 2 - [“The Bible, A Revelation From God”](#).

“The Bible does not contain the scientific errors of its day. It anticipated the vaunted discoveries of men by hundreds of years. None of its Statements have been proved erroneous. And it is only in modern times that men have come to understand some of them.” [\[1\]](#)

6.) Likewise, I have incorporated navigational links to allow the reader to easily go to specific chapters which the author refers them to. These links are illustrated in the following form in the quote from Chapter 16 - [“The Original State And Fall Of Man”](#).

“See the chapter on [“God’s Relation To The Universe”](#). Nothing remains in its own power unchanged except that which is immutable.”

If any errors varying from the original text are found you may contact me and I will correct them in a future eBook edition.

James L. Reynolds  
Cornersville, TN  
March 05, 2013

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## INTRODUCTION

I count it a distinct honor to be asked to write the introduction for a new edition of this splendid book. From the time it was first issued some years ago, I have always considered it the best book of my acquaintance in the field of systematic theology. During my seminary days I was under the necessity of studying several text books on systematic theology, and since that time I have studied and read many volumes along that line, but none of these have been as satisfactory as this volume. There are several reasons for my making this statement.

1. So many texts along this line CONTAIN A MIXTURE OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY. This book deals with theology and leaves out the philosophizing.

2. This volume, while of satisfactory size, covers much more territory than other books far more bulky. The reason for this is the fact that the author without superfluous words delves immediately into his subject. He acquaints the reader with sufficient Scripture to prove each point.

3. I prefer this book because THE AUTHOR IS WHOLLY UNINFLUENCED BY MODERN THEOLOGICAL TRENDS. He believes that if God says something that settles it, hence to him the field of theology is not to be compared to a beach that is constantly being changed by erratic tides and shifting winds.

4. I find this book most satisfactory BECAUSE IT TEACHES THE DOCTRINES THAT HAVE BECOME UNPOPULAR because of the changing times and the doctrinal looseness that characterizes whole denominations of this day. I recall a large and attractive volume published some years ago by a very gifted and popular theologian. The author seemed unwilling to commit himself concerning some of the doctrines that are of a controversial nature. He contented himself with a middle-of-the-road position, seeking to state the various views pro and con, without revealing

his own position. You will not find such theological cowardice on the part of the author of this book. Moreover, if you reverence the Scriptures, you will probably end up by agreeing with him, whether you started out to do so or not.

5. One fine thing about this book is the fact that IT IS ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF BOTH THE THEOLOGIAN AND THE AVERAGE READER. Many times in talking with a young minister, I have urged that he procure a copy of this book and read it carefully. I knew that if he did it, he would get started out on the right road. When laymen have asked if I could recommend a book that would give them a good grasp of Bible doctrine, I have recommended this book, and I have never had such persons to express disappointment.

6. Through the years I have found this book A VALUABLE REFERENCE WORK. Often in writing articles I have had need to refresh my memory along some doctrinal line. I turned to this volume because I knew that I would in brief compass find the information I sought.

7. This book is not only very suitable for classroom study in college, Bible Institutes and the like, IT WOULD REVOLUTIONIZE THE DOCTRINAL BELIEFS OF THE AVERAGE CHURCH if it were used by the pastor as the basis for a series of doctrinal messages, or for instructional classes in Bible doctrine.

As I have used Brother Simmons' book through the years I have found myself more nearly in accord with its doctrinal teachings than with any book on systematic theology that I have known. One thing that has enhanced the value of the book, to me, is the fact that I have known and appreciated the author for nearly half a century. I am glad that he is planning to reissue the book, and I trust that it will have a wide sale.

Roy Mason, A. B., Th. D,  
Aripeka, Florida

## Chapter 1 - THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The fact of God's existence is both the scriptural and the logical starting-point for a systematic study of Bible doctrine. It is the *scriptural starting-point* because the first verse in the Bible apprises us of it. It is the *logical starting-point* because the fact of God's existence underlies all other Bible doctrines. Without the existence of God all other Bible doctrines would be meaningless.

John Gill, in his "Body of Divinity," (p. 1) remarks very appropriately: "*I shall begin with the Being of God and proof and evidence of it; which is the foundation of all religion; for if there is no God, religion is a vain thing; and it matters not what we believe, nor what we do; since there is no superior Being to whom we are accountable for either faith or practice.*"

In commenting on the first verse of Genesis, Prof. Herbert W. Morris, in "Science and the Bible," (p. 25) says: "*Thus opens the Book of God with the announcement of a truth which no process of reasoning could have reached, and a declaration of fact which no philosophy could ever have unveiled. Nothing can exceed the grandeur of the thought, nothing surpass the appropriateness of the words, as an introduction to the sacred volume. Looking back across the wide waste of all the ages past, this sentence of divine sublimity, like a magic ARCHWAY, stands at the closing bounds of eternity past - beyond it are the silence and darkness of eternal night; out of it issue the periods, and scenes, and events of time.*"

### I. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IS ASSUMED IN THE BIBLE.

The Bible begins by assuming and declaring the existence of God, without undertaking to prove it. This is a noteworthy fact. Commenting on this fact, J. M. Pendleton, in "Christian Doctrines," says: "*Moses, under divine inspiration, had, no doubt, the best of reasons for the course he adopted.*"

The author believes this is true, and he believes there are at least three good reasons for the course adopted by Moses; viz.

## **1. ISRAEL, FOR WHOSE BENEFIT MOSES WROTE PRIMARILY, ALREADY BELIEVED IN GOD.**

Hence the purpose of Moses, which was practical rather than theological, did not require a discussion of proofs of God's existence.

## **2. THE EVIDENCES OF GOD'S EXISTENCE ARE APPARENT AND FORCEFUL.**

Thus it was unnecessary, even for the human race as a whole, that a practical discourse should deal with the evidences of God's existence. But our study is theological as well as practical; hence it is in place for us to note these apparent and forceful evidences.

“Some, because the being of God is a first principle, which is not to be disputed; and because there is one self-evident proposition not to be disproved; have thought that it should not be admitted as a matter of debate; but since such is the malice of Satan as to suggest the contrary to the minds of men; and such the weakness of some good men as to be harassed and distressed with doubts about it at times; it cannot be improper to endeavor to fortify our minds with reasons and arguments against such suggestions” (Gill Body of Divinity, p. 1).

These evidences come to us from—

### *(1) Inanimate Creation.*

A. Matter is not Eternal, and, therefore, must have been Created.

George McCready Price, author of “Fundamentals of Geology” and other scientific books, says: “The facts of radioactivity very positively forbid the past eternity of matter. Hence the conclusion is syllogistic: matter must have originated at some time in the past . . .” (Q. E. D., p. 30). Prof. Edward Clodd says that “everything points to a finite duration of the present creation” (Story of Creation, p. 137). “That the present form of the universe is not eternal in the past, but has begun to be, not only personal observation

but the testimony of geology assures us” (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 40).

B. Matter must have been Created other than by Natural Processes; hence the Evidence of a Personal Creator.

Prof. Price says: “There is no ambiguity of evidence. So far as modern science can throw light on the question, there must have been a real creation of the materials of which our world is composed, a creation wholly different, both in kind and in degree, from any process now going on” (Q. E. D., p. 25). The origin of things cannot be accounted for on a naturalistic basis. Seeking to do this, Darwin was made to say: “I am in a hopeless muddle.” It would be just as sensible to believe that books are written by forces resident in the alphabet and by the operation of the laws of spelling and grammar as to believe that the universe was created by forces resident in matter and the operation of natural law. “Thus the investigations of modern science, at whatever point of the horizon commenced, converge and unite in the grand and fundamental truth, that **‘IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH’**” (Herbert W. Morris, Science and the Bible, P. 30).

“Every thoughtful person believes in a series of causes and effects in nature, each effect becoming the cause of some other effect. Now, the acceptance of this as a fact logically compels one to admit that there must be a beginning to any series, that is, there could never have been a first effect if there had not been a first Cause. This First Cause to me is Deity, and because I cannot tell where the First Cause came from is not satisfactory reason for denying that He exists, else I might as well deny the existence of the millionth effect, which, for the sake of argument, might happen to be this world. You see, if I admit one cause as ever having existed, I am bound eventually by induction to arrive at the first cause” (R. A. L., in a tract, “The Reason Why,” Loizeaux Brothers, Publishers).

## (2) *Animate Creation.*

A. Living Matter cannot Spring from the Non-Living.

Writing in the London Times, Lord Kelvin said: “Forty years ago I asked Leibig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and flowers which we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, ‘No more than I could believe that a book on botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces.’” In an address before the Royal Institute of London, Tyndall candidly stated the results of eight months of laborious experiments as follows. “From the beginning to the end of the enquiry, there is not, as you have seen, a shadow of evidence in favor of the doctrine of spontaneous generation ... In the lowest, as in the highest of organized creatures, the method of nature is, that life shall be the issue of antecedent life.” Prof. Conn says: “There is not the slightest evidence that living matter could arise from non living matter. Spontaneous generation is universally given up” (Evolution of Today, p. 26). And Mr. Huxley was forced to admit: “The doctrine that life can come only from life is victorious all along the line” (The Other Side of Evolution, p. 25).

B. Since Matter is not Eternal Physical Life, which Involves Living Matter, cannot be Eternal.

The fact that matter is not eternal forbids the supposition that physical life is the result of an infinite series of begettings. And since, as we have seen, living matter cannot spring from the non-living, we are forced to accept the fact of a personal, non-material Creator. That this is a fact that even the theory of evolution cannot properly eliminate was frankly stated by such a thorough-going evolutionist as Professor Drummond, who said: “*Instead of abolishing a Creative Hand, evolution demands it. Instead of being opposed to Creation, all theories begin by assuming it*” (The Ascent of Man).

### (3) *Order, Design, and Adaptation in the Universe.*

We behold marvelous order in the planetary system, where we find “*not the disconnected and jarring results of chance,*” under which there would have been at least “*a thousand chances against conveniency and safety for one in their favor;*” but instead “*we find the system as it exists free from all these dangers and inconveniences,*” with all “*the planets moving in orbits*



*that ensure perfect safety to all and the highest advantages to each.” This has been brought about by “the most uniform and the most mathematically exact adjustment of number, weight, and measure in every part, exhibiting the most convincing evidence that the whole is the work of one Omnipotent and All-comprehending Mind” (Morris, Science and the Bible, pp. 309, 312).*

The full import of the foregoing can be appreciated only when we take into consideration the mutual attraction of all the planets and their satellites, by which equatorial planes are shifted, north poles are made to wander, axes rotated, orbital speeds altered, and planets are pulled out of the smooth ellipse they would otherwise follow. Our solar system is so arranged that these perturbations are oscillatory or cyclical. “Now all this, as Laplace and Lagrange have demonstrated, is secured by three specific and distinct adjustments, namely, the motions of the planets being in the same direction their orbits being of small eccentricity, and those orbits being slightly inclined to each other” (Morris, Science and the Bible, p. 317). To these may be added three other adjustments, namely, the vastly superior gravitational force of the sun, the great distances between the planets, and the fact that no two planets come into opposition (form a line with the sun on the same side of the sun) at the same places in their orbits each time. “We thus see that the ecliptic is constantly modifying its elliptical shape; that the orbit of the earth oscillates upward and downward; that the north pole steadily turns its long index-finger over a dial that marks 26,000 years; that the earth, accurately poised in space, gently nods and bows to the attraction of sun, moon, and planets. Thus changes are taking place that would ultimately entirely reverse the order of nature. But each of these variations has its bounds beyond which it cannot pass” (Steele, New Descriptive Astronomy, p. 112). “Who can contemplate this proof of the beauty and perfection of the planetary system, and not bow in reverence and adoration before the Omniscient Architect of the heavens, saying, ‘Great and marvelous art thy works, Lord God Almighty; thou art wonderful in counsel and excellent in working’” (Morris, *ibid*, p. 317).

We see wonderful design in that the earth has been placed just the right distance from the sun to receive, under all the circumstances that prevail, the

benign benefit of its life-giving rays and yet not be scorched by its unimaginable heat.

This advantageous distance of the earth from the sun is seen to be exceedingly remarkable when we reflect upon the fact that it is maintained because it is here that the attractive force of gravity is exactly equalized by the antagonistic force of the earth's centrifugal impulse. The attractive force of gravity between the earth and the sun is dependent upon the sizes and densities (which determine the "masses") of both the earth and the sun, together with the distance between the earth and the sun. The centrifugal force of the earth is dependent upon the earth's mass, its velocity of movement in revolving around the sun, and its distance from the sun. Change the mass of either the earth or the sun materially, or change the velocity of the earth materially, and the distance of the earth from the sun would be materially altered automatically. "The distance of a planet from the sun, other things being equal, determines the amount of light and heat. If, therefore, the earth with its occupants, as now constituted, were placed much nearer the sun, or much farther from him, the change would be attended with fatal consequences. Were it transferred, for example, to move in the orbit of Mercury, our light and heat would be increased seven-fold, and the dazzling splendor of the sun would extinguish our vision, and the intensity of his beams would speedily dry up all the fluids in our bodies. On the other hand, were the earth driven away to revolve in the distant orbit of Saturn, our light and heat would be only one-ninetieth part of what we now enjoy, and the feeble and scattered rays of the sun would scarcely enable us to distinguish him from a star; nay, ere we could cast about to make such an observation, the immeasurable cold would transform us into a rock of ice. We see, then, that our globe might have moved at a hundred different distances too near the sun, and at a thousand other distances all too far from him, to be a suitable abode for its present inhabitants. But we find it placed in an orbit where the temperature is exactly adapted to the bodily constitution, and the degree of light precisely suits the visual organs, of its living tenants. To whom, then, are we to ascribe this striking coincidence, this happy and universal adaptation? To chance? or to the foresight of the Infinite Mind?" (Morris, *Science and the Bible*, p. 282).

We observe amazing adaptation in the fitness of the things that have been provided for man. Take the air we breathe as only one of the myriad examples. The atmosphere is composed of approximately twenty-one parts of oxygen and seventy-eight parts of nitrogen. (The other one part is made up of carbon dioxide, hydrogen, argon, helium, neon, krypton, and xenon, mixed with a variable quantity of water-vapor, dust, and organic matter.) These proportions of oxygen and nitrogen are exactly those which are best suited to man's needs. If the quantity of nitrogen were appreciably increased, all the functions of the human body would be performed with such difficulty and pain as to be brought eventually to a standstill. If the proportion of oxygen were considerably increased, all the processes of life would be accelerated to such a feverish pace that the bodies of all men and animals would soon be burned up. Certain other proportions of these gases would be transformed by heat into deadly poisons. In fact, out of a hundred possible proportions of oxygen and nitrogen, we have the only one perfectly adapted to the needs of both man and beast.

It is not amiss to note further the provisions that have been made for maintaining these proportions, under ordinary circumstances, without noticeable variation. When men and animals breathe they take much of the oxygen out of the air and give back the nitrogen. Furthermore the small amount of oxygen that is exhaled by men and animals is combined with carbon to form carbon dioxide, which is unfit for breathing. Much carbon dioxide is also poured into the air by the processes of combustion and decay. But the balance is maintained. Nitrogen is lighter than air. Consequently, when it is exhaled, it rises; never to return until it is once more mixed with the proper proportion of oxygen. Carbon dioxide is heavier than air, and therefore settles so as to become available for vegetation; which takes out the carbon to sustain its growth and returns most of the oxygen to the air. Also plant leaves, under the influence of sunlight, give off an extra supply of oxygen. Thus, by a nicely adjusted system of compensation, the air we breathe is kept suitable to sustain life. There is no natural explanation of this, since nitrogen and oxygen in the atmosphere do not enter into a compound but remain free.

All of this evidences an intelligent Creator. It is sufficient to convince all except those who are willfully blind. One might as well believe that it is only by accident that rivers in civilized countries always run by towns and cities as to believe that the universal order, design, and adaptation manifest in the universe are the products of a fortuitous concourse of atoms.

#### (4) *The Human Conscience.*

For practical purposes, conscience may be defined as man's power or faculty of approving or condemning his actions on a moral basis. The Apostle Paul, one of the greatest scholars of his day, affirmed that the heathen who had not heard of God or His law showed "**the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them**" (Romans 2:15). Paul thus affirmed that men who had not been taught an authoritative moral standard had a consciousness of right and wrong. Scholars of this day tell us that the most benighted peoples of the earth have conscience.

It cannot be said, therefore, that man has conscience because of the moral teachings he has received. It cannot be doubted that moral instruction sharpens conscience and makes its compunctions more pungent. But the presence of conscience in the untaught heathen shows that moral education does not produce conscience.

Conscience, then, apprises us of the existence of law. The existence of law implies the existence of a lawgiver. Hence the human conscience attests the fact of God's existence.

#### (5) *The Bible.*

The reference here is not to the testimony of the Bible concerning the existence of God. It is illogical to give Bible authority as proof of God's existence, for Bible authority implies God's existence. Such a course amounts to begging the question. But the reference is to –

##### A. The Nature of the Contents of the Bible.

It has been well said that the Bible is such a book that man could not have written it if he would and would not have written it if he could. It reveals truths that man, left to himself, could never have discovered. A fuller discussion of this fact will come in the next chapter. And if man could, why should he write a book that condemns him as a sinful, failing, rebellious creature, deserving the wrath of God? Is it like human nature thus to condemn itself?

### B. Fulfilled Prophecy.

The detailed fulfillment of scores of Old Testament prophecies is recorded in the New Testament, which bears the internal evidence of a reliable history. The fulfillment of prophecy evidences a supreme being that inspired the prophecy.

### C. The Life of Jesus.

Accepting the testimony of the gospels as possessing the credentials of a reliable history, we see in Jesus a unique life. Neither heredity nor environment, the only two natural forces in the formation of character, can account for His life. Thus we have evidence of a divine being who indwelt Jesus.

### D. The Resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus, as a supernatural and well-attested fact, shows that He was divine. Thus we have further evidence that there is a divine being.

Proof of the resurrection of Jesus: After hearing a conversation on a railroad train between two men who were discussing the possibility of being deceived about the resurrection of Jesus, W. E. Fendley, a lawyer of Mississippi, wrote an article that was published in the *Western Recorder* of December 9, 1920. He approached the matter as a lawyer, and he gave the three following reasons for denying the plausibility of the suggestion that the body of Jesus was stolen: (1) "*It was not a good time for stealing the body.*" The fact that three Jewish feasts came at the time of the crucifixion

makes it certain that the streets of Jerusalem would be full of people. For that reason, Mr. Fendley says that it was not a good time for stealing the body. (2) *“There were five penalties of death attached to the stealing of the body, and not one of those penalties was imposed or carried out.”* The penalties are given as being: first, for allowing the seal to be broken; second, for breaking the seal; third, for stealing the body; fourth, for allowing the body to be stolen; fifth, for going to sleep on duty. (3) *“I deny the allegation again on the ground of premeditated and unpremeditated testimony.”* And then he shows how the soldiers came from the sepulchre and told that an angel had driven them away from the tomb; and that, when bribed by the Pharisees, they told that the body of Jesus was stolen while they slept.

Mr. Fendley goes on to give five things which people must believe in order to believe this report of the soldiers.

They are:

(1) *“They must believe that sixty-four Roman soldiers, under the penalty of death, all slept at once.”* (2) *“They must accept the testimony of sleepers.”* (3) *“They must believe that the disciples who were so afraid, all at once became tremendously bold.”* (4) *“Again they must believe the thieves took plenty of time to fold up the grave clothes, and place them neatly to one side.”* (5) *“They must also believe that those disciples would risk their lives for a dead imposter, when they would not for a living Saviour.”*

### **3. THE FACT OF GOD’S EXISTENCE IS ALMOST UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED**

This is given as the third reason that justifies the course pursued by Moses in assuming and declaring the fact of God’s existence without offering any proofs. It may also be taken as further evidence of God’s existence. The few that deny God’s existence are insignificant. “The lowest tribes have conscience, fear death, believe in witches, propitiate or frighten away evil fates. Even the fetish-worshipper, who calls a stone or a tree a god, shows that he has already the idea of God” (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 31).

“The existence of God and future life are everywhere recognized in Africa” (Livingstone). The great Plutarch summed it all up in the following famous quotation from him: “If you go over the earth, you may find cities without walls, letters, kings, houses, wealth, and money, devoid of theatres and schools; but a city without temples and gods, and where is no use of prayers, oaths, and oracles, nor sacrifices to obtain good or avert evil, no man ever saw.” Cicero says quite truly: “The consent of all nations in anything is to be reckoned the law of nature,” and he refers to notions about God as implanted and innate.

Men instinctively *feel* the existence of God. Why, then, do some deny it? Is it because of lack of evidence? No; it is only that this feeling is not pleasing to them. It disturbs them in their sinful course. Therefore they conjure up arguments to erase the thought of God from their minds. Every atheist and agnostic labors mainly to convince himself. When he presents his arguments to others it is partly through a desire to test them and partly in self defense. It is never through a feeling that his views can be of any help to others.

An atheist is a man who, through love of sin, has tampered with his mind and has brought it into a state of war with his heart, wherein the mind attacks the heart and tries to wrest the feeling of God from it. The heart counterattacks the mind and seeks to compel the mind to retain the thought of God. In this warfare the mind, therefore, is constantly looking for arguments to use as ammunition. As it finds these arguments, it fires them at the heart with the loudest possible report. This is why an atheist likes to expose his thinking. He is at war with himself and it gives him confidence when he hears his guns exploding.

There is much evidence that the mind of the atheist is never fully victorious over his heart. “*The number of real speculative atheists have been very few, if any; some have boldly asserted their disbelief of a God; but it is a question whether their hearts and mouths have agreed; at least they have not been able to maintain their unbelief long without some doubts and fears*” (Gill Body of Divinity, p. 3). Shelley, who was expelled from Oxford for writing a pamphlet on the “*Necessity of Atheism,*” delighted



in thinking of a “*fine intellectual spirit pervading the universe.*” Voltaire is said to have prayed in an Alpine thunderstorm, and, when dying, said, “*O God - if there be a God - have mercy on me?*” Therefore we conclude with Calvin: “*Those who rightly judge will always agree that there is an indelible sense of divinity engraven upon men’s minds.*” There is no rational explanation of this “*law of nature*” except on the hypothesis that God exists.

Before passing it is deemed well to note the sources of this almost universal belief in the existence of God. There are two sources of this belief; viz.,

(1) *Tradition.*

*Chronologically*, our belief in God comes from tradition. We receive our first ideas of God from our parents. No doubt this has been true of each successive generation from the beginning. But tradition is insufficient to account for the almost universal acceptance of the fact of God’s existence. The fact that only a few ever disavow this acceptance (it is doubtful that any ever fully reject it) shows that there is an inner confirmation of the traditional belief in God’s existence. This points us to the second source of this belief, which is-

(2) *Intuition.*

*Logically*, our belief in God comes from intuition. Intuition is the immediate perception of truth without a conscious process of reasoning. A fact or truth so perceived is called an intuition. Intuitions are “*first truths*,” without which all reflective thought would be impossible. Our minds are so constituted as to evolve these “*first truths*” as soon as proper occasions are presented.

A. Proof that the Almost Universal Belief in God Proceeds Logically from Intuition and not from Reasoning.

(a) The great majority of men have never tried to reason out the fact of God’s existence, and are not capable of such reasoning as would serve to

strengthen their belief in God's existence.

(b) The strength of men's belief in God's existence does not exist in proportion to the development of the reasoning faculty, as would be the case if that belief were primarily the result of reasoning.

(c) Reason cannot fully demonstrate the fact of God's existence. In all our reasoning about God's existence we must begin with intuitive assumptions that we cannot demonstrate. Thus when men accept the fact of God's existence, they accept more than strict reason would lead them to accept.

## B. The Existence of God as a "First Truth."

(a) *Definition.* "A first truth is a knowledge which, though developed on occasion of observation and reflection, is not derived from observation and reflection, - a knowledge on the contrary which has such logical priority that it must be assumed or supposed. Such truths are not, therefore, recognized first in order of time; some of them are assented to somewhat late in the mind's growth; by the great majority of men they are never consciously formulated at all. Yet they constitute the necessary assumptions upon which all other knowledge rests, and the mind has not only the inborn capacity to evolve them so soon as the proper occasions are presented, but the recognition of them is inevitable so soon as the mind begins to give account to itself of its own knowledge (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 30).

(b) *Proof.* "The processes of reflective thought imply that the universe is grounded in, and is the expression of, reason" (Harris, Philosophic Basis of Theism). "Induction rests upon the assumption, as it demands for its ground, that a personal, thinking deity exists ... It has no meaning or validity unless we assume that the universe is constituted in such a way as to presuppose an absolute and unconditional originator of its forces and laws ... We analyze the several processes of knowledge into their underlying assumptions, and we find that the assumption which underlies them all is that of a self-existent intelligence" (Porter, Human Intellect). "Reason thinks of God as existing. Reason would not be reason, if it did not think of God as

existing (Domer, Glaubenslehre). It is for this reason that God has said in His word: **“The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God*” (Psalm 14:1).** Only a fool will deny God’s existence. Some such fools are illiterate; some are educated. But they are fools nevertheless, because they have not or, at least will not acknowledge, even the beginning of wisdom, the fear of the Lord. See **Proverbs 1:7**.

## **II. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD NOT DEMONSTRABLE MATHEMATICALLY, YET MORE CERTAIN THAN ANY CONCLUSION FROM REASON.**

### **1. GOD’S EXISTENCE NOT DEMONSTRABLE MATHEMATICALLY**

In regard to all the arguments for the fact of God’s existence Strong says: “These arguments are probable, not demonstrative (Systematic Theology, p. 39). We read again: “Nor have I claimed that the existence, even, of this Being can be demonstrated as we demonstrate the abstract truths of science” (Diman, Theistic Argument, p. 363). Strong quotes Andrew Fuller as questioning “whether argumentations in favor of the existence of God has not made more skeptics than believers;” and then adds: “So far as this is true, it is due to an overstatement of the arguments and an exaggerated notion of what is to be expected from them” (Systematic Theology, p. 40).

### **2. GOD’S EXISTENCE YET MORE CERTAIN THAN ANY CONCLUSION FROM REASON**

Let the student read over again the quotations given to show that the existence of God is a “first truth,” a truth that is assumed by all in the process of reason. “He who denies God’s existence must tacitly assume that existence in his very argument, by employing logical processes whose validity rests upon the fact of God’s existence” (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 33). It is an axiomatic truth that that which is the foundation of all reason is more certain than any conclusion from reason. “We cannot prove that God is, but we can show that, in order to the existence of any knowledge, thought,

reason, in man, man must assume that God is” (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 34).

Descartes, (1596-1650) who distinguished himself in physics and revolutionized the study of geometry and philosophy, perhaps has never been excelled in stating the case for the existence of God. In his *Discourse on Method* he wrote as follows: “Finally, if there still be persons who are not sufficiently persuaded of the existence of God and of the soul, by the reasons I have adduced, I am desirous that they should know that all the other propositions, of the truth of which they deem themselves perhaps more assured, as that we have a body, and that there exist stars and an earth, and such like, are less certain; for, though we have a moral assurance of these things, which is so strong that there is an appearance of extravagance in doubting of their existence, yet at the same time no one, unless his intellect is impaired, can deny, when the question relates to a metaphysical certitude, that there is sufficient reason to exclude entire assurance, in the observation that when asleep we can in the same way imagine ourselves possessed of another body and that we see other stars and another earth, when there is nothing of the kind. For how do we know that the thoughts which occur in dreaming are false rather than those other which we experience when awake, since the former are often not less vivid and distinct than the latter? *And though men of the higher genius study this question as long as they please, I do not believe that they will be able to give any reason which can be sufficient to remove this doubt, unless they presuppose the existence of God. For, in the first place, even the principle which I have already taken as a rule, viz., that all things which we clearly and distinctly conceive are true, is certain only because God is or exists, and because he is a Perfect Being, and because all that we possess is derived from him; whence it follows that our ideas or notions, which to the extent of their clearness and distinctness are real, and proceed from God, must to that extent be true ... But if we did not know that all which we possess of real and true proceeds from a perfect and infinite being, however clear and distinct our ideas might be, we should have no ground on that account for the assurance that they possessed the perfection of being true.*”

“The most unreasonable people in the world are those who depend solely upon reason, in the narrow sense” Strong). “Belief in God is not the conclusion of a demonstration, but the solution of a problem” (Strong); and that problem is the problem of the origin of the universe. “The universe, as a great fact, demands a rational explanation, and ... the most rational explanation that can possibly be given is that furnished in the conception of such a Being (as God). In this conclusion reason rests, and refuses to rest in any other” (Diman, Theistic Argument). “We arrive at a scientific belief in the existence of God just as we do at any other possible human truth. We assume it, as a hypothesis absolutely necessary to account for the phenomena of the universe; and then evidence from every quarter begins to converge upon it, until, in the process of time, the common sense of mankind cultivated and enlightened by ever accumulating knowledge, pronounces upon the validity of the hypothesis with a voice scarcely less decided and universal than it does in the case of our highest scientific convictions” (Morell, Philosophic Fragments). Therefore, we may say; “God is the most certain fact of objective knowledge” (Browne, Metaphysics).

### **III. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, THEREFORE, MAY BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED AND BOLDLY PROCLAIMED.**

The foregoing facts should make the preacher bold in his proclamation of the fact of God’s existence, fearing not to proclaim it confidently to the worldly-wise. We are on safe ground in proclaiming this truth. No man can successfully gainsay our message.

There are times, perhaps, when the preacher in the pulpit should discuss the evidences of God’s existence; yet, as a usual thing, he should assume it and declare it as Moses did. And when he does deal with the evidences of God’s existence, let him not overstate them so as to leave the impression that the validity of the fact of God’s existence depends upon a strict rational demonstration.

## Chapter 2 - THE BIBLE, A REVELATION FROM GOD

Having now seen that the existence of God is an established fact, a fact more certain than any conclusion from formal reasoning - because it is the necessary foundation of all reason - we pass on to the consideration of another matter. There is now, and has been for centuries, in this world a peculiar book, called the Bible, which professes to be a revelation from God. Its writers speak in boldest terms of their authority as spokesmen for God. This authority has been admitted by millions of the inhabitants of the earth, both in the past and in the present. We desire to ask, therefore, if this book is what it professes to be, and what it has been and is believed to be by a multitude of people-a revelation from God. If it is not a revelation from God, then its writers were either deceived or else they were malicious deceiver.

### I. IS THE BIBLE HISTORICALLY AUTHENTIC?

By this question we mean: Is the Bible trustworthy as a record of historical facts? About a century ago critics held the Bible to be untrustworthy as history. They said the four kings mentioned in **Genesis 14:1** never existed, and that the victory of the kings of the West over the kings of the East, as described in this chapter, never occurred. They denied that such a people as the Hittites ever lived. Sargon, mentioned in **Isaiah 20:1** as king of Assyria, was considered a mythical character. Moreover Daniel was supposed to be in error in mentioning Belshazzar as a Babylonian king. **Daniel 5:1**. Typical New Testament examples of supposed historical errors are to be found in Luke's representation of the island of Cyprus as being ruled by a "proconsul" (**Acts 13:7**) and of Lysanias as being tetrarch of Abilene while Herod was tetrarch of Galilee (**Luke 3:1**.) But how is it now? We can say today, after far-reaching investigations concerning ancient nations have been made, that not a single statement in the Bible stands refuted. The confident denials of early critics have been proved to be the assumptions of ignorance. Prof. A. H. Sayce, one of the most eminent of archeologists, says "Since the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets until now great things have been brought out by archeology, and every one of them has been in harmony with the Bible, while nearly every one of them has been dead against the

assertions of the destructive critics.” Some years ago the United Press broadcasted the testimony of A. S. Yahuda, formerly Professor of Biblical History at the University of Berlin and later of Semitic Languages at the University of Madrid, to the effect that “every archeological discovery of Palestine and Mesopotamia of the Bible period bears out the historical accuracy of the Bible.”

## **II. IS THE BIBLE GOD’S REVELATION?**

We enter now upon the consideration of a further question. A historically correct book might be of human origin. Is this true of the Bible?

### **1. AN ANTECEDENT PROBABILITY**

Careful thought, apart from the question of whether the Bible is God’s revelation, will convince any fair-minded believer in God’s existence that it is highly probable that God has given to man an explicit and enduring written revelation of the divine will. Man’s conscience apprises him of the existence of law as has been well said: “Conscience does not lay down a law; it warns of the existence of a law” (Diman, Theistic Argument). When man has the consciousness that he has done wrong, he has indication that he has broken some law. Who else, other than Jehovah, whose existence we have found to be an established fact, could be the author of this law? And since man intuitively thinks of God as being good, he must think of the purpose of His law as being good. Therefore we cannot think of this law as being for the mere purpose of condemnation. It must be that this law is for man’s discipline in righteousness. We must also conclude that God, being shown to be wise by His wonderful works, would use the most effective means for the accomplishment of His purpose through the law. This argues for a written revelation; for any large degree of obedience to a righteous law is impossible to man without knowledge of that law. Nature and reason are too uncertain, indistinct, incomplete, and insufficient for the purpose. James B. Walker sums up the matter as follows: “The whole experience of the world has confirmed the fact beyond the possibility of skepticism that man cannot discover and establish a perfect rule of human duty” (Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation, p. 73).



If this be true of the law of human conduct, then how much more is it true of the way of salvation? “The light of nature leaves men entirely without the knowledge of the way of saving sinful men ... angels ... themselves would not be able to know the way of saving sinful men, or how sinful men can be justified before God; wherefore, in order to know this, they ‘**desire to look into**’ it, **I Peter 1:12**” (Gill, Body of Divinity, p. 25).

Furthermore, E. Y. Mullins says: “The very idea of religion contains at its heart the idea of revelation. No definition of religion which omits the idea can stand in the light of facts. If the worshipper speaks to God, and God is forever silent to the worshipper, we have only one side of religion. Religion then becomes a meaningless make-believe” (The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression).

## **2. A REASONABLE ASSUMPTION**

“If the Bible is not what the Christian people of the world think it to be, then we have on our hands the tremendous problem of accounting for its increased and increasing popularity among the great majority of the most enlightened people of the earth and in the face of almost every conceivable opposition” (Jonathan Rigdon, Science and Religion)

“Greater efforts have been made to destroy the Bible than were ever put forth for the destruction of any other book. Its foes have persistently attempted to arrest its influence. Criticism has assailed it and ridicule has derided it. Science and philosophy have been invoked to discredit it. Astronomy, in its disclosure of heavenly wonders, has been asked for some facts to disparage it; and geology, in its researches in the earth, has been importuned to throw suspicion upon it” (J. M. Pendleton, Christian Doctrines). Yet

“Steadfast, serene, immovable, the same

Year after year ...

Burns on for evermore that quenchless flame;

Shines on that inextinguishable light.”

- Whitaker

The Bible “rises up today like a phoenix from the fire, with an air of mingled pity and disdain for its foes, as much unharmed by their puny attacks as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace” (Collett, All About The Bible).

It is not likely that any merely human production could have triumphed over such opposition as has been brought against the Bible.

### **3. PROOFS THAT THE BIBLE IS GOD’S REVELATION**

(1) *The Great Differences between the Bible and the Writings of Men Evidence that it is not a mere Human Production.*

“These differences are: -

A. As to its Depth and Reaches of Meaning.

“There are infinite depths and inexhaustible reaches of meaning in the Scripture, which difference it from all other books, and which compel us to believe that its author must be divine” (Strong). We may pick up the productions of men and get about all they have to say at one reading. But not so with the Bible. We can read it over and over and find new and deeper meanings. Our minds are staggered at its depth of meaning.

B. As to its Power, Charm, Attraction, and Perennial Freshness.

The Biblical writers are incomparable in “their dramatic power, that divine and indefinable charm, that mysterious and ever-recurring attraction, which we find in them throughout our lives, as in the scenes of nature, an ever fresh charm. After being delighted and moved by these incomparable narratives in our early childhood, they revive and affect our tender emotions even in hoary age. Certainly, there must be something super-human in the very humanity of these forms, so familiar and simple” (L. Gaussen,

Theopneustia). And this same author suggests a comparison between the story of Joseph in the Bible and the same story in the Koran. Another author (Mornay) suggests a comparison between the history of Israel in the Bible and the same history in Flavius Josephus. He says that in reading Bible history, men “will feel their whole bodies thrill, their hearts move, and a tenderness of affection come over them in a moment, more than had all the orators of Greece and Rome preached to them the same matters for a whole day.” He says of the accounts of Josephus that one “will leave them colder and less moved than he found them.” He then adds: “What, then, if this Scripture has in its humility more elevation, in its simplicity more depth, in its absence of all effort more charms, in its grossness more vigor and point than we are able to find elsewhere?”

### C. As to its Incomparable Conciseness.

In the book of **Genesis** we have a history that tells of the creation of the earth and of its being made a fit place for man’s abode. It tells of the making of man, animals, and plants, and the placing of them on the earth. It tells of man’s apostasy from God, of the first worship, of the first murder, of the deluge, of the re-peopling of the earth, of the dispersion of men, of the origin of the present diversity of tongues, of the founding of the Jewish nation, and of the development and experiences of that nation for some five hundred years. Yet it is all contained in fifty remarkably brief chapters. Now compare with this the history written by Josephus. Both Moses and Josephus were Jews. Both wrote about the Jews. But Josephus takes up more space with the history of his own life than Moses consumes for the record of history from the creation to the death of Joseph. Take also the gospels. “Who among us could have been, for three years and a half, the constant witness, the passionately attached friend, of a man like Jesus Christ, and could have been able to write in sixteen or seventeen short chapters ... the whole history of that life - of His birth, of His ministry, of His miracles, of His preachings, of His sufferings, of His death, of His resurrection, and of His ascension into Heaven? Who among us would have found it possible to avoid saying a word about the first thirty years of such a life? Who among us could have related so many acts of kindness without an exclamation; so many miracles without reflection on them; so many sublime thoughts without an emphasis; so many

sinless infirmities in their Master, and so many sinful infirmities in His disciples, without any suppression; so many instances of resistance, so much ignorance, so much hardness of heart, without the slightest excuse or comment? Is it thus that men write history? Who among us, further, could have known how to distinguish what required to be said cursorily from what required to be told in detail?" (Gaussen).

*(2) The Revelation of Things that Man, left alone, could never have Discovered gives Evidence of the Superhuman Origin of the Bible.*

#### A. The Account of Creation.

Where could Moses have gotten this if God did not reveal it to him? "The very suggestion that Moses obtained his historical information from those Chaldean and Gilgamesh legends ... is simply absurd; for, interesting as they are, they are so full of legendary nonsense that it would have been practically impossible for Moses or any other man to evolve, from such mythical legends, the sober, reverent, and scientific records which are found in the book of Genesis" (Collett).

Moreover Moses did not get his information about creation from the science and philosophy of Egypt. "Moses as the Crown Prince of Egypt attended the best of their schools and 'was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians! - most of which is considered pure nonsense today - but he did not write it in his books. The weird and fantastic theories held by the Egyptians concerning the origin of the world and of man were passed over completely; and in the first chapter of Genesis in majestic language which has never been surpassed to this day he gives an account of God's creation of the world and of man, no statement of which is disproved by modern science" (Boettner, *Studies in Theology*, p. 34).

#### B. The Doctrine of Angels.

"Was anything similar to angels ever conceived of by the imaginations of the people, by their poets, or by their sages? No; they never even show the slightest approach to it. One will perceive, then, how impossible it was, without a constant operation on the part of God, that the Biblical narratives,

in treating of such a subject, should not have constantly borne the all too human impression of our narrow conceptions; or that the sacred writers should not have let slip from their pen imprudent touches, in vesting the angels by turns with attributes too divine, or affections too human” (Gaussen).

### C. The Omnipresence of God.

Do the following passages represent the conclusion of human philosophy?

**“Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? saith Jehovah. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah” (Jeremiah 23:23, 24).**

**“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me” (Psalm 139:7-10).**

These passages and others in the Bible teach, not pantheism, nor that God is at different places successively; but that He is everywhere at once and yet separate in being from His creation. Did the unaided intellect of man originate this conception, seeing that even when it has been set down the mind of man can comprehend it only partially?

### D. The Problem of Human Redemption.

If there had been submitted to man the problem of how God could be just and the justifier of the ungodly, would man have proposed, as a solution, that God become flesh and suffer in man’s stead?

“That the guilty creature should be saved at the expense of the incarnation of the Creator; that life should come to the sons of men through the death of the Son of God; that Heaven should become accessible to earth’s

distant population by the blood of a shameful cross - was utterly remote from all finite conceptions. Even when the wonder was made known by the gospel, it excited the contempt of the Jews and Greeks. To the former it was a stumbling-block and offense; to the latter it was foolishness. The Greeks were a highly cultivated people, acute in intellect, profound in philosophy, and subtle in reasoning, but they ridiculed the idea of salvation through one who was crucified. They may well be regarded as representing the possibilities of the human intellect - what it can do; and, so far from claiming the Christian doctrine of redemption as an invention of philosophers, they laughed at it as unworthy of philosophy. The facts of the gospel they rejected as incredible, because they seemed to be in positive conflict with their conceptions of reason" (J. M. Pendleton, Christian Doctrines).

"How could these books have been written by such men, in such surroundings without divine aid? When we consider the subjects discussed, the ideas presented - so hostile not only to their native prejudices, but to the general sentiment then prevalent with the wisest of mankind, - the whole system of principles interwoven everywhere with history and poetry and promise, as well as minute wonders and single excellences of the word - our minds are constrained to acknowledge this as God's Book, in a high and peculiar sense" (Basil Manly, The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration).

*(3) The Marvelous Unity of the Bible Confirms it as a Divine Revelation.*

"Here is a volume made up of sixty-six different books, written in separate sections, by scores of different persons, during a period of fifteen hundred years, - a volume antedating in its earlier records all other books in the world, touching human life and knowledge at hundreds of different points. Yet it avoids any absolute, assignable error in dealing with these innumerable themes. Of what other ancient book can this be said? Of what book even one hundred years old can this be said?" (Manly, The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration).

The Bible contains almost every known form of literature - history, biography, stories, dramas, arguments, poetry, prose, prophecy, parables,

pleas, philosophy, law, letters, satires, and songs. It was written in three languages by about forty different authors, who lived on three continents. It was in the process of composition some fifteen or sixteen hundred years. "Among these authors were kings, farmers, mechanics, scientific men, lawyers, generals, fishermen, ministers, and priests, a tax collector, a doctor, some rich, some poor, some city-bred, some country-born - thus touching all the experiences of men" (Peloubet's Bible Dictionary).

Yet the Bible is in agreement in all of its parts. Critics have imagined contradictions, but the contradictions disappear as mist before the morning sun when they are subjected to the light of intelligent, careful, candid, fair, and sympathetic investigation. The following marks of unity characterize the Bible:

A. It is a Unit in its Design.

The one grand design that runs all through the Bible is the revelation of how man, estranged from God, may find restoration to the favor and fellowship of God.

B. It is a Unit in its Teaching Concerning God.

Every statement in the Bible concerning God is compatible with every other statement. No writer has contradicted any other writer in writing on the stupendous theme of the ineffable, infinite God!

This is true in spite of the efforts of modernists to represent the God of the Old Testament as a God of vengeance and war and the God of the New Testament as a God of love and non-resistance. Modernists willfully ignore the fact that in the Old Testament God dealt with a nation, while in the New Testament God is dealing with individuals. There is not a word in the New Testament that teaches that nations should not resist aggression. Modernists grossly pervert the New Testament when they insist on applying to nations the teachings of Jesus with respect to individual believers.

C. It is a Unit in its Teaching Concerning Man.

Everywhere in the Bible man is shown to be by nature a corrupt, sinful, rebellious, failing creature under the wrath of God and needing redemption.

D. It is a Unit in its Teaching Concerning Salvation.

The way of salvation was not made so clear in the Old Testament as it was in the New Testament. But it can be seen readily that what is clearly revealed in the New Testament was fore-shadowed in the Old Testament. Peter affirmed that Old Testament saints were saved in exactly the same way that New Testament saints are saved, **Acts 15:10, 11**. Read in this connection the **fifty-third** and **fifty-fifth** chapters of **Isaiah**. Also note that Paul makes Abraham a typical example of justification through the faith (**Romans 4**) and says that the gospel was preached to Abraham (**Galatians 3:8**). Note moreover that Paul told Timothy that the “**holy Scriptures**” (the Old Testament) which he had known from a child were able to make one wise “**unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**” (**II Timothy 3:15**). The supposed conflict between James and Paul on justification will be treated in the chapter on [\*“The Doctrine Of Justification”\*](#).

E. It is a Unit as to the law of God.

A perfect ideal of righteousness is portrayed throughout the Bible in spite of the fact that God, in harmony with the laws of man’s development, suited His government to the needs of Israel that they might be lifted from their rude state. This adjustment of God’s discipline was like a ladder let down into a pit to provide a way of escape for one trapped there. The letting down of the ladder is not meant as an encouragement to the one at the bottom to remain there, but is intended as a means of rescue. So the condescension of God’s discipline in the case of Israel was not meant as an encouragement of evil but as a regulation of evil for the purpose of lifting the people to a higher plane. To deny the unity of God’s law because of adaptations to the need of particular peoples is as foolish as to deny the unity of the architect’s plans because he uses temporary scaffolding in the accomplishment of them.

F. It is a Unit in the Progressive Unfolding of Doctrine.



All truth was not given at once in the Bible. Yet there is unity. The unity in progressive unfolding is the unity of growth. We see “**first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.**” (Mark 4:28)

The force of this marvelous unity in its application to the question of inspiration of the Bible is emphasized by David James Burrell as follows: “If forty odd persons of different tongues and degrees of musical education were to pass through the organ-loft of a church at long intervals and, without any possibility of collusion, strike sixty-six notes each, which, when combined, should yield the theme of an oratorio, it is respectfully submitted that the man who regarded that as a ‘fortuitous circumstance’ would by universal consent be regarded - to put it mildly, - sadly deficient in common sense” (Why I Believe The Bible).

(4) *The Accuracy of the Bible in Scientific Matters Proves that it is Not of Human Origin.*

A. Bible not given to Teach Natural Science.

It is rightfully said that the Bible was not given to teach natural science. It was not given to teach the way the heavens go, but the way to go to Heaven.

B. Yet it makes Reference to Scientific Matters.

“On the other hand, however, seeing that the whole universe is so entirely and inseparably bound up with scientific laws and principles, it is inconceivable that this book of God - which confessedly deals with everything in the universe which affects the highest interests of man - should make no reference whatever to any scientific matter; hence it is that we do find incidental references to various branches of science ... (Sidney Collett, All About The Bible).

C. And when it does Make Reference to Scientific Matters, it is Most Accurate.

The Bible does not contain the scientific errors of its day. It anticipated the vaunted discoveries of men by hundreds of years. None of its Statements have been proved erroneous. And it is only in modern times that men have come to understand some of them. [1]

Note the following accurate Biblical references to scientific matters:

(a) The rotundity of the earth. Centuries before men knew that the earth is round the Bible spoke of **“the circle of the earth” (Isaiah 40:22)**.

(b) The gravitational support of the earth. Men used to discuss the question of what it is that supports the earth, various theories being advanced. Finally scientists discovered that the earth is held in place by the gravitation of the sun. But long before men knew this, and while they were contending for this or that material foundation for the earth, the Bible declared that God **“hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7)**.

(c) The nature of the heavens. The Bible speaks of the heavens as “expanse,” and this was so far in advance of science that the Hebrew word (raqia) was translated **“firmament” (Genesis 1:7, 8; Psalm 19:6)**, which means a solid support.

(d) The northern empty expanse. It has been only within the last century that the Washington Observatory discovered that within the northern heavens there is a great empty expanse in which there is not a single visible star. But more than three thousand years ago the Bible informed men that God **“stretcheth out the north over the empty place” (Job 26:7)**.

(e) The weight of air. Galileo is credited with the discovery that air has weight - a thing that men formerly had never dreamed of. But two thousand years before Galileo’s discovery, the Bible said that God made **“a weight for the wind” (Job 28:25)**.

(f) The rotation of the earth. In speaking of His second coming, Christ gave indication that it would be night in one part of the earth and day in another, **(Luke 17:34-36)**, thus implying the rotation of the earth upon its axis.

(g) The number of stars. In the second century before Christ, Hipparchus numbered the stars at 1,022. Over three hundred years later, Ptolemy added four more. But the Bible anticipated the revelations of the modern telescope by comparing the stars with grains of sand by the seashore (**Genesis 22:17; Jeremiah 38:22**), with only God being able to number them (**Psalms 147:4**).

(h) The law of evaporation. Long before men knew that it is evaporation that keeps the sea from overflowing and keeps rivers running by making rain possible, the whole amazing process was strikingly represented with scientific accuracy as follows: “**All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again**” (**Ecclesiastes 1:7**).

(i) The existence of trade-winds. Today we know that the rising of hot air in the tropics causes the cold air from the north to move in, causing what we call “trade-winds.” We also know that “*in some places they blow in one direction for half the year, but in the opposite direction for the other half*” (New Students Reference Work, p. 1931). The Bible anticipated this modern knowledge in a very remarkable statement as follows: “**The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north, it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits**” (**Ecclesiastes 1:6**).

(j) The importance of the blood. Only for about three and a half centuries have we known that the blood circulates, carrying oxygen and food to every cell in the body, removing carbon dioxide and other wastes from the body through the lungs and excretory organs, and promoting healing and fighting diseases. But a long time ago the Bible declared that “**the life of the flesh is in the blood.**” See **Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14**.

(k) The unity of the human race. Ancient tradition represented men originally as springing individually from the soil without lineal relationship. But modern knowledge has revealed many physical, physiological, geographic, and linguistic evidences of the unity of the race. [2] The strongest evidence, however, lies in the fact that whereas medical science can distinguish between human blood and animal blood and can distinguish

between the blood of different species of animals, yet it cannot distinguish between the blood of the different races of mankind. But Moses did not have to wait for this modern knowledge. Without hesitation or equivocation he declared that the race has spread by the descendents of the sons of Noah (**Genesis 9:19; 10:32**). Nor did Paul hesitate to affirm that God “**hath made of one blood every nation of men**” (**Acts 17:26**).

(5) *Fulfilled Prophecy Witnesses to the Fact that the Bible Came from God.*

A. The Prophetic Reference to Cyrus.

Fifty years before the birth of King Cyrus, who decreed that the children of Israel might return to their land, Isaiah spoke of God as the one “**that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid**” (**Isaiah 44:28**).

B. The Prophecy of the Babylonian Captivity. See **Jeremiah 25:11**.

C. Prophecies Concerning Christ.

(a) The parting of His garments. **Psalm 22:18**. For fulfillment see **Matthew 27:35**.

(b) The fact of His bones not being broken. **Psalm 34:20**. For fulfillment see **John 19:36**.

(c) His betrayal. **Psalm 41:9**. For fulfillment see **John 13:18**.

(d) His death with the thieves and burial in Joseph’s tomb. See **Isaiah 53:9, 12**. For fulfillment see **Matthew 27:38, 57-60**.

(e) His birth in Bethlehem. **Micah 5:2**. For fulfillment see **Matthew 2:1; John 7:42**.

(f) His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. **Zechariah 9:9**. For fulfillment see **Matthew 21:1-10; Mark 11:1-8; Luke 19:29-38**.

(g) His piercing. **Zechariah 12:10**. For fulfillment see **John 19:34, 37**.

(h) The scattering of His disciples. **Zechariah 13:7**. For fulfillment see **Matthew 26:31**.

There is but one plausible explanation of the wonder of fulfilled prophecy. And that explanation is that he “**who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will**” (**Ephesians 1:11**) moved the hand of the writer of prophecy.

*(6) The Testimony of Christ Proves the Genuineness of the Bible as a Revelation from God.*

Jesus regarded the Old Testament as the Word of God. He frequently referred to it as such, and said: “**The Scripture cannot be broken**” (**John 10:35**). He also promised further revelation through the apostles (**John 16:12, 13**). Thus we have His pre-authentication of the New Testament.

The testimony of Jesus is of unique value, because His life proved Him to be what He professed to be - a revelation of God. Jesus was not deceived; “for this would argue (a) a weakness and folly amounting to positive insanity. But His whole character and life exhibit a calmness, dignity, equipoise, insight, and self-mastery, utterly inconsistent with such a theory. Or it would argue (b) a self-ignorance and self-exaggeration which could spring only from the deepest moral perversion. But the absolute purity of His conscience, the humility of His spirit, the self-denying beneficence of His life, show this hypothesis to be incredible.” Neither was Jesus a deceiver; for “(a) the perfectly consistent holiness of His life; (b) the unwavering confidence with which He challenged investigation of His claims and staked all upon the result; (c) the vast improbability of a lifelong lie in the avowed interests of truth; and (d) the impossibility that deception should have wrought such blessing to the world, - all show that Jesus was not a conscious imposter” (A. H. Strong).

### III. WHAT CONSTITUTES THE BIBLE?

From what has been said already, it is manifest that the author believes that the Bible, God's revelation, consists of the sixty-six books of what is known as the Protestant Canon.

No lengthy and labored argument is necessary here, and none shall be attempted. The whole matter, so far as those who believe in the deity of Christ are concerned, can be settled by His testimony.

Let us note:

1. *Christ accepted the thirty-nine books of our Old Testament as constituting the written revelation that God had given up to that time.*

These books composed the "**Scripture**" (a term occurring twenty-three times in the New Testament) accepted by the Jews. It is believed they were collected and arranged by Ezra. They were translated from Hebrew into Greek some time before the advent of Christ. There can be no doubt that Christ accepted these books and no others as constituting the writings that God had inspired up to that time. He quoted from these books with the formula, "**It is written.**" He referred to them as "**Scripture.**" And He said, "**... the Scripture cannot be broken**" (John 10:35).

On the other hand, neither Christ nor the apostles accepted the fourteen books and parts of books (known as the Apocrypha), most of which have been added to the Protestant Canon to make up the Old Testament in the Roman Catholic Bible (Douay Version). "And although there are in the New Testament about 263 direct quotations from and about 370 allusions to passages in the Old Testament, yet amongst all these there is not a single reference, either by Christ or His apostles, to the apocryphal writings" (Collett, All About the Bible, p. 50). Neither were these books received by the nation of Israel. [3]

Josephus, in writing Against Apion (Book 1, Sec. 8), says: "*We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books* (this number was

arrived at by certain combinations of our thirty-nine books) ... *for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them.*” Nor were these books a part of the original Septuagint, as is often supposed. Cyril of Jerusalem (born A. D. 315) spoke of the Septuagint as follows: “*Read the divine Scriptures - namely, the twenty-two books of the Old Testament which the seventy-two interpreters translated.*” They were probably added to the Septuagint about the middle of the fourth century since the earliest copy of the Septuagint we possess (Vatican version) contains them, and this is supposed to date from the fourth century. Perhaps it was the addition of these books that prompted the Greek church at the Council of Laodicea (A. D. 363) to deny their inspiration. Even as late as 1546, the Council of Trent found it necessary to declare these books to be canonical.

2. *Christ also promised a further revelation going even beyond all that He had taught.*

In **John 16:12, 13** we find Christ speaking to the apostles as follows: “**I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come.**”

Furthermore Christ constituted the apostles a body of infallible teachers when in **Matthew 18:18** He said: “**Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**” To “**bind**” means to forbid, that is, to teach that a thing is wrong. To “**loose**” is to allow, to sanction, to teach that a thing is right. Thus Christ promised to sanction in Heaven whatever the apostles taught on earth. **John 20:22, 23** are of the same import.

In the New Testament we have this further revelation that Christ gave through His infallible body of teachers. The few books not written by apostles evidently received their place in the canon because of apostolic approval. At any rate, their teaching is the same as that of the other books of the canon.

The New Testament came into existence in the same way that the Old Testament did, that is, the canon was determined by the consensus of opinion on the part of God's own people. The fact that God gave and preserved an infallible revelation of the old dispensation argues that He has done the same with reference to the new.

The Roman Catholic contention that we accept our Bible on their authority is splendidly null and eloquently vain. The canon of the whole Bible was settled before there was such a thing as the Roman Catholic Church. (See the chapter on ["The Doctrine Of The Church"](#) for a discussion of its origin.) If we accepted our Bible on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, then we should accept the apocryphal books which they have added, together with their garbled translation of them. Furthermore, in that case, we should accept their vain traditions. The decisions of church councils are considered of value to us only as they are accepted as bearing historical evidence to the consensus of opinion among God's true saints and as voicing the truth that is confirmed by other evidences.

#### **IV. IS THE BIBLE SUFFICIENT AND FINAL AS GOD'S REVELATION?**

The sufficiency and finality of the Bible are rejected today by Roman Catholics in favor of "tradition," and by the devotees of neo-orthodoxy in favor of a continuous revelation. Back of the Roman Catholic contention for the authority of tradition is the idea that the Roman Catholic clergy are successors to the apostles. This is a figment of a perverted imagination. Neither Jesus nor the apostles gave the slightest hint about an apostolic successor, except for Judas; and it was necessary that he be one that had accompanied with them from the baptism of John. See **Acts 1:21, 22**. Roman Catholic traditions not only supplement the Bible; they also contradict it. They have arisen in the same manner that Jewish traditions did, and today they stand in the same relationship to the true Word of God. Thus the condemnation of Jesus is just as applicable to them as to Jewish traditions - **"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship**



me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:8, 9).

Paul plainly indicated that God’s plan was to give man such a complete written revelation that thereby **“the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Timothy 3:17).

The modern idea of the “authority of the Spirit,” which is really the authority of human reason, as giving a continuous revelation, is equally vain. We must go back to Christ as our only reliable authority, and Christ gave no promise of authoritative teachings extending beyond the apostles. This idea will be adopted by none except modernists or those greatly affected by modernism. Those who accept this idea will be found either openly or virtually denying the inspiration of the Bible. We care not for their misty notions. They are so flimsy they collapse under their own weight. The New Testament is manifestly complete, sufficient, and final.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[1] The conflicts supposed by many to exist between the Bible and science with respect to the creation of the earth and of living beings are dealt with in later chapters on [“God’s Relation To The Universe”](#) and [“The Creation Of Man”](#). Moreover scientific evidence of the flood will be given in chapter dealing with [“The Creation Of Man”](#). Furthermore this latter chapter will deal also with the supposed great antiquity of man.

[2] An extended discussion of *The Unity of Man* is found in *The New Biblical Guide* (Urquhart, beginning on page 381 of Vol. 1), where reference is made to a discussion of variations in the human family by Pritchard in *The Vestiges of Creation*, and Pritchard is quoted as saying: “*We have but obscure notions of the laws which regulate this variability within specific limits, but we see them continually operating, and they are obviously favorable to the supposition that all the great families of men may have been of one stock.*” Furthermore Pritchard is quoted as saying: “*The tendency of modern study of languages is to the same point.*” Then Urquhart says of the eminent and learned Quatrefages: “*He has expressed the*

*belief that the only possible conclusion of science is that the human race sprang from a single pair.”*

[3] This is admitted by Roman Catholic authorities. In *A Catechism of the Bible*, written by “Rev. John J. O’Brien, M. A.,” and published with the usual authorization by the International Catholic Truth Society, of Brooklyn, on page 10, this question was asked concerning these books: “*Were the added books accepted by the Hebrews?*” And the answer given is: “*No, the Hebrews refused to accept these added books.*”

## **Chapter 3 - THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE**

We have noted evidence that the Bible is a revelation from God. And we are told in the Bible that God gave the revelation by inspiration. If the Bible is God's revelation, it is right to let it speak for itself concerning its own nature. It is our purpose, then, in this chapter to inquire into the meaning and nature of inspiration, according to the Bible's own testimony.

In the course that we are here pursuing we are following reason in its highest sense. It has been shown that reason demands a belief in God's existence. And it has been pointed out, moreover, that it is reasonable to expect a written revelation from God. It is the province of reason, then, in relation to revelation, first of all, to examine the credentials of communications that profess to be a revelation from God. If these credentials are satisfactory, then reason must accept the communications as coming from God; and hence must accept the things presented as being true. "Revelation is the viceroy who first presents his credentials to the provincial assembly, and then presides" (Liebnitz). In the foregoing manner, "reason itself prepares the way for a revelation above reason, and warrants an implicit trust in such revelation when once given" (Strong).

*Above reason is not against reason.* It is only bald rationalism that rejects all it cannot fathom or rationally demonstrate. "The most unreasonable people in the world are those who depend solely upon reason, in the narrow sense" (Strong). Mere reasoning or the exercise of the logical faculty is not all of reason. Reason, in its broad sense, comprehends the whole of the mind's power to recognize truth. Reason can rightly reject only that which contradicts known facts. And then, to be safe, reason must be "conditioned in its activity by a holy affection and enlightened by the Spirit of God" (Strong). To such reason, the Scriptures present nothing contradictory, although they do make known much beyond the unaided power of man to discover or to comprehend fully.

### **I. THE MEANING OF INSPIRATION**

When Paul said: “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**” (**II Timothy 3:16**), he used the Greek word “theopneustos” for the idea of inspiration. This Greek word is composed of “theos,” meaning God, and “pneo,” meaning to breathe. The compound word is an adjective meaning literally “breathed of God.” Since it is the breath that produces speech, this word provided a very apt and impressive way of saying that the Scripture is the word of God.

## **II. THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN INSPIRATION**

However it was only in special cases that the words to be written down were orally dictated to the Scripture writers. In most cases the minds of the writers became the laboratory in which God converted His breath, as it were, into human language. This was not done by a mechanical process. The personality and temperament of the writers were not suspended. These are manifest in the writings. Hence we read from Gausson: “In maintaining that all Scripture is from God, we are far from thinking that man goes for nothing in it ... In Scripture all the words are man’s, as there, too, all the words are God’s. In a certain sense, the Epistle to the Romans is altogether a letter of Paul’s and, in a still higher sense, the Epistle to the Romans is altogether a letter of God’s” (Theopneustia, a book indorsed highly by C. H. Spurgeon). And so we read also from Manly: “The divine origin and authority of the Word of God is not to be affirmed so as to exclude or impair the reality of the human authorship, and the peculiarities resulting there from. The Bible is God’s Word to man, throughout; yet at the same time it is really and thoroughly a man’s composition. No attempt should be made - and we shall certainly make none - to set aside or ignore the “human element” of the Scriptures, which is unmistakably apparent on their very face; no one should wish to so magnify the divine as to crowd this out, or almost out. This is one of the mistakes which good men have committed. [4] Let both be admitted, recognized, accepted thankfully and rejoicingly, each contributing to make the Bible more completely adapted to human needs as the instrument of divine grace, and the guide for weak and wandering human souls. The word is not of man, as to its source; nor depending on man, as to its authority. It is by and through man as its medium; yet not only simply as the channel along which it runs, like water through a lifeless pipe, but through and by man as the agent

voluntarily active and intelligent in its communication. Both sides of the truth are expressed in the Scriptural language: ‘**Holy men of God spake as they were moved** (borne along) **by the Holy Spirit.**’ (II Peter 1:21). The men spoke; the impulse and direction were from God” (The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration). “The Scriptures contain a human as well as a divine element, so that while they constitute a body of infallible truth, this truth is shaped in human moulds and adapted to ordinary human intelligence” (Strong).

### III. INSPIRATION ACCOMPLISHED MIRACULOUSLY

The human element in the Bible does not affect its infallibility, just as the human nature of Christ did not affect His infallibility. Inspiration was accomplished miraculously just as the virgin birth of Christ was accomplished miraculously, and just as men are brought to repentance and faith miraculously. Repentance and faith are voluntary acts of the man, yet they are wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. God accomplished the miracle of inspiration by providentially preparing the writers for their work and by so revealing His truth to them and so enabling, guiding, and superintending them in the recording of it as to give to us through them an exact and complete transmission of all that He was pleased to reveal.

“Although the Holy Spirit did not select the words *for* the writers, it is evident that He did select them *through* the writers” (Bancroft, *Elemental Theology*).

### IV. METHODS IN INSPIRATION

The miraculous element in inspiration, of course, cannot be explained. And we have no desire that man should be able to explain it. But to some extent, at least, we can discern from the Scripture the methods God used in inspiration. A study of the methods used should heighten our appreciation of inspiration.

#### 1) *Inspiration Through Objective Revelation.*

Sometimes there was given a direct and oral revelation to be written down, such as was the case in the giving of the Mosaic law (**Exodus 20:1**),

and such as was the case, in some instances, with other writers (**Daniel 9:21-23; Revelation 17:7**).

2) *Inspiration Through Supernatural Vision.*

In other cases a supernatural vision was given with or without an interpretation of it, as was the case with John on the Isle of Patmos.

3) *Inspiration Through Passivity.*

At other times, when we are given no evidence of an external revelation of any kind, the writers were so consciously and passively moved by the Holy Spirit as to be knowingly ignorant of the full import of what they wrote, as was the case with the prophets when they wrote of Christ (**I Peter 1:10**).

4) *Inspiration Through Divine Illumination.*

Sometimes there was given to the writers such divine illumination as to enable them to understand and apply truth contained in former revelations, but not made fully clear by them; as was the case with New Testament writers in interpreting and applying Old Testament Scripture (**Acts 1:16, 17, 20; 2:16-21; Romans 4:1-3; 10:5-11**).

5) *Inspiration Through God's Direction.*

In some cases the writers were merely so guided and guarded as to be enabled to record infallibly such historical facts as God was pleased to have them record, whether those facts were personally known to them, obtained from others, or supernaturally revealed. All historical books are examples in point here.

6) *Inspiration Through Subjective Revelation.*

At other times truth was revealed through the writers by such divine quickening and deepening of their own thinking as to enable them to perceive and infallibly record new truth, as seems to have been the case with Paul in much of his epistles.

Summing it all up, we may say that the process of inspiration consisted of such means and influences as it pleased God to employ, according to the circumstances, in order to give us a divine, complete, and infallible revelation of all religious truth we need during this life. Or with A. H. Strong we may say: “By the inspiration of the Scriptures, we mean that special divine influence upon the minds of the Scripture writers in virtue of which their productions, apart from errors of transcription, and when rightly interpreted, together constitute an infallible and sufficient rule of faith and practice.”

## V. THE EXTENT OF INSPIRATION

It will be seen that verbal inspiration is implied in what we have said already. But, as also already said, this does not destroy the human element in the Scripture. The Scripture is all the Word of God; yet most of it is also the word of man. The writers differ in temperament, language, and style; and these differences are clearly manifest in their writings; yet their productions are as truly and fully the Word of God as any utterance of Jesus.

## VI. PROOFS OF VERBAL INSPIRATION

In proof of the fact that the Bible is inspired in word, and not merely in thought, we call attention to the following evidences:

1) *Inspired Scripture necessarily involves Verbal Inspiration.*

We are told that the Scripture is inspired. Scripture consists of written words. Thus we necessarily have verbal inspiration.

2) *Paul Affirmed that he used Words taught him by the Holy Spirit.*

In **I Corinthians 2:13**, in referring to the things he knew through the Holy Spirit, he said: “**Which things we also speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth.**” This is a positive affirmation on the part of Paul that he was not left to himself in the selection of words. [\[5\]](#)

3) *Peter Affirmed the Verbal Inspiration of His Own and Other Apostle's Writings.*

In **II Peter 3:1, 2, 15, 16**, Peter puts his own and other apostles writings on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures. And, since Peter believed the Old Testament Scriptures to be verbally inspired (**Acts 1:16**), it follows, therefore, that he considered the writings of himself and those of other apostles as being verbally inspired. [6]

4) *Quotations in the New Testament from the Old Testament prove the Verbal Inspiration of New Testament Writers.*

The Jews had a superstitious regard for the very letter of Scripture. Certainly, then, devout Jews, if left to themselves, would be exceedingly careful to quote Scripture as it is written. But we find in the New Testament about two hundred and sixty-three direct quotations from the Old Testament, and of these, according to Horne, eighty-eight are verbal quotations from the Septuagint; sixty-four are borrowed from it; thirty-seven have the same meaning, but different words; sixteen agree more nearly with the Hebrew; and twenty differ from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint. All the New Testament writers, except Luke, were Jews, yet they did not write as Jews. What can account for this if they were not conscious of divine sanction of every word they wrote? Some good examples of quotations from the Old Testament by New Testament writers where new meaning is put into the quotations are found in **Romans 4:6, 7**, which is a quotation from **Psalms 32:1**, and **Romans 10:6-8**, which is a quotation from **Deuteronomy 30:11-14**.

5) *Matthew Affirmed that the Lord spake through the Prophets of the Old Testament.*

See Revised Version of **Matthew 1:22** and **2:15**.

6) *Luke Affirmed that the Lord spake by the Mouth of the Holy Prophets (Luke 1:70).*

7) *The Writer to the Hebrews affirms the Same Thing (Hebrews 1:1).*



8) *Peter Affirmed that the Holy Spirit spake by the Mouth of David (Acts 1:16).*

9) *Paul's Argument in Galatians 3:16 implies Verbal Inspiration.*

In this place Paul bases an argument on the singular number of the word “seed” in God’s promise to Abraham.

10) *Old Testament Writers constantly implied and taught the Divine Authority of their Very Words.*

Passages in proof of this are too numerous to need mentioning.

11) *Fulfilled Prophecy is Proof of Verbal Inspiration.*

A study of fulfilled prophecy will convince any open-minded person that the prophets were necessarily inspired in the very words they uttered. Otherwise they could not have foretold something of which they knew very little.

12) *Jesus Affirmed the Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures.*

Jesus said: “**The Scripture cannot be broken**” (John 10:35), by which He meant that its meaning cannot be loosed nor its truthfulness destroyed. Meaning and truth are dependent upon words for expression. Infallible meaning is impossible without infallible words.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[4] The following quotation is very much to the point here: “Sometimes, it may be frankly conceded, zeal for the divine authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures may have led to untenable theories and modes of expression, that have rather obscured the truth. To say, e. g., that the writers were mere passive instruments in the hand of the Spirit, or at best amanuenses writing to dictation-to adopt, in other words, the mechanical theory, is unwarranted and

mischievous. It is no part of the doctrine, and has never been generally held” (New Biblical Guide, Urquhart, Vol. 8, Page 175).

[5] It is charged by some that in **Acts 23:5** and **I Corinthians 7:10, 12**, Paul admits non-inspiration. In **Acts 23:5** Paul says concerning the High Priest, “**I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest.**” This “may be explained either as the language of indignant irony: ‘I would not recognize such a man as High Priest’; or, more naturally, as an actual confession of personal ignorance and fallibility, which does not affect the inspiration of any of Paul’s final teachings or writings” (Strong). Inspiration does not mean that Bible writers were always infallible in judgment or impeccable in life, but that in their capacity of official teachers and spokesmen for God they were preserved from error.

In the passages from the first Corinthian epistle, Paul says in the case of one command: “**I command, yet not I, but the Lord;**” while in the case of other commands he says: “**The rest speak I, not the Lord.**” But notice that at the end of the latter series of exhortations he says: “**I think ... I have the Spirit of God**” (**I Corinthians 7:40**). “Paul distinguishes, therefore, here ... not between his own and inspired commands, but between those which proceeded from his own (God-inspired) subjectivity, and those which Christ Himself supplied by his objective word” (Meyer, in Loco).

[6] A question may be raised as to Peter’s dissimulation at Antioch, where we have a “practical disavowal of his convictions by separating and withdrawing himself from the Gentile Christians (**Galatians 2:11-13**)” (Strong). “Here was no public teaching, but the influence of private example. But neither in this case, nor in that mentioned above (**Acts 23:5**), did God suffer the error to be a final one. Through the agency of Paul the Holy Spirit set the matter right” (Strong).

## Chapter 4 - OBJECTIONS TO VERBAL INSPIRATION

The objections that are brought against verbal inspiration are many and varied. We shall not attempt to note all of them, but shall take only some of the most common ones; trusting that our discussion may indicate how reasonably and easily all other objections may be disposed of.

These objections concern:

### I. FALLIBLE COPIES AND TRANSLATIONS

#### 1. OBJECTION STATED.

The first objection we shall consider may be stated thus: “Of what value is the verbal inspiration of the original manuscripts of Scripture, since we do not have these original manuscripts, and since the great majority of people must depend upon translations of the original languages, which translations cannot be held to be infallible.”

#### 2. OBJECTION ANSWERED.

(1) *This objection is correct in stating that translations of the original languages of Scripture cannot be held to be infallible.*

Nowhere does God indicate that the translators were to be preserved from error. Verbal inspiration means the verbal inspiration of the original manuscripts of Scripture. [7]

(2) *This objection is also correct in stating that we do not now have a single one of the original manuscripts of any part of the Scripture.*

(3) *But this objection does not bear against the fact of verbal inspiration; it only questions the value of it.*

(4) *And the objection is wrong in supposing that an admittedly imperfect copy of an infallible original is not better than the same kind of*

*copy of a fallible original.*

It is even better to have an imperfect copy of an infallible original than to have a perfect copy of a fallible original.

*(5) The objection is wrong again in implying that we do not have a substantially accurate copy of the original.*

By means of comparison of the many ancient copies of the originals of the Scripture, textual criticism has progressed to such a point that no doubt exists as to any important doctrine of the Bible. While God did not preserve the original manuscripts for us (and He must have had good reasons for not doing so), He has given us such an abundance of ancient copies that we can, with remarkable exactness, arrive at the reading, of the originals.

*(6) And the study of Hebrew and Greek has progressed to such a point and this knowledge has been made available to even the common people in such a way that all can be assured as to the meaning of the original language in nearly all cases.*

## **II. IMPRECATORY PSALMS**

Another objection is brought against what is known as the “imprecatory psalms.”

### **1. OBJECTION STATED.**

It is said that the psalmist “indignantly cries out against his oppressors,” and that we find him using language “which would be unfit for the lips of our Lord,” in which we are told can be detected “traces of human prejudice and passion.” Such are the objections raised by J. Patterson Smith, in “How God Inspired The Bible.”

The objector is wrong here in assuming that the imprecatory psalms express David’s personal feeling against his enemies merely because of what they had done to him. David was the sweet singer of Israel, and was not given to manifestations of personal bitterness and vindictiveness. Notice his

princely attitude toward King Saul, even when Saul sought his life for no good reason.

## 2. SPECIFIC INSTANCES CITED BY THE OBJECTOR.

### (1) **“Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth” (Psalm 58:6).**

A study of this psalm reveals that the above words do not refer to David’s personal enemies, but to the unrighteous in general. David was here only voicing the indignation of Him who **“hatest all workers of iniquity” (Psalm 5:5)**. And notice that nothing is said here by David about this judgment being inflicted immediately. We have here only David’s inspired sanction of God’s final judgment on the wicked. This is evident through a comparison of **Psalm 58:9-11** with **Revelation 19:1-6**. In these Scriptures we have prophecy and its fulfillment.

### (2) **“Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek *their bread* out of desolate places” (Psalm 109:10).**

**Acts 1:16** shows that this was not spoken of David’s personal enemies, but was a prophetic utterance concerning Judas. And Peter says that the Holy Spirit spoke this by the mouth of David. This imprecation on the children of Judas is according to God’s own revelation of Himself as he who visits **“the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him” (Exodus 20:5)**.

### (3) **“O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy *shall he be* that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy *shall he be* that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.” (Psalm 137:8, 9).**

But note that the words are not a prayer, nor an imprecation, but only and wholly a prophecy. Then note that this doom was to be meted out to Babylon because of the way she had treated Israel. And then recall the words of God spoken through Balaam: **“Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee” (Numbers 24:9)**, in which we have an echo of God’s assurance to Abraham (**Genesis 12:3**).

David's words, like those of Isaiah (**Isaiah 13**) concerning Babylon, have a double meaning. They refer immediately to the destruction of Babylon by the Medes (**Isaiah 13:7**), but ultimately to God's punishment of the wicked at the coming of Christ to the earth (**Isaiah 13:9-11; 34:1-17; Zechariah 14:1-7; Revelation 19:11-21**).

As the agent of God, David revealed God's indignation against the wicked, but, so far as his own personal feeling was concerned, he had only mercy and benevolence toward his personal enemies. He refused to molest King Saul when he had opportunity and human justification, and after Saul was dead, he inquired: "**Is there any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness?**" (**II Samuel 9:1, 2, 11**).

These instances are sufficient to show how empty are the objections of the critics in regard to the imprecatory psalms.

### **III. NOAH'S IMPRECATION AND DEBORAH'S PRAISE**

Similar objections are likely to be brought against the Bible because of Noah's imprecation upon Canaan (**Genesis 9:25**), and because of Deborah's praise of Jael for murdering Sisera by treachery (**Judges 5:24-31**).

The reply here is simple and brief. The Bible does not justify either Noah or Deborah for the utterances mentioned; it merely records the fact that the utterances were made. It is true that Noah uttered a truthful forecast of the nations descended from his sons, but whether God moved him to utter this curse upon Canaan, or merely permitted him to utter the truth in an outburst of anger, is not stated.

The Bible, by no means, sanctions every word and act recorded in it. It records the words and actions of evil men, such as King Saul and Ahab; and oftentimes passes no verdict thereupon. God has revealed His law by which all actions are to be tried. Therefore, it was unnecessary that He should have cumbered the Bible with appraisal of every word or action recorded. Verbal inspiration means simply that those chosen to write the Bible were preserved from error in what they wrote. If their writings represent a bona fide conviction of their own, it is true; but if a statement of some other person, it

may be true or false, according as to whether it harmonizes with the Bible as a whole.

#### **IV. SO-CALLED “OBSCENE CHAPTERS”**

Then we are told that certain chapters of the Bible “reek with obscenity from beginning to end.” In reply to this objection, R. A. Torrey says: “That there are chapters in the Bible that cannot be wisely dealt with in a mixed audience, we have no desire to deny; but these chapters are not obscene. To speak in plainest terms of sin, even of the vilest sin, in order to expose its loathsomeness and in order to picture man as he really is, is not obscenity. It is purity in one of its highest forms. Whether a story is obscene or not depends entirely upon how it is told and for what purpose it is told. If a story is told in order to make a jest of sin, or in order to placate or excuse sin (or in order to gratify lust), it is obscene. If a story is told in order to make men hate sin, to show men the hideousness of sin, to induce men to give sin as wide a berth as possible, and to show man his need of redemption, it is not obscene; it is morally wholesome” (Difficulties and Alleged Contradictions and Errors in the Bible).

If these chapters were obscene, they would make favorite reading in the dens of vice. But did anyone ever hear of wicked people reading the Bible for lustful gratification? These get no pleasure out of reading the Bible, but they revel in hearing the obscene remarks of the critics. It is the critic that is obscene and not the Bible. Col. Ingersoll objected to the Bible for relating vile deeds “without a touch of humor,” as though it would have made it all right if the Bible had made a jest of sin and immorality.

#### **V. NUMERICAL VARIATIONS**

An objection is brought against verbal inspiration because of numerical variations.

In regard to the number of Jews, we find that the sum given in **I Chronicles 21:5** for Israel is 1,100,000, and for Judah, 470,000, making a total of 1,570,000; while the number given in **II Samuel 24:9** for Israel is 800,000 and for Judah it is 500,000, making a total of 1,300,000. This

discrepancy is easily explained by noting that the number given by **Chronicles** for Israel was of men “**that drew the sword,**” by which is meant that there was this number of men subject to military service. While Samuel tells us that in Israel there were so many “**valiant men that drew the sword,**” by which is meant that there was that number of men that had distinguished themselves for bravery in actual combat. The difference in regard to Judah was occasioned by the fact that Samuel gave the total number of men in Judah, while **Chronicles** gives the number of men subject to military service.

In other places, such as **1 Kings 7:26; II Chronicles 4:5; II Samuel 8:4;** and **I Chronicles 18:4,** the numerical differences are probably due to errors in transcription. Numbers are indicated in Hebrew by letters, and a small alteration of a letter greatly changes its numerical value.

It should not seem strange to us that present copies of the Bible contain some minor errors. It should not surprise us any more than the finding of some printer’s errors in our Bibles. We have no more reason for believing in infallible copyists than we have for believing in infallible printers. Realizing the laborious task of copying the Scriptures by hand, it is marvelous that there are not more minor errors.

In another place a numerical difference (**Numbers 25:9; I Corinthians 10:8**) is to be explained as the perfectly legitimate use of round numbers of exact ones.

## **VI. MATTHEW’S ALLEGED MISTAKE**

It is alleged that Matthew attributes to Jeremiah a prophecy that should have been credited to Zechariah.

This supposed mistake of Matthew is found in **Matthew 27:9, 10.** Matthew here seems to quote **Zechariah 11:13,** but that this is not absolutely certain appears from a comparison of the two passages. Matthew does not make a verbal quotation from Zechariah, therefore it cannot be maintained with certainty that he meant to be quoting from Zechariah. And, while we do not have in the extant writings of Jeremiah any passage that really resembles



Matthew's quotation, we are far from the necessity of admitting that Matthew made a mistake. We do not know that we have all the prophetic utterances of Jeremiah. In **Jude 14** we have a prophecy of Enoch mentioned that we do not find elsewhere in the Bible. We have heard of no objection being brought against this passage. But suppose some other writer in the Scripture had said something similar to the words attributed to Enoch. Then the critic would have said that Jude made a mistake.

Moreover, it may be that chapters nine to eleven of the book attributed to Zechariah were written by Jeremiah. Many critics believe that only the first nine chapters of Zechariah compose the actual writings of this prophet. Matthew was in far better position than any of his critics to know from whom he was quoting. To suppose that he carelessly wrote Jeremiah when he meant Zechariah, and left it without subsequent correction, is to suppose an absurdity. And there is no indication that a copyist made the error.

## VII. STEPHEN'S SUPPOSED MISTAKE

Our next objection to consider is an alleged contradiction between **Genesis 23:17, 18** and the words of Stephen in **Acts 7:16**.

To this we reply:

1. *Even if a contradiction could be made out here, it would prove nothing against inspiration, for Stephen was not one of the inspired writers.*

Luke merely records what Stephen said.

2. *But no contradiction appears here.*

The two Scriptures do not refer to the same thing. The sepulchre mentioned in **Genesis** was in Hebron. The one mentioned by Stephen was in Sychem. This makes it clear that Abraham purchased two sepulchres. In the case of the one at Hebron, he purchased the field surrounding the sepulchre; but, in the case of the one at Sychem, no mention is made of the purchase of the surrounding field.

This latter fact explains another alleged contradiction. It is charged that **Genesis 33:19** states that Jacob bought the sepulchre at Sychem. But no such thing is stated in **Genesis 33:19**. **Genesis 33:19** says simply that Jacob bought the field in the vicinity of Sychem; and, since the bones of Joseph were buried in this field, in all probability it was in this field that Abraham's second sepulchre stood. This also appears from the fact that Abraham's second sepulchre and the field purchased by Jacob formerly belonged to the same owners. So in this last case we simply have Abraham buying a sepulchre, while later Jacob buys the field in which the sepulchre stood.

### VIII. THE GENEALOGIES OF CHRIST

The two genealogies of Christ are held to be contradictory. For these genealogies see **Matthew 1** and **Luke 3**. The explanation here is:

1. *Matthew gives the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, because he was presenting Jesus as king of the Jews.*

Therefore, he desired to show his legal right to the throne, which required that he be descended from David through his paternal (supposed to be) parent.

2. *Luke gives the descent of Jesus through Mary, because he was interested in presenting Christ only as the Son of Man.*

Hence it is natural that he should have given Christ's actual human descent, rather than His supposed and legal descent. But, instead of inserting the name of Mary, Luke inserted the name of Joseph, because it was not customary for the names of women to stand in genealogical tables. Joseph is said to be the son of Heli, but, in a loose sense, this may mean no more than that he was the son-in-law of Heli. The Targums tell us that Heli was the father of Mary.

3. *A further difficulty as to the father of Shealtiel, Matthew giving Jechoniah and Luke giving Neri, is to be explained by the fact that Luke gave the full ancestry, while Matthew gave only the royal line back as far as David.*

Jeconiah is the same as Jehoiachin, one of the last Kings of Judah.

## **IX. THE INSCRIPTION OVER THE CROSS**

The four accounts of the inscription over the cross have been subjected to criticism. But let us note:

1. *We have no indication that each of the writers meant to be giving all that was in the inscription.*

2. *No one of the writers actually contradicts another.*

We can best see this fact by arranging the accounts of the inscription as follows:

<b>Matthew 27:37 -</b>	<b>“This is Jesus</b>	<b>“the King of the Jews.”</b>
<b>Mark 15:26 -</b>		<b>“the King of the Jews.”</b>
<b>Luke 23:38 -</b>	<b>“This is</b>	<b>“the King of the Jews.”</b>
<b>John 19:19 -</b>	<b>“... Jesus of Nazareth</b>	<b>“the King of the Jews.”</b>
<b>Total -</b>	<b>“This is Jesus of Nazareth</b>	<b>“the King of the Jews.”</b>

3. *Just as it requires the four gospels to give us a full picture of Jesus, so it requires the four gospels to give us a full account of the inscription on the cross.*

The different aspects of Jesus and His ministry, as they are set forth in the gospels, are indicated in the following verse:

“Matthew, Messiah, Israel’s King sets forth, by Israel slain; But God decreed that Israel’s loss should be the Gentiles’ gain. Mark tells how in patient love this earth has once been trod by One, who in a servant’s form, was yet the Son of God. Luke, the physician, tells of a more skilled physician still, Who gave His life as son of Man, to heal us from all ill. John, the beloved of Jesus, sees in Him the Father’s Son; The everlasting Word made flesh, yet with the Father one.” It may be that the inscription differed in the three languages, and that this accounts, in part, for the differences in the accounts.

## **X. ACCOUNTS OF RESURRECTION**

Objections are brought because of supposed contradictions in the different accounts of the resurrection.

1. *Matthew mentions only the appearance of an angel to the women at the sepulchre (Matthew 28:2-8), while Mark says that it was a young man (Mark 16:5-7), and Luke says that there were two men (Luke 24:4-8).*

There is no contradiction here. The young man mentioned by Mark is evidently the angel mentioned by Matthew. Angel means “messenger.” God’s messenger to the women was a supernatural appearance in the form of a

young man. An angel is a spirit and has no material body of its own, but may assume a body temporarily.

2. *Mark says that the message of the angel was delivered to the women after they entered the tomb. Matthew makes no mention of the entering into the tomb.*

But there is here no contradiction, because Matthew does not say that the women did not enter into the tomb before the angel gave the message.

3. *Luke mentions the two men as standing while Mark mentions the one as sitting.*

This is easily explained by supposing that the one who did the talking (and, doubtless, the other also) was sitting when first seen, and that he arose, as would be natural, before addressing the women. Luke does not say that the two men were not sitting when the women entered the tomb, and Mark does not say the one he mentions did not arise before speaking.

4. *Luke says, in reporting the message to the women: “**They said unto them,**” while Mark says: “**He saith unto them.**”*

One of these men likely did the talking; they would not have been likely to recite the message in unison as school children might do. But the other concurred in the message. Therefore the statement of each writer is valid. When one person speaks and another concurs in what is said, it is perfectly proper to say that they both said whatever is said.

5. *The message of the angels is not reported in the same words by all the gospel writers.*

But this presents no real difficulty, for none of them indicate that they are giving the message verbally.

(**John 20:11-13** is not considered here in connection with the foregoing because it records a later occurrence.)

## XI. SLAUGHTER OF HEATHEN NATIONS

The command concerning the slaughter of the heathen nations in the land of Canaan has given rise to an objection. See **Deuteronomy 20:16, 17**.

1. *God asserts that He will punish the wicked in hell throughout eternity.*

If He has a right to do this (and who will deny it?) does He not have a right to command the taking of their physical life when it pleases Him to do so? Why, then, should it be doubted that God inspired this command?

2. *It was a stroke of mercy to cut these people short in their iniquity, for additional days would only have gotten them greater punishment in hell.*

None of the adults that were slain in their wickedness were of the elect; for all the elect that reach accountability, come to Christ before death; hence it is true that continued life could only involve these peoples in greater punishment.

3. *As for the infants among these nations: If God was pleased to take them on to Heaven in their infancy, who should object?*

God knows best and does all things well. The salvation of infants who die is treated in the chapter on [“Human Responsibility”](#).

## XII. JOSHUA’S LONG DAY

Objection has been brought against verbal inspiration because the Bible records that the sun stood still at the command of Joshua, thus prolonging a certain day. **Joshua 10:12-14**.

1. *Objection has been made to the language.*

It is said that the language of Joshua’s command and that of the Bible record of the occurrence implies that the sun moves in its relation to the

earth. But this is no more true of this language than it is of our language when we speak of the sun as rising and setting. In both cases we have the language of appearance, which is common both in the Bible and in our everyday language.

*2. Objection is made to the authenticity of the occurrence.*

It is said that such a thing as the prolonging of the day could not occur without dire results. But, absurd as it may seem to our would-be-wise critics, records of this long day have been found in Egypt, China, and Mexico. Moreover the fact that an extra day has been added to astronomical chronology is witnessed by three eminent scientists, viz., W. Maunder, formerly of the Royal Observatory of Greenwich, and Professors Totten and Pickering, formerly of Harvard Observatory.

The author freely admits that a slowing down of the rotation of the earth would be attended with dire results, unless the laws of nature had been suspended or some natural causes which we cannot imagine were brought into play. But since we believe in a miracle-working God, we have no difficulty in believing that God could circumvent the calculated natural consequences in either one of the ways suggested.

### **XIII. JONAH AND “THE WHALE”**

It is said that a whale could not have swallowed Jonah. We will note first that, when correctly translated, the Bible does not say that it was a whale that swallowed Jonah. The Greek word for whale in **Matthew 12:40** means simply a “sea-monster.” On the other hand we will note that the idea that a whale cannot swallow a man is another ignorant assumption. In the “Cruise of the Cachalot,” Frank Bullen characterizes the idea that a whale’s gullet is incapable of admitting any large object as “a piece of crass ignorance.” He relates how “a shark fifteen feet in length has been found in the stomach of a sperm whale,” and he describes this monster as “swimming about with the lower jaw hanging down in its normal position, and its huge gullet gaping like some submarine cavern.” Into this Jonah could have slipped so easily that the whale would have been scarcely conscious of his

entrance. Another remarkable testimony from Mr. Bullen is “that when dying the sperm whale always ejected the contents of its stomach,” and he says that when caught and killed, one full-grown whale ejected from its stomach food “in masses of enormous size ... some of them being estimated to be of the size of our hatch-house-viz., eight feet by six feet by six feet!” And yet the critics say the Bible is wrong! And despite the confident assertion of would-be-wise critics that a man could not survive the action of the gastric juices in a fish’s stomach, there are cases on record of men being swallowed by sharks and coming out alive. However, a natural explanation is unnecessary in that the Giver of Life could have preserved Jonah alive miraculously.

#### **XIV. ANIMAL SACRIFICES**

On the basis of **Isaiah 1:11-13**; **Jeremiah 7:22**; **Amos 5:21-24**; **Micah 6:6-8** it has been asserted that the prophets denounced all animal sacrifices and did not recognize them as being of divine institution. Such a notion, of course, represents the prophets as being in conflict with the Pentateuch. To see that the Pentateuch represents God as commanding animal sacrifices we have only to examine such chapters as **Exodus 12**; **Leviticus 4**; **8**; **12**; and **16**.

In reply to the affirmation that the prophets denounced all animal sacrifices and did not recognize them as being of divine origin let us note.

1. *Jeremiah speaks elsewhere of sacrifices as being among “the crowning blessings of a happier day”.*

See **Jeremiah 33:18**. This is to be fulfilled in a day when God says Israel shall be to Him “**for a name of joy, for a praise and for a glory, before all the nations of the earth**” (**Jeremiah 33:9**). Israel shall then be no longer a rebellious nation, walking in stiffnecked disobedience. They shall then do the things that please the Lord, and one of the things they shall do, according to **Jeremiah 33:18**, is to offer, through their priests, burnt offerings and sacrifices continually. Jeremiah speaks of this with utmost approval.

2. *Amos condemned the sacrifices of Israel only because that along with their sacrifices to God they had borne the tabernacle of Moloch.*



See **Amos 5:25, 26**. Along with this idol worship they had neglected judgment and righteousness. For these reasons God hated their feast days. See **Ezekiel 20:39**. They were hypocritical pretensions of respect for Jehovah. For the same reasons God was displeased with their songs. Shall we then conclude that God rejected all singing?

3. *The meaning of **Jeremiah 7:22** is that God did not speak to Israel primarily about sacrifices in the day when He led them from Egypt, and that He did not commend sacrifices as an end within themselves.*

“The difficulty is removed when the precise point of the text is recognized. The word ‘**concerning**’ should be rendered ‘with a view to the matter of sacrifices.’ That is, they are not the end contemplated. They were but means for securing a higher end; and therefore those were altogether mistaken and wrong who limited their view to the formal sacrifice” (Robert Tuck, in *A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties*).

4. *The language of the other prophets is no stronger than language used elsewhere in Scripture, which manifestly cannot be taken in the absolute.*

In **Exodus 16:8** Moses declared to Israel: “**Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord,**” while in verse two of the same chapter it is said that the children of Israel “**murmured against Moses and Aaron.**” And in **Psalms 51:4**, David said, in his prayer to God: “**Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight,**” when it is certain that he had sinned against Uriah. Hence we read: “It is a way of speaking usual in Scripture, to express the preference that is due one thing above another, in terms which express the rejection of that which is less worthy” (Lowth). Again: “Henderson remarks suggestively that it is not infrequent in the Scripture for a thing to be stated absolutely, which is true only relatively. Absolutely God did command sacrifices, but not such as they offered, nor of final obligation” (Tuck, *ibid*). Further: “The negative in Hebrew often supplies the want of the comparative; not excluding the thing denied, but only implying the prior claim of the thing set in opposition to it” (Commentary by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown).

Corresponding to the above we find in **Hosea 6:6** both a negative and a comparative clause so placed together as to indicate that they both express the same truth. And the latter clause, “**and knowledge more than burnt offerings,**” provides the key for interpreting all prophetic denunciations of the sacrifices of Israel.

## **XV. THE LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH OF AHAB’S PROPHETS**

In **II Chronicles 18:22** Micaiah is represented as declaring to Ahab: “**The lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets.**” This record causes us to ask if God caused this lying spirit to be in the mouth of Ahab’s prophets. The answer is that He did not. The record here, together with a number of other passages, gives a strong expression of what took place according to God’s permissive providence or purpose. See discussion of God’s permissive will in Chapter on [\*“The Will Of God”\*](#). See also **Isaiah 45:7**, where God is said to create evil. This is to be explained in the same way as the foregoing passage.

This explanation is enforced by a comparison of **II Samuel 24:1** with **I Chronicles 21:1**. In the former passage it is said that God moved David to command the numbering of Israel, and in the latter it is said that Satan “**provoked David to number Israel.**” God moved David permissively. All of these passages taken together are mutually explanatory.

## **XVI. NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD**

An objection has been brought because of verbal differences between some passages of the Old Testament and the quotation of them in the New Testament.

But as we have already noticed, instead of this being against verbal inspiration, it is argument in favor of it. If God put more meaning into Old Testament passages than the language could convey to men, was it not altogether His privilege to bring out this meaning in the New Testament? God has a right to interpret His own words. Indeed these quotations show the depth and breadth of Scripture, and thus witness to its inspiration.

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## **FOOTNOTES:**

[7] Let no one be disturbed by the fact that translations are not infallible. Our two great English translations (the King James or “Authorized Version” and the American Standard Version of 1901) are good basic translations. Such errors as they contain do not leave any doctrine of the Bible in doubt. Speaking of translations, the author wishes to make it clear that he does not recommend the most recent revision of the Bible under the sponsorship of the International Council of Religious Education known as the Revised Standard Version. This is manifestly the work of modernists who have done everything they dared to do (and modernists are very daring) to obliterate the deity of Jesus Christ. This translation is neither sound nor scholarly, but is rather a piece of modernistic propaganda.

## Chapter 5 - THE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

We are ready now to find out from the Scriptures the mode of God's being.

### I. THE NATURE OF GOD

Two expressions will suffice to indicate the nature of God.

#### 1. GOD *IS* A SPIRIT.

We have these exact words from the mouth of Jesus in **John 4:24**. This statement means that God is purely, wholly, and only a spirit. A spirit may inhabit a body, but a pure spirit does not have or regularly inhabit a body; for Jesus said again after His resurrection: "**A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have**" (**Luke 24:39**). Consequently, man is never spoken of as being a spirit while he inhabits the body. He is said to possess a spirit, but, when his composite nature is described, he is said to be a "**living soul**" (**Genesis 2:7; I Corinthians 15:45**) rather than a spirit.

We also know that God is a pure spirit, not possessing or inhabiting a body, because of His invisibility (**Colossians 1:15; I Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:27**) and because of His omnipresence.

This brings us to consider those passages of Scripture that ascribe to God such bodily parts as eyes and ears, and hands and feet. In view of what has been said already, it is plain that these passages are to be taken in a figurative and symbolic sense. Such representations are known theologically as anthropomorphisms

Robert Young, author of "Analytical Concordance to the Bible," says: "Human feelings, actions, and parts are ascribed to God, not that they are really in Him, but because such effects proceed from Him as are like those that flow from such things in men."

On the other hand, there are other passages that are explained by A. H. Strong as follows: “When God is spoken of as appearing to the patriarchs and walking with them, the passages are to be explained as referring to God’s temporary manifestations of Himself in human form—manifestations which prefigured the final tabernacling of the Son of God in human flesh” (Systematic Theology, p. 120)

The personality of God is involved in His spirituality, and hence is not treated as a separate characteristic.

## 2. GOD IS ONE.

By the statement that God is one, we mean to affirm His unity in the full sense of that term. We mean that there is but one God, and we also mean that His essence is homogeneous, undivided, and indivisible.

That there is but one God is taught by **Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; John 17:3; I Corinthians 8:4; I Timothy 1:17**. And it is irrational, moreover, to assume the existence of a plurality of gods, when one will explain all the facts. Also the passages which represent God as infinite and perfect (cf. **Psalm 145:3; Job 11:7-9; Matthew 5:48**) are indirect proofs of His unity; for infinity and absolute perfection are possible to only one. Two such beings could not exist for each would limit the other.

That the essence of God is homogeneous, undivided, and indivisible is a necessary inference from the fact that He is a pure spirit. All that we know about spirit compels us to believe its essence to be simple and uncompounded.

J. P. Boyce gives the following three reasons for affirming the unity of God in the sense that we are now discussing it:

“1. Because composition (or a putting together) involves possibility of separation. But this would involve destructibility, and changeableness, each of which is inconsistent with absolute perfection and necessary existence.

“2. Composition involves a time of separate existence of the parts compounded.” And this would necessitate a time when the parts existed separately, and, therefore, a time when God did not exist, or, “when He existed imperfectly, having not yet received to his essential nature the additions subsequently made; all of which is inconsistent with absolute perfection and necessary existence.

“3. If the parts have been compounded, it has been done by some force from without, or has been a growth in His nature.” And both of these ideas are “inconsistent with absolute perfection and necessary existence.”

However the unity of God does not preclude His trinity, and His trinity is in no way inconsistent with His unity. The trinity, as we shall see more clearly later, consists of three eternal distinctions in the same being and in the same pure essence, which distinctions are presented to us under the figure of persons.

## **II. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**

“The term ‘attribute,’” says J. M. Pendleton, “in its application to persons or things, means something belonging to persons or things. The attributes of a thing are so essential to it that without them it could not be what it is; and that is equally true of the attributes of a person. If a man were divested of the attributes belonging to him, he would cease to be a man, for these attributes are inherent in that which constitutes him a human being. If we transfer these ideas to God, we shall find that His attributes belong inalienably to Him, and, therefore, what He is He must ever be. His attributes are His perfections, inseparable from His nature and constituting His character” (Christian Doctrines, p. 42).

J. P. Boyce says: “The attributes of God are those peculiarities which mark or define the mode of His existence, or which constitute His character. They are not separate or separable from His essence or nature, and yet are not that essence, but simply have ground or cause of their existence in it, and are at the same time the peculiarities which constitute the mode and character of His being” (Abstract of Systematic Theology, p. 65).

“The attributes of God,” as defined by A. H. Strong, “are those distinguishing characteristics of the divine nature which are inseparable from the idea of God and which constitute the basis and ground for His various manifestations to His creatures. We call them attributes, because we are compelled to attribute them to God as fundamental qualities or powers of His being, in order to give rational account of certain constant facts in God’s self-revelations” (Systematic Theology, p. 115).

It is common to divide the attributes of God into two classes. This aids both memory and understanding. To these divisions various pairs of names have been given, such as communicable and incommunicable; immanent and transient; positive and negative; natural and moral; absolute and relative. The two latter classifications have been adopted for these studies.

## 1. ABSOLUTE ATTRIBUTES.

The absolute attributes of God are those that have respect to His being independent of His relationship to anything else.

### (1) *Self-existence.*

God’s being is underived. His is a self-caused existence. His existence is independent of everything else. The self-existence of God is implied in the name “Jehovah,” which means “the existing one,” and also in the expression “**I AM THAT I AM**” (**Exodus 3:14**), which signifies that it is God’s nature to be.

The eternity of God, which falls in the second class of attributes, also implies His self-existence. If God has existed forever, then His existence is a necessary, underived, self-caused existence. Self-existence is a mystery that is incomprehensible to man; yet a denial of it would involve us in a greater mystery. If there is not in the universe some self-existent person or thing, then the present order of things came into existence out of nothing without cause or Creator. They could not have been the product of mere energy, for energy is the property either of matter or of life. And since science has proved that matter is not eternal, we are left to assume an eternal, and therefore, a self-existent person as an explanation of the present order of things.

## *(2) Immutability.*

Note the following statements:

“By immutability we define God as unchangeable in His nature and purposes” (E. Y. Mullins, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*, pp. 223, 224). “By the immutability of God is meant that He is incapable of change, either in duration of life, or in nature, character, will, or happiness. In none of these, nor in any other respect, is there any possibility of change” (J. P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* p. 73).

Immutability is implied in infinity and perfection. Any change, either for the better or for the worse, implies either prior or subsequent imperfection and finiteness.

The principal passages teaching the general immutability of God are: **Psalm 102:27; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17.**

The following passages teach specifically the immutability of God’s will: **Numbers 23:19; I Samuel 15:29; Job 23:18; Psalm 33:11; Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 46:10; Hebrews 6:17.**

The foregoing passages give us positive and absolute declarations. All passages that represent God as repenting, such as **Genesis 6:6, 7; Exodus 32:14; I Samuel 15:11; Psalm 106:45; Amos 7:3; Jonah 8:10;** and those that seem in any way to imply or suggest any change in the purposes of God, must be explained in the light of them. These latter passages contain anthropomorphisms.

Commenting on **Exodus 32:14**, A. W. Pink says: “These words do not mean that God changed His mind or altered His purpose, for He is ‘**without variableness or shadow of turning**’ (**James 1:17**). There never has been and never will be the smallest occasion for the Almighty to effect the slightest deviation from His eternal purpose, for everything was foreknown to Him from the beginning, and all His counsels were ordained by infinite wisdom. When the Scripture speaks of God’s repenting, it employs a figure of speech, in which the Most High condescends to speak in our language.



What is intended by the above expression is that Jehovah answered the prayer of a typical mediator.”

And in regard to such passages, J. P. Boyce says: “It may be stated that these are merely anthropopathic expressions, intended simply to impress upon men His great anger at sin, and His warm approbation of the repentance of those who had sinned against Him. The change of conduct, in men, not in God, had changed the relation between them and God. Sin had made them liable to His just displeasure. Repentance had brought them within the possibilities of His mercy. Had He not treated them differently, then there would have been a change in Him. His very unchangeableness makes it necessary that He shall treat differently those who are innocent and those who are guilty, those who harden themselves against Him and those who turn toward Him for mercy, with repentant hearts” (Abstract of Systematic Theology, p. 76).

We must in like manner understand all allusions which seem to indicate a succession of emotions in God. All emotions in God exist alongside each other at the same moment, and have done so from all eternity. He has been always pleased with righteousness and displeased with sin. And He has from all eternity known of all righteousness and sin. Sin exposes man to God’s displeasure. Righteous subjects him to God’s pleasure. Passing from God’s displeasure to His pleasure is brought about by a change in man and not in God. The sun melts wax. But if the wax could be changed to clay, the sun would harden it. Would that represent any change whatsoever in the sun?

Prayer does not change God. It changes us and the things and circumstances with which we have to do; but it does not change God. We shall never have the right attitude toward God so long as we think of prayer as a means of getting God to do things that He did not intend to do. So far from prayer changing the will of God, we must pray according to His will if we expect to get an answer. John tells us: “**This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us**” (I John 5:14). It is the Holy Spirit that causes us to pray (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6), and it is to the Holy Spirit that we should look for leadership in the things we pray for (Romans 8:26). Prayer, then, is the work of God in

our hearts getting us ready for the most profitable use and grateful enjoyment of His blessings. It is His own key, with which He unlocks the flood-gates of the river of His blessings. In God's wise counsels before the foundation of the earth He ordained prayer as one of the means for the accomplishment of His will. Prayer no more changes God than the faith of the repentant sinner changes God. Both are simply means in the working out of God's eternal and immutable purpose.

### (3) *Holiness.*

The holiness of God is His perfect moral and spiritual excellence. God is perfectly pure, sinless, and righteous in Himself. Holiness is the ground of all other moral attributes in God. The holiness of God was typified by the immaculate dress of the High Priest when he entered the Holy of Holies.

R. A. Torrey says: "The entire Mosiac system of washings; divisions of the tabernacle; divisions of the people into ordinary Israelites, Levites, Priests, and High Priests, who were permitted different degrees of approach to God, under strictly defined conditions; the insisting upon sacrifices as a necessary medium of approach to God; God's directions to Moses in **Exodus 3:5**, to Joshua in **Joshua 5:15**, the punishment of Uzziah in **II Chronicles 26:16-21**, the strict orders to Israel in regard to approaching Sinai when Moses was talking with God - these were intended to teach, emphasize, and burn into the minds and hearts of the Israelites the fundamental truth that God is holy, unapproachably holy. The truth that God is holy is the fundamental truth of the Bible, of the Old Testament and the New Testament, of the Jewish religion and the Christian religion" (What The Bible Teaches, p. 37)

The following passages of Scripture are the principal ones that declare the holiness of God: **Joshua 24:19; Psalm 22:3; 99:9; Isaiah 5:16; 6:3; John 17:11; I Peter 1:15, 16.**

The holiness of God causes Him to abhor sin, and, therefore, gives rise to His justice, which we shall consider under relative attributes.

## 2. RELATIVE ATTRIBUTES.

The relative attributes of God are those that are seen because of God's connection with time and creation.

(1) *Eternity.*

This means that God had no beginning and that He can have no end. It also means that He is in no way limited or conditioned by time. A. H. Strong says: "God is not in time. It is more correct to say that time is in God. Although there is logical succession in God's thoughts, there is no chronological succession" (Systematic Theology, p. 130).

God sees events as taking place in time, but from all eternity those events have been the same to Him as after they have taken place. Eternity has been described as follows: "Eternity is not, as men believe, before and after us, an endless line. No, 'tis a circle, infinitely great - all the circumference with creation thronged; God at the center dwells, beholding all. And as we move in this eternal round, the finite portion which alone we see, behind us is the past; what lies before we call the future. But to Him who dwells far at the center, equally remote from every point of the circumference, both are alike, the future and the past" (Murphy, Scientific Basis, p. 90).

(2) *Omnipresence.*

By the omnipresence of God is meant that God is present at the same moment throughout His creation.

The omnipresence of God is beautifully and strikingly declared in **Psalm 139:7-10** and in **Jeremiah 23:23, 24**.

Those passages that speak of God as being present in special places are to be understood as referring to God's special and transcending manifestations. Thus He is spoken of as dwelling in Heaven, because it is there that He makes the greatest manifestation of His presence.

(3) *Omniscience.*

From all eternity God has possessed all knowledge and wisdom. John declares that God “**knoweth all things**” (**I John 3:20**). God’s omniscience may be argued from His infinity. Everywhere in the Bible He is pictured as an infinite being. Thus His knowledge must be infinite. Omniscience may also be argued from immutability. If God changes not, as the Scripture declares, then He must have possessed all knowledge from the beginning; for otherwise He would be learning all the while, and that would of itself constitute a change in Him and would necessarily lead to even more manifest changes.

Moreover, the necessity of omniscience on the part of God may be seen from **Ephesians 1:11**, which says that God “**worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.**” Only an omniscient being could work all things after the counsel of his own will.

It will be seen from the foregoing discussion that God’s omniscience includes perfect foreknowledge. From eternity God has known all things that have come to pass and all things that shall yet come to pass. Moreover He foreknew from eternity all things that would have come to pass if He had not prevented them. He has ever known exactly what things would have come to pass if His immutable purpose had been different from what it is at any point.

The basis of God’s foreknowledge of all things that come to pass is His own purpose. God could not have known that a thing would come to pass unless it had been certain to come to pass. God’s eternal, immutable purpose is the only scriptural basis for the certainty of future events.

As to the manner in which God knows all things, perhaps we cannot do better than to take a brief quotation from J. J. Rousseau, as found in a “A Savoyard Vicar” (Harvard Classics, Vol. 34, p. 267): “God is intelligent; but in what manner? Man is intelligent by the act of reasoning, but the supreme intelligence lies under no necessity to reason. He requires neither premise nor consequences; nor even the simple form of a proposition. His knowledge is purely intuitive. He beholds equally what is and what will be. All truths are to Him as one idea, as all places are but one point, and all times one moment.”

(4) *Omnipotence.*

God possesses all power. In **Genesis 17:1** God declares: “**I am God Almighty.**” The title “**Almighty**” is applied to Him over and over in the Scripture. This title signifies that He possesses all might or power. Again we read in **Matthew 19:26**: “**With God all things are possible.**” Many other passages declare God’s omnipotence.

The omnipotence of God does not mean, of course, that He can do things that are logically absurd or things that are against His will. He cannot lie, because the holiness of His character prevents Him from willing to lie. And He cannot create a rock larger than He can lift; nor both an irresistible power and an immovable object; nor can He draw a line between two points shorter than a straight one; nor put two mountains adjacent to one another without creating a valley between them. He cannot do any of these things because they are not objects of power. They are self-contradictory and logically absurd. They would violate the laws that God has ordained, and thus cause God to cross Himself.

(5) *Veracity.*

By the veracity of God is meant His truthfulness and faithfulness in His revelation to and dealings with His creatures in general and His redeemed people in particular.

Some of the passages setting forth the veracity of God are: **John 9:33; Romans 1:25; 3:4; I Corinthians 1:9; II Corinthians 1:20; I Thessalonians 5:24; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; I Peter 4:19.**

(6) *Love.*

Love is used in different senses in the Bible when attributed to God in His dealings with His creatures. Sometimes it refers to mere goodness in bestowing natural benefits upon all men (**Psalm 145:9; Matthew 18:33; Luke 6:35; Matthew 5:44, 45**). God’s redeeming love, on the other hand, is sovereign, discriminating, and particular. He says: “**Jacob have I loved, but**

**Esau have a hated” (Romans 9:13).** And of God it is emphatically declared: **“Thou hatest all workers of iniquity” (Psalm 5:5).**

*(7) Justice.*

The justice of God is taught in **Genesis 18:25; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 7:9-12; 18:24; Romans 2:6.**

It was the justice of God that made it necessary for Christ to die in order that men might be saved. The justice of God makes it impossible for God to let sin go unpunished. The death of Christ made it possible for Him to be just and yet the justifier of believing sinners. (**Romans 3:26**).

In the sacrifice of Jesus the Scripture was fulfilled which says: **“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*” (Psalm 85:10).**

The salvation of believers is an act of grace toward them; yet it is an act of justice to Jesus Christ who died in the stead of all who will ever believe.

## **Chapter 6 - THE WILL OF GOD**

The will of God is used here to embrace the following: (1) God's faculty of self-determination and choice. (2) The inherent preference of God. (3) The purpose and plan of God.

### **I. QUALITIES OF GOD'S WILL**

#### **1. FREEDOM.**

Freedom of will, whether it be in God, angels, or men, means that the will is not constrained by anything outside the nature of the being who possesses it. But it does not mean that the will can act independent of or contrary to the character of that being. In the operation of the will we have simply a moral being preferring, choosing, and determining courses of action in view of motives. Motives influence, but do not constrain the will. The relative strength of motives is determined by character. The will is never subject to caprice or arbitrariness.

#### **2. POWER.**

We speak of some men as lacking will-power. And by this we mean that they lack the power to will that which they should will. This results from the perversity of man's character or nature through sin. But there is no lack of power with God to will that which He should will. His character is perfectly holy. Consequently God always wills that which is perfectly holy, just, and good.

#### **3. IMMUTABILITY.**

The immutability of God's will has been touched upon in the preceding chapter. It is mentioned here for the sake of emphasis. God's will is but the expression of His immutable nature and character, and thus it is necessarily immutable. God's will is incapable of the slightest wavering, vacillation, or variation. It must ever retain the perfection and the holiness that it possessed in eternity. Whatever God willed in eternity to do or to bring to pass, He

must now and evermore will to do and to bring to pass. Thus there has not and there will not be any change in His purpose or plan.

## II. PHASES OF GOD'S WILL

### 1. GOD'S WILL OF PURPOSE.

God has purposed or decreed all things that have come to pass and all things that shall ever come to pass. See **Psalm 135:6; Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 4:35; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; 13:48; Romans 8:29, 30; 9:15-18; Ephesians 1:11**. These passages show God to be an absolute sovereign in directing all the affairs of this world and in the distribution of saving grace. His will of purpose includes evil as well as good, sin as well as righteousness; and it is always accomplished perfectly. But the following subdivisions of God's will of purpose are necessary.

#### (1) *Gods Positive Purpose.*

God is the active, positive cause of all good. Everything good is the result of the efficient working of Gods power, either directly or through His creatures. It is to this subdivision of God's will of purpose that **Philippians 2:13** applies, which tells us: "**It is God that worketh in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**"

#### (2) *God's Permissive Purpose.*

God is not the cause of evil; but for just, holy, and wise reasons, known fully to Himself only, He has decreed to permit such evil as comes to pass and to overrule it for His own glory. It is to God's permissive will that the Scripture refers when it says: "**Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain**" (**Psalm 76:10**). This Scripture points out that God restrains men from doing more sin that He is pleased to overrule for His glory. Therefore He permits them to commit such sins as they do commit. He could keep men from all sin as easily as He stops them at the appointed place. We can give no reason why God permits sin that will satisfy the carnal mind; but the fact that He does so is abundantly clear. And,



since God always does right, we know that it is right for Him to permit such sin as comes to pass.

In **Acts 2:23** and **4:27, 28** we have a clear statement that the crucifixion of Christ was a part of the purposive or decretive will of God. But we know that God did not efficiently cause the crucifiers to do what they did. Such would make God responsible for the killing of Christ. God merely withheld His restraining power and permitted the crucifiers to proceed according to their own evil desires. This is all God has to do to bring about the commission of any sin He is pleased to overrule for His glory. Man will commit any sin that God will permit him to commit.

The hardening of the heart of Pharaoh, as detailed in **Exodus**, and his making of vessels unto dishonor (**Romans 9:21**) are to be understood also as coming under God's permissive purpose.

The careful student will note that it is implied in the foregoing discussion that God's permission of sin is not a bare or necessary permission, such as Arminians are willing to admit and such as is exemplified in a man's permission of that which he cannot prevent; but is a sovereign, providential, willing, and purposeful permission of that which God has full power to prevent had He so willed. With regard to Adam's sin, John Gill aptly remarks: *"There was a concourse of divine providence attending this action, and influencing it as an action, without which it could never have been performed; as divine providence supports every wicked man in his being throughout the whole course of his vicious life, [determining the circumstances and occasions of all his acts], and so while he is sinning; the same providence upheld [and surrounded] Adam in his being, whilst he was eating of the forbidden fruit; otherwise as Eve could not have stretched out her hand and taken the fruit of the tree and eaten it, so neither could Adam have put forth his hand and taken it of her. The influences of divine providence concur with every action, be it what it may, as an action, since all live, and move, and have their being in God; every action, as an action, is from God; BUT THE OBLIQUITY, IRREGULARITY, AND SINFULNESS OF THE ACTION, IS FROM THE CREATURE: WHEREFORE GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF ANY SIN; AS*

*HE IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF SIN IN ANY MAN, NOTWITHSTANDING THE CONCOURSE OF HIS PROVIDENCE WITH EVERY ACTION OF HIS, AS AN ACTION ...”* (Body of Divinity, p. 319).

Because Calvinists have recognized the full truth as unmistakably set forth in those Scriptures that ascribe evil to God (see **Exodus 7:3, 4; I Samuel 18:10; II Samuel 24:1**, compared with **I Chronicles 21:1; John 12:40; Acts 4:27, 28; Romans 9:18**), and, therefore, have been unwilling to divorce God’s permission of sin from His decrees; Arminians have accused them of making God the author of sin. But every representative Calvinist that has ever lived has repudiated this charge and, like John Gill, has given logical ground for that repudiation. This includes Calvin himself. A careful perusal of his works will show indisputably that he taught nothing more with regard to God’s relation to sin than is taught herein.

## 2. GOD’S WILL OF APPROBATION.

This phase of God’s will has to do with God’s attitude toward things considered separately and apart from their relation to His eternal purpose. When thus considered, sin is never pleasing to God. God never approves sin as a thing within itself; nevertheless He has decreed by the most wise and holy design to allow men to use the powers He gives them to commit sin. God always approves righteousness, but in His perfect plan He has not found it suitable to bring all men to righteousness. Herein lies both the distinction and the harmony between God’s will of purpose and His will of approbation. [8] God’s will of purpose embraces both evil and good, while His will of approbation includes only that which is good within itself. Another difference between these two phases of God’s will lies in the fact that His will of purpose is always accomplished in its fullness, while His will of approbation is, at best, accomplished only very imperfectly on earth.

Let no one suppose that it is here meant that God would have some things come to pass that He cannot bring to pass; or that He would prevent the coming to pass of some things that He cannot prevent. God always accomplishes what He wants to accomplish, but, in doing this, He uses that which within itself is not a thing that is pleasing to Him. Just as a parent,

taking pleasure in the proper training of a child, often chastens the child, notwithstanding the fact that the chastening of itself affords the parent no pleasure.

God's pleasure in things as a whole is always carried out. **“Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased” (Psalm 115:3), “Whatsoever Jehovah pleased, that hath he done, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps” (Psalm 135:6). “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isaiah 46:10).**

It is on the basis of the phase of God's will now under consideration that **Ezekiel 33:11** is to be explained and understood. [\[9\]](#)

However, the death here mentioned is not spiritual death, but physical death in the Babylonian siege. But the relation of the declaration to the will of God is the same. In itself considered, the perishing of the Israelites in the Babylonian siege was not a pleasing thing to God; but, considered in connection with things as a whole, God had decreed to permit the death of many of them.

Much might be said as to why God permits that which He does not approve, but this fact can never be explained to the satisfaction of the finite mind. It was in the face of this fact that Paul arose to great heights in exclaiming: **“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36).** Therefore we do not attempt to explain this mystery lest we seem to try to be wise above that which is written or to darken counsel by words to no profit.

God's will of approbation is revealed in two ways, viz., through His Word, the Bible, and through the Holy Spirit. It is revealed through His Word as to broad principles and basic truths. It is revealed through the Holy Spirit

as to the application of these principles and truths to the circumstances and details of every-day life, and as to the calling, capacity, and plan in which God would have each individual serve him.

It is God's will of approbation, as revealed in His Word, that fixes man's responsibility. This is very forcefully shown in **Deuteronomy 29:29**, which reads: "**The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.**" "The secret things" are those things embraced in God's will of purpose or decree. "The things that are revealed" are those things that are embraced in God's will of approbation as revealed in His Word.

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### FOOTNOTES:

[8] Theologians have used various names for this second phase of God's will, such as revealed will, preceptive will, directive will, will of command, will of desire, and will of pleasure. The author has adopted the designation herein employed as the one that seems to him most fitting and comprehensive.

[9] But it is not on the basis of this phase of God's will that we are to understand **II Peter 3:9** and **I Timothy 2:4**. See treatment of these two passages in chapter on ["The Doctrine Of The Atonement"](#).

## Chapter 7 - THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

### I. THE TRINITY DEFINED

Perhaps the meaning of the Trinity of God has never been better stated than it is stated by A. H. Strong - "in the nature of the one God there are three eternal distinctions which are represented to us under the figure of persons, and these three are equal" (Systematic Theology, p. 144).

The principles of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary set forth the doctrine of the Trinity as follows: "God is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being."

In consideration of these definitions, note:

#### 1. THE TRINITY CONSISTS OF THREE DISTINCTIONS.

The doctrine of the Trinity does not mean that God merely manifests Himself in three different ways. There are three actual distinctions in the Godhead. The truth of this will appear more clearly later.

#### 2. THESE THREE DISTINCTIONS ARE ETERNAL.

This is proved, on one hand, by the immutability of God. If there was ever a time when these distinctions did not exist, then when they came to exist God changed. It is proved again by the Scriptures which assert or imply the eternity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. See **John 1:1, 2; Revelation 22:13, 14; Hebrews 9:14.**

"It is no reply to this, that the expressions 'begotten,' and 'proceedeth from,' involve the idea of the antecedent existence of him who begets, and from whom there is procession. For these are terms of human language, applied to divine actions, and must be understood suitably to God. There is no greater difficulty here than in other cases in which this principle is readily recognized" (Boyce, Abstract of Systematic Theology, pp. 138, 139). Just as there can be logical order without chronological sequence, and just as a

cause and its effect can be simultaneous, so we have the eternal Father, the eternal Son, and the eternal Spirit. *“If there had been an eternal sun, it is evident that there must have been an eternal sunlight also. Yet an eternal sunlight must have evermore proceeded from the sun. When Cyril was asked whether the Son existed before generation, he answered: ‘The generation of the Son did not precede His existence, but He always existed, and that by generation’”* (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 165).

**3. THESE THREE DISTINCTIONS ARE REPRESENTED TO US UNDER THE FIGURE OF**

**PERSONS, BUT THERE IS NO DIVISION OF NATURE, ESSENCE, OR BEING.**

The doctrine of the Trinity does not mean tritheism. When we speak of the distinctions of the Godhead as persons, we must understand that we use the term figuratively. There are not three persons in the Godhead in the same sense that three human beings are persons. In the case of three human beings there is division of nature, essence, and being; but it is not so with God. Such a conception of God is forbidden by the teaching of the Scripture as to the unity of God.

**4. THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE TRINITY ARE EQUAL.**

Many of the same attributes are ascribed to each member of the Trinity, and the attributes thus ascribed are such as could not be possessed without all other divine attributes. The equality of the members of the Trinity is further shown by the fact that each one is recognized as God, as we shall see later.

## **II. SCRIPTURAL PROOFS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY**

**1. THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT ARE ALL RECOGNIZED AS GOD.**

*(1) The Father Recognized as God.*

This occurs in such a great number of passages that it is both unnecessary and impracticable to quote all of them. The two following ones will suffice:

**“Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for him the Father, even God, hath sealed” (John 6:27).**

**“Elect ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (I Peter 1:1, 2).**

*(2) The Son Recognized as God.*

A. He is Called God.

**John 1:1; Romans 9:5; I John 5:20.**

B. Old Testament Passages Referring to God are Applied in the New Testament to the Son.

**Matthew 3:3** - alluding to **Isaiah 40:3**; **John 12:41** - alluding to **Isaiah 6:1**.

C. The Son Possesses the Attributes of God.

Eternity: **John 1:1**; Omnipresence: **Matthew 28:20** and **Ephesians 1:23**; Omniscience: **Matthew 9:4** and **John 2:24, 25** and **John 16:30** and **I Corinthians 4:5** and **Colossians 2:3**; Omnipotence: **Matthew 28:18** and **Revelation 1:8**; Self-existence: **John 5:26**; Immutability. **Hebrews 13:8**; Truth: **John 14:6**; Love: **I John 8:16**; Holiness: **Luke 1:35** and **John 6:39** and **Hebrews 7:26**.

D. The Works of God are Ascribed to the Son.

Creation: **John 1:3**; **I Corinthians 8:6**; **Colossians 1:16**; **Hebrews 1:10**. Preservation: **Colossians 1:7**; **Hebrews 1:3**. Raising the dead and judging: **John 5:27, 28**; **Matthew 25:31, 32**.

E. He Receives Honor and Worship Due to God Alone.

**John 5:23; Hebrews 1:6; I Corinthians 11:24, 25; II Peter 3:18; II Timothy 4:18.**

(3) *The Holy Spirit is Recognized as God.*

A. The Attributes of God are Ascribed to Him.

Eternity: **Hebrews 9:14**; Omniscience: **I Corinthians 2:10**; Omnipresence: **Psalms 139:7**; Holiness: all passages that apply the term “holy” to the Spirit; Truth: **John 16:13**; Love: **Romans 15:30**.

B. He is Represented as Doing the Works of God.

Creation: **Genesis 1:2**; moved means “brooded;” Regeneration: **John 3:8; Titus 3:5**; Resurrection: **Romans 8:11**.

2. THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT ARE ASSOCIATED TOGETHER ON AN EQUAL FOOTING.

This is done -

(1) *In the Formula of Baptism. Matthew 28:19.*

(2) *In Apostolic Benediction. II Corinthians 13:14.*

3. THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT ARE DISTINGUISHED FROM ONE ANOTHER.

(1) *The Father and Son are Distinguished From Each Other.*

The Father and the Son are distinguished as the begetter and begotten; and as the sender and the sent. The distinction between the Father and Son was manifested at the baptism of Jesus when God’s voice from Heaven was heard saying: “**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**” (**Matthew 3:17**). Christ distinguished Himself from the Father when He prayed to the Father, as He often did. That the distinction thus implied was



not a temporal one, continuing only so long as Christ was In the flesh, is proved by the fact that Christ still intercedes with the Father (**Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:1**). He is a perpetual mediator between God and man (**I Timothy 2:5**), and thus is perpetually distinguished from God the Father.

(2) *The Spirit is Distinguished from the Father.*

The Spirit is distinguished from the Father when He is said to proceed from and to be sent by the Father (**John 15:26; 14:26; Galatians 4:6**).

(3) *The Son is Distinguished from the Spirit.*

Jesus referred to the Spirit as “**another Comforter**” (**John 14:16**). And Jesus spoke of Himself as sending the Spirit (**John 15:26**).

#### 4. THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT ARE ONE GOD.

Trinity means tri-unity, or three-oneness. We have shown that there are three distinctions in the Godhead. Now, in order to prove the doctrine of the Trinity, rather than the doctrine of Tritheism, we must show that the three, while being distinguishable from one another, are yet one. This is proved:

(1) *By All Passages Teaching the Unity of God.*

The student is referred here to the chapter on [“The Nature and Attributes of God”](#), where these passages are noted.

(2) *By The Fact that Each One of the Three is Recognized As God.*

We have already shown that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are severally recognized as God in the Scripture. This shows their unity, because God is represented as being the supreme being. For that reason there could not be three Gods. Supremacy is possible to only one.

(3) *By the Fact that the Three are Equal.*

We have already discussed the equality of the members of the Trinity. Absolute equality is impossible without identity of essence, nature, and

being.

**III. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY IS A MYSTERY INSCRUTABLE AND INSOLUBLE TO FINITE MINDS; BUT IT IS NOT SELF-CONTRADICTIONARY.**

We make no attempt to deny or to explain away the mystery of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is a high mystery that human minds can never fathom.

Yet the doctrine of the Trinity is not self-contradictory. God is not three in the same sense that He is one. He is one in essence, nature, and being; but in this one essence, nature, and being there are three eternal distinctions that are represented to us in such a way that we call them persons. Who can say that such distinctions are impossible in the nature of God? To do that one would have to have perfect understanding of God's nature. So we do well to accept what the Scripture teaches, and leave the mystery for solution when we have further light, if such light as will enable us to explain and understand it is ever given to us. The mystery comes because of our inability to understand fully the nature of God.

## **Chapter 8 - THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

We have studied God the Father, and the doctrine of the Trinity. It now remains for us to study the other two members of the Trinity. In this chapter our study is to be devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son.

### **I. HIS PRE-EXISTENCE AND ETERNITY**

The pre-existence of Christ means His existence before the incarnation. The Scripture teaches this very plainly. But more than that, it teaches also that He has existed from all eternity. In our study of the Trinity we noted that the distinctions in the Godhead are eternal. The following passages clearly set forth the pre-existence and eternity of God the Son:

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).**

**“I am come down from heaven” (John 6:38).**

**“And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).**

### **II. HIS INCARNATION**

This same pre-existent, eternal Son became flesh, took upon Him a human body, and dwelt among men, finally giving Himself as a sacrifice for sinners.

Let us note:

#### **1. THE FACT OF THE INCARNATION.**

**“And the Word became flesh” (John 1: 14).**

**“Who ... emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:6, 7).**

**“He saith ... a body didst thou prepare for me” (Hebrews 10:5).**

## 2. THE NECESSITY OF THE INCARNATION.

(1) *It was necessary that He endure bodily suffering if He was to suffer as man's substitute.*

The final suffering of sinners in hell will be a suffering of both body and soul (**Matthew 10:28**). Therefore, since Jesus was to suffer in the place of sinners, it was necessary that He have a body in which to suffer.

(2) *It was necessary that He have a body that He might be “in all points tempted like as we are,” so that He, as a high priest can be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15).*

The angel Gabriel cannot sympathize with us when we are tempted, because he has never known temptation in the flesh. But Christ can sympathize with us. **“In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2.18).**

(3) *It was necessary that He have a probation in the flesh, and render perfect obedience to the law, in order that there should be wrought out a righteousness that could be imputed to us.*

The righteousness imputed to us through faith is not righteousness as the personal attribute of God, but it is the righteousness wrought out by Christ in His earthly life. This is indicated because the righteousness imputed to us is described as being by or through faith in Christ (**Romans 3:21, 22; Philippians 3:9**).

(4) *The incarnation was also necessary to His ministry of teaching, His selecting the twelve apostles and founding the church, and His setting for us an example of perfect obedience to the will of God.*

These things are things which God saw could be best accomplished by one in the flesh. Therefore the incarnate Christ was sent to accomplish them.

## III. HIS SUPERNATURAL BIRTH

The incarnation of Christ is a mystery incomprehensible to the finite mind. It is a supernatural phenomenon. Hence the necessity of the supernatural virgin birth of Christ as shown in the following passages:

**“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:18).**

**“Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son” (Matthew 1:23) - quoted from Isaiah 7:14.**

**“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).**

**“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).**

The birth of Christ was miraculous. But let us beware of pushing the miraculous element so far that we destroy the reality of Christ's human nature. Of what did the miracle of Christ's birth consist? It did not consist of a miraculous creation of Christ's body, nor of an immediate birth; but of merely a conception in the womb of Mary. **Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:31.** There is every evidence that the body of Jesus passed through embryogeny and fetation just as the bodies of other human infants do, and that he was carried in the womb of His mother for the usual period of nine months, **Luke 1:56; 2:6.** It is quite plain that the miraculous element in the incarnation consisted merely of the divine impregnation of the ovum. Thus the human nature of Christ was made a normal human nature, but, nevertheless, completely sanctified and preserved from every taint of sin by the implantation of Deity.

#### **IV. HIS HUMANITY**

The following Scriptures show that Christ had a real human nature:

**“Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well” (John 4:6).**

Deity cannot become wearied.

**“When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman” (Galatians 4:4).**

**“There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).**

Christ’s body and human nature were in all respects like our own, except that there was no taint of sin in Him. He was the flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. **“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of FLESH AND BLOOD, he also himself took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14).**

On the human side Jesus was a bona fide Jew. We are plainly told that He **“was made of the SEED OF DAVID ACCORDING TO THE FLESH” (Romans 1:3)**. See also **John 7:42; Acts 13:23; II Timothy 2:8**. The physical characteristics of Jesus were those of a Jew, and thus the Samaritan woman recognized Him as a Jew, **John 4:9**. Then Jesus freely acknowledged Himself a Jew, **John 4:22**.

We should be just as zealous in maintaining Christ’s humanity as we are in maintaining His deity. It was against those who denied the true humanity of Jesus that John wrote in **2 John 7-11**, and he shows that their error was just as fatal as the error of those who deny His deity. As shown in the preceding discussion of the incarnation, it was just as necessary that He be man as it was that He be God.

## **V. HIS DEITY**

**“And the Word was God” (John 1:1).**

**“I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).**

**“The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven” (I Corinthians 15:47)**

**“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Colossians 1:15).**

**“Being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance” (Hebrews 1:3).**

**“They shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us” (Matthew 1:23).**

The notion of modernists that Jesus was divine only in the sense that they hold man to be divine does not satisfy these passages. Man is not divine in his natural condition. After regeneration he has a divine nature dwelling in him, but retains also the sinful human nature. It is never said that man, even after regeneration, is God or that he is the **“effulgence of His glory.”**

How Christ could be both God and man is a mystery beyond the power of man to comprehend. Neither does man have any ground for a denial of it. It is a revealed fact, necessary, as we have seen already, to the work that Christ came to do.

## **VI. HIS SINLESS LIFE**

**“Him who knew no sin he made *to be* sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (II Corinthians 5:21).**

**“For we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that bath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).**

**“For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26).**

## **VII. HIS SACRIFICIAL DEATH**

**“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his**

**stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).**

**“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).**

**“Who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25).**

**“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:3).**

**“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).**

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed” (I Peter 2:24).**

**“Christ ... suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (I Peter 3:18).**

**“The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7).**

**“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins” (I John 4:10).**

Christ did not die merely as a martyr. In a sense He was a martyr. His death was brought about, from a human standpoint, by His faithfulness to His Father’s will. But He was more than a martyr. He was the substitute for sinners. He died in their stead.

“The un-martyr-like anguish cannot be accounted for, and the forsaking of the Father cannot be justified, upon the hypothesis that Christ died as a mere witness to truth [nor upon any other hypothesis except the one that affirms that He died as a substitute for sinners to satisfy the justice of God]. If Christ’s sufferings were not propitiatory, they neither furnish us with a



perfect example, nor constitute a manifestation of the love of God ... If Christ was simply a martyr, then He is not a perfect example; for many a martyr has shown greater courage in the prospect of death, and in the final agony has been able to say that the fire that consumed him was ‘a bed of roses.’ Gethsemane, with its anguish, is apparently recorded in order to indicate that Christ’s sufferings even on the cross were not mainly physical sufferings” (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 399).

## **VIII. HIS RESURRECTION**

1. *As Prophesied.*

**Psalm 16:9, 10.**

2. *As Taught by Jesus Himself.*

**Matthew 12:40; 16:4; 20:19; 26:32; Mark 9:9; Luke 18:33; 24:26; John 2:19, 21.**

3. *As Witnessed by the Angel.*

**Matthew 28:6.**

4. *As Taught by the Apostles.*

**Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10, 33; 10:40; 13:30-33; 17:2, 3, 31; 26:23, 26; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:4, 5, 9; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 13:20; I Peter 1:3; 3:18; Revelation 1:5.**

5. *As Proved by Rational Arguments.*

For arguments in proof of the resurrection of Christ see [“Chapter I”](#)

## **IX. HIS ASCENSION**

1. *As Prophesied.*

**Psalm 68:18.**

2. *As Taught by Jesus Himself.*

John 6:62.

3. *As Recorded by the Gospel Writer.*

**Mark 16:19.**

4. *As Recorded by the Inspired Historian.*

**Acts 1:9.**

5. *As Declared by the Apostles.*

**Acts 3:21; Ephesians 1:20; 4:8; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:14; 9:24.**

6. *As Proved by His Presence at the Right Hand of the Father.*

Acts 7:56.

**X. HIS OFFICES**

1. *Prophet.*

**Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; Matthew 21:11; Luke 24:19; John 6:14.**

2. *Priest.*

**Hebrews 3:1; 5:6; 6:20; 7:11, 15-17, 20-28; 8:1, 2, 6.**

3. *King.*

**Numbers 24:17; Psalm 72:8, 11; Isaiah 9:6, 7; 32:1; Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24, 25; Daniel 7:13,14; Hosea 3:5; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 2:2, 6; 19:28; 21:5; 28:18; Luke 1:33; 19:27; 22:29, 30; John 1:49; 12:13,15; 12:19.**

As a prophet Christ taught the will of God. As a priest He offered His own blood in the heavenly temple (**Hebrews 9:11-14**) and intercedes for believers (**Hebrews 7:25**). As king He possesses all power (**Matthew 28:18**) and rules now over an invisible, spiritual kingdom (**John 18:36, 37**), and is later to rule visibly over the whole earth (**Psalms 66:4; 72:16-19; Isaiah 2:2; Daniel 7:13, 14, 18, 22, 27; Hebrews 10:13; Revelation 15:4**).

## Chapter 9 - THE HOLY SPIRIT

“There is much confusion and error current in this day concerning the personality, operations, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Conscientious but misguided scholars have held wrong views concerning this doctrine. It is vital to the faith of every Christian that its Scriptural teaching be seen in its true light and held in its right proportions” (Bancroft, Elemental Theology).

### I. THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In ascribing personality to the Spirit we mean that He is not an impersonal energy, influence, or emanation. He is a self-conscious, self-determined, willing, feeling intelligence. “Personality may be said to exist where there is found united in a single combination intelligence, emotion, and volition, or self-consciousness and self-determination” (Bancroft, Elemental Theology).

That the Holy Spirit is a person is proved by -

1. *The Mention of Him along with Other Members of the Trinity.*

**Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14.**

2. *His Association with Other Persons in Personal Relationship.*

**Acts 15:28.**

3. *The Ascription to Him of Emotion and Volition.*

**I Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:30.**

4. *The Ascription to Him of Personal Acts.*

(1) He searches the deep things of God.

**I Corinthians 2: 10.**

(2) He speaks.

**Matthew 10:20; Acts 10:19, 20; 13:2; Revelation 2:7.** See also passages under inspiration where the Spirit is said to have spoken by the prophets and other Scripture writers.

(3) He teaches.

**Luke 12:12; John 14:26; I Corinthians 2:13.**

(4) He leads and guides.

**John 16:13; Romans 8:14.**

(5) He intercedes.

**Romans 8:26.**

(6) He bestows gifts.

**I Corinthians 12:7-11.**

(7) He calls men to service.

**Acts 13:2 and 20:28.**

*5. The Representation of Him as being Affected as a Person by the Acts of Others.*

(1) He may be rebelled against and vexed or grieved.

**Isaiah 63:10; Ephsians 4:30.**

(2) He may be blasphemed.

**Matthew 12:31.**

(3) He may be lied to.

**Acts 5:3.**

## *6. The Use of the Masculine Pronoun with Reference to Him.*

In **John 16:13, 14** the Greek masculine pronoun “ekeinos” is used in alluding the Holy Spirit. This is very significant since the Greek word for “spirit” (pneuma) is neuter. Thus we see that the idea of the personality of the Spirit is so strong that it here takes precedence over grammatical order. In **Romans 8:16, 26**, in a closer construction, the grammatical order is allowed to prevail. This is true in other places also. However this does not annul, but rather serves to emphasize, the setting aside of the grammatical order in the former case.

## *7. The Application of the Masculine Noun “Parakletos” to the Spirit.*

“Parakletos” is the Greek word for “Comforter” in **John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7**.

“The name ‘parakletos’ cannot be translated by ‘comfort,’ or be taken as the name of any abstract influence. The Comforter, Instructor, Patron, Guide, Advocate, whom this term brings before us, must be a person” (Strong, Systematic Theology).

## **II. THE RELATION OF PENTECOST TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### *1. The Holy Spirit Was in Existence Before Pentecost.*

**Genesis 1:2; Nehemiah 9:20; Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10; II Peter 1:21**. We have seen that the Holy Spirit, as a member of the Trinity, is coeternal with the Father.

### *2. He had Access to the Earth and Operated in Man Before Pentecost.*

See all passages immediately above that follow the first passage.

### *3. He Came on the Day of Pentecost in Special Capacity.*

This explains the meaning of Christ’s promise to send the Spirit. This special capacity was:

(1) Perhaps as the antitype of the Shekinah.

**Numbers 9:15-22; II Chronicles 7:1-3.** The Shekinah, in the case of the tabernacle, was for leadership, and in the case of the temple it was a symbol of ownership and possession. The coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost meant both of these to the church.

(2) In fulfillment of prophecy and promise.

**Joel 2:28; Matthew 3:11.** We do not hold, however, that the day of Pentecost marked the complete and ultimate fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. This day saw only a partial and spiritual fulfillment of this prophecy. Indeed Peter's words need be understood as meaning no more than that the thing being witnessed on that day was the same in kind as that of which Joel had foretold. The literal, ultimate, and complete fulfillment of **Joel 2:28-32** will come in the conversion of the Jewish nation at the second coming of Christ. See **Zechariah 12:9-11; 13:8, 9; Romans 11:26.**

(3) To empower the church.

**Acts 1:4, 8.**

(4) As the abiding comforter and teacher of believers.

**John 14:16, 17; I John 2:20, 27.**

In **John 14:17** note that Jesus told the disciples that the Spirit “**dwelleth WITH you, and shall be IN you.**” Here the two tenses - present and future, and the two prepositions - with and in are significant. As already noted, before Pentecost the Holy Spirit had access to the earth. He was God's agent in creation. He inspired the prophets. He even came upon such wicked men as King Saul and Balaam. He also regenerated men. But an inseparable union between the soul of the believer and the Holy Spirit was not formed then as it is now. (This inseparable union as now formed is clearly shown in **John 7:37-39; Romans 8:26; Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:30.**) While, by the special dispensation of God, the Spirit was in the prophets (**I Peter 1:11**); yet, as a rule, He was only *WITH* the people of God until the day of Pentecost. This is

further shown by **John 7:37-39**. Note John's explanation that the blessing promised by Christ could be fulfilled only when the Holy Spirit had been given, manifestly alluding to Pentecost. Even the presence of the Spirit *WITH* God's people before Pentecost was not necessarily permanent. His presence could be forfeited then by sin. Thus it was that David prayed: "**Take not thy Holy Spirit from me**" (**Psalm 51:11**). Before the day of Pentecost, believers could have the Holy Spirit through prayer. **Luke 11:13**. But after the day of Pentecost, as we shall note more at length later, there is no indication that believers should or did ask for the Holy Spirit. He now abides constantly and inseparably in believers. (**John 20:21, 22** must be considered exceptional, because the recipients of the Spirit were apostles, or anticipatory of Pentecost.)

(5) To convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

**John 16:8-11**. We hold this passage as referring primarily to an indirect work of the Spirit. For the difference between the direct and indirect work of the Spirit see later under the treatment of His work in the lost.

#### *4. His Coming on Pentecost was Dispensational and Final.*

There is absolutely nothing to justify the belief that Pentecost is to be repeated in the experience of each believer. It came in fulfillment of definite and particular prophecy and promise. It marked the beginning of the special dispensation of the Spirit.

Pentecostalism is the most absurd nonsense. One might as well talk of a repetition of the resurrection and ascension of Christ as to talk of a repetition of Pentecost. Pentecost has never been and never will be repeated. The occurrence in the house of Cornelius was merely supplemental to Pentecost (**Acts 10:44-47**), and was brought about that Peter might know that believing Gentiles were received of God on the same footing as believing Jews.

*5. Since Pentecost the Holy Spirit Enters Every Believer at Conversion and Never Departs.*



**John 7:38, 39; Acts 19:2 (R. V.); Romans 8:9; Galatians 3:2; 4:6; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; Jude 19-20.**

It is folly for the believer to pray for the Holy Spirit, though he may pray for His power and fullness. Neither does the believer need to pray that God will not take the Holy Spirit from him; for, though the believer may grieve the Spirit and quench Him (**I Thessalonians 5:19**) - refuse His impulses; nevertheless, the believer is permanently sealed by the presence of the Spirit (**Ephesians 1:13; 4:30**).

*6. The Believer, therefore, Should Seek Neither the Presence nor the Baptism of the Spirit, but His Fullness.*

### **Ephesians 5: 18.**

We have shown that each believer has the Spirit. *It now remains only to be remarked that there is no warrant in Scripture for affirming a baptism of the Spirit today either in or after regeneration.* The Scripture is silent on the notion of a baptism of the Spirit for this day. The passage usually referred to, to substantiate a baptism of the Spirit in regeneration (**I Corinthians 12:13**) refers to water baptism. See its treatment under water baptism.

*The believer has all of the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit does not usually have all of the believer.* His presence is an expansive one. He fills so much of the believer as is emptied of selfishness and sin. Thus the exhortation to be filled with the Spirit is an exhortation to surrender completely to Him. The more completely He fills us the greater will be the manifestation of His power in our lives (**Acts 6:3-5; 11:24**). The evidence of the fullness of the Spirit will be found in the fruit of the Spirit. See **Galatians 5:22, 23**.

## **III. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### *1. His Work in General.*

(1) He was the agent of God in creation.

### **Genesis 1: 2.**

(2) He inspired the Scripture writers.

**II Peter 1:21.** See other passages under discussion of verbal inspiration.

(3) He is, in general, the agent of God in all God's works.

**Job 33:4; Psalm 104:29, 30; Isaiah 40:7; Luke 1:35; Acts 10:38.**

*2. His Work in the Lost.*

(1) His indirect work in the lost.

By the indirect work of the Spirit in the lost we mean such work as He performs mediately through the Word and not immediately by personal impact upon the soul. Any work produced by the Word is a work of the Spirit, for He is the author of the Word. This is proved by **Acts 7:51, 52**, where the resisting of the word spoken by the prophets is said to be resisting the Holy Spirit.

In the indirect work of the Spirit in the lost He -

A. Strives with them.

**Genesis 6:3.** This striving is done through men, such as Enoch and Noah, in the preaching of the Word.

To use **Genesis 6:3**, as many preachers do, to prove that the Holy Spirit strives directly and immediately with all sinners today and that He can be compelled to withdraw because of man's refusal to yield, is to misuse it inexcusably. The passage makes no allusion to the direct work of the Spirit, and it does not remotely suggest that a man can drive the Spirit away. The passage simply means the indirect ministry of Spirit for that generation was to continue for only one hundred and twenty years longer; this being the length of time that would elapse before the destruction of that generation in the flood.

B. He convinces them of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

**John 16:8-11.** The presence and operations of the Spirit in the world, as one who came to take the place and carry forward the work of a rejected and crucified Christ, constitute a potential convincing of sin. Had Christ been an imposter, His promise of the Spirit would not have been fulfilled. It is as though the ghost (spirit) of a man should come back to haunt his murderers and to carry on the work that the murderers had tried so vainly to end. Such would tend to convince the murderers of their guilt and witness to the righteousness of the man they had killed.

Thus it is with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ (**Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6**). And thus it is that the Holy Spirit gives evidence of the righteousness of Christ by manifesting that He has gone to the Father and by manifesting that He is thus seen to have triumphed over Satan, who sought in every way to prevent the purpose of God through Christ. By this means He convinces men of the sin of rejecting Christ, and of the certainty of judgment to all that remain in league with Satan, because Satan is already judged (**John 12:31**). “This judgment of Satan was secured at the cross and he was potentially rendered powerless” (Bancroft).

Let it be noted that the Holy Spirit in His convincing or convicting work, “convicts, not primarily of the sin of lawbreaking, but of the sin of unbelief, ‘**of sin, because they, believe not on me.**’ (**Acts 2:36-37**). As all sin has its root in unbelief, so the most aggravated form of unbelief is the rejection of Christ. The Spirit, however, in fastening this truth upon the conscience, does not extinguish, but, on the contrary, consummates and intensifies the sense of all other sins” (Bancroft, *Elemental Theology*).

We call special attention to this last sentence above. Many would have it that unbelief is the only damning sin. Some would even say that this is all that men will suffer for in hell. Such a notion is abundantly contradicted by the Bible. See **Romans 2:5, 6; 7:7-11; Galatians 3:10, 24; I John 3:4; Revelation 20:12**. The Spirit does not merely convict of the sin of unbelief, but of sin because of unbelief. That is, He shows men their sinful condition by causing them to see that they are rejecting the Christ of God, thus showing

rebellion against God. Unbelief is the principal symptom of the disease of sin, whose essence is lawlessness.

The indirect work of the Spirit, not only may be resisted, but is constantly resisted by sinners. Sinners do nothing else but resist the Spirit until the Spirit, by direct and personal impact upon the soul, quickens the dead sinner into life. This, as already indicated, explains **Acts 7:51, 52**.

(2) His direct work in the lost.

We refer here to regeneration. Regeneration is instantaneous. It cannot be otherwise, for there can be no such thing as a man being partly alive and partly dead from a spiritual standpoint. It is for that reason that we put conviction before regeneration.

Sinners show evidence of varying degrees of conviction through periods of varying lengths. Of course, it is only in the moment of regeneration that conviction reaches its highest intensity. The indirect work of the Spirit in conviction is brought to instantaneous completion in the moment that the dead soul is quickened into life. But conviction exists before the quickening. See Paul's experience, **Acts 26:14**. See also and compare **Acts 2:37**. Note that in the parable of the dry bones in the valley (**Ezekiel 37:1-10**) there was an effect produced by preaching before the Spirit (symbolized by breath) came upon them. This illustrates the indirect work of the Spirit in conviction prior to quickening.

The direct work of the Spirit in regeneration is irresistible. This does not mean that the Spirit violates the will. He simply works back of the will. Regeneration takes place in "regions of the soul below consciousness" (Strong). It is the means by which our wills are conformed to God's will strictly according to the laws of the will and its action. See the chapter on ["The Free Agency of Man"](#). Regeneration is irresistible because it is a work of God, and is not dependent upon the will of men (**John 1:12, 13**). It is in regeneration that God enables men to come to Christ (**John 6:65**). It is thus that He gives over His elect to Christ (**John 6:37**). Regeneration is the drawing referred to in **John 6:44, 45**, in its consummation. Man can do

nothing pleasing to God while spiritually dead, being in the flesh (**Romans 8:7, 8**). But when quickened into life he is certain to act in general harmony with the will of God (**I John 5:4; 3:9**). Thus regeneration is necessarily irresistible.

### *3. His Work in the Saved.*

We have seen already that the Spirit indwells every believer. This indwelling is in order to the accomplishing of a work in believers. The work consists of -

#### (1) Giving assurance of salvation.

**Romans 8:16; II Corinthians 1:22; Ephsians 1:14.** The Spirit not only witnesses to believers of present sonship, but gives assurance of final salvation. It is in this latter sense in which the work of the Spirit is an “**earnest**,” which means a pledge, a part of the purchase price paid in advance as a guarantee that the transaction will be completed. The presence of the Spirit in our hearts affords us a foretaste of Heaven and is a guarantee of our receiving the inheritance “**incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven**” for us “**who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time**” (**I Peter 1:4, 5**).

#### (2) Comforting, teaching, and illuminating.

**John 16:7; I Corinthians 2:9-12; Ephesians 1:17; I John 2:20, 27.**

#### (3) Leading in obedience and service.

**Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:16; Acts 8:27, 29; Hebrews 8:10.**

#### (4.) Calling to special service.

**Acts 13:2, 4.** “The Holy Spirit not only directs the general tenor of the Christian life, but He calls men out for special work, such as missions, the ministry, teaching, etc.”

“This passage does not tell us how the Spirit calls men, presumably because He does not always call men in the same way. It is for us to be willing to be called, to desire it, and then to wait for the Holy Spirit to call us. He does not call all to foreign missionary work, though every Christian should be willing to answer that call. He does, however, call every Christian to some field of service, and will lead him, if yielded, to that specific field” (Bancroft).

(5) Distributing spiritual gifts.

**I Corinthians 12:4-11.** Note that “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man (that is, every saved man) to profit withal (**I Corinthians 12:7**). No saved man may truthfully say, therefore, that he is devoid of spiritual ability in the service of the Lord.

(6) Empowering in service.

**Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:4; I Thessalonians 1:5.**

(7) Making fruitful.

**Galatians 5:22-25.**

(8) Initiating prayer and interceding.

**Romans 8:26, 27; Galatians 4:6.**

(9) Moving to worship.

**Philippians 3:3** (R. V.). It has been said, “In our prayers we are taken up with our needs, in our thanksgiving we are taken up with our blessings, but in our worship we are taken up with God Himself.”

(10) Finally quickening the believer’s body.

**Romans 8:11-23.**

## Chapter 10 - THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

It is reasonable that there should be an ascending scale of life from man upward toward God, just as there is a descending scale of life from man downward. A contemplation of the vastness and the wonder of this universe may well raise the question, Is man the only creature that “has a mind to appreciate and contemplate this workmanship of God” and to praise Him for it? Without the Bible we should be left to blind conjecture. But in the Bible we have clear revelation of an order of beings above man, existing in ascending orders and ranks, called angels.

### I. THE NATURE OF ANGELS

#### 1. *They Are Created Beings.*

In **Psalm 148:1-5** angels are among the things exhorted to praise the Lord on the ground that “he commanded and they were created.” That angels are created beings is also proved by **Colossians 1:16**, which reads: “**For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.**”

#### 2. *They Are Pure Spirits.*

We do not mean to affirm here that all angels are sinless; for, as we shall see later, some are evil. We mean that the nature of angels is spirit unmixed with materiality. Angels do not possess bodies as a part of their being; even though they may assume bodies for the execution of certain purposes of God, as in **Genesis 19**. We affirm that angels are pure spirits because in **Hebrews 1:14** they are called spirits. Man is never thus unqualifiedly designated. Christ said “**a spirit hath not flesh and bones**” (**Luke 24:39**).

#### 3. *They Constitute an Order of Creatures Higher than Man.*

Of man it is said that he was “**made a little lower than the angel**” (**Hebrews 2:7**). Angels are said to be greater than man in might (**II Peter**

2:11). Their superior power is also implied in **Matthew 26:53; 28:2; II Thessalonians 1:7**. Yet angels are ministering servants to believers (**Hebrews 1:14**), and shall be judged by them (**I Corinthians 6:3**). This last fact would seem to indicate that man, though now inferior in nature to angels, shall in his glorified state, as a trophy of God's redeeming grace, be exalted with Christ far above angels (**Ephesians 1:20, 21; Philippians 2:6-9**).

#### 4. *They are Sexless.*

**Matthew 22:30** declares that angels do not marry, which proves them sexless. "Sons of God" in **Genesis 6:2** are not angels, but descendants of Seth: the true worshippers of God, as distinguished from the descendants of Cain.

#### 5. *They are Deathless.*

**Luke 20:36** declares that angels cannot die, which means they cannot cease to exist.

## II. CLASSES OF ANGELS

The angels consist of the elect angels and the fallen angels. The following Scriptures allude to and distinguish these two classes:

**"I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality" (I Timothy 5:21).**

**"God spared not angels when they sinned but cast them down to hell and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (II Peter 2:4).**

**"And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6).**



The elect angels are those whom God chose to preserve in holiness. The others He permitted to fall and for them no redemption or possibility of escape has been provided.

### **III. ORGANIZATIONS, ORDERS, AND RANKS AMONG ANGELS**

In **Jude 9** we have Michael mentioned as an archangel. See also **I Thessalonians 4:16**. Archangel means the chief of angels. Gabriel seems also to occupy a relatively high place among the angels. See **Daniel 8:16; 9:16, 21; Luke 1:19**.

The mention of thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers among the invisible things in **Colossians 1:16** implies rank and organization among the angels. And in **Ephesians 1:21** and **3:10** we have the mention of rule, authority, power, and dominion in the heavenly places. Of the orders named in **Colossians 1:16**, E. C. Dargan, in his commentary, represents “**thrones**” as “being the highest next to God and so called either because they are near and support the throne of God, or because they themselves sit on thrones approaching nearest to God in glory and dignity; next ‘**dominions**,’ or ‘lordships,’ those who exercise power or lordship over the lower ones or men; then ‘**principalities**,’ or ‘princedom,’ those of princely dignity; and lastly ‘**powers**,’ or ‘authorities,’ those who exercise power or authority in the lowest angelic order, just above men.”

We consider it more satisfactory to view the “**cherubim**” of **Genesis**, **Exodus**, and **Ezekiel** with which we would identify also the “**seraphim**” of Isaiah and the living creatures of Revelation, not as actual beings, but as symbolic appearances, illustrating truths of divine activity and government. The “**living creatures**” of Revelation seem to symbolize praise arising from God’s lower creation because of its being “**delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God**” (**Romans 8:21**). The twenty-four elders associated with the living creatures seem to represent redeemed humanity. And it is well to note that the living creatures do not include themselves among those redeemed to God. The living

creatures, as representative of the lower creation giving praise to God, fulfill **Psalm 145:10**, which says: “**All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord.**”

#### **IV. ANGELS ARE NOT TO BE WORSHIPPED**

“**And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book**” (**Revelation 22:9**).

This is also condemned in **Colossians 2:18**.

#### **V. THE EMPLOYMENT OF ANGELS**

##### *1. Of Holy Angels.*

(1) They praise the lord and do His commandments.

**Psalm 103:20; 148:2.**

(2) They rejoice in the salvation of men. **Luke 15:7, 10.**

(3) They minister to the heirs of salvation.

**Hebrews 1:14; 1 Kings 19:5-8; Daniel 6:22; Psalm 84:7; 91:11, 12; Acts 12:8-11.**

(4) They are messengers of God to men.

**Genesis 19:1-13; Numbers 22:22-35; Matthew 1:20; 2:13, 19, 20; Luke 1:11-13, 19; Acts 8:26; 10:3-6; 27:23, 24.**

(5) They execute God’s purposes.

**II Samuel 24:16; 2 Kings 19:35; II Chronicles 32:21; Psalm 35:5, 6; Matthew 13:41; 13:49, 50; 24:31; Acts 12:23; Revelation 7:1, 2; 9:15; 15:1.**

(6) They gave the law.

**Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2.**

(7) They ministered to Christ.

**Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43.**

(8) They will accompany Christ at His second coming.

**Matthew 25:81, 32; II Thessalonians 1:7, 8**

(9) They are present at church services.

**I Corinthians 11:10.**

(10) They take a great interest in divine truth and learn through the church.

**I Peter 1: 12; Ephesians 3:10**

There is nothing in the above to show that there is a constant intervention of angels between God and man. They are not in any sense regularly constituted mediators between God and man. Their intervention is occasional and exceptional. And their activity is subject to the command and permission of God.

But it is evident that the average believer has not attached sufficient importance to the ministry of angels. However, on the other hand, the notion of a special guardian angel for each individual finds no certain foundation in the Scripture. J. P. Boyce says:

“Guided by rabbinical fables, and led by the peculiar views of Oriental philosophy, some have conceived that on each person in this life an angel attends to guard and protect him from evil. This theory of a guardian angel has been held in various forms. Some have confined his presence to the good; some have extended it also to the wicked; some have supposed two angels instead of one, the one good and the other bad. In like manner has the theory

been held of guardian angels over nations; some confining that also to good nations, others extending it to all. That such views existed among the Jews, and that they were also prevalent among earlier Christians may be admitted; but scriptural authority for them is wanting” (Abstract of Systematic Theology, p. 179).

There are really but two passages that even suggest this doctrine of a guardian angel for each individual. These two passages are **Matthew 18:10** and **Acts 12:15**. On **Matthew 18: 10** John A. Broadus says: “There is in this no sufficient warrant for the popular notion of ‘guardian angels,’ one angel especially assigned to each individual; it is simply said of believers as a class that there are angels which are their angels; but there is nothing here or elsewhere to show that one angel has special charge of one believer” (Commentary on Matthew).

On **Acts 12:15** H. B. Hackett says: “It was a common belief among the Jews, says Lightfoot, that every individual has a guardian angel and that this angel may assume a visible appearance resembling that of the person whose destiny is committed to him. This idea appears here, not as a doctrine of the Scriptures, but as a popular opinion that is neither affirmed nor denied” (Commentary on Acts). On this passage Broadus also says: “The disciples who were praying for Peter during his imprisonment, when the girl insisted that he was at the gate, sprang to the conclusion that he had just been put to death and this was ‘**his angel**’ (**Acts 12:15**), according to the notion that a man’s guardian angel was apt to appear to friends just after his death, with his form and voice. But the views of these disciples were erroneous on many subjects, and are not an authority for us unless sanctioned by inspiration.”

We dismiss the subject with this further comment from Broadus: “It cannot be positively asserted that the idea of guardian angels is an error, but there is no Scripture which proves it true, and the passages which merely might be understood that way do not suffice as a basis of a doctrine.”

## *2. Of Evil Angels.*

The work of evil angels will be considered more extensively in the next chapter, which deals with Satan, their ruler and leader. It will suffice here to say that evil spirits or angels war against God and His saints. This is seen in **Ephesians 6:12** and in the demon possession of early New Testament days.

As to demon possession, it needs to be said that the record is too clear and decisive to admit of a mere accommodation on the part of Christ and the apostles to popular but erroneous notions of the Jews. It is very probable, however, that demon possession was more prevalent in the days of Christ's earthly ministry than now. We can see that, according to the record, it was more prevalent in early than in late New Testament times; yet it was not entirely absent in later New Testament times (**Acts 16:16-18**); and it is probably not absent now. Some physicians today believe that some experiences and actions of the insane are best explained by the supposition that the patient's mind is under the control of a foreign power. J. P. Boyce gives a good reason for the greater prevalence of demon possession in the days of Christ's earthly ministry: "The great struggle was about to take place between Christ and Satan, and uncommon freedom was doubtless granted to the Devil and his assistants."

## **Chapter 11 - SATAN, HIS ORIGIN, WORK, AND DESTINY**

No believer in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures can doubt the existence of a personal devil. The reality of such a being is stamped indelibly on the pages of Holy Writ. “We cannot deny the personality of Satan, except upon principles which would compel us to deny the existence of angels, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the personality of God the Father” (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 223).

Even if the Bible said nothing of the existence of such a being, perhaps we should be compelled to believe in his existence as an adequate explanation of the subtle and enslaving power of sin.

### **I. THE ORIGIN OF SATAN**

The existence of a wicked being such as Satan is, in view of our belief in God as being infinitely holy and yet the creator of all other things, presents this inescapable question: How are we to account for his existence?

Skeptics have imagined that the question, “Who made the devil?” offers an unanswerable objection to the Christian doctrine of God. But the Bible answers this question clearly and reasonably.

#### **1. SATAN A FALLEN ANGEL.**

We affirm this for the three following reasons:

(1) *He is of the Same Nature as Angels.*

The works ascribed to the devil make it impossible for us to conceive of him as being other than incorporeal. If he were material he would be limited by space; and therefore, could not carry on the universal works of wickedness ascribed to him in the Bible.

(2) *He is the Leader of Certain Angels.*

In **Matthew 25:41** Christ uses the expression, “**the devil and his angels.**”

(3) *A Common Destiny Awaits Satan and These Angels.*

In the passage just referred to Christ tells us that hell was prepared for both “**the devil and his angels**”.

We conclude that these angels of which Satan is the leader and whose punishment he shall share are the fallen angels mentioned by Peter and Jude. It seems clear, then, that Satan himself is a fallen angel.

The statement in **John 8:44** to the effect that the devil “**was a murderer from the beginning**” need not be taken as standing in necessary conflict with the foregoing. The expression “**from the beginning**” need not be taken as referring to the beginning of the devil’s existence. It may, and we think does, refer to the beginning of human history.

## 2. ACCOUNTS OF SATAN’S FALL.

We believe we have in the Scripture two fragmentary accounts of Satan’s fall. We refer to **Ezekiel 28:12-18** and **Isaiah 14:12-17**.

The first of these passages was addressed to the King of Tyre. The second one was addressed to the King of Babylon. In both of them, but more especially in the first, some of the language is too strong to apply to any man. We believe that these passages, like much other prophecy, have a double reference. This is true of some of the prophecies concerning the regathering of Israel. Their immediate reference is to the return of Israel after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon. But they have also a clear ultimate reference to the final regathering of dispersed Israel at the end of this age. In **Matthew 24:4-51** we have a double reference marvelously wrought together. The reason for this double reference is that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. was a type of the final siege of Jerusalem just preceding the second advent of Christ to the earth to judge the world and set up His millennial reign. And, no doubt, the reason for the double reference in the passages we are considering from **Ezekiel** and **Isaiah** is that the kings of Tyre and Babylon

were taken as types of “**the man of sin**” (**II Thessalonians 2:3,4**), the “**beast**” of **Revelation (Revelation 13 and 17)**, who will be but a tool in the hands of Satan. Therefore the words of the prophets look beyond these kings to the dominating power back of them; thus addressing Satan through his representatives. We have other instances where Satan is thus addressed. In **Genesis 3:15** Satan is addressed through the serpent, his tool. And in **Matthew 16:22, 23** Satan is addressed through Peter in whom Christ sensed the spirit of Satan.

*(1) References to Satan in His Unfallen Condition.*

**“Thou sealest up the sum (or measure), full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee: in the day that thou wast created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth: and I set thee so, so that thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee” (Ezekiel 28:12-15).**

*(2) References to the Fall of Satan.*

**“By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I have cast thee to the ground; I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee. By the multitude of thine iniquities, in the unrighteousness of thy traffic, thou hast profaned thy sanctuaries; therefore have I brought forth a fire from the midst of thee; it hath devoured thee, and I have turned thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.” (Ezekiel 28:16-18).**



**“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Day-star, son of the morning! How are thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations! And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the uttermost parts of the North; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the uttermost parts of the pit. They that see thee shall gaze at thee, they shall consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; then let not loose his prisoners to their home?” (Isaiah 14:12-17).**

From these two accounts it seems clear that Satan fell through pride. This is also in harmony with the following Scriptures:

**“Pride *goeth* before destruction. And a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18).**

**“The bishop therefore must be without reproach ... not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil” (I Timothy 3:2, 6).**

From **Ezekiel** we understand that Satan held a very high place among the angels in his unfallen state. **“Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth: and I have set thee, so that thou wast upon the holy mountain of God.”** Notice that he was not “an anointed cherub,” but **“the anointed cherub.”** **“Anointed”** means set apart as a priest to the service of God. **“The anointed cherub that covereth”** probably alludes to the cherubim that covered the mercy seat in the temple with their wings (**Exodus 37:9**). This seems to indicate that the devil was the leader of angelic worship. He probably occupied the place which is now occupied by Michael, the archangel

## **II. THE WORK OF SATAN**

### **1. ORIGINATED SIN IN THE UNIVERSE.**

The foregoing Scriptures, which give a veiled account of Satan's fall, point us to the earliest account of sin that we have in the Bible. We know that Satan fell before man did, for Satan solicited man to sin. "Sin was not a creation but an origination. It came into existence by the aid of that which had prior existence, namely, personality and the power of free choice. God created this being not as the Devil, but as a holy angel, who originated sin through disobedience and transformed himself into the wicked devil which he is today" (Bancroft, Elemental Theology).

## 2. INTRODUCED SIN INTO THE HUMAN FAMILY.

**Genesis 3:1-16.** There is a close connection between what we have noted from Isaiah concerning the devil and his method of seducing Eve. Satan was cast out of Heaven because he said, "**I will make myself like the Most High.**" He deceived Eve by telling her that instead of dying as result of eating the forbidden fruit, she would become "**as God, knowing good and evil**".

## 3. POSSESSES AND CONTROLS THE WORLD.

**Job 9:24; Matthew 4:8, 9; John 12:31; 14:80; 16:11; II Corinthians 4:8, 4; Ephesians 6:12.** God owns the world (**Psalm 24:1**), but, as we read in **Job 9:24**, the world has been "**given into the hand**" of Satan temporarily; and Satan dominates it, subject to such limitations as God is pleased to impose. See **Psalm 76:10**.

## 4. ACCUSES GOD'S PEOPLE.

**Job 1:6, 9; 2:3-5; Revelation 12:9, 10.** "Devil" means "**accuser**" or "slanderer."

## 5. ALSO TESTS, HINDERS, RESISTS, AND BUFFETS THEM.

**Luke 22:31; I Thessalonians 2:18; Zechariah 3:1; II Corinthians 12:7.**

## 6. SEEKS TO OPPOSE AND HINDER THE WORK OF GOD.

**Matthew 13:39; Mark 4:15; II Corinthians 11:14, 15; II Thessalonians 2:9, 10; Revelation 2:10; 3:9.**

7. TEMPTS, ENSNARES, AND LEADS MEN INTO EVIL.

**I Chronicles 21:1; Matthew 4:1-9; John 13:2, 27; Acts 5:3.**

8. CONTROLS AND BLINDS THE LOST.

**John 8:44; 12:37-40; Acts 26:18; II Corinthians 4:4; II Timothy 2:26.**

The blinding in **II Corinthians 4:4** and that in **John 12:37-40** are the same. Its immediate cause is the depravity of the carnal nature. The devil is said to be the author of this blindness because he is the author of sin. In the latter passage it is ascribed to God because it is by God's permissive will that the devil was allowed to bring sin into the world. For a further discussion of this blinding see the chapter on ["The Free Agency of Man"](#).

9. CAUSES SICKNESS.

**Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38.**

10. HAS THE POWER OF DEATH.

**Hebrews 2:14.**

But, thanks be unto God, all the work of Satan is overruled by the omnipotence and omniscience of God and made to work ultimately for God's glory and the good of the saints. See **Psalms 76:10; Romans 15:31; II Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 1:11.**

In Peter's fall we have an excellent example of how God is glorified and the saints benefited even through the temptations of the devil that actually produce sin in the lives of saints. Peter's experience in denying Christ made a different man out of him. At the trial of Jesus he cowered before a little maiden. But on Pentecost he faced the multitude of the crucifiers of Christ with burning words of condemnation. Peter's fall took away his self-confidence. Thus, Satan, seeking the complete downfall of Peter, as he had

that of Job, but sifted out the chaff and left the wheat. We can see also that Satan's afflictions brought greater blessings to Job in the end.

### III. THE DESTINY OF SATAN

The common notion that Satan is now in hell is not correct. The same is true of the idea that Satan shall ever be in hell as the one who inflicts torment on others. He will be cast into hell to be tormented. He now inhabits the heavenlies (**Ephsians 6:11, 12**), has access to God (**Job 1:6**), and is active upon the earth (**Job 1:7; I Peter 5:8**). But finally Satan will be cast into hell.

We have already noted that hell has been prepared for the devil and his angels. In the following Scripture we have the account of how he will be cast into hell:

**“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).**

This is to take place at the end of the **“little season”** during which Satan is to be loosed again after the millennium. The beast and the false prophet are to be cast into the lake of fire preceding the millennium (**Revelation 19:20**).

## **Chapter 12 - GOD'S RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE**

There are various ideas concerning the relation of God to this universe of ours. By way of contrast between these false ideas and the teaching of Scripture, let us note:

### **I. GOD IS SEPARATE IN BEING FROM THE UNIVERSE.**

Everywhere in Scripture God is distinguished from His creation. He is a pure spirit, while all created things and beings are at least partly material with the exception of the angels, both good and evil. God is infinite; all created things are finite. God is eternal, having existed from everlasting. This is not true of anything else. God is immutable. Nothing else is immutable. God is omnipresent; nothing else is. Nor does anything else possess God's attributes of omnipotence and omniscience.

The Scriptures, therefore, refute pantheism, which is defined by Strong as "that method of thought which conceives of the universe as the development of one intelligent and voluntary, yet impersonal substance, which reaches consciousness only in man. It, therefore, identifies God, not with each individual object in the universe, but with the totality of things" (Systematic Theology, p. 55).

### **II. GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE**

#### **1. THE FACT.**

This is declared in the first verse of the Bible. The Scripture, therefore, denies that the universe was created by an evil spirit as the Manicheans taught. It also denies the emanation theory, which holds with pantheism that God is of the same substance as the universe; and that the universe is the result of successive emanations from His being. Spontaneous generation, the view of atheistic evolutionists, is also denied. Moreover we have here a denial of the eternity of matter.

Let it be noted that the author understands **Genesis 1:1** as referring to the whole universe with its billions of stars. He can not agree with those,

such as George McCready Price [10] and Harold W. Clark, [11] who think that this passage alludes to nothing more than the earth and its surrounding atmosphere or, at most to our solar system. The view of these two worthy and scholarly men is rejected on Biblical grounds. Unless “**heaven**” is used in **Genesis 1:1** in a sense radically different from that in which it is used in many other passages, it includes all the stars. See **Genesis 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; Exodus 32:13; Deuteronomy 10:22; 2 Kings 23:5; Isaiah 13:10; Jeremiah 33:22; Nahum 3:16**. It is true, according to **Genesis 1:8**, that God identified Heaven with the firmament, above which there were waters (**Genesis 1:7**); but note that God said, “**Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven,**” which lights manifestly included the stars (**Genesis 1:14-17**). Evidently, then, “**firmament**” must have included both a lower and upper expanse.

Today, as never before, there is full explicit, and emphatic agreement between the Bible and sound scientific thinking concerning the necessity of a real supernatural creation of the universe. Scientists have found the universe to be like a gigantic clock that is slowly running down or an immense lump of coal that is leisurely burning up. Matter is being converted into heat and other form of energy and is being dissipated. Thus a leveling off process is going on throughout the universe, resulting in what scientists call “entropy”, which is defined as “*the unavailability of energy for doing work.*” [12] All of this has been expressed very effectively by Barnett as follows: “*All the phenomena of nature, visible and invisible, within the atom and in outer space, indicate that the substance and energy of the universe are inexorably diffusing like vapor through the insatiable void. The sun is slowly but surely burning out, the stars are dying embers and everywhere in the cosmos heat is turning to cold, matter is dissolving into radiation, and energy is being dissipated into empty space. The universe is thus progressing toward an ultimate ‘heat-death’ or, as technically defined, a condition of ‘maximum entropy.’ When the universe reaches this state some billions of years from now, all processes of nature will cease. All space will be the same temperature. No energy can be used because all of it will be uniformly distributed through the cosmos. There will be no light, no life, no warmth - nothing but perpetual and irrevocable stagnation*” (*The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, p. 100). As an application of this to the point

under discussion, the words of Handrich are again appropriate: *“If the universe must come to an end, then it is finite; and it cannot be both finite and eternal. If energy transformations had been going on from eternity, then the static, lifeless state of maximum entropy would have been reached eternal ages ago. So the universe must have had a beginning”* (ibid, p. 47). Now that the universe in the beginning was not created by a natural process, but by supernatural power, is shown by these further words from Barnett: *“Nothing in all inanimate nature can be unmistakably identified as a pure creative process. At one time, for example, it was thought that the mysterious cosmic rays which continually bombard the earth from outer space might be by-products of some process of atomic creation. But there is greater support for the opposite view that they are by-products of atomic annihilation. Everything visible in nature or established in theory, suggests that the universe is implacably progressing toward final darkness and decay”* (ibid, p. 100). Then Handrich points out that even if cosmic rays are by-products of a creative process, this very fact shows that not all energy is being thus reconverted into matter; since cosmic rays represent a portion of energy that is being wasted. [13] Therefore, even if this theory of perpetual creation were true, entropy would still prevail. Unless it can be shown that all expended energy is being reconverted into matter, then this universe is not self-sustaining. If it is not self-sustaining, then it was not brought into existence by natural forces. And even if it should be found that there is a total reconversion of all energy into matter, and this should be taken as evidence that all matter has been created out of energy by a natural process; there would still remain the question that can have but one sensible answer: How did the energy come into existence in the first place? Thus scientific evidence for a supernatural creation is complete and unanswerable.

## 2. THE TIME.

When was the beginning mentioned in the first verse of Genesis? Was it on the first day of creation week? The language of the passage will allow this view, and some worthy men of science advocate it. However the language of the passage does not demand this view, but will readily allow any space of time that might have transpired between the origin of the universe and the fitting of the earth for man’s abode. Let us be careful to distinguish between

Biblical facts and our own theories about them. When the language of the Bible will readily admit of more than one interpretation, it is an evil thing for us to become so dogmatic about our own understanding of it that we must think of those who differ with us as denying the Bible. [14]

In saying that the language of **Genesis 1:1**, while not demanding it, will yet allow a lapse of time between the first two verses, the author is not affirming any of the following: (1) The age of rocks or fossils as advocated by uniformitarian geology. The author wholly rejects uniformitarian geology in favor of catastrophism and new deluvialism. [15] (2) The accuracy of any of the forty methods by which scientists have tried to determine the age of the earth. [16] (3) That there was any life on the earth - plant, animal, or human - or that there was a catastrophic ruin of original creation prior to the six days of **Genesis 1**. [17]

### 3. THE MANNER.

#### (1) *By Fiat.*

By this we mean that God spoke the universe into existence. The following passages teach this quite clearly:

**“By the word of Jehovah were the heaves made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Psalm 33:6).**

**“Let all the earth fear Jehovah; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalm 33:8, 9).**

**“Through faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God” (Hebrews 11:3).**

#### (2) *Without Previously Existing Materials.*

**“What is seen hath not been made out of things which appear” (Hebrews 11:3).**



When God had called the materials of the universe into existence, He fashioned them according to His will. But He began without anything. He alone is eternal. All other things have sprung from His creative hand.

#### 4. THE ORIGINAL FORM OF MATTER.

In the second verse of Genesis (interpreted in the light of v. 9) we find the earth covered with water and the atmosphere so saturated with vapor that the light of the sun could not reach the earth. The author can think of only three possible views concerning the reason for this condition: (1) That it was the condition of the earth at its origin. (2) That it had resulted from the ruin of original creation. (3) That it was a condition that had developed through the operation of natural forces subsequent to the origin of earth. This third view is elucidated in the following quotation: *“It is generally believed that in an early stage the earth was quite hot, possibly much hotter than the boiling point of water. If so, there could have been no oceans as the heat would have evaporated all the free water and the earth would have been completely covered with dense clouds right down to its surface”* (Stoner, in *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, p. 35).

Was all the matter in the universe created in one mass and then separated by violent expulsive power? An affirmative answer to this question provides a natural explanation of two noteworthy facts: (1) Distant galaxies or “island universes” seem to be speeding away from us with velocities proportional to their distances from us, so that if they “were traced backward, they would appear to have originated from one place at one time.” [18] (2) The universe is littered with a debris of matter such as one should expect to result from a universal explosion. This debris exists today in three forms: (A) Comets, the number of which in our solar system is estimated to be 17,500,000. [19] (B) Meteors, which are so numerous that “it is estimated that the earth encounters thousands of millions ... each day, and that the sun encounters as many as a trillion a second.” [20] (C) Individual atoms, constituting about one-third of all the matter of the universe, “dispersed in a condition of almost inconceivable tenuity of one atom per cubic inch. [21]

The language of **Genesis 1:1** does not forbid the idea that God used natural forces in a secondary manner to bring the earth into the condition described in the next verse. The same Hebrew word (bara) is used in **Psalm 89:47**, where it is affirmed that God “**made all men.**” Here the word admits of the use of the natural laws of generation. We know two things: (1) The universe was created by supernatural power. (2) Natural law now operates in the universe. The question is, at what point in the past did the operation of supernatural creative power give way to the operation of natural processes? “Genesis states a creation of the universe. It does not state when or how that creation took place” (Stoner, *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, p. 31).

### **III. GOD FITTED THE EARTH FOR MAN’S ABODE**

This was the work of the six days listed in **Genesis 1. Exodus 20:11** is manifestly speaking of this rather than the original creation when it says: “**For in six days the Lord God made heaven and earth ...**” The word for “**made**” is not “bara,” but “asah.” This latter word is used more than fifteen hundred times, and it has many meanings; but it is not once translated “create.” Thus it is not alluding to what God did in **Genesis 1:1**. This gives another reason for separating the original creation from the work of the six days.

#### **1. THE LENGTH OF THESE “DAYS.”**

The author believes that these “days” were ordinary days of approximately twenty-four hours each. This is the manifest meaning of both Moses and the Holy Spirit. The day-age theory would never have arisen had it not been for a desire on the part of some to accommodate the Genesis account to the “ages” advocated by uniformitarian geology. The absurdity of this theory can be seen by the fact that it involves the presence of vegetation for thousands of years during the “**third day**” without the benefit of the direct rays of the sun. “Moreover, this theory can never make the periods of creation fit the scheme of geological ‘ages’ even if the ‘days’ of Genesis are stretched out to any length whatever; for the Biblical record has to be ‘doctored’ or changed in various ways to make it fit these ‘ages,’ even when the days are stretched out to make them correspond. The glaring

inconsistencies that have always remained between the Genesis record and the geological ‘ages,’ even when such men as Hugh Miller, Gladstone, and Louis Agassiz had used their procrustean methods upon them, made thousands of scoffing infidels during the later nineteenth century; and these inconsistencies will always stare us in the face, and ought to warn us that we are taking shameful liberties with the Word of God.” [\[22\]](#)

## 2. THE GIVING OF LIGHT.

The record of this is found in **Genesis 1:3, 4**. The supposition that this light was produced by earth-glow, or from ionized air, or from phosphorus, or that it was supernaturally created at this time, is both unfounded and unnecessary. C. I. Scofield says very correctly here: *“Neither here nor in verse 14-18 is an original creative act implied. A different word is used. The sense is, made to appear; made visible. The sun and moon were created ‘in the beginning.’ The ‘light,’ of course, came from the sun, but the vapor diffused the light. Later the sun appeared in an unclouded sky”* (Scofield Bible). The appearance of light at this time was made possible, no doubt, by the precipitation of much of the moisture that had completely saturated the air. For one to say that this could not have been accomplished in an ordinary day, even by natural means, is for him to presume to be omniscient.

## 3. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EXPANSE.

Verses **6-8**. The Hebrew word, *“raqia,”* used seventeen times and always translated **“firmament”** in the King James Version, means *“expanse.”* The excess of vapor that still remained in the air after the work of the first day, was on the second day caused to rise to form clouds; which allowed increased light, no doubt, but did not yet permit the orb of the sun to become visible. As remarked before, the Bible alludes to both a lower and an upper **“firmament.”** See especially v. 14 and **Psalm 19:1-6**.

## 4. DRY LAND MADE TO APPEAR.

V. **9**. This was done on the third day. The necessity of this work shows that the earth, as described in verse **2**, was completely covered with water.

The draining of the land was accomplished evidently by the elevation of land masses, or by the depression of sea areas, or by both. Perhaps many, if not the hills and mountains of the antediluvian world were thrust up at this time. If the earth formerly had been very hot, as most scientists believe, then the forming of a solid outer crust may have caused a build-up of internal pressure sufficient to uplift continents, hills, and mountains. However scientific facts seem to indicate that continents were not as extensive then as now. Perhaps before the deluge much of the present land area was occupied by swamps, inland seas, and waterways. The waterways of that era may have been the “geosynclines” so well-known to geology. There may have been much volcanic activity in connection with the elevation of land masses.

#### 5. THE MAKING OF VEGETATION AND TREES.

Verses **11-13**. See also **Genesis 2:5**. This also was done on the third day. A creative act is not affirmed here. Because of this fact some have imagined that vegetation and trees sprang from seeds that had been preserved in the ground through a supposed cataclysm that had reduced the original creation to the condition described in verse 2. But such a notion cannot be made to harmonize with the declaration of **Genesis 2:5** to the effect that God made “**every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.**” One evident reason God used this method in the making of vegetation is that the uplifted land masses had become dry very quickly and there had been no rain. The ground, therefore, was not in suitable condition for the production of vegetation from seeds.

#### 6. SUN, MOON, AND STARS MADE TO APPEAR.

Verses **14-18**. This was the work of the fourth day. We have noted already that we have not here the creation of these bodies, but merely the full appearance of them. Clouds were cleared from the sky so that for the first time the heavenly orbs shone upon the earth in all their glory.

#### 7. FISH, SEA-MONSTERS, AND FOWLS CREATED.

Verses **20-23**. Verse **21** shows clearly that we have here on the fourth day another creative act. The water brought forth forms of life only after God

created them. This is fatal to the notion of reconciling evolution with the Bible. So also is the statement that each form of life was to bring forth “**after his kind.**” However “**kind**” here evidently is used in a broader sense than “species” as it is used by many today. But we know that the term “**kind**” need not mean anything broader than “family” as used in biology.

#### 8. INSECTS AND ANIMALS CREATED.

Verses **24-25.** The use of the expression “**living creature**” in verse 24 shows that we have here a creative act as in verse 21.

#### 9. MAN CREATED.

Verses **26-27.** The Hebrew “bara” is used three times in verse 27, showing unmistakably that the human race was divinely created and not evolved. We shall note man’s creation more in detail in the next chapter.

### IV. GOD NOW PRESERVES THE UNIVERSE

God exerts continuous power, by means of which He maintains the existence of the things He has created according to the nature He imparted to them. The Scripture teaching on the infinity and supremacy of God is sufficient to convince us that God alone is self-existent and immutable, and that the universe, therefore, must be supported and sustained by power that is not inherent. It is as we should expect, then, when we find the Scripture making the following statements:

**“Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and thou preservest them all (Nehemiah 9:6).**

**“O Jehovah, thou preservest man and beast” (Psalm 36:6).**

**“In him we live and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).**

**“He is before all things, and in him all things consist”** - held together, “derive their perpetuity” - Dargan (**Colossians 1:17**).

**“... upholding all things by the word of his power”** (**Hebrews 1:3**).

It was probably to preservation that Jesus referred in part at least, when He said: **“My Father worketh even until now”** (**John 5:17**). The rest of God on the seventh day of creative week was not total cessation of activity, but only of His direct creative work.

## **V. GOD CONTROLS THE UNIVERSE**

We find from the Scripture that God is not only the creator and preserver of the universe, but the controller of it. He did not create the universe and then abandon it. He now actively governs every part and every activity in the universe. This teaching is involved in the declaration that God **“worketh all things after the counsel of his own will”** (**Ephesians 1:11**).

The following Scriptures also teach this doctrine: **Job 37:3, 4, 6, 10-13; Psalm 135:7; 104:14; Matthew 5:45; 6:26, 30.**

The doctrine of God’s control of the universe does not deny the reality of second causes. It merely shows God as the first cause and the creator of all second causes. God arranged second causes so that they would fulfill His will. Physical laws are real. They prevail in all cases, except where God sets them aside in His miraculous acts. Vapor rises, rain falls, and the wind blows according to certain laws. But God ordained those laws, and He now sustains all things according to their original nature and His intention for them, so that it is really God that causes the vapor to rise, the rain to fall, and the wind to blow. To deny the existence of law is foolish. To represent law as operating independent of God is infidelity.

God’s control does not stop with the impersonal forces of the universe; it extends to and comprehends all the actions of men. This is shown by the following Scriptures. **Exodus 12:36; Psalm 33:14, 15; Proverbs 19:21; 20:24; 21:1; Jeremiah 10:23; Daniel 4:35; Isaiah 44:28; Exodus 9:12; Psalm 76:10; Proverbs 16:4; John 12:37, 39, 40; Acts 4:27, 28.**

It will be seen that the above control of men includes their evil acts as well as their good ones. God's control of the evil acts of men may be divided into four kinds:

1. PREVENTIVE.

**Genesis 20:6; 31:24; Psalm 139:3; 76:10.**

2. PERMISSIVE.

**Psalm 81:12, 13; Hosea 4:17; Acts 14:16; Romans 1:24, 28.**

It is under the head of God's permissive will or control that **I Samuel 18:10** belongs. Here we are told that "an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul." It is thus that we are to understand God's hardening and blinding of sinners, as in **Exodus 9:12; Romans 9:18; John 12:40**. It is also to this head that we are to refer **Acts 4:27, 28**, which has to do with the crucifixion of Christ. God ordained that Christ should die on the Cross, but He merely withheld His restraining power and permitted the crucifiers to follow their own natural enmity against Christ. In **II Samuel 24:1** and **I Chronicles 21:1**, we see proof of the fact that sometimes in the Bible the things which God allows others to accomplish are ascribed to Him. In **II Samuel 24:1** it is said that God moved David to number Israel, while in **I Chronicles 21:1** the same thing is ascribed to Satan.

3. DIRECTIVE.

**Genesis 50:20; Isaiah 10:5**. Thus, while God permits sin, He also directs it to accomplish such purposes as He is pleased for it to accomplish.

4. DETERMINATIVE.

God not only permits sin and directs it but He sets the bounds beyond which it cannot go, and prescribes the limits of its effects. See **Job 1:12; 2:6; Psalm 124:2; I Corinthians 10:13; II Thessalonians 2:7**.

The doctrine of God's control of the universe refutes deism, which teaches that God created the universe and then withdrew from it; leaving it to operate independently of His direction.

The following quotations may help to explain God's relation to sin. "That men's sins proceed from themselves; that in sinning they perform this or that action, is from God, who divideth the darkness according to His pleasure" (Augustine). "God is not the causative force, but the directing force in the sins of man. Men are in rebellion against God, but they are not out from under His control. God's decrees are not the necessitating cause of the sins of man, but the foredetermined and prescribed boundings and directings of men's sinful acts" (C. D. Cole, Baptist Examiner, March 1, 1932). "The wishes of sin are the wishes of man; man is guilty; man is to be blamed, but the All-wise God prevents those wishes from producing actions indiscriminately. He compels those wishes to take a certain divinely narrowed course. The floods of iniquity are from the hearts of men, but they are not allowed to cover the land; they are shut up to the channel of God's sovereign appointment, and men unwittingly are thus held in bounds, so that not one iota of God's purpose shall fail. He brings the floods of the ungodly into the channel of His providence to turn the mill of His purpose" (P. W. Heward).

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## FOOTNOTES:

[10] Genesis Vindicated, p. 54.

[11] The New Diluvialism, p. 190.

[12] Handrich, The Creation - Facts, Theories, and Faith, p. 46.

[13] Ibid, p. 50.

[14] "The modern scientific age challenges us as Christians to be receptive to new truth as it is discovered. The leaders of our faith counsel us to make certain that a new idea is truth before we hasten to adopt it. Our reason tells us to examine with great care any new teaching that appears to



displace the old line of thought in which we have been trained, until we have weighed it and found it satisfactory. We must avoid the two rocks of gullibility on the one hand and the ostrich-like attitude of some who deliberately close their eyes to new truth” (Gedney, in *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, p. 71).

[15] For criticism of the theories of uniformitarian geologists, see: *Evolutionary Geology* (Price); *Genesis Vindicated* (Price), p. 230; *Common Sense Geology* (Price); *How Did the World Begin* (Price), p. 56; *That You Might Believe* (Morris), p. 58; *Everyday Science for the Christian* (Handrich), p. 69; *Beyond the Atom* (De Vries), p. 79; and *The New Deluvialism* (Clark).

[16] For review and criticism of these methods, see *Everyday Science for the Christian* (Handrich) p. 69; *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, p. 26; *Beyond the Atom* (De Vries), p. 57.

[17] For criticism of this idea, see *Modern Science for the Christian Faith*, p. 63; *Genesis Vindicated*, (Price) p. 290; *Creation - Facts, Theories, and Faith* (Handrich), p. 126.

[18] *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, pp. 28, 30.

[19] *New Descriptive Astronomy* (Steele), p. 188.

[20] *Outline of Science* (Sheldon), p. 33.

[21] Allen (*Modern Science and Christian Faith*, p. 127). Note: Natural laws are never implied with reference to creation week. In fact, natural laws as so-called, are still the miraculous working of Christ, Who is said to hold all things together by His power, and that by Him “all things consist”. Who is able to discern what is “natural” law as opposed to spiritual power in an ongoing miraculous state?

[22] *Genesis Vindicated* (Price), p. 13. For further discussion of “days” of **Genesis 1**, see *Modern Science and the Genesis Record* (Rimmer), p. 17.

## Chapter 13 - THE CREATION OF MAN

In the previous chapter we covered the creation of the earth. In this chapter we are to deal with the creation of man. We are to face here the broad question: How did man come into existence? Another question growing out of this one is: Has science given a rational naturalistic explanation of the origin of man? There is also a third question that arises. Does the Bible teach that man is the direct and immediate creation of God? The answers to these questions will be made manifest as we give consideration to three other questions which form the grand divisions of this chapter, viz.,

### I. DID GOD CREATE MAN?

#### 1. THE BIBLE SAYS HE DID.

The Bible repeatedly answers this question in the affirmative. Can we, in this scientific age, intelligently accept this Bible truth? We shall see.

Let it be definitely borne in mind that we are not at this time asking how God created man. That question will form our next grand division. Our present question is, to put it more pointedly: “*Did God in some manner originate man?*” or, to put it in yet another form, “*Is God the author of life?*”

#### 2. SPONTANEOUS GENERATION DISPROVED.

There was a time when scientists were quite confident that living cells could be generated from certain kinds of dead matter under favorable conditions. *But the experiments of Pasteur and Tyndall demolished this theory of the spontaneous generation of life.*

Therefore we read from such a source as *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia* (Vol. B, p. 151):

“It is only in recent years (this was published in 1951] that science has proved that the origin of life is the same for the simplest forms as for the highest—for the infinitely small germs of tuberculosis, and the whole multitude

of plant and germ life ... as for mankind itself. *At present it can be said that man has never created even the simplest form of life, or seen it rise spontaneously.*”

If there are those who are credulous enough to believe that spontaneous generation will yet be observed or demonstrated, let them take cognizance of the fact that the advance of knowledge is constantly deepening the mystery of life. This was acknowledged as early as 1900 by H. W. Conn, a thorough-going evolutionist. In his book, *The Method of Evolution*, he said:

“An important part of the evolution problem is, of course, the origin of life, which appears to mean the origin of the first protoplasm. *Upon this subject it must be confessed we are in as deep ignorance as ever. Indeed, if anything, the disclosures of the modern microscope have placed the solution of this problem even farther from our grasp.* So long as we could regard protoplasm as a chemical compound, definite, though complex, so long was it possible to believe that its origin in the past geological ages was a simple matter of chemical affinity. It was easy to assume that, under the conditions of earlier ages, when chemical elements were necessarily placed in different relations to each other from those of today, chemical combinations would arise which would result in the formation of the complex body of protoplasm. This has been the supposition that has laid the foundation of various suggestions as to the origin of life. But having now learned that this substance is not a chemical compound, but a *mechanism*, and that its properties are dependent upon its mechanism such a conception of the origin of life is no longer tenable. In its place must be substituted some forces which build a mechanism. But even our most extreme evolutionists have not yet suggested any method of bridging the chasm, *and at the present time we must recognize that the problem of the origin of life is in greater obscurity than ever.* The origin of chemical compounds we may explain, but their combination into an organic machine which we call protoplasm is, at present, unimaginable.”

More than fifty years have passed since Prof. Conn wrote the above, and still no evolutionist has found the natural bridge between the living and

the non-living; and such is even more unimaginable today than it was in 1900.

In view of all this Prof. Asa Gray of Harvard University wrote:

“A beginning is wholly beyond the ken and scope of science, which is concerned with questions about how things go on; and has nothing to say as to how they absolutely began” (*Natural Science and Religion*).

### 3. TRUE SCIENCE DEMANDS BELIEF THAT GOD CREATED MAN.

The foregoing is true of science only insofar as it is confined to natural explanations. But science, broadly speaking, means systematized knowledge, and no man has the right to limit science to natural causes. The term is used in a special sense as referring to knowledge relating to the physical world. This is called natural science. But even natural science is concerned with the observation and classification of facts with a view to the discovery of general truths and the establishment of verifiable general laws. It proceeds chiefly by postulating hypotheses and testing them, and then by drawing general conclusions by induction. Hypotheses with reference to the natural origin of life have been thoroughly tested and found false. Is it not about time for all true scientists to adopt by induction the hypothesis that supernatural power alone can account for the origin of things, especially life? Observation has established the fact that life can come only from life. Now every scientist knows that physical life is dependent on matter. Moreover he knows that matter cannot be eternal. Therefore he knows that physical life cannot be eternal. Why, then, should not the true scientist adopt the conclusion that physical life began through the power of invisible life?

Some scientists have done this. Among them is the famous Louis Pasteur, who said:

“Believe me, in the face of these great problems, these eternal subjects of man’s solitary meditation, there are only two attitudes of mind: one created by faith, the belief in the solution given by Divine Revelation; and

that of tormenting the soul by the pursuit of impossible explanations” (*Pasteur and His Work*, L. Decours, p. 206).

But even more to the point is the testimony of lord Kelvin, the greatest scientist since Newton, the master of Dynamics, Sound, Light, Heat and Electricity; who said in a letter to James Knowles in 1903:

“I cannot admit that, with regard to the origin of life, science neither affirms nor denies Creative Power. SCIENCE POSITIVELY AFFIRMS CREATIVE POWER. It is not in dead matter that we live and move and have our being, but in the creating and directing power WHICH SCIENCE COMPELS US TO ADOPT AS AN ARTICLE OF BELIEF ... *There is nothing between absolute scientific belief in a Creative power, and the acceptance of the theory of a fortuitous concourse of atoms ...*”

To the same effect is the testimony of the great Swiss geologist, Lewis J. R. Agassiz (1807-1873):

“Though I know those who hold it to be unscientific to believe that thinking is not something inherent in matter, and that there is an essential difference between inorganic and living and thinking beings, I shall not be prevented by any such pretensions of a false philosophy from expressing my conviction that as long as it cannot be shown that matter or physical forces do actually reason, I shall consider any manifestation of physical thought as the evidence of a thinking being as the author of such thought, and shall look upon an intelligent and intelligible connection between the facts of Nature as direct proof of a thinking God . . . All these facts proclaim aloud the one God whom man may know, adore, and love; and natural history must in good time become the analysis of the thoughts of the creator of the universe as manifested in the animal and vegetable kingdom” (*Methods of Study in Natural History*).

Finally we read from Sir Oliver Lodge:

“We cannot understand the existence either of ourselves or of an external world unless we postulate some kind of creation. Creation involves

design and purpose and mental activity, and necessarily implies a creator of some kind” (*The Great Design*, p. 231).

Therefore when we accept the declaration of Genesis that God created man we are actuated by faith and also compelled by science. *The only scientists that will want to deny or even ignore the scientific evidence of an eternal, personal, self-existent Cause of all existing things are those whose minds are preempted by either agnosticism or atheism; and this means that they are dominated by an unscientific attitude.*

## II. WHEN DID GOD CREATE MAN?

### 1. NO SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR EXTENDED ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

Can we rely upon the chronology of Genesis, after due allowance is made for any possible numerical errors of transcription? or are we forced to believe that man has been on the earth from 500,000 to a million years? [\[23\]](#) Harry Rimmer, D.D., Sc.D., says:

“The evidences (?) of an extended antiquity for man are purely hypothetical, entirely erroneous, and in most cases manufactured entirely out of the imagination and desire of the sponsor of such evidences. The attempts to prove the data have been simply ludicrous, and in any other field would be pathetic as well. But there is no pathos in the attempts of staid men of science to falsify evidence and obscure the very subject they are presumed to illumine; this is pure chicanery. Scientific reputations are used to perpetuate shams hoaxes that would make the late and able Barnum turn green with envy, and cause him to revise his famous estimate which said there was only one sucker born every minute”, (*The Theory of Evolution and the Facts of Science*, p. 118).

### 2. WORLD POPULATION PROVES HISTORY OF MAN SHORT.

Moreover an extended antiquity for man cannot be reconciled with the present population of the world. We read from Handrich:

“Now, if the original population was two, we can find by logarithms that the population would have doubled itself thirty times to produce the present number of people (that is, the number of people in 1940) in the world. If the original pair lived, say, five hundred thousand years ago, which is considerably less than the average evolutionary estimate, the average interval of doubling would have been 16,667 years, which is absurd. If on the other hand, all people are descended from Noah and his wife, who, according to the best Biblical chronology, must have lived about 4,500 years ago, then the average interval for doubling is 150 years, which is reasonable” (Creation-Facts, Theories, and Faith, P. 284). The interval for the doubling of the population of the world would be increased to approximately 168 years if the longer chronology of Hales, based on the Septuagint, is followed, which allows 5,170 years from the time Noah and his wife were the lone ancestors of present day mankind up to 1940. This figure receives remarkable and singular confirmation as being approximately right from the number of descendants of Abraham and Jacob on the earth in 1922. In that year the descendents of Abraham numbered approximately 25,000,000. Abraham begat Ishmael 3,988 years prior to 1922, according to Hales. These figures show that the descendents of Abraham doubled every 163 years (approximately). On the other hand, there were 15,393,815 descendants of Jacob in the world in 1922. According to Hales, it was 3,850 years prior to 1922 that Jacob married. These figures show that the interval for the doubling of the descendants of Jacob is 162 years (approximately). The approximate correspondence of these figures (168 for the world as a whole; 163 for the descendants of Abraham; and 162 for the descendants of Jacob) cannot be dismissed as a mere coincidence. Furthermore the reliability of average statistics is established by the fact that insurance companies, the world over, conduct successful business on the basis of them.

Therefore, following the longer chronology of Hales, we find that man has been on this earth approximately 7,366 years. The author is willing to risk the prediction that no man will ever establish a longer period for man’s tenancy on this planet. If anything, this figure is too large. Gilbert says:

“Man has 7,000 years of history on the earth” (*Transactions of Victoria Institute*, Vol. 27, p. 41).

Sir William Dawson says:

“This figure (7,000) must be reduced” (*Modern Science in Bible Lands*, pp. 99, 100).

### 3. EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE BIBLE.

Nor does Egyptian chronology disprove the foregoing. *There is no settled Egyptian chronology*. Blaikie reflects this fact as follows:

“Egyptian Archeologists differ as to the length of the authentic period of Egyptian history. Six writers quoted by Brugsch represent it as having begun at various periods before Christ, ranging from 3150 years to 5702. The period does not exceed by very great space the time allowed by our ordinary chronology; while the fact that authorities differ to the extent of 2552 years shows how much uncertainty still belongs to the subject. How far the dynasties were contemporaneous, is still an unsettled question” (*Bible History*, p. 50).

### 4. FLOOD PROBABLY INTERRUPTED EGYPTIAN HISTORY.

It is commonly supposed that we must allow sufficient time after the flood for the original development of Egyptian civilization. But such is not the case. Urquhart devotes twelve pages of his *New Biblical Guide* (Vol. 1, pp. 298-309) to evidences that the deluge of the Bible broke into Egyptian history following the Sixth Dynasty. He quotes the following highly significant words from M. Mariette:

“After the reigns of Apappus and Nitocris, which closed the Sixth Dynasty, a sudden and unforeseen check was given to the progress of civilization; and *during four hundred and thirty-six years - from the Sixth to the Eleventh Dynasty - Egypt seems to have disappeared from the list of nations*. When she awoke from her long sleep, on the accession of the Entefs and Menuhotefs (of the Eleventh Dynasty), it was to find *that her ancient traditions were quite forgotten. The old family names, titles of the functionaries, the writing, and even the religion itself seems changed*. No



longer were Thinis, Elephantine, and Memphis the capitals, but Thebes was for the first time chosen as the seat of sovereign power. Besides this, Egypt had been shorn of a considerable portion of her territory, and the authority of her kings was limited to the Thebaid. The monuments, which were barbaric, primitive, sometimes even coarse, confirm all this; and on looking at them, we might easily believe that Egypt under the Eleventh Dynasty had reverted to that period of infancy through which she had passed under the Third” (*History of Egypt*, pp. 14,15).

Moreover John F. Blake, in *History of the Heavens*, tells us that Egyptians participate in “*a New Year’s festival connected with and determined by Pleiades (that is the passing of the meridian by this constellation at midnight), (which) appears to be one of the most universal of all customs*” (p. 115). The date of this festival is Nov. 17, which is believed by many to correspond to “*the second month, the seventeenth day*” as given in Gen. 7:11 for the beginning of the flood. Mr. Blake says that this festival was “*always connected with the memory of the dead*” because of “*a tradition that the world has been previously destroyed at this time.*” Mr. Blake then makes a final summation of the matter as follows:

“The commemoration of the dead was connected among the Egyptians with a Deluge which was typified by the priest placing the image of Osirus in a sacred coffer or ark, and launching it out into the sea till it was borne out of sight. Now when we connect this fact, and the celebration taking place *on the 17th day of Athyr*, with the date on which the Mosaic account of the Deluge of Noah states it to have commenced, ‘in the second month (of the Jewish year, which corresponds to November), the 17th day of the month,’ it must be acknowledged that this is no chance coincidence, and that the precise date here stated must have been regulated by the Pleiades, as was the Egyptian date” (ibid. pp. 121,122).

### **III. HOW DID GOD CREATE MAN?**

We noted in the previous chapter that the Hebrew word “bara” is used three times in **Genesis 1:27**, where it evidently refers to the creation of life in man. The Hebrew word signifies a direct and immediate creation.

Moreover, in **Genesis 2:7** we are told that God made the body of man out of the dust of the ground, not from the body of some lower form of life.

Now the atheistic evolutionist flatly and openly denies this account. He is absolutely and willfully blind, but consistent. The theistic evolutionist is an inconsistent straddler. He foolishly tries to hold to both evolution and divine creation. Harry Rimmer has the following to say with reference to Genesis and Theistic Evolution:

“It is here stated that man was created by a specific fiat of the deity. To refute this, men who are unwilling to receive and recognize the power of God in creation have produced the weird theory of Theistic Evolution. By this they state that God’s part in the matter was a minor part. He created the first tiny cell and endued it with power to multiply and change, violated all present known laws of biology, and by a series of miraculous transmutations produced all living things that are now or ever have been, climaxing in a creature called man. THIS IS A HOPELESS ATTEMPT TO RIDE TWO HORSES THAT ARE HEADED IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS. This theory of Theistic Evolution limits God in His power to create a specific being and denies Him the authority demanded by the creation account in Genesis. It also violates the clear teaching of this text” (Modern Science and the Genesis Record, p. 275)

#### 1. BIBLICAL REASONS FOR BELIEVING THAT MAN IS THE DIRECT CREATION OF GOD.

These reasons will show that the Bible cannot be made to harmonize with evolution. They concern:

##### (1) *The Time of Man’s Creation.*

It has been shown, and any man that is not totally blind must recognize it, that the Bible will not allow in its chronology the long ages demanded by evolution for man’s existence on this earth.

##### (2) *The Method of Man’s Creation.*

It has also been shown that the method of God in man's creation, as set forth in the Bible, is in hopeless conflict with the theory of evolution.

(3) *The Method and Time of Woman's Creation.*

The scriptural account of woman's creation represents her as being created after man and from a rib taken from man. On the other hand, evolution would have necessarily produced the female along with the male, else procreation would have been impossible.

(4) *The Manner in Which the Human Race Began.*

We learn from the Bible that the human race began with one man, Adam. But, if evolution were true, it is certain that many human beings would have been produced simultaneously and in various parts of the earth.

(5) *The Original State and Fall of Man.*

According to the Bible, man was created holy and upright, and fell from this estate, bringing sin into the world (**Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:22**). But evolution has no place for an original holy state of man, nor for the entrance of sin through a fall.

(6) *The Permanence of Each "Kind" of Life.*

In Genesis God prescribed that each kind of life bring forth "**after his kind.**" It has been remarked already that the Genesis "*kind*" is probably broader than "*species*" as sometimes used; but it need not be thought of as being broader than "*family*" according to biological classification in order to see that Genesis is true according to science. Evolution is in opposition to the Bible on this matter in that it believes in the transmutation not only of species, but of families and even of phyla. It is noteworthy that biologists have felt compelled to put man in a family by himself. Man, designated biologically as species *Homo sapiens*, is the sole representative of the family *Hominidae*. [24]

## 2. SCIENTIFIC REASONS FOR BELIEVING THAT MAN IS THE DIRECT CREATION OF GOD.

Every scientific evidence of the falsity of the theory of evolution is scientific evidence of the direct creation of man. Thus we have here a broad field.

### (1) *Evolution Cannot Prove that Protozoa Ever Have Become Metazoa.*

The phylum protozoa includes all animal forms that consist of one cell. The earth literally teems with them. They generally reproduce by fission. But they never change into metazoa- animal forms with more than one cell. This startling fact is well stated by Harry Rimmer as follows:

“When these present day protozoa, which are living creatures whose entire organism consists of just one cell, are observed for thousands and thousands of generations, they never change one iota from what they were in the very beginning. Countless generations pass under the eye of the observer and no new species of protozoa arise, nor do metazoa result from changes in protozoan structure” (The Theory of Evolution and the Facts of Science, p. 24).

Now evolution supposes that all life, both plant and animal, has evolved from some protozoan form. It must suppose that a protozoan form became a metazoan form, which is contrary to both observation and reason. There is no imaginable way for this to take place. Every time a protozoan divides, it gives rise to an offspring - another protozoan. Thus, at its very foundation (ignoring its inability to give a natural explanation of the origin of the first protozoan), evolution is utterly unscientific and is guilty of a rash guess that is not worthy to be called a theory or hypothesis. The only man, therefore, that will believe the first postulate of evolution is the man whose prejudice against the supernatural overbalances his reason. [\[25\]](#)

*(2) Evolution Cannot Explain Why The Body Cells of Each Species are Different.*

I quote again from Harry Rimmer for the sake of convenience and brevity:

“For a long time morphology, the science of gross bodily structure, proved the stumbling block of biologists. Realizing that all living things were simply masses of cells, and supposing that all cells were fundamentally the same, the biologist of the past generation concocted the theory of the Continuity of Life.” “This is all changed now. The archaic days of biology are over, and the super-microscope, the micro-manipulator, and ultra-violet observation have opened up new fields. The earliest experiments I know of in the differentiation of protoplasm were to determine the rate of decomposition of this element under the ultra-violet ray. Then sufficient quantities of the substance were isolated for more careful study . . . The protoplasm of the cat family is one kind of protoplasm, and the dog has a distinct kind of protoplasm that differs from that of the cat. Boiled down to its essential summary, there is a variable formula for the formation of protoplasm by species. So we are now in the stage of research where we can begin to test protoplasm as we do blood! We do not make the error of saying, that as all mammals have blood they are essentially the same in origin, because we recognize the appreciable difference in the blood of one specie, genus, or family, as each blood differs from every other kind. So today with protoplasm; and the continuity theory suffers catastrophic collapse” (*The Theory of Evolution and the Facts of Science*, pp. 25, 36)

Thus evolution suffers miserable demolition in the realm of its second postulate.

*(3) Evolution Cannot Prove or Even Explain the Transmutation of One Family Into Another.*

The larger unit of the family is mentioned here because, as indicated previously, the term species has been used sometimes in the sense of varieties; and there can be no reasonable doubt that multitudes of varieties

have developed within the Genesis kinds. Perhaps genera could be safely used here instead of family. But the term family is used in order to be on sure ground.

First of all, the evolutionist cannot find intervening forms between the families among the fossils. This is too well known to require more than mere statement.

In the second place, extensive experimentation, involving selective breeding, inbreeding, crossbreeding, and change of environment, has not produced a single new and distinctive kind. Crossing has occurred between varieties of fruits and vegetables, producing new varieties; but the new variety was still a fruit or a vegetable. Tall yellow peas have been crossed with dwarf green peas with the result that tall green peas and dwarf yellow peas have been produced; but the hybrids were still peas. Much experimentation has been conducted with fruit flies, and mutations have been produced; but the mutants still belonged to the same kind - they did not become houseflies, horseflies, June bugs, or bumblebees. A cross between two members of the horse family (*Equidae*) produces the mule; but here, even though the cross is between two closely related genera of the same family, nature protests by making the hybrid mule sterile. Where fertile mutants and hybrids are possible, under natural conditions there is always a strong tendency toward reversion to original type. This nullifies Darwin's much-heralded *natural selection*.

Change of environment is even more futile in effecting mutations. George McCready Price, in his *Q.E.D.*, tells of a German botanist who transplanted 2,500 kinds of mountain plants to the lowlands, and studied them for years in connection with related kinds in the lowlands. He found that the mountain environment had made absolutely no permanent or significant change in their structures or habits.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that evolutionists cannot prove the transmutation of family, nor can they give a scientific explanation of how it could occur. [\[26\]](#)

(4) *Evolution Cannot Explain Why Certain Kinds of Life Have Shown No Evolution.*

The fossil record preserved for us in the rock formations of the earth show that certain present-day forms of life have been the same from the beginning. Among these we have the protozoa, as already indicated. They throng the earth and exist in many varieties, but one variety never becomes another, nor does a *protozoa* ever become a metazoa. Another instance of non-evolution is found in coral polyps. These insects have been working since the era known in uniformitarian geology as the *Silurian period*, which is supposed to have occurred millions of years ago. Great masses of coral have been excavated in inland areas and thus date back to the time when the sea covered the given area; yet “*the present day descendants of the Silurian coral animals are identical with their Silurian ancestors!*” (Rimmer, *The Theory of Evolution and the Facts of Science*, p. 81). The same is true of *primitive algae* from the same Silurian period, crayfish from the *Carboniferous age*, grasshoppers, preserved in the famous *Grasshopper Glacier* of Montana, a mosquito preserved in a moss agate which is supposed to have been formed “when the earth was young,” many varieties of insects petrified and preserved in amber formed from resin that dripped from pre-historic trees similar to pine or gum, and of giant sharks and immense whales embedded in rock on the Pacific Coast several thousand feet above sea level and some forty miles from the beach.

(5) *Evolution Cannot Explain the Universal Law of Retrogression Instead of Progression.*

This law holds true with reference to civilization. Archeology has revealed that the farther down the excavator goes the higher the type of civilization he finds evidence of.

In the animal kingdom the law is not, as evolution would assert, progress from the small to the large or from the weak to the strong. It is just the reverse. The largest modern elephant is a pigmy in comparison with the *Elephas imperator* of the distant past. The present-day sloth is a small creature, but the giant sloth (Megatherium) of geological history weighed

tons! The modern dragon fly or mosquito hawk is the modern representative of fossil dragon flies with a wing spread of eighteen inches. The great Sabertooth tiger that once roamed California shows some evidence of having been the progenitor of present diminutive wild cat of the Pacific Coast.

All of this is dead against the theory of evolution; but it is exactly in harmony with the revelation of the Bible that giant men once lived on the earth and that men were once so strong that they sometimes lived more than nine hundred years.

These are just a few of the potent scientific objections that can be brought against the foolish fallacy of evolution. Space forbids that we deal with the many other scientific reasons for rejecting this unscientific imagination.

### 3. THE HOAX OF GEOLOGICAL AGES EXPOSED.

We are now about to storm the very citadel of evolution. It is to fossils preserved in rocks that the evolutionist must look for his chief and only real proof. That this is true is shown by the following quotations from qualified authorities:

“The direct evidence furnished by fossil remains, is by all odds, the strongest evidence that we have in favor of organic evolution” (Morgan, *A Critique of the Theory of Evolution*, p. 24).

“While the comparative study of living animals and plants may give very convincing evidence, fossils provide only historical, documentary evidence that life has evolved from simpler to more complex forms” (Part II - *Historical Geology*, p. 23, in *A Textbook of Geology*, by Schuchert and Dunbar).

Uniformitarian geology is the outgrowth of the philosophy of naturalism as opposed to supernaturalism. It follows the method of “*explaining the past and the present from a subjective standpoint*” (Zittle, *History of Geology*, p. 23). It takes the fractional sedimentary deposits found in various parts of the earth, which are never more than a few miles thick; and, by presuming to



be able to compute the comparative age of each stratum of rock, it pieces together an imaginary series of sedimentary rock envelopes or “onion coats” covering the earth to a depth of perhaps one hundred miles. [27] Then it calculates the length of time that it took for this sedimentary rock to form on the basis of the rate of deposition today, which it calculates to be about a foot in two hundred years. By this method it arrives at a figure between 80,000,000 and 100,000,000 as the minimum age for the lowest strata of sedimentary rock. [28] From this, then, the age of each stratum is determined.

Let us note the glaring falsity of this method of procedure and of the supposed proofs of evolution that it furnishes.

(1) *The Method of Determining the Order in Which Various Strata Were Deposited is False.*

Uniformitarian geologists have had recourse to three methods in determining the order of deposition: the materials of which deposits are composed, the order of superimposition, and the fossil content of deposits. No one of these can be relied upon by itself, and it is the cunning way in which they are combined that shows the falsity of the whole method.

Full reliance cannot be placed on material composition alone, because evidence from the other two sources sometimes contradicts this evidence. Then superimposition cannot be fully relied upon because the various strata are not continuous and because some are missing in every deposit. Moreover their vertical order is very often reversed. Thus evolutionists turn to fossils as their chief indicator of the order of deposition. But here again full dependence is denied them, for, as George McCready Price points out:

“Any kind of fossiliferous rock, ‘old’ or ‘young,’ may occur conformably on any other kind of fossiliferous rock, ‘older’ or ‘younger’” (*Evolutionary Geology*, p. 160)

However, despite this fact, in the last analysis, fossils alone determine the order of deposition. And in using fossils as an age-indicator, evolution is assumed to be true. Thus uniformitarian geologists proceed in a circle. They assume the truth of evolution, and then proceed to prove it by a geological

sequence that is largely arranged in an arbitrary manner. Any thinking person can see the utter falsity of this hoax.

(2) *The Method Used for Determining the Time Required for the Deposition of Sediment is False.*

It is assumed that the rate through the past was the same that it is today. That means that evolutionary geologists assume that there have not been conditions, catastrophes, and cataclysms that could have produced a more rapid rate of deposition. Later we shall notice that there are indications both in fossils and elsewhere that the rate of deposition has not remained uniform.

(3) *Most of the Great Mountain Chains Show at Their Summits What Uniformitarian Geologists Consider Youngest Strata.*

See *Evolutionary Geology* (Price), p. 155. Thus the uplifting of these mountains must be considered “young” or recent in the geological time scale. This is a puzzle to evolutionists, as indicated by Dana:

“It has been thought incredible that the orthographic climax should have come so near the end of geological time, instead of in an early age when the crust had a plastic layer beneath, and was free to move; yet the fact is beyond question” (*Manual*, p. 1020).

(4) *On the Ocean Floor the “Youngest” and “Oldest” Fossils Lie Mingled.*

See same reference given under (3). This is interpreted by evolutionists as showing how slowly ooze accumulates on the ocean floor. But it is a better indication that the fossils are of the same recent age.

(5) *The Conformability and Blending of Many Successive Strata Show That There Was No Great Lapse of Time Between Their Deposition.*

If the upper surface of a given stratum is level and comparatively smooth so it and the stratum next above it agree with each other in their planes of bedding, where there is no evidence of erosion on the lower

stratum, the two are said to be *conformable*. This means that the upper one must have been laid down before any great lapse of time between it and the lower one. Then often there is a blending of successive strata which seems to indicate that the lower was still in a moist and plastic condition when the upper one was deposited upon it.

(6) *It is Becoming Increasingly Apparent That Many Species of Animals, Formerly Considered Extinct, Have Representatives in the Modern World.*

Evolutionists have used the case of extinct animals to bolster their idea of vast ages for life on the earth. But the sand is giving way under them here. Post-pliocene mollusks have been found to be identical with living species.

“Pictet catalogues ninety-eight species of mammals which inhabited Europe in the post glacial period. Of these, fifty-seven still exist unchanged ... “ (Fairhurst, *Theistic Evolution*, P. 99).

In many cases evolutionists have based their conclusion as to extinct species on the most flimsy evidence. If modern forms were not precisely like fossil forms, they have been classed as separate species. This caused even Mr. Darwin to say:

“It is notorious on what excessively slight differences many paleontologists have founded their species.”

(7) *The Abundance of Fossils Preserved in Rocks Stand Against the Fragmentary Specimens Now Being Buried.*

This is indicative that the fossil record was not made by the slow processes working today. Moreover the remarkable preservation of fossils argues for interment under very abnormal conditions. Viewing the matter from a slightly different viewpoint leads to a similar conclusion, as shown by Clark, in speaking of deposits in the “High Plains” of the United States as follows:

“The appearance indicates that great erosive forces carved the general contour of the rocks, after which vast streams of water, overloaded with sediment, built up the alluvial plains above the eroded surface. Normal conditions would not produce this situation. Violent water action is required to spread this sand and gravel so widely and so thickly” (*New Diluvialism*, p. 29).

(8) *Fossils Give Evidence of Violent and Sudden Death.*

The evidence of this flows from the fact that many Trilobite fossils are found tightly rolled up into a ball as for protection, indicative of a defensive spasm into which they threw themselves because of exposure to a violently destructive force. Then there are fishes whose figures show contortion, contraction, and curving; their tails in many instances being bent around their heads, their spines sticking out, and their fins fully spread, indicating that they died in convulsions. Mass destruction is also indicated in the fossil record, and this betokens violence.

(9) *Coal Formations Indicate Quick Violent Action Rather Than A Slow Process.*

Evolutionary Geologists supposed that coal was formed from peat that was produced during long ages in swamps through the accumulation of leaves, stems, and plants. They must suppose that while the peat was forming there was a slow subsidence of the area. But it is not easy for them to explain the reason for such a vast accumulation in one place. It is estimated that it takes from five to fifteen feet of vegetable matter to make one foot of coal. There are some coal beds forty feet or more thick. This would have required from 200 to 450 feet of peat. Moreover there are instances of 117 successive seams of coal. But the strongest evidence of quick action lies in the fact that trees extend up through seams of coal. In an English coal mine there is a tree 114 feet high. This tree could not have grown thus through long ages in a peat bog. Sometimes trees have been found extending through several seams of coal and their intervening rock strata. All of this is indicative of quick violent action in the entombing of the vegetation that made our coal.

#### 4. WHAT IS THE CONCLUSION OF ALL THIS?

The conclusion of all these indications of the falsity of uniformitarian geology is, to put it bluntly, *that the flood described in Genesis accounts for the vastly greater part of sedimentary rocks and the fossils they contain.*

When one contemplates the probable causes of the precipitation of the vast store of vapor that had been held in suspension somewhere above the earth, the meaning of the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, and the calculated effect of the vast tides that swept back and forth over the earth, it is not hard to visualize forces and agencies that can account for geological formations.

There may have been a near-approach of a huge comet that caused the precipitation of the vast belt of moisture. The inclination of the earth's axis may have been suddenly altered temporarily, sending great tides of water sweeping over the earth. The shrinking of the earth's crust may have caused underground streams to burst through, thus greatly disrupting the face of the earth. Water entering the bowels of the earth through volcanic craters may have caused great internal disturbance.

At any rate, the flood of the Bible gives the most satisfactory explanation of all observed facts.

This implies that the flood was world-wide, and this is the plain meaning of Genesis. To say that there was not enough water to cover the whole earth and submerge all mountains, is to presume that we know how high the mountains were at the time. It has been estimated that there is enough water on the earth to cover it to a depth of two miles if it were level. That figure could be far too small. Who can tell just how much water there is now suspended in the atmosphere and hidden in underground streams? The author prefers the Bible to any word of man. And he takes his stand on it against every theory that even questions the accuracy of its chronology wherever such is given, making reasonable allowance for errors of transcription.

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#### FOOTNOTES:

[23] All suggestions that Moses did not intend to give an exact chronology in stating the ages of fathers at the birth of sons are about as sensible as would be the suggestion that it is not the purpose of a clock to indicate time. The author takes his stand with Moses and banks on his accuracy. A believer in verbal inspiration cannot do otherwise. There may have been minor errors of transcription. Then there is the question of the comparative accuracy of the extant Hebrew manuscripts and the Septuagint translation. Some defend one and some defend the other. Even so the disagreement is of no great importance when it comes to deciding whether man has been on the earth a few thousand years or a million years. It is admitted that an absolutely complete and reliable chronology cannot be made out much beyond the birth of Isaac. But we know that by no manner of means can man's existence on this earth be lengthened to more than a few thousand years without denying any semblance of accuracy to the Bible.

[24] See *General Biology*, p. 757 (Mavor), The Macmillan Company (1952).

[25] Let no evolutionist be so foolish as to think that he can appeal to the original life germ. The life germ is not a protozoan, for it is not an animal. It is a reproductive cell, distinguishable from a body cell. Even after fertilization, the original germ has not the power of independent life as has the protozoan; and would never be mistaken for a protozoan by any trained scientist.

[26] That the student may better understand the terms used in the foregoing discussion it is thought best here to list in order the terms used in biological differentiation in the animal kingdom. From the larger to the smaller groups the names used are as follows: Phylum, Subphylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species.

[27] See *A Textbook on Geology* (Garrels, p. 297, Harper & Brothers, New York.

[28] *Ibid*, P. 298.

## Chapter 14 - THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF HUMAN NATURE

There are two theories with reference to the essential elements of human nature. We note them in the following order:

### I. THE TRICHOTOMOUS THEORY

The two following passages are held by some to teach a three-fold division of human nature into body, soul and spirit, - these constituting three distinct elements in man's nature:

**“The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thessalonians 5:23).**

**“The word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).**

We reject this theory for the following reasons:

1. *If the three-fold enumeration in I Thessalonians 5:23 must be taken as signifying three distinct elements in man, then Matthew 22:37 must be taken as naming at least one additional element, making four in all.*

**Matthew 22:37** reads: **“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.”** It needs to be noted that this passage, in the light of the interpretation of **I Thessalonians 5:23** by the advocates of the trichotomous theory, makes the heart and mind different elements in man's nature. Now it may be said that **“mind”** in this passage is identical with **“spirit”** in **I Thessalonians 5:23**. But the **“heart”** cannot be identified with anything in **I Thessalonians 5:23**, since **“soul,”** as well as heart, is mentioned in **Matthew 22:37**. So, for the advocates of the trichotomous theory, in the light of their interpretation of **I Thessalonians**

**5:23**, there is no escape from the necessity of holding a four-fold division of human nature.

*2. Just as it is manifest from the Scripture that “heart” and “mind” do not designate separate elements of human nature, so this is also manifest of “soul” and “spirit.”*

We presume all will agree that “heart” and “mind” represent, not two distinct elements of human nature, but only two faculties; the mind being specially the faculty of knowledge and the heart the faculty of feeling. Later we will show that it is just as manifest that soul and spirit are not distinct.

*3. Hebrews 4:12 need not be taken as referring to a division between the soul and spirit, as though they are separable elements.*

Rather we think it refers to “the piercing of the soul and of the spirit, even to their very joints and marrow; i. e., to the very depth of the spiritual nature (A. H. Strong).

*4. The terms “spirit” and “soul” are used interchangeably in the Scripture.*

See **Genesis 41:8**, as compared with **Psalm 42:6**; **John 12:27**, as compared with **John 13:21**; and **Hebrews 12:23**, as compared with **Revelation 6:9**. This interchangeable use of the two terms is fatal to the trichotomous theory.

*5. Only two elements of human nature are indicated in the creation of man.*

God first created man’s body. Then into the nostrils of that body He breathed the breath (spirit) of life, and man thus became a living soul. Cf. **Genesis 2:7**. Man did not first come to be a living soul or to possess a soul, and then receive the spirit in addition. It was the reception of the spirit that made him a living Soul.

*6. Jesus divided human nature into two elements only.*



In **Matthew 10:28** Jesus said: “**Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**” If there are three elements in human nature, what becomes of the third when the body and soul go to hell?

If **Ecclesiastes 12:7** is offered in answer to this question, we reply that the Hebrew word translated “**spirit**” in this passage, cannot be taken as meaning “**spirit**” in the sense that we are here using it; it merely means breath. In reply to this, it may be said that, if the Hebrew word here means only breath, then it means the same in **Genesis 2:7**, where we have interpreted it to mean spirit. But since, after the departure of the breath, man continues to be a living soul, as evidenced by his eternal conscious suffering, in case he goes to hell (Gehenna), it must be understood that the word in **Genesis 2:7** means more than breath.

Let it not be understood that we are here saying that there is never any distinction whatever made between soul and spirit. While they are most frequently used synonymously, yet sometimes a vague distinction is traceable. But this distinction is not between different elements of human nature. When a distinction is made, the two terms merely “designate the immaterial principle from different points of view” (A. H. Strong). “We conclude that the immaterial part of man, viewed as an individual and conscious life, capable of possessing and animating a physical organism, is called ‘psuke’ (**soul**); viewed as a rational and moral agent, susceptible of divine influence and indwelling, this same immaterial part is called ‘pneuma’ (**spirit**). The ‘pneuma’ (**spirit**), then, is man’s nature looking God-ward, and capable of receiving and manifesting the ‘Pneuma Hagion’ (**Holy Spirit**); the ‘psuke’ (**soul**) is man’s nature looking earthward, and touching the world of sense. The ‘pneuma’ (**spirit**) is man’s higher part, as related to spiritual realities or as capable of such relation; the ‘psuke’ (**soul**) is man’s higher part, as related to the body, or as capable of such relation. Man’s being is therefore not trichotomous but dichotomous, and his immaterial part, while possessing duality of powers, has unity of substance. Man’s nature is not a three-storied house, but a two-storied house, with windows in the upper story looking in two directions - toward earth and toward Heaven. The ‘lower story’ is the physical part of us - the body. But man’s ‘upper story’ has two aspects; there

is an outlook toward things below, and a skylight through which to see the stars” (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 246). “Soul is spirit modified by union with the body” (Hovey).

## II. THE DICHOTOMOUS THEORY

In view of all the foregoing considerations we hold to the dichotomous theory of human nature rather than the trichotomous theory. The dichotomous theory views man as being composed of two parts, one material (body) and the other immaterial (either soul or spirit).

We have already justified this theory, at least to our own satisfaction, against the trichotomous theory. It remains now only for us to answer those who refuse even a two-fold division of man’s nature and deny that the soul is an actual element, distinct from the body. As proof that the body and soul are two distinct elements, we offer the following arguments:

1. *Jesus said that man cannot kill the soul.*

See **Matthew 10:28**. And in this same passage He also said that man can kill the body. Therefore the body and soul are distinct elements.

2. *Man continues to exist after the body is gone back to dust.*

For proof of this see the chapter on [“The Present State Of The Dead”](#).

3. *Physical death is spoken of as the departing of the soul from the body and a coming to life again is spoken of as the soul’s coming again into the body.*

See **Genesis 35:18**; **1 Kings 17:22**. Sometimes the Hebrew word in these passages for “soul” (nephesh) means merely life. But such a meaning does not make good sense in **1 Kings 17:22**, for it is stated there that “**the soul of the child came into him again and he revived**” or lived again. To translate “nephesh” here as “life” would make the words read: “The life of the child came into him again and he lived again.”

4. *Paul calls the body merely our earthly house, and says that we shall have another house after the dissolution of this body.*

See **II Corinthians 5:1-4**. This other house is the spiritual body which believers will receive in the resurrection. Thus the inner man or soul may move out of this house and into another one, and is, therefore, as distinct in substance and separable in nature from the body as the human body is from the house it lives in. The physical body is only the soul's earthly dwelling-place.

## **Chapter 15 - THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN**

Man is a moral creature. By this we mean that he is responsible for his actions. This is one of the marks by which man is distinguished from the beast. Man is constituted a moral creature by those faculties which make him responsible for his actions. These faculties are three:

### **I. INTELLECT**

The intellect is the faculty of perception or thought. It is man's power of knowing or receiving knowledge. Without this man would not be a moral creature. This is taught by Jesus in **John 9:41**.

### **II. CONSCIENCE**

From a strictly psychological standpoint, conscience is not regarded as a separate faculty. From this standpoint, the three faculties are intellect, sensibility, and will; the conscience being regarded as the combined action of these faculties giving man a consciousness of his moral responsibility and judging between right and wrong. Yet conscience can, in a sense, be regarded as a faculty; for it is the power of the mind to know right and wrong and to feel obligated to do the right. Thus judgment is involved in conscience. And reason is involved in judgment.

After all, conscience is man's ultimate guide. It is unsound to make a distinction between following one's conscience and following the law of God. The law of God has no way of reaching us except through the conscience. When we do right it can be only as the result of the prompting of conscience. Conscience acts according to the standard accepted by the mind. Thus conscience guides us aright only in proportion to the rightness of the standard we have accepted as our guide. Hence the need of correct knowledge of the Word of God.

### **III. WILL**

The will of man is defined by A. H. Strong as "the soul's power to choose between motives and to direct its subsequent activity according to the

motive thus chosen - in other words, the soul's power to choose both an end and the means to attain it." The same author says: "The choice of an ultimate end we call immanent preference; the choice of means we call executive volition."

As we have remarked in considering God's will, the will is not independent of the nature of its possessor. It is not, as it were, another self within us. The character of the will is the character of the individual possessing it. The will is simply a power of the soul.

The acts of the will are determined by two factors - motives and character. We use the term "motives" to mean reasons and inducements influencing toward certain acts of the will. Of these two factors, character is the most dominant; for in every act of the will we make choice between two or more motives, and it is our character that determines which motive we choose.

Every act of will is an expression of character in view of motives. And every act of will tends to modify or confirm character. This explains why a given choice of the will becomes easier each time it is made.

The question of the freedom of man's will, being such a broad subject, will be treated in another chapter.

## Chapter 16 - THE ORIGINAL STATE AND FALL OF MAN

In **Ecclesiastes 7:29** we read. “**Behold, this only have I found: that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.**” Nothing is more evident than the two facts mentioned in this passage; viz., the original uprightness of man and the later fall of man.

### I. MAN’S ORIGINAL STATE

#### 1. THE FACT OF IT.

The passage just quoted tells us that God made man upright. This is evident from the nature of God. Being infinitely holy, he could create only that which is upright. Then we are told in **Genesis 1:31** that God saw everything He made was very good. This included man. Furthermore, we are told that God made man in His own image (**Genesis 1:27**).

#### 2. THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN.

##### (1) *Negatively Considered.*

The image of God in man did not consist of a trinity in man analogous to the divine trinity. We have already discussed this at length in the chapter on [“The Essential Elements Of Human Nature”](#). In this chapter we showed that man consists, not of three parts, but of two. And if man did consist of three parts, which member of the trinity would the body of man represent?

##### (2) *Positively Considered.*

The image of God in man consisted of two things; viz.,

##### A. Holiness.

In this, man had a moral likeness to God. In affirming that holiness was a part of God’s image in man we mean that in the creation of man God imported to the human faculties a righteous inclination. Holiness must have

been a part of the image of God in man because holiness is the fundamental attribute of God. That holiness was a part of the original image of God in man is also confirmed by the fact that it is imparted in the renewing of God's image in regeneration (**Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10**). This is further confirmed by **Ecclesiastes 7:29**.

Man's original moral likeness to God consisted of more than mere innocence. It was positive holiness. This alone can satisfy the statement that man was made in God's image. If innocence were enough to satisfy this statement, then we should be forced to conclude that every infant is born in the moral image of God; and this the Scripture denies (**Psalms 51:5; 58:3; Jeremiah 17:9**).

#### B. Personality.

In this, man has a natural likeness to God. Personality may be defined as self-consciousness and self-determination. Self-consciousness is the ability of man to know self in distinction from everything else and to analyze self. Self-determination is the power of making choices in view of motives. Such choices involve reason and judgment. And, when they are related to moral matters, they involve conscience.

It is personality that distinguishes man in a natural way from the brute. The brute has consciousness, but not self-consciousness. No brute ever thought "I." No brute ever stopped to analyze itself. A brute never reflects on its own nature in distinction from everything else. It never engages in introspection. Neither does a brute make choices in view of motives. Its actions are determined by instincts and by influences from without. Thus, the brute has determination, but not self-determination. That a brute is moved by instinct rather than by choice in view of motives is evidenced by the fact that brutes never improve in their methods of doing things.

That personality was a part of the original image of God in man is evidenced by the fact that fallen man, devoid of holiness, is still said to be in the image of God. See **Genesis 9:6; James 3:9**.

## II. THE FALL OF MAN

Man's original holiness was not immutable. Mutability is a necessary characteristic of human nature. Immutability requires infinity of knowledge and power. Infinity is a characteristic of divinity only. Therefore, since God wished to create a man and not a god, he made Adam mutable. This made the fall possible. Let us note, then, with reference to the fall:

### 1. THE FACT OF IT.

We have the account of the fall in **Genesis 3**. Thus the fall is a revealed fact. It is also a fact that is evident, as we have already pointed out.

### 2. THE PROBLEM OF IT.

When we come to study the fall of man we are at once faced with the problem of how such a being as Adam was could fall. Let us note in regard to this problem:

#### (1) *An Erroneous Explanation.*

Sometimes an explanation of the problem of man's fall is attempted by representing his original state as one of mere equilibrium in which it was as easy to choose the wrong as it was to choose the right. In other words, the will was in a state of indifference, and was as likely to act one way as the other. Such a notion as this reduces man's original state to one of mere innocence instead of positive holiness. We have already touched upon this and trust that we have shown that mere innocence does not satisfy the statement that man was created in the image of God.

#### (2) The Right Explanation.

The fall of man cannot be accounted for simply on the basis of Adam's freedom of choice. Neither can it be accounted for on the basis of natural desire, nor upon the basis of the fact that our first parents were deceived by the devil. These facts are aptly stated by Strong as follows: "*The mere power of choice does not explain the fact of an unholy choice. The fact of natural desire for sensuous and intellectual gratification does not explain how this desire came to be inordinate. Nor does it throw light upon the matter to*



*resolve this fall into a deception of our first parents by Satan. Their yielding to such deception presupposes distrust of God and alienation from Him. Satan's fall, moreover, since it must have been uncaused by temptation from without, is more difficult to explain than Adam's fall" (Systematic Theology, p. 304).*

However the author fails to see the difficulty expressed by Strong in saying that *"we must acknowledge that we cannot understand how the first unholy emotion could have found lodgement in a mind that was set supremely upon God, nor how temptation could overcome a soul in which there were no unholy propensities to which it could appeal"* (ibid, p. 304).

The author believes that in the following facts we have a logical and satisfactory explanation of the fall of man:

A. Adam was mutable.

This fact we have already discussed.

B. Being mutable, he could remain steadfast in his original state only by the power of God.

See the chapter on ["God's Relation To The Universe"](#). Nothing remains in its own power unchanged except that which is immutable.

C. God could justly and holily permit Adam to fall if it pleased Him.

Since God has permitted sin, none can object to the permission of the fall except those who will criticize God.

D. God, having chosen to permit the fall, withheld His sustaining power from Adam and Adam's moral nature became disordered, just as the whole universe would fall to pieces if God were to withdraw His sustaining and preserving power for one instant.

3. THE RESULTS OF IT.

(1) *The Headship of Adam.*

When Adam experienced the corruption of his nature, he stood not as a mere individual; but as the natural head of the race. The natural headship of Adam is clearly taught in the fifth chapter of Romans. His headship is not presented there as a mere federal headship. Adam did not merely sin for us as would be the case if he were the mere federal head of the race; we sinned in him (**Romans 5:12**).

(2) *The Effects of the Fall.*

A. Upon Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve suffered the corruption of their nature, which brought both natural and spiritual death upon them.

B. Upon the Race.

The total effect of the fall upon the race is the corruption of the nature of the race, which brings the race into a state of spiritual death and makes it subject to physical death.

The descendants of Adam are held accountable, not for the overt act of Adam in partaking of the forbidden fruit; but for the inward apostasy of his nature from God. We are not personally responsible for the overt act of Adam because his overt act was the act of his own individual will. But our nature, being one with his, did corrupt itself in the apostasy of his nature. Hence the effect of the fall upon the race does not consist of both personal guilt for the overt act of Adam and the corruption of the nature of the race. We are not responsible for anything that we cannot repent of when quickened by the Spirit of God. Is any man today convicted of Adam's sin of partaking of the forbidden fruit? But we do feel convicted of, and we can and do repent of, the corruption of our natures, which manifests itself in rebellion against God and in personal transgressions. We do not believe the Scripture teaches more than this in regard to the effects of the fall upon the race. For a discussion of **John 1:29** in regard to this, see the chapter on [\*"The Doctrine Of The Atonement."\*](#)

In speaking of the corruption of human nature, the author does not refer to a corruption of the substance or essence of the soul. The word “nature” is used here in the sense of *inherent character, disposition, natural instincts, desires, and appetites*. The fall corrupted human nature in the sense of introducing moral and religious disorder. Or, to use the words of Strong, we may say that the fall resulted in “*the depraving of all those powers which, in their united action with reference to moral and religious truth, we call man’s moral and religious nature; or, in other words, the blinding of his intellect, the corruption of his affections, and the enslavement of his will*” (Systematic Theology), p. 307).

#### 4. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADAM AND EVE IN THE FALL.

The Genesis account makes no vital difference between Adam and Eve in the fall. But a distinction is clearly brought out in **I Timothy 2:14**. Here it is said that Eve was deceived, but that Adam was not. This means that Eve entered into the transgression because she was made to think that God’s warning was not true, and that she would not die as a penalty for partaking of the forbidden fruit. But with Adam it was different. He did not doubt God’s Word. He sinned because he preferred to be cast out of Eden with his wife, rather than remain in Eden without his wife.

Oftentimes it is thought that the above facts attach greater guilt to the sin of the woman than to the sin of the man. But just the reverse is true. Adam sinned through the willful and conscious choice of the fellowship of his wife, rather than the fellowship of God. No such thing was true of Eve’s sin.

#### 5. WHY DID GOD PERMIT THE FALL?

It was not that God was compelled to permit it. He is a sovereign and does everything freely. And it was not because of any lack of power. Although God made man mutable, which was necessary, as we have shown, yet He could have preserved man from sin without the violation of man’s will or any principle. We can give but one answer to the above question. It is that God permitted the fall in order to provide the way for the glorification of His Son in redemption.

## 6. THE FALL AND THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

Perhaps the carnal reason will never be satisfied with any explanation of the fall in relation to the holiness of God. How could a holy God permit sin when He had the full power to prevent it? That He had this power cannot be doubted. And while the carnal reason may never be satisfied, yet faith in the Word of God satisfies the new mind that the permission of sin by God is perfectly consistent with His holiness. If we had the power to prevent sin and did not do it, we should be guilty of evil. But God is different from us. We are dependent, and, therefore; responsible. He is independent, and therefore, responsible to no one. When we know as we are known, then we shall be able to understand fully how the permission of sin is perfectly compatible with the perfect holiness of God.

## Chapter 17 - THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

In the chapters on [“Satan, His Origin, His Work, And Destiny”](#) and [“The Original State And Fall Of Man”](#) we covered the ground of the origin of sin in the universe and also its entrance into the human family. For that reason these subjects will not be treated in this chapter.

It is very important that we have an adequate understanding of sin. Many modern errors concerning salvation cannot be held by those who think logically if they have a proper conception of sin.

### I. THE NATURE OF SIN

Sin is a hydra-headed thing. It presents different phases. An adequate treatment of sin must deal with these different phases:

#### 1. SIN AS AN ACT.

In **I John 3:4** we have the definition of sin as an act. It is a transgressing or a going contrary to the law of God.

#### 2. SIN AS A STATE.

There are many people who cannot or will not see that sin goes deeper than an overt act. A little reflection will show that our acts are but expressions of our inner selves. Inward sinfulness then must precede overt acts of sin.

Jesus taught this in principle when He said: **“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit” (Matthew 12:33)**. This means that there must be a corrupt tree before there can be corrupt fruit. Jesus taught this truth explicitly when He said: **“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false witness, blasphemies ...” (Matthew 15:19)**. He taught it again when He said: **“And this is the condemnation: that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light” (John 3:19)**. Still again He taught it in the Sermon on the Mount by

emphasizing the fact that men can break the commandments of God by harboring evil thoughts. See **Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28**. In simple words this means that a man is not what he is because of what he does; rather he does what he does because of what he is, fundamentally speaking.

Note the following additional scriptural proofs that man is not only sinful in conduct, but that he also exists in a sinful state - a lack of conformity to God in mind and heart:

(1) *The Hebrew and Greek words translated “sin” are as applicable to dispositions and states as to acts.*

(2) *Sin may consist of omitting to do the right thing as well as of doing the wrong thing.*

**“To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4.17).**

(3) *Evil is ascribed to thoughts and affections.*

**Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Hebrews 3:12.**

(4) *The state of the soul that gives rise to overt acts of sin is expressly called sin.*

**Romans 7:8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20.**

(5) *Sin is alluded to as a reigning principle in the life.*

**Romans 6:21.**

### 3. SIN AS A PRINCIPLE.

In principle sin is rebellion against God. It is refusing to do the will of Him who has every right to demand obedience of US.

### 4. SIN IN ESSENCE.

“We may follow Dr. E. G. Robinson in saying that, while sin as a state is unlikeness to God, as a principle is opposition to God, and as an act is transgression of God’s law, the essence of it always and everywhere is selfishness” (Strong Systematic Theology, p. 295).

Sin may be described as a tree of self-will, having two tap roots. One is a “no” to God and His demands. The other is a “yes” to self and self’s interests. This tree is capable of bearing every manner of sin in the catalogue of sins. Selfishness is always manifest in the sinner in the elevation of “some lower affection or desire above regard for God and His law” (Strong). No matter what form sin may take, it is always found to have selfishness as its root. Sin may take the forms of avarice, pride, vanity, ambition, sensuality, jealousy, or even love of others - in which case others are loved because they are conceived of as being in some way connected with or contributing to self. The sinner may seek truth, but always for selfish, egotistical purposes. He may give his goods to feed the poor, or even his body to be burned, but only through selfish desire for fleshly gratification or for honor or reward. Sin as selfishness has four component parts: “(1) Self will, instead of submission; (2) self-seeking, instead of benevolence; (3) self-righteousness, instead of humility and reverence; (4) self-sufficiency, instead of faith” (Harris).

In proof of the fact that sin is essentially selfishness we urge the following considerations:

(1) *In the apostasy of the last days it is said that “**men shall be lovers of self,**” and also “**lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.**” (II Timothy 3:2, 4).*

(2) *When the “**man of sin**” is revealed, he shall be he that “**exalteth himself against all that is called God**” (II Thessalonians 2:4).*

(3) *The essence of the law of God is to love God supremely and others as self.*

The opposite of this, the supreme love of self, must be the essence of sin. **Matthew 22:37-39.**

*(4) Satan's apostasy consisted of the preference of self and selfish ambition to God and his will.*

**Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-18.**

*(5) The sin of Adam and Eve in the garden sprang from a preference of self and self-gratification to God and His will.*

Eve ate of the forbidden fruit because she thought it would give desired wisdom. Adam partook of the fruit because he preferred his wife to God; and the reason he preferred his wife to God is that he conceived of his wife as contributing more than God to his self-gratification.

*(6) Cain's murder of Abel was prompted by jealousy, which is a form of selfishness.*

*(7) Selfishness is the cause of the sinner's impenitence.*

God has commanded all men everywhere to repent. Men refuse to do this because they prefer their own wills to the will of God.

We see, then, that sin is not merely a result of man's imperfect development. It is a perversity of the will and disposition. Man will never outgrow it so long as he is in the flesh. Regeneration puts a check upon it; but it does not destroy it. Nor is sin the mere result of the union of the spirit with the body. The spirit itself is sinful and would be just as sinful out of the body as in the body if left in its natural state. Satan has no body; yet he is supremely sinful. Neither is sin mere finiteness. The elect angels in Heaven are finite; yet they are without sin. Glorified saints will still be finite; yet they will have no sin.

**II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN IN THE HUMAN FAMILY**

All men, with the sole exception of the God-man, Christ Jesus our Lord, are sinful by nature and express that inward sinfulness in willful transgressions as soon as they reach the age of accountability. This fact is proved by -



1. *The Universal Need of Repentance, Faith, and Regeneration.*

**Luke 13:3; John 8:24; Acts 16:30, 31; Hebrews 11:6; John 3:3, 18.**

2. *Plain Scripture Declarations.*

**1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 143:2; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:10, 23; Galatians 3:22.**

### **III. THE EXTENT OF SIN IN MAN'S BEING**

The Scriptures teach that the extent of sin in man's being is total. This is the meaning of total depravity.

#### **1. TOTAL DEPRAVITY CONSIDERED NEGATIVELY.**

Total depravity is a much-misunderstood subject. For that reason we need to understand that total depravity does not mean -

(1) *That man by nature is utterly devoid of conscience.*

Even the heathen has conscience. **Romans 2:15.**

(2) *That man by nature is destitute of all of those qualities that are praiseworthy according to human standards.*

Jesus recognized the presence of such qualities in a certain rich man (**Mark 10:21**).

(3) *That every man is by nature prone to every form of sin.*

This is impossible, for some forms of sin exclude others. "The sin of miserliness may exclude the sin of luxury; the sin of pride may exclude the sin of sensuality" (Strong).

(4) *That men are by nature incapable of engaging in acts that are externally conformed to the law of God.*

**Romans 2:14.**

(5) *That men are as corrupt as they might be.*

They may and do grow worse. **II Timothy 3:13.**

Thus total depravity does not mean that depravity is total in its degree. It has to do with extent only.

(6) *Moreover total depravity does not mean that there is depravity or corruption of the substance or essence of the soul.*

Total depravity consists only of a moral perversion of all the faculties of the soul as we shall now see. It is the sinful bent of these faculties that gives to man a sinful nature. To say that one cannot affirm that man has a sinful nature without attributing sin to the substance of the soul is to deny that there is any such thing as moral character. Perhaps that which happened in the fall of the race cannot be better expressed than in the following words from Delitzsch; *“In consequence of the first sin, the internal nature of man became possessed by death, by the dissolution of the previous unity of the manifold powers reciprocally acting in the life of the spirit and soul; and by the disappearance of the spiritual life in God’s image, and its reflection in the soul. Hitherto God’s love filled the spirit’s will, thought and feeling: this threefold divinely filled life of the spirit was the holy image of the Godhead in man. But when Satanic thoughts of a loveless God found entrance into man’s mind, then entered enmity ... into the place of love, and Turba [confusion, devastation, destruction] in the place of peace: the powers of the soul fell into confusion, and kindled in passionate eagerness opposed to God”* (*A System of Biblical Psychology*, p. 153). This fallen condition of man is further elucidated by Strong as follows: *“In fine, man no longer made God the end of his life. While he retained the power of self-determination in subordinate things, he lost that freedom which consisted in the power of choosing God as his ultimate aim. The intuitions of the reason were abnormally obscured, since these intuitions, so far as they are concerned with moral and religious truth, are conditioned upon a right state of the affections; and - as a necessary result of this obscuring of*

*reason - conscience, which as the moral judiciary of the soul, decides upon the basis of law given it by reason, became perverse in its deliverances. Yet this inability to judge or act aright, since it was a moral inability springing ultimately from will, was itself hateful and condemnable”* (*Systematic Theology*, p. 307). In man today this inherited moral inability sprang from the will of Adam which was the will of the race; therefore our will. **I Corinthians 15:22; Romans 1:12, 16-19.**

Let us note the Biblical proof of the foregoing as we consider:

## 2. TOTAL DEPRAVITY CONSIDERED POSITIVELY.

Total depravity means that sin has permeated every faculty of man's being just as a drop of poison would permeate every molecule of a glass of water. Sin has warped every faculty in man, and thus it taints his every act.

### (1) *Proof of Total Depravity.*

A. Man is Depraved in Mind. **Genesis 6:5.**

B. In Heart. **Jeremiah 17:9.**

C. In Affections so that He is Averse to God. **John 3: 19; Romans 8:7.**

D. In Conscience. **Titus 1:15; Hebrews 10:22.**

E. In Speech. **Psalms 58:3; Jeremiah 8:6; Romans 3:13.**

F. Depraved from Head to Foot. **Isaiah 1:5, 6.**

C. Depraved when Born. **Psalms 51:5; Psalm 58:3.**

### (2) *The Effect of Total Depravity.*

A. No Remnant of Good Remains in Man by Nature. **Romans 7:18.**

B. Therefore Man by Nature Cannot Subject Himself to the Law of God or Please God. **Romans 8:7, 8.**

C. Man is by Nature Spiritually Dead. **Romans 5:12; Colossians 2:16; I John 3:14.**

D. Therefore He Cannot Comprehend Spiritual Things. **I Corinthians 2:14.**

E. Hence He Cannot Until Quickened by the Spirit of God, Turn From Sin to God in Godly Penitence and Faith. **Jeremiah 13:23; John 6:44, 65; 12:39, 40.**

The basis of depravity and spiritual inability lies in the heart. It is deceitful and incurably wicked (**Jeremiah 17:9**). Out of the heart are the issues of life (**Proverbs 4:23**). No one can bring a clean thing out of an unclean one (**Job 14:4**). Hence neither holiness nor faith can proceed from the natural heart. Good things proceed from a good heart and evil things proceed from an evil heart (**Matthew 7:17, 18; Luke 6:45**).

### 3. TOTAL DEPRAVITY DEFENDED.

The doctrine of total hereditary depravity, as set forth above, is opposed by three systems of theology as they deal with the effects of Adam's fall upon the race. Let us briefly note these systems:

#### (1) *Pelagianism.*

This was propounded by Pelagius, a British monk, at Rome in 409. Some of the features of Pelagianism were not original with Pelagius. However, he was the ablest and most thorough exponent of the system as a whole.

Pelagius taught that every human soul is directly created of God. This is Creationism, which was held also by Aristotle and Jerome, as opposed to Traducianism, propounded by Tertullian and tacitly assumed by Augustine. Logically, then, Pelagius felt obliged to consider the soul of a baby free from evil tendencies. But he was wholly illogical in considering the soul of an infant as merely innocent instead of positively holy. The holiness of God forbids the supposition that He can create a being that is merely innocent, just

as surely as it forbids the supposition that He can create an evil being. But Pelagius thought holiness could not be created. See **Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; II Peter 1:4**. Adam was created in the image of God, and that, as we have seen, means more than mere innocence. Only arbitrary reasoning can lead any Creationist to believe that the human soul at its origination is merely innocent.

According to Pelagianism the only effect the sin of Adam had upon the race lies in the effect of the evil example set by him. Adam's sin was in no way our sin, and we do not inherit corrupt natures from him; the only corruption of human nature being from persistent personal disobedience to known law.

As would be expected, Pelagius taught that man is able to obey the law of God, and that salvation can come by the law as well as by the gospel. He believed that such men as Abel, Enoch, Joseph, Job, and even Socrates and Aristides were saved by obeying God's law. God was wholly excluded from man's inner life, and could reach man only through external means.

This theory requires no detailed or extended refutation. The student will see at once that it is the very antithesis of Bible teaching in all of its phases. Let us dismiss it with this penetrating characterization from Dorner: "*It is Deism, applied to man's nature. God cannot enter man's being if he would, and he would not if he could. Free will is everything*" (*System of Doctrine*, 2:38).

## (2) *Arminianism.*

This system was elaborated by Arminius, a Dutch theologian (1560-1609), who served as a professor in the University of Leyden, in South Holland. Few, if any, of the elements of Arminianism were original with Arminius. Origen based election on God's foresight of the believer's works. Moreover Arminius leaned toward Semi-Pelagianism.

Arminius taught that men are born without original righteousness and with inherent evil tendencies; and are, therefore, wholly unable of themselves to obey God or attain eternal life. The natural state of the infant

may be called sinful, but it does not involve guilt because it is physical and intellectual rather than voluntary. Moreover it does not spring from our racial unity with Adam. Adam's sin was not our sin. We inherit our infirmities from Adam by divine appointment.

As a matter of justice, according to Arminius, God has bestowed upon all men the special influence of the Holy Spirit (often called "gracious ability") from the beginning of consciousness, with which man has the power to cooperate and thus obey the will of God. It is only when a human being consciously refuses to cooperate with the special influence of the Holy Spirit that he becomes guilty before God. Original Arminianism was greatly modified by John Wesley. But Wesleyanism, on the whole, is just as flagrantly false as original Arminianism.

The same that was said of Pelagianism can be said of Arminianism. It needs no further refutation than that which is given in the truth of the Bible as set forth in the former portion of this chapter. In some respects it is simply extra-scriptural; in others it is anti-scriptural; while in others it is logically unsound.

### (3) *The New England or "New School" Theology.*

This system represents an attempted compromise between Arminianism and Calvinism. It is called "New School" because it opposed the old school of Puritan anthropology as expounded by Edwards and Bellamy. It was built up through the successive labors of Hopkins, Emmons, Dwight, Taylor, and last of all by Charles C. Finney. This school opposed much of the truth taught by Edwards and then capitalized on his errors.

It is expedient that this school of theology be dealt with as it is represented by its most recent advocate, Charles C. Finney in *Finney's Lectures on Systematic Theology*. This book has been highly and widely recommended to young Baptist preachers. Here are some samples of its deliverances: "*Moral depravity cannot consist in any attribute of nature or constitution, not in any lapsed or fallen state of nature; for this is physical and not moral depravity.*" "*It (moral depravity) cannot consist in anything*

*back of choice, and that sustains to choice the relation of a cause. Whatever is back of choice is without the pale of legislation.” “Moral depravity is sinfulness, not of nature, but of voluntary state.” (pp. 230,231).*

Upon these statements we remark:

(A) They involve a denial of our participation in the apostasy of Adam, which is plainly taught in **Romans 5:12**, as shown by later pertinent verses in the chapter. **“Have sinned”** translates a verb in the aorist tense in the Greek. Now the aorist tense can express action roughly equivalent to that which is expressed by the imperfect tense; but in view of the context of the passage the Revised Version dropped the word **“have”** and translated the Greek verb simply **“sinned.”** To take this verb as referring to the personal sinning of each individual is to ruthlessly wrest the last clause of the passage from its connection with the first clause. Why is mention made of the fact that death came by Adam if our death is not the result of Adam’s sin? This interpretation, moreover, *“is inconsistent with ver. 13, 14, which are intended to prove what is here asserted: but they do not prove that all have actually sinned, but rather the reverse”* (Arnold, in *An American Commentary on the New Testament*). The meaning of **Romans 5:12** as contended for here is further borne out by **I Corinthians 15:22** - **“As in Adam all die ...”**

(B) They deny that sin exists as a state before there is a conscious choice of evil. Thus they deny that it is a sinful state that gives rise to sinful acts. This contradicts the principle enunciated by Jesus in **Matthew 12:33**, and implies that an apple tree is an apple tree because it bears apples and not vice versa. Jesus said that evil acts proceed out of the heart (**Matthew 15:19**), and the word **“heart,”** when used in a moral or spiritual sense as it is here, refers to the affections, not the will. Thus Jesus affirmed that the will acts because of the affections. Jesus further taught this in **John 3:19** in saying that men do not come to the light because they love darkness. Then **Jeremiah 17:9** says that the natural heart is *“desperately wicked.”* Furthermore Paul taught that his sins both of commission and omission were the result of sin dwelling in him, that is, in his carnal nature. **Romans 7:8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20.**

Paul's indwelling sin after he was saved was not there because his will was committed to it as his immanent preference or ultimate end; [29] it was there in spite of his will and hindered the executive volitions of his will. Naturally Mr. Finney was forced by the exigencies of his false system to deny that any part of **Romans 7** describes Paul's experience as a saved man. The fact that he must ignore and deny the plain meaning of the Bible to support his contentions is enough to show their utter falsity.

(C) They are false in their implied denial that the will of the natural man always acquiesces in the state of his nature. In the sense of immanent preference or as an ultimate end, a natural man always wills to be what he is. Otherwise he would not be free in being what he is, but would be under constraint from without; and would not be responsible. The sinner is blind (**II Corinthians 4:3, 4**), not because at some point in his personal existence he made a deliberate choice to be blind. God says it is the Devil that has blinded him. How? By forcing blindness upon him from without? No; for that would destroy the free agency of the sinner. The Devil has blinded the sinner by blinding the race through the fall, from which the sinner has received his blindness by inheritance. Yet the sinner is responsible for his blindness. This could be true only upon the ground that his will acquiesces in the blindness. The same is true with regard to every evil tendency and disability of the sinner by nature.

(D) They are wrong in implying that a man's affections are under the control of his will. Jesus said men reject Him because of their affections. **John 3:19**. "**Love is the fulfilling of the law**" (**Romans 13:10**). Why? The first part of the verse tells - "**Love worketh no ill ...**" that is, love moves a man to do what is right. In other words, love controls action and that means that love controls the will. Thus the will is subject to the affections. A man does not choose to love in the final analysis. He loves because of what he is and because of what the object of his affections is. In the final analysis affections are spontaneous. This is not to say that a man's intellect, his faculty of knowing, has no part in determining his actions. His intellect is always involved in his affections.



(E) They are wrong in that they deny the existence of real character. If the will does not act according to character, then there is no such thing as character; nor is there any such thing as responsibility. To talk about the character of the will as a thing separate from the nature of the man to which the will belongs is to talk childish nonsense.

(F) They are wrong in that they affirm that lapsed and fallen nature is “*physical and not moral depravity*.” In another place Mr. Finney defines “*physical depravity*” as being “*depravity of substance as opposed to depravity of the actions of free will*.” This means that Mr. Finney denied that there can be such a thing as moral and spiritual disorder in the soul without a perversion of the very substance or essence of the soul. It means also that if there should be such a thing as moral or spiritual disorder, a setting of the soul in sin, involving a blinding of the mind and a perverting of the heart - in other words, a spiritual deadening of all the faculties of the soul, this would be *physical depravity* and not *moral depravity*, for which a man cannot be held responsible.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[29] See treatment of the will in chapter on [“The Moral Nature Of Man”](#) for meaning of these terms and also the meaning of “executive volitions.”

## Chapter 18 - HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

By human responsibility we mean man's accountability to God for all of his actions. The teaching of man's accountability is so general in the Bible that no Scripture citations are needed. Any one that is at all acquainted with the Bible should be able with no difficulty to find plenty of proof texts on this subject.

### I. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

#### 1. THE MEANING OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

The absolute sovereignty of God means just what Paul affirms in **Ephesians 1:11**, where he speaks of God as one that **“worketh all things after the counsel of His will.”** This teaches just what the Philadelphia Confession of Faith teaches when it says: *“God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass.”* Other passages teaching the absolute sovereignty of God are as follows:

**“Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of Jehovah hath wrought this, In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:9, 10).**

**“Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens; And his kingdom ruleth over all” (Psalm 103:19).**

**“Whatsoever Jehovah pleased, that hath he done, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and all deeps” (Psalm 135:6).**

**“Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the Most High cometh there not evil and good?” (Lamentations 3:37, 38).**

**“I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things” (Isaiah 45:7).**

**“I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isaiah 46:9-10).**

**“All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Daniel 4:35).**

**“At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes” (Matthew 11:25).**

**“Jesus answered him, Thou couldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above” (John 19:11).**

**“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth. So then he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Romans 9:15-18).**

See also Acts 2:2, 3 and 4:27, 28.

## 2. WHY MAN IS RESPONSIBLE

The question is, then, how can man be responsible for his actions when all that he does has been ordained and decreed of God? This is not a new question. It is at least as old as the New Testament, and probably much older. Paul anticipated this question from his readers when he penned the wonderful ninth chapter of Romans. He said. **“Thou will say then unto me, Why doth he still find fault? For who withstandeth his will.”** And Paul’s reply was: **“Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one**

**part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor.”** Paul’s mentioning of this question and his reply show conclusively that Paul taught the absolute sovereignty of God. Indeed his preceding words clearly teach it. Paul made the reply that he did because he anticipated the question as coming from an objector. When it comes as a reverent inquiry, it deserves more detailed consideration. Paul’s reply had to be brief because his time and purpose would not permit a lengthy discussion. Our time permits and our purpose demands a fuller discussion.

Man is responsible for his actions, notwithstanding the fact that God has decreed all that comes to pass, for at least three reasons:

1. *God’s Decree Concerning Sin is Not Causative but Permissive, Directive, Preventive, and Determinative.*

God decreed that sin should come in the world, for reasons that are fully known only to Him, but He decreed that it should come by man’s own free choice. God does not compel man to sin, but He allows it. Man, and not God, is the efficient cause of sin; and for that reason man is responsible.

Before passing it needs to be remarked that no objections can be brought against the statement that God decreed that sin should come into the world that cannot be brought against God’s actual permission of sin, unless the objector takes the position that God was powerless to prevent the entrance of sin. This would be a denial of God’s omnipotence and sovereignty, and would render the objector unworthy of consideration here. God’s omnipotence and sovereignty teaches us that whatever God permits He permits because He wills to do so. And since God is immutable, His will has ever been the same. What He wills at any time He has willed from all eternity. Therefore, His will equals His purpose and His purpose equals His decree.

2. *The Law of God and Not His Decree Fixes Man’s Duty and Responsibility.*

The law of God is man’s guide and standard. This is God’s revealed will. God’s decree is His secret will. Man has nothing to do with this except

to know and acknowledge the facts concerning it. **“The secret things belong unto Jehovah, our God; but things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).**

### *3. The Motive Back of Man's Sinning Makes Him Responsible.*

Why does man sin? Is it ever because he wants to do the will of God? Nay, never so. Why did men crucify Christ? Was it because they believed that God had sent Him to die as a sin-bearer? No. It was because they hated Him. They crucified Him through wicked motives. It is thus that man always sins. Sin proceeds from man's love of darkness (**John 3:19**).

## **II. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY AND MAN'S SPIRITUAL INABILITY**

Another question concerning man's responsibility is, How can man be responsible for not fully obeying the law of God and for not receiving the gospel when it is heard when he is unable by nature to do either of these? For proof of man's spiritual inability, see the chapters on [“The Doctrine Of Sin”](#) and [“The Doctrine Of Conversion”](#).

The answer to this question is that man can be responsible for what he is unable to do only on the supposition that he is to blame for his inability. And it is a fact that man is to blame for his spiritual inability. It is not that he individually, by his own personal act, originated the inability, for he was born with it. But every man sinned in Adam, and thus originated his spiritual inability. That every man sinned in Adam is the true teaching of **Romans 5:12** - **“Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that ALL SINNED.”** “Sinned” in the Greek is aorist tense, which expresses pointed past action. The passage makes it refer to the participation of all men in the sin of Adam.

But how did we participate in the sin of Adam when we were not born when he sinned? We think we cannot do better than give the following words of A. H. Strong in reply:

“God imputes the sin of Adam immediately to all his posterity, in virtue of that organic unity of mankind by which the whole race at the time of Adam’s transgression existed, not individually, but seminally, in him as its head. The total life of humanity was then in Adam; the race as yet had its being only in him. Its essence was not yet individualized; its forces were not yet distributed; the powers which now exist in separate men were then unified and localized in Adam; Adam’s will was yet the will of the species. In Adam’s free act, the will of the race revolted from God and the nature of the race corrupted itself. The nature which we now possess is the same nature that corrupted itself in Adam - not the same in kind merely, but the same as flowing to us continuously from him. Adam’s sin is imputed to us immediately, therefore, not as something foreign to us, but because it is ours - we and all other men having existed as one moral person, or one moral whole, in him, and as the result of that transgression, possessing a nature destitute of love to God and prone to evil” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 328).

### III. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY DEPENDENT ON KNOWLEDGE

It needs to be emphasized that man is responsible only so far as he knows, or has within his reach the knowledge of, what is right. The heathen is responsible to recognize God because, and only because, **“that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse”** (**Romans 1:19, 20**). As to acts of outward conduct, the heathen is responsible only for the violation of such principles of righteousness as his own conscience recognizes. **“As many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law,”** i.e., those to whom the written law of God has not been made known shall perish, but they shall not perish through the condemnation of the written law. How then will they be judged? The verses which follow the above quotation show that they will be judged by their own standard of righteousness; they will be charged with no transgressions except those against their own conscience. See **Romans 2:12-15**.

From the above it is evident that the heathen will not be charged with the sin of unbelief or rejection of the gospel; yet they shall perish. This shows that it is sin in general that condemns primarily. Rejection of the gospel does not bring condemnation to man; it only manifests it and increases the penalty that shall be inflicted because of it.

The fact that human responsibility is dependent on knowledge explains why dying infants and native imbeciles will be saved. They are mentally blind to the principles of righteousness, and, therefore, are not responsible. This is the kind of blindness that the Pharisees thought Jesus meant in **John 9:39**. And Jesus perceiving the thought of their hearts, said unto them: “**If ye were blind** (in the sense you have in mind), **ye would have no sin**” (**John 9:41**). There are but three kinds of blindness: physical blindness, mental blindness, and spiritual blindness. Certainly the Pharisees did not suppose that Jesus meant they were physically blind. And certainly Christ did not mean in His reply to say that they were not spiritually blind. See **John 12:37-40**; **II Corinthians 4:3, 4**. He could have meant but one thing, and that is that if they were mentally blind, they would have no sin. Infants and imbeciles are mentally blind, as already stated, and are, therefore, not responsible for their conduct. It is for this reason that we believe they will be saved through the blood of Christ without the exercise of faith in the body. However, since they have a sinful nature, we must believe that it will be necessary for them to be regenerated and thus brought to faith in Christ. The Bible makes it clear that this is necessary before one is fit for the presence of God. But it does not tell us when it will take place with reference to infants and imbeciles. We are of the opinion that it will take place at the time of the separation of the spirit from the body in the hour of death. See also **Deuteronomy 1:39** as to personal responsibility of infants.

## Chapter 19 - THE FREE AGENCY OF MAN

Clear thinking is very much needed when we come to deal with the free agency of man. Some have imagined it a very difficult subject because they have made out of it something other than what it is. For the same reason some have charged that the doctrine of unconditional election, a Bible and Baptist doctrine, destroys the free agency of man.

Well does Spurgeon say: “In reference to the matter of predestination and free will, I have often heard men ask, ‘How do you make them agree?’ I think there is another question just as difficult to solve. ‘How do you make them differ?’ The two may be as easily made to concur as to clash. It seems to me a problem which cannot be stated, and a subject that needs no solution!” (*Sermons*, Vol. 13, p. 31).

### I. FREE AGENCY OF MAN A BAPTIST DOCTRINE

The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith, widely accepted among Baptists, declares that election is “*perfectly consistent with the free agency of man.*”

The late George W. McDaniel, while president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said in a personal letter to the author: “*The Baptist position recognizes both divine sovereignty and free moral agency.*”

Spurgeon says: “*The predestination of God does not destroy the free agency of man, or lighten the responsibility of the sinner*” (*Sermons*, Vol. 18, p. 30).

D. F. Estes (Hamilton Theological Seminary and Colgate University) says: “*The moral freedom of man was clearly held by Paul, and none the less positively and tenaciously because of certain other views which he held but which seem to some to be inconsistent therewith*” (*New Testament Theology*, p. 104).

W. W. Hamilton says: “*God has united certain great facts in salvation, and we must surely come to grief if we fail to recognize this. Sovereignty*



*and free will are seen closely related when Peter said at the great revival on Pentecost, 'Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the wicked hands of lawless men did crucify and slay.'* (Bible Evangelism, p. 90).

J. M. Pendleton says: *"There are no truths more plainly revealed in the Bible than that God is sovereign and man is free"* (Christian Doctrines, p. 103).

E. Y. Mullins says: *"Free will in man is as fundamental a truth as any other in the Gospel and must never be cancelled in our doctrinal statements. Man would not be man without it and God never robs us of our true moral manhood in saving us"* (Baptist Beliefs, p. 26).

J. P. Boyce says: *"Free agency belongs to the nature of an intelligent moral creature. He must have freedom of choice, or he would not be responsible for his action. The very essence of responsibility consists in the power of contrary action, had one so pleased"* (Abstract of Systematic Theology, p. 224).

A. H. Strong says: *"Free agency ... has been shown to be consistent with the decrees (of God)"* (Systematic Theology, p. 117).

It is manifest from the above quotations that free agency, according to its use among Baptist authors, must have a meaning different from that which many people understand it to have. Spurgeon, Estes, Pendleton, Mullins, Boyce, and Strong are all clear in their teaching of unconditional election. This leads us, then, to consider:

## **II. FREE AGENCY DEFINED**

### **1. BY DICTIONARIES.**

Funk and Wagnall's Desk Standard Dictionary defines free agency as *"the power or capacity of acting freely, i.e., without constraint of the will"*.

Webster's New International Dictionary, in defining the term "free," in its application to the acts of a moral being, says: "*Not determined by anything beyond its own nature or being; not necessitated by an external cause or agency; choosing or capable of choosing for itself; as a free agent.*"

## 2. BY STANDARD THEOLOGICAL WRITERS.

N. L. Rice says:

*"Free agency is nothing more nor less than acting without compulsion, and in accordance with one's own desires and inclinations"* (*God Sovereign and Man Free*, p. 58).

J. M. Pendleton repeats the definition of Andrew Fuller, which is as follows:

*"A free agent is an intelligent being who is at liberty to act according to his choice, without compulsion or restraint"* (*Christian Doctrines*, p. 104).

A. H. Strong says:

*"Free agency is the power of self-determination in view of motives or man's power (a) to choose between motives, and (b) direct his subsequent activity according to the motive thus chosen"* (*Systematic Theology*, p. 176).

Luther denied "Free-will," as it was used by his great opponent, Erasmus, and also by the Pelagians and Sophists; and, with all his profundity of understanding, mistakingly supposing that the use made of "*Free-will*" by the above errorists was the only sense of the expression, opposed its use. Nevertheless, he attributed to the will a freedom such as is attributed to it by others here quoted; and he defined that freedom in the following words:

*"Will, whether divine or human, does what it does, be it good or evil, not by any compulsion, but by mere willingness or desire, as it were,*

*totally free*” (*The Bondage of the Will*, p. 41).

John Gill, who is often falsely accused of antinomianism says:

*“A determination of the will to some one thing, is not contrary to choice, for the human will of Christ, and the will of angels and glorified saints, are determined only to that which is good, and yet they both choose and do that good freely ... Besides, neither the disability of man, nor the efficacious influence of grace, at all hinder the freedom of human actions. A wicked man, who is under the strongest bias, power, and dominion of his lusts, acts freely in fulfilling of them; as does also a good man, in doing what is spiritually good; and never more so, than when he is under the most powerful influences of divine grace”* (*Cause of God and Truth*, pp. 184, 185).

Jonathan Edwards viewed free agency as the “power, opportunity or advantage that any one has to do as he pleases” (*Freedom of the Will*, p. 17).

We have purposely reserved until last the definition that is the most explicit of all because it sums up all the others and states them in greater detail and in a more easily understandable way. This definition is from E. Y. Mullins:

*“Freedom in man does not imply exemption from the operation of influences, motives, heredity, environment. It means rather that man is not under compulsion. His actions are in the last resort determined from within. He is self-determined in what he does. Some hold that freedom in man means ability to transcend himself and act contrary to his character. (This is the erroneous sense of free will, as believed by all Pelagians and Arminians, and as opposed by Luther and many others.) The will is thus regarded, not as an expression of what the man is in his essential character. It is free in the sense of being capable of choices unrelated to past choices, acquired traits, and hereditary tendencies. This is an untenable view of freedom. It makes the will a mere external attachment to man’s nature rather than an expression thereof. Freedom excludes compulsion from without, it also excludes mere caprice and arbitrariness.*

*Freedom is self-determinative” (The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression, pp. 258, 259).*

Now we submit that all of these great writers are in harmony with each other in their view of that freedom which man possesses, although some of them might deny that this should be called either free agency or free will. However, if there be in all the universe such a thing as free agency, even in the case of God, the freedom of man asserted in the foregoing is free agency.

To make this more manifest, we take as our next proposition:

### **III. MAN AS MUCH A FREE AGENT AS GOD**

We have noted that A. H. Strong says: “Free agency is the power of self-determination.” Others define it as the power one has to act according to his choice, to do as he pleases. We have seen that free agency does not imply ability to transcend oneself and to act contrary to one’s character. It does not exclude determination to either good or bad. It does exclude compulsion and restraint from outside of ones nature, and it also just as surely excludes mere caprice and arbitrariness.

What more than this can be affirmed of God? What less can be affirmed of man? God is self-determined. So is man, and at all times. God always acts according to His choice; He does as He pleases. [30] So also does man. God cannot transcend Himself and act contrary to His character. [31] Neither can man. God is ever determined to good. Natural man is ever determined to that which is spiritually evil. A regenerated man is determined, in the main, to that which is good. When he commits evil, he is, for the moment determined to evil. The will of God is never compelled or restrained by anything outside His own nature. The same is true of man. God never acts capriciously or arbitrarily, that is, without sufficient cause. Neither does man. God always acts according to His preference, considering things as a whole; but not always according to His preference in things, considering them separately and apart from His perfect plan. [32] For instance, God immanently prefers holiness at all times, but, in consideration of His plan as a whole, He purposed to permit sin; because it, in some way, is necessary to the working

out of His plan. This is analogous to the fact that man has conflicting preferences, but he always follows his strongest preference; and in doing so, his will is wholly and absolutely free.

The position of God's will, and the nature and laws of its action, are the same as in the case of man's will. Each is subject to the nature of its possessor. Both express the nature of their possessors in view of motives. Both man and God are free at all times to act out their most dominant desires and inclinations. God is not more truly a free agent than man is.

That the free agency of man at all times may be more manifest, we shall consider:

#### **IV. FREE AGENCY OF THE NATURAL MAN**

Man cannot do otherwise than continue in sin so long as he is in his natural state (**Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 4:23; Job 14:4; Jeremiah 13:23; John 6:65; Romans 8:7, 8; I Corinthians 2:14**). But his continuance in sin is not due to outside compulsion or restraint, but to his own character which causes him to choose darkness rather than light (**John 3:19**). He continues in sin for the same reason that a hog wallows in the mire. He continues in sin for the same reason that God continues in holiness. Thus he is fully a free agent.

#### **V. FREE AGENCY AND DIVINE HARDENING AND BLINDING**

In the hardening and blinding of sinners, which is unmistakably attributed to God in the Scripture (**Romans 9:18; John 12:40**), there is no outside force brought to bear upon the will of the sinner. While God is said to blind and to harden the sinner, the sinner is said to blind and harden himself. **John 12:40** is a quotation from **Isaiah 6:10**, where the prophet Isaiah is commanded to shut the eyes of the people. Then in **Matthew 13:14, 15** there is another free quotation from this same prophecy, and in Matthew the sinners are said to have closed their own eyes. Then, still again, in **II Corinthians 4:3, 4**, we have the blinding of sinners attributed to the devil. All of these passages refer to the same thing, and all of them are true because they are in the Word of God. We have the blinding of sinners attributed to

God, to the devil, to the prophet, and to the sinners themselves. It is ours to find, if we can, the harmony between these statements. Here it is: The blinding is attributed to God because He decreed, whether permissively or efficiently, all the circumstances that render the sinner blind. The blinding is attributed to the devil because he is the author of sin by which the sinner is blinded. The same blinding is attributed to the prophet because his preaching of the Word brings out and makes the blindness of the sinner active in his rejection of the Word. Then, finally, the blinding is attributed to the sinner himself because he loves darkness rather than light, and manifests his choice of darkness by rejecting the Word. This leaves the natural man a free agent. If *God*, or the *devil* or the *prophet*, by a power outside of the nature of the sinner, could compel the sinner against his choice to reject the Word, the sinner would no longer be a free agent, and he would be no longer responsible for his unbelief. Responsibility and free agency go hand in hand.

What has been said of the blinding of the sinner is also true of the hardening of the sinner. The hardening of the heart of Pharaoh is attributed to God (**Romans 9:18; Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 7:13; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27, 11:10**). But it is also attributed to Pharaoh himself (**Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34**). The explanation is the same as for the blinding treated above.

## VI. FREE AGENCY AND CONVERSION

Man is unable to turn from sin until he is quickened by the Spirit of God. For proof of this see the passages given in proof of the fact that man cannot do otherwise than continue in sin so long as he is in his natural state. The new nature, therefore, must be implanted logically (but not chronologically) prior to the exercise of repentance and faith. [33] This is the meaning of the New Hampshire Declaration of Faith when it says that repentance and faith are “*inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God.*” This is also the teaching of **Ephesians 1:19, 20**.

But when a man turns to God in repentance and faith he acts voluntarily and is thus a free agent. He is not compelled to turn by a power outside of his own nature. For, in implanting the new nature, the Holy Spirit operates “*in the region of the soul below consciousness*” (Strong). Then that new nature,

when implanted, becomes as much a part of the man as the old nature was; and it moves the will in strict conformity to the nature, laws, and normal action of the will. Thus man is a free agent in conversion; and, of course, remains a free agent, although God continues to work in him “**both to will and to work for his good pleasure**” (**Philippians 2:13**). But this work, like the work of quickening, does not coerce the will.

## VII. FREE AGENCY AND CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

Some become confused in regard to free agency because of the statement of Christ in **John 8:32** – “**Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**” Christ here referred to the freedom of the nature from sin’s bondage and not to free agency. This will become evident to any thoughtful student upon a consideration of the foregoing treatment of free agency. The position of the will and the nature and laws of its action, are the same before conversion as after. In both cases man is self-determined in view of motives. Both before and after regeneration the will expresses one’s character. The difference between the unregenerate and regenerate states is not in regard to the freedom of the will but in the fact that before regeneration man is the “**bondservant of sin**” (**John 8:34**), while, after regeneration, believers are, through the power of the new life, “**bond-servants of righteousness**” (**Romans 6:18**). In both cases men are bondservants, and the will is subject to the character, being as free in one case as in the other.

## VIII. FREE AGENCY AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Without the least reserve or hesitancy we subscribe to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith in its declaration that “*God hath decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably all things whatsoever comes to pass.*” This includes evil as well and as fully as good, though in a different sense; and is supported by both reason and revelation. See the chapter on “[The Will of God.](#)” Also see **Daniel 4:35; Isaiah 46:10; Romans 9:19; Ephesians 1:11.**

When men say that the absolute sovereignty of God cannot be reconciled with the free agency of man by finite minds, they betoken a misunderstanding

either of free agency, or the workings of God's sovereignty, or both. Free agency is in perfect, full, and manifest harmony with the absolute sovereignty of God. The bond of union between the two lies in the fact that the will is subject to the character of its possessor. God has determined the character of each man, through either His positive or permissive decrees - positive in the case of all good, and permissive in the case of all evil. And God, having determined all circumstances, controls the motives that influence the will. Thus God controls the actions of men, and yet men act at all times as freely as God Himself does. If there were no God, man could not act more freely than he does.

We see this harmony between the sovereignty of God and the free agency of man strikingly exemplified in the crucifixion of Christ. God determined that Christ should be crucified (**Acts 2:23; 4:27, 28**). And He determined that certain ones should do it, but He did this permissively. All that took part in the crucifixion were only acting out their own natures, and were never freer in any act, nor was God ever freer in any act. Through wicked motives they chose to kill the Lord of glory. They killed Him because they hated Him. They killed Him because He rebuked them for their sin. They killed Him because He took away the glory that had been theirs. God did not cause them to do it, but He decreed to permit them to follow their own inclinations and desires in doing it.

## **IX. FREE AGENCY AND THE POWER OF CONTRARY ACTION**

It will be noted that the expression on free agency quoted from J. P. Boyce implies that the power of contrary action is essential to free agency. This is true if the power of contrary action is defined as Boyce defines it, that is, as the power that one has to do otherwise than he does, had he so pleased. This is only saying that man is free from outward necessity and compulsion in his actions. If at any moment, one had not pleased to act as he did, he could have acted differently, for one is always free to do as he pleases. This means, of course, as he pleases on the whole. He follows his strongest desire.



Or if the power of contrary choice is used to mean the power of the soul to make choices contrary to its previously ruling purpose, it is still implied in free agency. Motives awaken latent tendencies in the soul, and thus the soul may act contrary to its previously ruling purpose. In conversion the soul acts contrary to its previously ruling purpose. But in this case, it is not due to the awakening of latent tendencies, but to the implantation of the new life.

There is another form of contrary action. One may and often does put forth executive volitions contrary to his ultimate choice or immanent preference. This is consistent with free agency.

But if one supposes that the power of contrary action means that it is possible for one to act at any moment differently from the way in which he does act, the individual and the motives remaining the same, he is supposing a contradiction and an absurdity. This is supposing that one may choose that which he does not choose. All action is the result of an inward necessity of consequence; but not of an outward necessity, nor a necessity of compulsion. In other words, the action of any individual at any time could not have been different without the individual or the motives being different. Otherwise there would be no cause for the will's action. And all common sense forbids the supposition of a finite thing without a cause. Thus the acts of the will proceed from an inward necessity. But the individual is free and unconstrained. There is no power compelling the will, for the will is simply the soul's faculty of choice. In fact, no power can compel or coerce the will. It is necessarily free. It would not be will without this.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[30] **Psalm 135:6; Isaiah 46:10.**

[31] We know this because of God's immutability, for a discussion of which see the chapter on [\*"The Nature and Attributes of God."\*](#)

[32] See the chapter on [\*"The Will of God."\*](#)

[33] For fuller discussion of this see the chapter on [\*“The Doctrine Of Conversion”\*](#).

## Chapter 20 - THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

Election is the fundamental principle in the saving grace of God. It is the sovereignty of God in respect to the salvation of man. It forms a part of God's decrees. It is an expression of His all-pervading providence. It concerns only a portion of the human race. Yet it *"is the expression of God's infinite love towards the human race, redeeming man from sin through Christ, and by the Holy Spirit bringing him into this state of redemption, so far as it is consistent with the interests of God's great and final kingdom"* (Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, p. 505). It presupposes the entire sinfulness of the human race, and is based on the atonement of Christ.

### I. SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

#### 1. THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION NOT POPULARITY UNDERSTOOD AND RECEIVED.

The Bible doctrine of election is much misunderstood, much perverted, much abused, and much opposed. Nevertheless, to **"full grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil"** (Hebrews 5:14), it is a blessedly and gloriously profitable doctrine, a veritable mine of spiritual wealth.

#### 2. IT IS EMINENTLY SCRIPTURAL

This doctrine has a broad and deep foundation in the Scripture. It is woven into the very warp and woof of divine revelation. As a scarlet thread this gracious purpose of God runs through the fabric of the word. *"The Bible not only teaches the doctrine, but makes it prominent - so prominent that you can get rid of election only by getting rid of the Bible"* (Bishop, *The Doctrines of Grace*). *"Let the Scripture be read with reference to this doctrine, and every passage marked which indicates God's dealing with men as an absolute sovereign, and also every declaration which ascribes election or the fruits of it to His choice and not to the will and acts of men, and every illustration afforded that this is God's usual method, and it will appear that scarcely any book of Scripture will fail to furnish testimony to*

*the fact that in the acts of grace, no less than those of providence, God 'doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth' (Daniel 4:35)" (Boyce, Abstract of Systematic Theology).*

### 3. YET IT HAS MANY OPPOSERS.

But since this doctrine is so stripping and humbling to the natural man and so thoroughly distasteful to the carnal mind, it has many opposers. It is even as the immortal J. R. Graves said: "*All men are by nature Arminians; and the absolute sovereignty of God is a doctrine hateful to the natural and depraved heart. False teachers have taken advantage of this natural feeling and have for ages inflamed the prejudices of Christian men and women against the exercise of sovereignty on the part of God*" (*The Seven Dispensations*, pp. 95,96). Many false theories of election have arisen. These theories have come about through an effort at "*measuring supernatural mysteries with the crooked mete-wand of degenerate reason*" (Ness).

### 4. THE MEANING OF ARMINIANISM

*Any system of doctrine that conditions the saving purpose of God on the acts or merits of men is essentially Arminian; just as, any system that makes the sovereign pleasure of God the ground of His saving purpose is essentially Calvinistic.* If one holds to the former, he is an Arminian, although he may not go all the way with Arminius. And if a man holds to the latter, he is a Calvinist, although he may not go all the way with Calvin. There is no middle ground between Arminianism and Calvinism in their accepted meaning among theologians. Every man that takes my view of election whatsoever is one or the other. G. W. Northrup, himself practically an Arminian, says, in discussing the question of whether election is conditioned on something in man "*Arminianism may be considered as representing all non-Calvinistic systems as regards the point under consideration*" (*Sovereignty of God*, p. 48). And in the second part of this book, written by Prof. Robert Watts, of Belfast, Ireland, in reply to the first part, we have A. A. Hodge's "Outlines" quoted as follows: "*What is the*

*ground of the eternal predestination of individuals to salvation? Is it the foreseen faith and repentance of the individuals themselves, or the sovereign good pleasure of God? Every Christian must take one side or the other of this question. If he takes the side which makes foreseen faith the ground, (or if he, as is common today, makes faith the procuring cause of an election in time, which is essentially the same as the foregoing proposition), he is an Arminian, no matter what else he holds. If he takes the side which makes the good pleasure of God the ground, he is a Calvinist.”*

## 5. CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM THEOLOGICAL TERMS

It needs to be understood that Calvinism and Arminianism are now theological terms. They do not signify all that Calvin and Arminius believed or wrote. They refer to two antithetic systems of doctrine, somewhat modified in transmission, and having respectively unconditional and conditional election as their chief points. So it has become common in theological discussions to classify men and systems of doctrine as Calvinistic or Arminian on the basis of these two chief points.

## 6. THE SPIRIT AND NATURE OF ARMINIANISM

The spirit of Arminianism is the spirit of Modernism. *Arminianism is a system of rationalism, which, like Modernism, makes reason, instead of divine revelation, the standard of truth.*

“The Church has been corrupted and cursed in almost every age by the undue confidence of men in their reasoning powers. They have undertaken to pronounce upon the reasonableness or unreasonableness of doctrines infinitely above their reason, which are necessarily matters of pure revelation. In their presumption they have sought to comprehend ‘**the deep things of God,**’ and have interpreted Scriptures, not according to their obvious meaning, but according to the decisions of their finite reason” (Rice, *God Sovereign and Man Free*, p. iii).

Let the reader be warned against that haughty spirit which rejects revealed truth because the twisted and vitiated mind of man cannot fully

fathom it. This is the mainspring of infidelity and Modernism. *“It was through pride of reasoning that man fell,”* and we may add that in the same way today man is falling farther and farther from God. Reason is a divine gift, and, when used aright, it is a pearl of great price. Its proper sphere in religion lies in the right dividing of the word of truth. But when it sets itself up as a standard by which the credibility of divine revelation is to be tried, it becomes a snare of the devil, and a sure road to hell. *“Revelation constantly assails the arrogance which impiously arraigns the credibility of the divine word, unless our puny intellect can comprehend the things which it is the glory of God to conceal. The design of the gospel is to humble this temper and to nourish in us the spirit of ‘a little child,’ without which the mind will go on sounding its dim and perilous way, till it is lost in endless mazes bewildered and inextricable in dark, interminable labyrinths”* (Richard Fuller, *Baptist Doctrines*, by C. A. Jenkins).

Arminianism is the slickest lie the devil has ever invented in all his age-long opposition to God. It is his supreme effort to efface the godhood of God. *“Arminianism is man’s religion, which can be accomplished by man. Man is the main power: with man it begins, and with man it shall perish”* (Parks). It exalts man and insults God. It fosters human pride and detracts from divine glory.

*“Arminianism is the spawn of Popery, which the warmth of favour may easily turn into frogs of the bottomless pit”* (Rous). It is *“the Pope’s Benjamin ... the elixir of Anti-Christianism; the mystery of the mystery of iniquity; the Pope’s cabinet; the very quintessence of equivocation”* (Leighton). It *“puts God into the same extremity with Darius, who would gladly have saved Daniel but could not. Daniel vi. 14”* (Ness). It pulls *“the great Jehovah Himself out of His throne of glory, setting up Dame Fortune to be worshipped in His stead”* (Ness). It *“surrenders the government of the world to mere chance, to wild caprice and disorder. According to this system, nature, providence, and grace are only departments of atheism; God has no control over the earth and its affairs, or - if that be too monstrous and revolting - he exercises authority over matter, but none over the minds and hearts of men ... consequently prophecy is an absurdity; providence a chimera; prayer is a mockery; since God does not interfere in mortal events,*

but abandons all to the wanton humors and passions of myriads of independent agents, none of whose whims and impulses he restrains, and by whom his will is constantly defeated and trampled underfoot” (Richard Fuller, *Baptist Doctrines*, by C. A. Jenkins).

It is no wonder, then, that B. P. Riley says: “Whitfield was a Calvinistic Methodist, whatever that is, though it is quite as easy of definition as an Arminian Baptist. Neither is free of obliquity, and they are clearly a stand-off” (*The Baptists in the Building of the Nation*).

## **II. ELECTION DEFINED**

“God, of His own purpose, has from eternity determined to save a definite number of mankind, as individuals, not for or because of any merit or work of theirs, nor of any value to Him of them; but of His own good pleasure” (J. P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*, p. 347).

“Election is that eternal act of God, by which in His sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, He chooses certain ones out of the number of sinful men to be the recipients of the special grace of His Spirit and to be made voluntary partakers of Christ’s salvation” (A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 427).

## **III. ELECTION IS ETERNAL**

By this we mean that election is without actual origin. It always has been, just as God always has been.

### **1. PROOFS STATED**

#### *(1) The Immutability of God.*

“By this we mean that the nature, attributes, and will of God are exempt from all change ... All change must be to better or worse. But God is absolute perfection, and no change to better is possible. Change to worse would be equally inconsistent with perfection” (Strong, *Systematic*

Theology). Because God has ever possessed all knowledge and all power there can be no occasion of change in Him.

For scriptural proof and further discussion of Gods immutability see the chapter on [\*“The Nature and Attributes of God.”\*](#)

The immutability of God teaches us that whatever God wills at any time, He always has willed. “There can be no more a new thought, a new intent, or a new purpose in God, than there can be a new God” (Ness). Consequently when God saves a man, He must always have intended and purposed to save him. That purpose and intent to save him involves an election of him to salvation. Hence election is eternal. To affirm otherwise is to deny the immutability of God.

### *(2) The Foreknowledge of God.*

**Romans 8:29** asserts that God foreknew those whom He saves. This foreknowledge involved a purpose to save these. And this purpose to save them involved election. Did this foreknowledge have a beginning? If so, then there was a time when God was not omniscient and, hence, not perfect and infinite. Without perfection and infinity there can be no God. Therefore the foreknowledge of God is eternal, and, consequently, election is eternal; because election is involved in foreknowledge, as pointed out above.

Thus we see how deleterious is the teaching that election takes place in time. Any denier of the eternity of election is logically an atheist. He really has no God; for having logically denied the immutability, perfection, and infinity of God, he has theoretically robbed him of His divinity. Yet those who teach the eternity of election are accused of raising new tests of fellowship.

### *(3) Plain Scripture Statements.*

We appeal here to the two following passages:

**“Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).**



## **“God chose you from the beginning” (II Thessalonians 2:13).**

That which took place before the foundation of the world, took place before the beginning of time: for in the beginning of time the world was created (**Genesis 1:1**). The first passage above, then, definitely puts election in eternity. The second passage means that ever since the beginning our election has been a completed act. Thus it took place before the beginning, and, since in eternity there is no before or after, there never was a time when election had not taken place. This is the meaning of eternal.

## **2. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.**

To the eternity of election it is objected by some -

(1) *That election takes place when we are saved because we are elected “in” Christ.*

This is stated in **Ephesians 1:4**, which we have just quoted. But note that this same passage makes election eternal. Why will men thus array a single passage of Scripture against itself?

The statement that we were elected “in” Christ means no more than that Christ was the ground of our election (election being on the basis of His saving work), and that we were foreknown as being in Christ in the purpose of God. The language here is the language of Him who, in His purpose, “**calleth things that are not, as though they were**” (**Romans 4:17**). We have another example of this in **Romans 8:29, 30**, where the calling, justification, and glorification of all the elect are put in the past tense. We were not actually and experientially in Christ in eternity, nor were we actually and experientially called, justified, and glorified in eternity; but we were in the purpose of God, and this is the meaning of the passage just cited.

(2) *That we are elected when we are saved on the ground that the Scripture never applies the term “elect” to any except the saved.*

It is true that the term “**elect**,” in some places in the Scripture, has exclusive reference to saved persons. Such a use of the term may be seen in

**Matthew 22:24; Luke 18:7; Romans 8:23; I Peter 1:2.** These passages refer only to those in whom election has been applied and made experiential. But it is not to these only that the term “**elect**” and its equivalents are applied. In **Ephesians 1:4** and **II Thessalonians 2:13**, as we have seen, the elect are said to have been such from eternity. Then the term “**sheep**” is equivalent to the term “**elect**,” and in **John 10:16** we have Christ’s application of the term “**sheep**” to the lost Gentiles that were yet to be saved. This passage reads:

**“Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: (the Jewish nation) them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, one shepherd.”**

But, to the further discomfiture of Arminians, we find that **II Timothy 1:10** applies the term “**elect**” in its possessive form to those who were not yet saved. The passage reads.

**“I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”**

*(3) That we are elected when we are saved on the ground that the Scripture puts calling before election.*

It is a fact that sometimes the Scripture, in referring to both the calling and election of believers, or in alluding to the called and elected, mentions the former first. See **Matthew 22:14; II Peter 1:10; Revelation 17:14**. The “**called**” of **Matthew 22:14** (the Greek word being an adjective used substantively) are those to whom only the general, external, and, for the most part, ineffectual call, through the preaching of the gospel, is sounded. This class is composed of many. But of these only a few, comparatively speaking, belong to the chosen, elect, as evidenced by the fact that only the few believe the gospel. “The other two passages cited mention calling and election in the order in which they are realized in the experience. One knows his election only by the calling (quickening) that he has received of the Holy Spirit. That the passages given above do not fix the chronological or even the logical, order of calling and election is evident from the proofs that have been given

of the eternity of election, and from **Romans 8:29, 30**, where the order is manifestly the true logical order. There foreknowledge and predestination, which involve election, are placed before calling. Then **Romans 8:28** asserts that we are called (particularly, internally, and effectually) “**according to his (God’s) purpose.**” And this purpose involves election. Thus election must precede calling, just as the purpose to call must precede the actual call since the calling is according to the divine purpose.

Those who urge this objection against the eternity of election need to note that the Scripture does not always name things in either their logical or chronological order. For instance, **II Timothy 1:9** puts salvation before calling.

*(4) That election takes place when we are saved on the ground that we are elected through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*

This objection is based on the King James translation of **II Thessalonians 2:13** and **I Peter 1:2**. This first passage says, in the King James version, that we were elected “**to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.**” The second passage says, according to the same version, that we are “**elect ... through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.**” The Greek preposition translated “**through**” by the King James translators is “en.” And it is rather disconcerting to Arminians to note that the Revised Version translates this preposition “**in**” instead of “**through.**” But it is ruining to them to note that N. M. Williams says of this preposition: “*It expresses a state, not an act; not ‘through,’ but ‘in.’ The Greek preposition seldom expresses instrumentality*” (*An American [Baptist] Commentary on the New Testament*).

The Greek preposition alludes to the state the people addressed were in at the time they were addressed, and does not signify the means by which they became the elect of God.

### 3. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

Before passing we wish to point out a few other passages which are as a death knell to the infidel theory that election and salvation take place at the same time.

(1) **“All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me” (John 6:37).**

It is manifest that this passage represents the Father’s giving of people to the Son as preceding their coming to the Son. The Father’s act of giving people to the Son (by which is here meant the divine efficacy in bringing them into the actual possession of the Son through repentance and faith, the verb **“giveth”** being in the present tense) involves an election of those thus given, inasmuch as all are not given. And since this giving precedes salvation, then election must precede salvation. This giving, of course, proves the eternity of election in the light of the immutability of God. But we are here concerned only with showing that election precedes salvation. The divine efficacy in bringing men to Christ is alluded to in **John 6:44, 65,** and **Ephesians 1:19, 20.**

(2) **“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).**

This passage puts ordination to eternal life before faith, and, consequently, before salvation. This ordination to eternal life involves election on the same grounds that the giving of the former passage involves election.

So far as the form of the Greek word is concerned, it could be either middle or passive; but the preponderance of scholarly opinion considers it as being definitely passive. Thus Hackett gives the translation: **“As many as were appointed unto eternal life believed,”** and then adds: *“This is the only translation the philology of the passage allows.”* Further Hackett says: *“Some translate the Greek participle (tetagmenoi) disposed, inclined; but this term as passive, though it may signify disposed externally - as e. g., drawn up in military order- was not used of an act of the mind.”* Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown’s commentary makes this significant comment on the words under consideration: *“... cannot ... be interpreted of anything lower*

*than this, that a divine ordination to eternal life is the cause, not the effect, of any man's believing."*

Some have tried to turn the passage around and make it read: "As many as believed were ordained to eternal life," which is the way it would have to read in order to even permit the interpretation that election and salvation take place at the same time. But the Greek construction will not allow this transposition. Thayer says the passage refers to "as many as were appointed to obtain eternal life, or to, whom God had decreed eternal life."

(3) **"God chose you ... unto salvation" (II Thessalonians 2:13).**

Since men are chosen or elected "unto salvation, their election must precede salvation. This is manifest to all except a certain class of Arminians who are incapable of understanding plain English.

**IV. ELECTION WAS PERSONAL, INDIVIDUAL, PARTICULAR, AND DISCRIMINATORY**

Being forced to admit that election of some kind took place in eternity, some Arminians hold to one of the three following notions:

1. THAT ELECTION IN THE BIBLE HAS REFERENCE, ONLY TO ISRAEL AS A NATION AND TO THE GENTILES AS A WHOLE, AND THAT IT IS ONLY AN ELECTION TO POSITION AND ADVANTAGE, NOT TO ETERNAL LIFE.

It is said that God chose Israel as a nation, then, in New Testament days, rejected her, and substituted the Gentiles as a whole. It is believed by those who hold this view that the classic discussion of election in **Romans 9** and **11** refers not to individual election to eternal life, but only to such corporate election as set forth above. The fact that any man can hold such a position as this only shows to what lengths of folly prejudice will lead one.

Our reply:

(1) *That in **Romans 9 and 11** we have an individual election of Jews to eternal life, as well as the national election of Israel to position and advantage, is evident from -*

A. The declaration that God has mercy on whom He will and hardens whom He will. **Romans 9:18.**

Such a declaration is not applicable to national or corporate election and rejection. It can be applied only to God's dealings with individuals. And that it does so apply becomes more evident as we pursue Paul's discussion further.

B. The anticipated objection to this manner of dealing with men. **Romans 9:19.**

What is this objection in plain words? As stated by A. N. Arnold it is this: "If it is God's will to harden a man, since His will cannot be successfully resisted, how can He blame hardened sinners?" By Prof. David Brown the objection is stated as follows: "This doctrine is incompatible with human responsibility; if God chooses and rejects, pardons and punishes, whom He pleases, why are those blamed who, if rejected by Him, cannot help sinning and perishing?" And this same commentator goes on to say that this objection shows "the real nature of the doctrine objected to - that it is Election and Non-election to eternal salvation prior to any difference of personal character; this is the only doctrine that could suggest the objection here stated."

C. The mention of "**vessels of mercy**" and "**vessels of wrath.**" **Romans 9:21-23.**

This is not applicable to national or corporate election to position and advantage. In such an election, the non-elect nations and groups cannot justly be represented as "**vessels of wrath,**" because such election does not represent them wholly abandoned to wrath. During the days of God's special dealing with the Jews as an elect nation, other nations were not entirely shut out. Individuals of them could partake of the theocratic blessings of Israel by submitting to, and observing, the rites of Israel.

D. The mention of a portion of Israel as “**the election**” and “**a remnant according to the election of grace.**” **Romans 11:5, 7.**

“In this elect remnant, gathered from an elect nation, we have an election within an election, an election of individuals to eternal life, who belonged to a people whom God elected to the privileges of grace” (*An American Commentary on the New Testament*).

(2) *That the Gentiles were not substituted for Jews is evident from -*

A. The fact that Israel has not been rejected in the sense that her election has been revoked.

Israel has been temporarily rejected from her national position in God’s plan, but, “**as touching election,**” she is still beloved, and will yet be restored to her place (**Romans 11:25-31**). The calling of God, whether national, corporate, or individual, is unchangeable (**Romans 11:29**). Hence all talk of the Gentiles having been substituted for the Jews is pure drivel.

B. Paul’s argument in **Romans 9:6**.

Paul’s argument is that the unbelief of the great body of the Jews did not make void God’s promise to Abraham on the ground that the promise did not apply to all the seed of Abraham. But if the Jews had been rejected as pertaining to election and the Gentiles substituted in their stead, Paul’s argument would have run something as follows: “The choice of Abraham and his seed has not failed: because though Israel has been rejected, the Gentiles have taken their place; and God has a right to choose what nation He will to the privileges of His visible kingdom” (commentary, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown).

(3) *That there is an individual election of Gentiles as well as of Jews to eternal life is evident from -*

A. **Romans 9:24.**

In this verse, Paul follows his reference to “**vessels of mercy ... afore prepared unto glory**” with the statement: “**Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.**” This shows us clearly that the “**vessels of mercy,**” which are manifestly elect individuals, are made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Thus we have an individual election of Gentiles as well as of Jews. On this verse Prof. Brown remarks illuminatingly: “Here for the first time in this chapter the calling of the Gentiles is introduced; all before having respect, not to the substitution of the called Gentiles for the rejected Jews, but to the choice of one portion of the same Israel. Had Israel’s rejection been total, God’s promise to Abraham would not have been fulfilled by the substitution of the Gentiles in their room; but Israel’s rejection being only partial, the preservation of a ‘**remnant,**’ in which the promise was made good, was but ‘according to the election of grace.’ And now, for the first time, the apostle tells us that along with this elect remnant of Israel it is God’s purpose to ‘**take out of the Gentiles a people for His name**’ (Acts 15:14).”

#### B. References to election in other New Testament books.

These references appear somewhere in this discussion. Hence they need not be mentioned here. Let the reader turn the pages of this chapter and note these references, marking how certainly they refer to an individual election to salvation. Note especially **II Thessalonians 2:13** in contrast to the theory that election is only to position and advantage and not to salvation.

C. All the arguments which we now address to the second theory, which denies that election was individual.

The second theory is:

2. THAT ETERNAL ELECTION APPLIES ONLY TO THE “WHOSO-EVER-WILLS” AS A CLASS.

The falseness of this theory is proved by -



(1) *Gods foreknowledge of those He saves.*

**Romans 8:29** asserts God's foreknowledge of those He saves. And since God foreknew those whom He saves, His election of them could not have been mere class election. To elect a class with full knowledge beforehand as to rust who will compose that class is equal to an individual election of each one in the class.

(2) *The fact that the names of the elect were written in the book of life.*

That the names of the elect were written in the book of life in eternity is proved by **Revelation 17:8**, which reads:

**“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, *they* whose names hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come.”**

This passage, in speaking of those whose names were not written in the book of life, distinctly implies that there were some whose names were written in the book of life **“from the foundation of the world.”** **“From the foundation of the world,”** says Justin A. Smith, *“is the New Testament mode of representing what took place in the remote past, before time, measured in the periods of this world, had existence”* (An American Commentary on the New Testament).

This writing of the names of the elect in the book of life certainly makes election individual and personal.

(3) *The fact the God saves people as individuals.*

The immutability of God, as we have indicated already, binds us to believe that God eternally purposed to do everything He does. Therefore, since He saves people as individuals, He must have an eternal purpose to

save them as individuals. This eternal purpose is equal to election, and thus election is proved to be individual.

All of these arguments show also that election in no sense had respect to all men. It pertains only to those whom God actually saves. All others He passed by, leaving them to suffer the just penalty of their sins in hell.

## **V. ELECTION WAS NOT BASED ON THE FORESEEN FAITH OF THE ELECT**

It is certain that God foresaw the faith of the elect. And it is also certain that this was not the ground of election. We proceed to prove that election was not based on the foreseen faith of the elect by urging some scriptural objections to this theory. We will then show that this theory does not eliminate some of the strongest objections that Arminians urge against the doctrine of unconditional election.

### **1. OBJECTIONS TO THE THEORY THAT ELECTION WAS BASED ON THE FORESEEN FAITH OF THE ELECT.**

Before giving these objections, we wish to point out the fact that they apply with equal force to the theory that we are elected when we are saved, because both of these theories alike condition election on faith.

(1) *This theory denies that faith is a gift of God and makes it an exercise of the natural heart.*

No sensible advocate of this theory can hold that faith is the gift of God - that it is wrought in us by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. The noted Augustine, in his book of *Retractations*, cleverly acknowledges his error in having once thought that election is based on foreseen faith, saying: "*I could never have asserted that God in choosing men to life had any respect to their faith, had I duly considered that faith is His own gift.*" Faith is salvation in the germ. Therefore, to say that God gives faith, and then elects us to salvation because of that faith as foreseen, is equivalent to saying that God saves and then because of that, elects us to salvation. Hence the only sensible view that can be taken by those who believe that election is based

on foreseen faith is that faith precedes the quickening power of the Holy Spirit and is, therefore, an exercise of the natural heart. This implies the following things which the Scripture denies:

A. That a clean thing can come out of an unclean one.

Faith is certainly a clean or a holy thing. The natural heart is certainly an unclean or an unholy thing. **Jeremiah 17:9** teaches that the natural heart is desperately wicked. And in **Romans 7:18** Paul says that in his fleshly nature there was no good thing. Moreover, the doctrine of total depravity, as taught in Scripture and believed by Baptists, affirms that every faculty in man is tainted by sin, and, therefore, is unclean and unholy.

Now can faith, a clean thing, proceed from the natural heart, an unclean thing? We reply that it cannot, and that for two reasons; viz.,

(a) The inexorable law that like begets like. This is a universal law. It operates in every realm. It is an axiom. This law is expressed figuratively in the saying that water cannot rise above its level.

(b) The statement of Job. We refer here to **Job 14:4**, which reads: “**Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.**”

B. That one who is accustomed to do evil may turn and do good.

The sinner is accustomed to do evil. Faith is a good thing. Then can the sinner exercise it so long as he is in the natural state? Jeremiah strongly affirms the impossibility of the sinner's doing this. He says: “**Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil**” (**Jeremiah 13:23**). Thus Jeremiah says that it is as impossible for the natural man to do good and, therefore, to exercise faith, as it is for the Negro to make himself white or the leopard to divest himself of his spotted robe.

C. That one who is in the flesh can please God.

Faith is pleasing to God. Until one is quickened by the Holy Spirit, he is in the flesh, that is, he is under the dominating power of the fleshly nature. Then can one exercise faith until he is quickened? Not according to Paul, who says: **“The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: and they that are in the flesh cannot Please God” (Romans 8:7, 8).**

D. That the natural man can receive spiritual things.

Saving faith is the reception of Jesus Christ as one’s Saviour. Christ as Saviour is certainly a spiritual thing. To receive Christ as one’s Saviour, one must do more than receive truth intellectually. He must have a heart realization of his lost condition and of his utter inability to save himself. He must also have a heart conviction as to Christ’s saving power and as to how men partake of that power. There must be a real appreciation of these things. And these things, when properly appreciated in their deep significance, are certainly spiritual things. And it was with reference to “Christ and Him crucified” that Paul was writing when he said: **“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged” (I Corinthians 2:14).**

*(2) This theory makes election depend upon the running and willing of man.*

Yet Paul says, in discussing election: **“It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy” (Romans 9:16).**

*(3) This theory denies salvation by grace and gives men ground for glorying before God.*

If God is represented as looking down through the centuries and foreseeing that certain ones would believe apart from any sovereign purpose to bring them to believe and as having elected these because of this foreseen faith, it cannot be denied that God saves only those who are better than the common lot of mankind. The great majority of men go on in unbelief, which indicates in there a much worse spirit than would be indicated in them by

their believing. Hence men who believe, on Arminian principles, are better, in and of themselves, than those who do not believe; for faith, if it be a condition of election, must, as we have shown already, precede the quickening power of the Holy Spirit and come, therefore, from the natural heart. Consequently it follows, as the night the day, that God saves only those who are better than others. And this goodness, even though it consists only of faith, cannot be excluded from the category of meritorious acts. Faith is the germ of holiness. Yea, more, it is the very expression of a holy disposition. So one who believes that God elected men on condition of their faith, must, if he is capable of thinking, accept the proposition that God elected to save men on the ground of their own partial merit. No believer in election conditioned on faith can consistently hold to salvation by grace.

The Arminians commonly hold that God may not in justice pass by fallen men, as unconditional electionists represent Him as passing by all the non-elect. But “if God might not, in justice, have passed by man when he fell, He would have done him an injustice to have passed him by, and when, instead of passing him by, He visited him, He was simply performing toward him an act of justice. Surely it is a gross misuse of language to call such interposition an act of grace. Arminians are ever claiming that they are the advocates of ‘free grace,’ but their principles ... prove to a demonstration, that the claim is absolutely destitute of warrant either in the nature of the economy or in the history of its administration” (Watts, *Sovereignty of God*, p, 13).

“There are only two systems of theology. One of these gives all the glory to God, the other divides it with man” (J. W. Porter, *Random Remarks* (on election), p. 41).

According to the theory now being refuted, a saved man may say: “Father, I thank thee for sending Christ to die for me, and I thank thee for offering salvation to me; for unless thou hadst done these things I could never have been saved. And I thank thee that thou didst influence me by the Spirit. But, Father, I can thank only myself that I accepted thy offer of mercy. The credit for that belongs to me, since nothing that thou hast done was sufficient to irresistibly cause my acceptance of thy free mercy. Thou did do as much

for others that are still lost as thou didst do for me before I believed, therefore I have made myself to differ from them. Father, you can't in justice deny me the right to glory in this and boast of it throughout all eternity, as I will be especially moved to do when I think of the plight of the lost in hell and remember that it was my act that kept me from being in Hell. Somehow, either through heredity or training or something else, I was better than they; for I submitted myself to thee and they did not. Thus, even though salvation was mostly of thy grace, yet it was not wholly so; for thou wouldst not have saved me if I had not been better than those who perish."

On the contrary, we are told in holy writ that God has arranged the economy of His grace "**that no flesh should glory before God**" (I **Corinthians 1:29**).

(4) *This theory makes a farce out of election.*

"If men were foreseen as possessed of faith and holiness, prior to their election and independent of it; it is hard to conceive what occasion there was for their being elected. There could be no necessity for it to secure their final happiness. For the judge of all the earth must do right: and eternal misery was never designed to be the portion of any who believe and are holy; for peace and salvation are inseparably joined to such a state, and to such characters. To have ordained those to happiness and glory that were foreseen to be thus qualified, would, therefore, have been altogether unnecessary" (A Booth, *Reign of Grace*, p. 63).

Thus Arminianism makes election an unnecessary and meaningless term.

(5) *This theory represents us as being elected because we were foreseen as holy rather than that we should be holy.*

The believer is holy; that is, he is a sanctified person. Thus to teach that we were elected because we were foreseen as believing is to teach that we were elected because we were foreseen as being holy. But the Scripture teaches that we were chosen in Christ "**that we should be holy**" (**Ephesians 1:4**).

(6) *This theory makes election because of adoption rather than unto adoption.*

All believers have been adopted; for adoption is through faith (**Galatians 3:26**). Thus, if election had been based on foreseen faith, it would have been based also on foreseen adoption. But the Scripture teaches that predestination (which involves election) is “**unto adoption**” (**Ephesians 1:5**).

(7) *This theory destroys the sovereignty of God.*

According to Arminianism, God is powerless to save any except those who will of themselves allow Him to save them. Thus “God stands powerless before the majesty of man’s lordly will. Sinners have the glory of their own salvation. To pray to God to convert a man is absurd. God elects the man, because He foresees that the man will elect himself (S. R. Mason, as quoted approvingly by A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 433).

## 2. THE FUTILITY OF THE THEORY THAT ELECTION WAS BASED ON THE FORESEEN FAITH OF THE ELECT.

Arminians have imagined this theory to eliminate certain objections they have invented against unconditional election. They object to the certainty that prevails under unconditional election, because they fancy this certainty abrogates the free agency of man. But the theory under consideration involves no less a degree of certainty. If God foresees that a thing is going to be, it is absolutely certain to be. Nothing could make it more certain.

They do not like to think of some men as having been born into the world with no possibility of salvation. But the theory under consideration involves the same thing. Certainly, if God foresaw those who would believe, He also foresaw those who would not believe, and there is no possibility that these will be saved.

They think that unconditional election places the responsibility for those that perish upon God. But their admission of God’s foresight is equally open to the same objection, as shown in the following quotation: “I at once admit

that the mere foreseeing of an event, which we cannot hinder and have no agency in accomplishing, does not involve us in any responsibility. But when the Creator, of His own sovereign pleasure calls an intelligent agent into being, fashions him with certain powers and appetites and places him amid scenes where he clearly sees that temptations win overcome him-in such a case it is self-evident that our feeble faculties cannot separate foreknowledge from fore-appointment. The denial of preordination does not, therefore, relieve any objection. It only conceals the difficulty from the ignorant” (Richard Fuller, *Baptist Doctrines*, by C. A. Jenkins).

### 3. THE NATURE OF GOD’S FOREKNOWLEDGE.

**Romans 8:29** and **I Peter 1:2** have been appealed to in support of the theory that election is based on God’s foresight of the faith of those elected. But foreknowledge and foresight are by no means identical in meaning. In commenting on **Romans 8:29**, Prof. Brown says: “In chapter **11:2**, and **Psalm 1:6**, God’s ‘knowledge’ of His people cannot be restricted to mere foresight of future events, or acquaintance with what is passing here below ... God’s foreknowledge of His own people means His peculiar, gracious complacency in them” (Commentary, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown). To say that **Romans 8:29** means, whom He foreknew as those who would of themselves believe, “is to thrust into the text what is contrary to the whole spirit, and even letter, of the apostle’s teaching” (ibid). The same word in **Romans 8:29** appears again, in its participial form, in **I Peter 1:20**, where it refers to Christ in His redemptive work. There it certainly cannot be limited to the mere meaning of foresight. It is a common notion that **I Peter 1:2** represents foreknowledge as logically prior to election, but no such notion is contained in this passage. This passage teaches simply that election is agreeable to the foreknowledge of God. The expression “**elect ... according to the foreknowledge of God**” has the same meaning as “elect in the foreknowledge of God.” Those referred to were elect in that God, before the world was, looked upon them with peculiar, gracious complacency. The word for foreknowledge in **I Peter 1:2** is defined in Thayer’s Lexicon as meaning “forethought, prearrangement.”



Any foreknowledge that implies certainty, as is the case in both passages under discussion, must be considered as logically subsequent to God's purpose or decree. See **Acts 2:23**. "Logically, though not chronologically, decree comes before foreknowledge" (Strong). "Whence is God's knowledge of the futurity of any events, except from the knowledge of His purpose to cause or permit them to come to pass?" (Boyce). "God's foreknowledge rests on His determinate counsel." (Graves, *The Seven Dispensations*, p. 100).

## **VI. ELECTION IS UNTO SALVATION**

This truth is declared in **II Thessalonians 2:13**, which reads:

**"God chose you from the beginning unto salvation."**

Note three things from this passage:

### **1. ELECTION IS NOT SALVATION.**

Arminians charge that unconditional election means unconditional salvation, and that we teach that men were actually saved in eternity. Both charges are groundless, for election is not salvation. We were unconditionally elected in eternity to a conditional salvation in time. And when we speak of salvation as being conditional we do not mean that the salvation of the elect is in any way fortuitous or uncertain, but only that certain conditions (repentance and faith) must be fulfilled before they come to possess salvation. A condition is "something that necessarily precedes a result, but does not produce it." In eternity the salvation of the elect was purposed, and the elect are spoken of in the purpose of God as **called, justified, and glorified (Romans 8: 29, 30)**, but this is simply the language of Him, who in His purpose, "**calleth the things that are not, as though they were**" (**Romans 4:17**). Many passages clearly teach that actual salvation takes place in time. For this we strongly contend. We have no patience whatsoever with the theory that the salvation which takes place in time is only temporal salvation, or salvation as it respects this life.

## 2. ELECTION IS PRIMARILY UNTO SALVATION RATHER THAN BEING MERELY UNTO SERVICE.

The Devil is never tired of inventing notions contrary to the truth. He has led some to assert that Bible election is merely unto service. But God's Word has set itself squarely against this silly notion by revealing that we were chosen "**Unto salvation.**"

## 3. ELECTION IS UNTO SALVATION RATHER THAN BEING MERELY UNTO EXTERNAL PRIVILEGES.

Another devilish notion is that election is merely unto external privileges or opportunities. But **II Thessalonians 2:13** kills this notion also.

## VII. ELECTION INCLUDES ALL THAT EVER WILL BE SAVED

Some have the idea that election includes only so many in every generation as necessary to guarantee that the gospel will be believed and proclaimed. Others have the notion that, in addition to the elect, room must be made for the "whosoever wills." The above affirmation denies both of these views. That election includes all that ever will be saved is certain, because –

### 1. GOD'S IMMUTABILITY PROVES IT.

Man, in his natural condition, is unable to come to Christ. Cf. **Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 4:23; Job 14:4; Jeremiah 18:23; John 12:39, 40; Romans 8:7, 8; II Corinthians 2:14.** The ability to come to Christ, therefore, is divinely given, as stated in **John 6:65.** Hence none can come to Christ and be saved except those to whom God imparts the ability to come. Now we have previously noted that the immutability of God teaches us that whatever God does at any time He must always have purposed to do. Consequently, in eternity, He purposed to give the ability to come to Christ to all that He actually gives it to in time. This purpose is equal to election. And since none can come except those to whom this ability is given, and them were all included in the purpose of God, which is equal to election; it follows that none will ever be saved except the elect. The elect and the "*whosoever-*

*wills*” are one, since none can will to turn to Christ until God works in them to will.

## 2. GOD’S OMNISCIENCE PROVES IT.

Salvation is of the Lord. Since God is omniscient, He knew just whom He would save. This knowledge involved a purpose to save them. This purpose, as we have remarked before, equals election. Thus election includes all that ever will be saved, because it includes all that God knew He would save.

## 3. THE FACT THAT NONE EXCEPT THE ELECT WILL ENTER NEW JERUSALEM PROVES IT.

**Revelation 21:27** tells us who the inhabitants of New Jerusalem will be - “**only they that are written in the Lambs’ book of life.**” We have seen that the writing of names in the book of life took place in the remote past, before the beginning of time, as we know it, and that it is, therefore, equivalent to election. Then New Jerusalem will be inhabited by the elect only. If others are saved, they had better carry a tent with them; for they will have to camp outside of New Jerusalem. Only the elect will get on the inside.

## VIII. THE END OF ELECTION IS INSEPARABLY CONNECTED WITH ALL THE MEANS NECESSARY TO ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT

At the same time God chose His people He ordained all the means necessary to accomplish their full and final salvation. See **Romans 8:29, 30**. These means were inseparably joined to election in the decree of God. We have no sympathy with Hardshellism, hypercalvinism. To say that the elect will be saved whether they ever hear the gospel or not is to misunderstand completely the connection between election and the means God has ordained for the accomplishment of the end of election.

Salvation - spiritual, temporal, and eternal - is by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 5:1; Galatians 8:26**). All the heathen that die without hearing the gospel will be lost (**Romans 1:19, 20; 2:12**). Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (**Romans 10:17**).

Wherever God has an elect soul, in the fullness of His own time, He will in some way send the gospel to call that one from darkness to light. See **II Thessalonians 2:14**. Thus Philip was sent to the elect eunuch, and thus it was given to Paul to endure that the elect might obtain eternal salvation (**II Timothy 2:10**). Thus we have the divine tie between election and missions.

Some charge that unconditional election makes all means useless. They say if the case is so with man that he cannot by nature receive spiritual things and must be quickened by the Spirit before he can turn from sin, being sure to turn when he is quickened, then why preach to him? We preach to him, first of all, because God has commanded it. We accept God's Word whether we can reason out why He speaks thus and so or not. We do not make our reason the standard of obedience or truth, as is the case with Arminians. But, on the other hand, we find God's Word to teach that God calls His elect by the Word, since the Word is the instrument of the Spirit in regeneration (**John 3:5; Ephesians 5:25, 26; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23**). There is no more incongruity in preaching the gospel to the spiritually dead than there was in Christ's standing before the tomb of Lazarus, dead four days, and saying, "Lazarus, come forth." As long as he remained dead Lazarus could not hear, much less obey, the command. But the life-giving power of God accompanied the Word of God, and Lazarus both heard and came forth. It is ours to preach the gospel to every creature, for so has Christ commanded. It is God's part to bring the dead to life. See also the parable of the dry bones in the valley, where we have a picture of conversion through preaching (**Ezekiel 37**). The dry bones represent the state of sinners by nature. The bones were lifeless; yet preaching to them was not in vain.

And Arminians ask, "Why pray for the lost, since all God's elect will be saved and none others can be saved?" We pray for the lost for the same reason that Paul prayed for men, even though he taught unconditional election. We pray for the lost for the same reason that Christ prayed for the security of believers, even though that security was already certain. See **John 17:11**. Christ also prayed for a restoration of His former glory with the Father. See **John 17:5**. Was that in any sense uncertain? Prayer, as well as preaching, is a means of God in carrying out His will His purposes are

sovereignly fixed and eternally immutable, but He did not fix them independent of means.

## IX. ELECTION IS NOT HARDSHELLISM

It is customary for Arminians to reproach the Bible doctrine of election by referring to it as “Hardshellism.” May God forgive them, for they know not what they do. That election is not Hardshellism is proved by the following facts:

### 1. ELECTION IS INDISSOLUBLY JOINED TO THE GOSPEL AS GOD’S MEANS OF CALLING HIS ELECT TO SALVATION.

This is proved by the Scriptures given above that show that regeneration is through the Word. And it is also proved by **II Thessalonians 2:13, 14**. The elect have been chosen to “**salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.**” To this, Paul says, they are “**called by our gospel.**” Typical Hardshells deny the indispensable necessity of the knowledge of the gospel in regeneration. For that reason they show little concern in the carrying out of the great commission.

### 2. THE HARDSHELLS AND MISSIONARIES DID NOT SPLIT OVER ELECTION.

(1) *They split over “mission, education, support of pastors, and other religious enterprises”* (Jarrell, p. 431).

(2) *In the split both parties held to unconditional election.*

It will not be challenged that the Hardshells held to this doctrine. That the Missionaries did too is proved by the testimony of Spencer, who says that the Missionaries, “*which embraced the main body of the denomination, held the doctrinal sentiments of Andrew Fuller,*” who believed in unconditional election, even though he taught an atonement of universal sufficiency. See History of Kentucky Baptists, Vol. 1, p. 645.

3. THERE IS YET NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MISSIONARIES AND HARDSHELLS ON THE MATTER OF UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.

This is proved by -

(1) *The fact that both accept the statement on election in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.*

Hardshells still accept this. And among the Missionaries this confession “*is still widely used, and in the South it is probably the most influential of all confessions*” (McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, p. 298).

(2) *The fact that unconditional election is taught in the other great American Baptist confession - the New Hampshire.*

See proof of this under later discussion of unconditional election as a Baptist doctrine.

(3) *The fact that all our standard theological text books and all doctrinal books written by representative and recognized Baptists teach this doctrine.*

For proof of this see discussion referred to immediately above.

4. BAPTIST BELIEVERS IN UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION, COUPLED WITH THE GOSPEL AS AN INDISPENSABLE MEANS IN REGENERATION, HAVE EVER BEEN MOST AGGRESSIVE IN THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

Modem missionary vision and effort originated, not among the General (Arminian) Baptists, nor yet among any other Arminian denomination, but among the Particular (Calvinistic) Baptists of England. See the record in most any Baptist history. Robert Hall, Sr., Andrew Fuller, and William Carey were the leading lights.

American world-wide missionary effort originated in the Philadelphia Association, which adopted the hated Philadelphia Confession of Faith. See “The Story of Baptists,” Cook, p. 327. *“The Philadelphia Association speedily became the leading body of American Baptists - a position that it has not wholly lost to this day (1897). Pretty much everything good in our history, from 1700 to 1850, may be traced to its initiative or active cooperation”* (Vedder, *Short History of Baptists*, p. 204).

## **X. ELECTION IS NOT TWO-SEEDISM**

This is another epithet that Arminians delight to apply to the Bible doctrine of election. In brief, two-seedism holds that Adam and Eve brought forth two seeds, one the seed of God and the other the seed of the serpent. Daniel Parker, who gave currency to this doctrine, taught that the seed of God “were actual sons of God from eternity,” and that the seed of the serpent were “begotten of the devil” (Minutes of General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, 1837, p. 11).

No such teaching as this is involved in unconditional election. We have shown that election is unto salvation, and, therefore, is not salvation. Salvation takes place in time. All men are children of the devil until they become children of God by regeneration and faith. **I John 3:9, 10.**

## **XI. ELECTION DOES NOT INVOLVE FATALISM**

Those who cannot see the difference between election and fatalism need to consult a good dictionary. *“Fate is heathen, an irresistible, irrational power determining all events with no manifest connection with reason or righteousness.” “Foreordination and predestination are Christian, denoting the rational and righteous order or decree of the supreme and all-wise God.”* A. R. McGehee once said the following concerning the difference between fatalism and predestination: *“Fatalism is that theory of life which teaches that all destiny is fixed from the beginning, and that intermediate circumstances and acts do not affect that fixed destiny. The end in view, whether good or bad, is reached by sheer fiat or caprice, and little account is taken of morality or purpose, with meager emphasis on*

*either divine or human personality. It is a philosophy and not a religion. In contrast, Determinism holds that the end or destiny in view is effected by a combination of all preceding acts and circumstances. Election, on the other hand, is moral and personal and purposeful, and events are divinely ordered and controlled to produce certain moral values.”*

But the Arminian must either deny the foreknowledge of God or shut himself up to blank fatalism. If God foreknew the final destiny of every man, then that destiny was settled and fixed in eternity. By what then was it fixed? Arminians have on the one hand a vacant throne, and on the other a fixed future. There are just two ways out for them. They can either pursue their infidelity toward its logical terminus and deny the foreknowledge of God, or they can acknowledge fate as the determiner of human events. Let every Arminian make his choice and then write us about it.

We have said there are but two ways out for the Arminian. That is true so long as he remains an Arminian. But there is, after all, a way out of the dilemma that is safe and happy. That way is to acknowledge the truth of God’s absolute sovereignty. We wish every Arminian could know the comfort and joy that an acceptance of that truth brings.

## **XII. ELECTION IS PERFECTLY CONSISTENT WITH THE FREE AGENCY OF MAN**

For the definition and general discussion of free agency see the chapter on [“The Free Agency Of Man”](#).

The Bible doctrine of election represents man, in his natural condition, as completely enslaved by sin, with no ability in spiritual things. It also represents God as taking the initiative in conversion by quickening the dead sinner into life logically prior to his repentance and faith. But for proof that this does not involve a conflict between free agency and election see in Chapter XIX [“The Free Agency Of Man”](#) the discussion under “Free Agency of the Natural Man” and “Free Agency and Conversion.”

## **XIII. ELECTION DOES NOT DESTROY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SINNER**



When Paul wrote his marvelous epistle to the Romans, he anticipated the objection that is often made to God's sovereign dealing with men on the ground that it destroys the responsibility of the sinner. He says: "**Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doeth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?**" (**Romans 9:19**). In other words, "if God chooses and rejects, pardons and punishes, whom He pleases, why are those blamed who, if rejected by Him, cannot help shining and perishing?" Or, if God saves all He chooses to save, leaving the rest in a state of spiritual impotency, from which they cannot liberate themselves, being certain to persist in sin unto their eternal doom, why does He blame those who continue in sin? This shows clearly, as we have already pointed out, that Paul taught unconditional election and the total spiritual inability of the natural man. Such an objection would not be suggested by any other doctrine.

## 1. THIS OBJECTION IS IMPIOUS.

In reply to this objection, Paul says: "**Nay but, O man, who are thou that replest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?**" (**Romans 9: 20**). Paul replied, as we reply to similar objections, that man has no right, under any circumstances, to question anything God does. God is under no obligation to give an account of Himself to man. The Arminian deserves no further consideration.

But the reverent inquirer, who readily accepts all that God has revealed and desires, for his own spiritual edification, to know all that he can learn from God's Word concerning the infinitely wise and holy ways of him whose presence is as a flame of fire and whose glory He has set above the heavens, deserves further consideration. Hence, for the sake of such an inquirer, we note further:

## 2. THE TWO PHASES OF GOD'S WILL.

We have said that God saves all He chooses or wills to save. On the other hand, God "**commandeth all men every where to repent**" (**Acts 17:30**). He has also commanded that the gospel be preached to every creature (**Mark 16:15**), and the gospel is God's general call, [\[34\]](#) also being

properly accompanied with a general invitation, such as Christ gave (**Matthew 11:28**). This makes it evident that a distinction must be made in dealing, with the will of God. God has made that distinction for us. You will find it in **Deuteronomy 29:9**. There God's will is divided into His secret [35] and revealed will. [36] This distinction is brought out there because it is indicated in the 29th and 30th chapters that the Israelites would be permitted of God to so disobey Him and that He would send the captivity upon them and finally scatter them to the four winds of the earth. It was His secret will to permit this. But His revealed will was that they should obey. That fixed their responsibility, as **Deuteronomy 29:29** clearly indicates.

This distinction between God's secret will and His revealed will does not, as has been charged, "put an intolerable dualism into the being of God and charge Him - sit venia verbo - with falsehood and deceit" (Schaff). It is based on a fact of human experience. God's revealed will expresses His immanent preference in things considered within themselves and apart from His perfect and holy purpose. That there should be a difference between God's immanent preference in things abstracted from the whole and His consummate purpose is imperfectly illustrated in the following instance. A loving parent takes no pleasure in the suffering of a child, yet, in order to the child's future good and happiness, the parent inflicts suffering by way of chastisement. The parent thus employs a thing that is displeasing within itself for the attainment of a purpose. God is not Pleased with sin, within itself considered; but in the accomplishment of His purpose it has pleased Him to permit sin and to overrule it for His glory.

### 3. ELECTION AND THE NON-ELECT.

Election imposes no restraint on the non-elect. It actively affects them in no way. It leaves them in exactly the same condition they would be in if there were no such thing as election - a condition of spiritual impotence and condemnation, such as all sinners are in by nature. An election of some to life does not imply an election of some to death. The death of the wicked is not the result of election, but of God's just dealings with them as sinners. It is their rightful wages (**Romans 6:23**). In election God simply chooses out of the whole mass of depraved mankind those whom He pleases to save for just

and holy reasons known only to Himself. The rest He simply leaves to the just consequences of their sin. If a rich man chooses out one beggar and gives him wealth, can it be justly said that in so doing he elects all other beggars to suffer perpetual poverty?

After reading the foregoing, one asked: “*Does not the author believe in reprobation?*” The answer is, “*He most certainly does.*” And the foregoing is in nowise inconsistent therewith, but rather implicitly affirms reprobation. The author is in full and happy agreement with Warfield in the following statement concerning reprobation: “*Were not all men sinners, there might still be an election, as sovereign as now; and there being an election, there would still be as sovereign a rejection; BUT THE REJECTION WOULD NOT BE A REJECTION TO PUNISHMENT, TO DESTRUCTION, TO ETERNAL DEATH. BUT TO SOME OTHER DESTINY CONSONANT TO THE STATE IN WHICH THOSE PASSED BY SHOULD BE LEFT. It is not indeed, then, because men are sinners that men are left unelected; election is free, and its obverse of rejection be equally free; BUT IT IS SOLELY BECAUSE MEN ARE SINNERS THAT WHAT THEY ARE LEFT TO IS DESTRUCTION*” (*Biblical Doctrines*, p. 54).

#### 4. RESPONSIBILITY AND SPIRITUAL INABILITY.

The sinner is without ability in spiritual things, but that does not destroy his responsibility. That responsibility depends upon present ability is a tenet of chimney-corner (or street-corner) theology that cannot stand in the light of scriptural facts. The heathen is responsible for living up to the light of conscience that he has concerning the law of God. Cf. **Romans 2:12-16**. But he can't do this; for if some should do it, there would be no basis for their condemnation, according to the above Scripture, and they would be saved by works, by which the Scripture declares that none can be saved. Then those that bear the law are to be judged by it. This means that they are held responsible to obey the law. But they cannot do this; for the voice of the law shuts every mouth (**Romans 3:19**). Hence responsibility does not depend upon present ability, and spiritual inability does not destroy responsibility.

#### 5. MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS SPIRITUAL INABILITY.

But while responsibility does not depend upon present ability, it does rest upon former ability. Originally man had ability in spiritual things. This ability he sinned away in the fall of Adam. The whole race participated in this fall. This is the teaching of **Romans 5:12**. “**Have sinned**” of King James Version is the translation of the aorist tense in the Greek. The aorist tense in the indicative mode (and some other modes) expresses pointed action in past time. **Romans 5:12** therefore, does not allude to a course of sin followed by each individual but to one apostasy, the apostasy of Adam, in which all participated. The way in which all of Adam’s race took part in the fall is forcefully set forth by A.H. Strong as follows:

“The total life of humanity was then in Adam; the race as yet had its being only in him. Its essence was not yet individualized; its forces were not yet distributed; the powers which now exist in separate men were then unified and localized in Adam; Adam’s will was yet the will of the species. In Adam’s free act the will of the race revolted from God and the nature of the race corrupted itself. The nature which we now possess is the same nature that corrupted itself in Adam - not the same in kind merely, but the same as flowing to us continuously from him.” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 328).

Having sinned in Adam, each descendant of Adam is responsible for the depravity and spiritual inability thus incurred.

#### **XIV. ELECTION IS PERFECTLY CONSISTENT WITH THE JUSTICE OF GOD**

Paul also anticipated this objection to his doctrine (**Romans 9:14**), which shows that he taught unconditional election; for no other theory of election would have suggested this objection. If by chance one who misunderstood his doctrine had offered the objection, this was the place for him to clearly state that his doctrine of election was not open to that objection because it taught that election was based on the foreseen faith of the elect. He certainly would have done this, if he had been an Arminian. But instead, he dismissed it as being preposterous, with “**God forbid.**” Then he

proceeded to answer the objection with God's own declaration concerning His sovereign dealing with men.

Examining the objection further, we note:

## 1. JUSTICE AND PARTIALITY.

Among other crude and unscriptural notions, the idea that justice and partiality are necessarily antagonistic deserves an important place. We are commanded not to be partial, but God nowhere says that He is not partial. God's wisdom, sovereignty, and independence give Him rights that our ignorance, subjection, and dependence deny to us. The Scripture shows that God is partial. He is partial to fallen men in comparison with fallen angels, in that for some of the former He has provided redemption while all the latter are **“reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6)**. He is partial to people of so-called Christian lands in comparison with the people of heathen lands, in that the former have the light of the gospel while the latter in many cases live on through life in ignorance of the gospel which is the only way of salvation.

Whether partiality is unjust depends upon the circumstances. The minister, in his dealing with those who persist in sin, is not to allow anything to cause him to excuse some where all are equally guilty (**I Timothy 5:21**). And we are not to prefer some men in favor or honor because of wealth or any such thing (**James 2:4**). In other words, we are to deal with men according to what they really deserve. But in salvation God deals with the wholly ill-deserving; for grace is unmerited favor and favor that is not owed as an obligation. Hence God may distribute His grace among men as His perfect wisdom and holiness dictate. In doing this, He elected some to life and left others to perish as the just consequences of their sins. Who will dare deny Him this right?

“May not the sovereign God of all,

Dispense His favors as He will;

Choose some to life, while others fall,

And yet be just and holy still?

## 2. GOD OWES MAN NOTHING

This needs to be emphasized. If God owed man anything, then salvation would be of debt instead of grace. Some will say that God owes man a “chance” to be saved. Has He given this “chance” to the heathen that have died without the gospel? A “chance” to be saved accomplishes nothing for man. One might as well talk of giving a totally paralyzed man a “chance” to walk. Every such man that is not physically bound has every possible “chance” to walk. But the “chance” is of no value to him in the absence of ability. Lost men are spiritually dead. They must have ability to come to Christ (**John 6:65**). Some will say that God owes this ability to man but this ability is salvation in the germ; and hence if God owes this ability, salvation is not of grace. And suppose God should give to all men such ability as Arminians contend for and then they should refuse to employ this ability. Would not God then be liberated from any obligation to renew that ability? This is man’s position. He once had ability. There came a time when he squandered it and thus lost it. This took place in Adam, in whom God says all sinned. Is God now under obligation to renew that ability?

## 3. GOD MAY DO WHAT HE WILL WITH HIS OWN.

God asserts the same right over humanity that the potter has over the clay (**Romans 9:21-23**). **“Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish”** (**Acts 13:41**). However let it be said in order to prevent misunderstanding that God’s method of making “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction” is different from His method of making “vessels of mercy.” The latter is an act of sovereign grace. The former is an act of permissive justice. The latter He accomplishes by the efficient working of His grace; the former He does not efficiently cause, but only permits for wise and holy reasons fully known to Himself only.

## **XV. ELECTION DOES NOT MAKE GOD A RESPECTER OF PERSONS**

When the Scriptures tell us that God is not a respecter of persons they mean that His dealings with men are not determined by the outward differences of race, wealth, social position, or any such thing. This the Scripture distinctly intimates. See **II Samuel 14:14; Acts 10:34; I Peter 1:17**. To have respect of persons is to make a difference between the equally deserving. But it involves no respect of persons to make a difference between the wholly ill-deserving. God has done this in various cases, as pointed out in the preceding discussion of justice and partiality.

## **XVI. ELECTION DOES NOT IMPLY THAT GOD CREATED THE NON-ELECT MERELY TO DAMN THEM**

God takes no delight in the destruction of the wicked, as a thing within itself. On the contrary, the salvation of men is a thing that is, within itself, pleasing to God. But He made man for His own glory. Somehow, in a way that is not fully comprehensible to the finite mind, it subserves that glory that some men perish. Thus He has willed to permit it, but not because He is one who exults in man's suffering. We can rest assured that God will save the greatest number that He can save without prejudice to the most glorious manifestation of His character as a whole. And finally we shall see in full the holiness of God's purpose.

The believer in unconditional election is no more under obligation to answer this objection than is the believer in the foreknowledge of God who denies unconditional election. For to such an one there comes the inevitable question, Why did God create those whom He knew would perish? Richard Fuller was exactly right in saying that foreknowledge on the part of God and fore appointment cannot be separated. The denial of foreordination "only conceals the difficulty from the ignorant" (Richard Fuller).

## **XVII. ELECTION, AS SET FORTH HEREIN, IS A BAPTIST DOCTRINE**

We come now to show that the doctrine of unconditional election is a Baptist doctrine. In proof of this we call attention to the following:

### **1. THE FAITH OF BAPTIST PROGENITORS.**

(1) *Paterines.*

Of the Paterines, W. A. Jarrell says: “*They appealed to the text in the ninth chapter of Romans, employed by others, in proof of the doctrine of unconditional election*” (*Church Perpetuity*, P. 139).

(2) *Waldenses and Albigenses.*

An article of an old Waldensian confession, as quoted by C. H. Spurgeon, reads as follows:

“That God saves from corruption and damnation those whom He has chosen from the foundation of the World, not for any disposition, faith, or holiness that He foresaw in them, but of His mercy in Christ Jesus His Son, passing by all the rest, according to the irreprehensible reason of His own free will and justice” (*Spurgeon’s Sermons*, Vol. 2, P. 69).

And Prof. A. A. Hodge, of Princeton Seminary, says: “*The Waldenses ... were all Calvinists.*”

“*Amongst the earlier believers in the system of doctrine called Calvinistic, we may, with great propriety, mention the Waldenses and Albigenses, - those eminent and honored witnesses for the truth, during the long period when the Church and the world were overrun with gross error and immorality*” (*Rice, God Sovereign and Man Free*).

“*Gualtier, a Jesuitical monk, in his chorographical tables, drew up a catalogue consisting of seven and twenty particulars, in which he shows that the principles of the Waldenses and those of the Calvinists coincided with each other.*

“*Lindanus, a Catholic bishop of the see of Ghent, who wrote in defense of the tenets of the church of Rome, about 1550, terms Calvin ‘the inheritor of the doctrines of the Waldenses’*” (*Jones’s Church History*, p. 357).

(3) *Anabaptists.*



The faith of Anabaptists with regard to election is set forth by one of their leaders as follows.

*“Christ, the Lamb of God, has been from the beginning of the world a mediator between God and men, and will remain a mediator to the end. Of what men? Of you and me alone? Not so, but of all men whom God has given him for a possession.”*

(4) *Particular Baptists of England.*

American Baptists are directly descended from the Particular Baptists of England, with whom such men as John Bunyan, Andrew Fuller, and William Carey were associated. They were denominated “*Particular*” because they believed in an atonement for the elect only. This would be enough to show their position on election. But we have explicit proof of this position in their great confession of faith, called the London Confession. This confession was adopted by the Philadelphia Association in America, and its testimony concerning election will be found

2. BAPTIST CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.

(1) *The Philadelphia Confession.*

The Philadelphia Confession of Faith says: *“Although God knoweth whatsoever may, or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass on certain conditions. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.”*

(2) *The New Hampshire Confession.*

The New Hampshire confession originated in the midst of strong Arminian influence. Consequently its position on election is mildly expressed. Nevertheless, it speaks of election as “the eternal purpose of

God.” There is no election in time here. And the article on repentance and faith binds this confession to the teaching that God’s eternal elective purpose was unconditional. It says:

*“We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God.”*

Then the article on regeneration speaks of repentance and faith as fruits of regeneration.

No denier of unconditional election can accept either of these statements. They can be harmonized with unconditional election alone. All deniers of unconditional election believe that repentance and faith are at least logically, if not chronologically, prior to regeneration

### *(3) Other Confessions.*

According to Prof. W. J. McGlothlin, unconditional election is taught in German, French, Belgian, Swiss, Danish, Hungarian, and Russian Baptist confessions. See “Baptist Confessions of Faith,” p. 330, 334.

### 3. REPRESENTATIVE BAPTIST PREACHERS AND WRITERS.

J. W. Porter, eminent preacher, editor, author, and scholar:

*“1. Election took place in eternity. 2. It was an individual election. 3. It was based wholly on the good pleasure of God, and not on the foreseen merit of the elect”* (From a letter to the author).

F. F. Gibson, erstwhile pastor of the largest Baptist church in Kentucky, the Walnut Street Church of Louisville:

*“First, election is personal. Second, election is eternal Third, election was not in view of foreseen faith and good works”* (From a letter to the author).

John Clark, founder of first Baptist church in America:

*“Election is the decree of God, of His free love, grace, and mercy, choosing some men to faith, holiness, and eternal life, for the praise of His glorious mercy ...”*

*“The cause which moved the Lord to elect them who are chosen was none other but His mere good will and pleasure”* (Backus, *Church History - New England*, p. 110).

Roy Mason (Tampa, Fla.) author of “The Church That Jesus Built” and other books:

*“God, in sovereign grace, acting upon good and righteous grounds known only to Himself, in eternity, before the foundation of the world, chose certain persons from among the race of mankind for Himself. At the same time that God unconditionally elected these unto eternal life, He likewise ordained the means efficient to bring the elect in time to a saving knowledge of Himself. This election is not apart from, but is in Christ and the end - the salvation of the elect - is inseparably connected with the means ordained of God to bring to pass the thing He has ordained”* (From a letter to the author).

David Burris (Oakdale, Tenn.):

*“The purpose of election cannot be conditional upon any merit or faith of those chosen, since there is no such merit. This is especially true since man’s faith is foreseen only as the result of God’s work of grace ... Faith, as the effect of election, cannot at the same time be the cause of election”* (*The Baptist Sentinel*, Aug. 1934).

R. A. Venable:

*“I cannot agree with them (Methodists) as to the doctrine of election and predestination. They hold that God’s election unto salvation was based upon His foreknowledge; that God foreknew that some would believe and as many as He knew would believe He elected to salvation. The sovereign*

*will of God had nothing to do in deciding His electing grace. This I believe to be contrary both to reason and revelation.” (Why Baptist and Not Methodist, in Baptist Why and Why Not, p. 123, published by Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.)*

Robert Watts, Belfast, Ire., in articles written at the request of T. T. Eaton and published in the Western Recorder during Eaton’s editorship, and later published in book form by the Baptist Book Concern:

*“On behalf of Calvinism it can be claimed that it is the doctrinal system deduced from the Scriptures.” And further, in speaking of the Arminian notion that election is based on foreseen faith: “It is not manifest that it takes the government of His moral agents out of the hands of God? and does it not represent Him as occupying the position of a mere spectator, whose line of action is determined by the creatures of His hand?” (Sovereignty of God, pp. 63,128).*

J. B. Moody, author of more than forty books, when ninety five years old, said:

*“Election to salvation is sovereign, eternal, unconditional, with predestinated means and agencies to secure the betrothal of a bride to become the Lamb’s wife, vicariously redeemed” (The Plan and Way of Salvation, p. 5).*

D. F. Estes, in ‘New Testament Theology,’ p. 180:

“Upon what this divine choice depends we have no basis for assertion, but we note that the divine choice is never made to depend on a previous choice of God by men, but is made to anticipate their action.”

D. B. Ford, in comment on **Romans 8:29**:

*“That ... election ... does not depend on God’s foreknowledge of our faith or goodness is also evident from the declaration of the ... apostle, that we are chosen in Christ ‘before the foundation of the world that we*

**should be holy.’ See Ephesians 1:4.”** (*An American [Baptist] Commentary on the New Testament*).

A. N. Arnold, in comment on same passage:

*“This foreknowledge must not be explained as merely foreknowledge of their future repentance and faith; for this would make their repentance and faith the cause, and not, as they truly are, the consequence, of their foreordination. See I Corinthians 4:7”* (*An American [Baptist] Commentary on the New Testament*).

Alvah Hovey, general editor of the above commentary, as quoted by Strong:

*“The Scriptures forbid us to find the reasons for election in the moral action of man before the new birth, and refer us merely to the sovereign will and mercy of God, that is, they teach the doctrine of personal election”* (*Systematic Theology*, p. 427).

W. T. Conner (Southwestern Seminary), author of “The System of Christian Doctrine,” says:

*“The doctrine of election means that God saves us in pursuance of an eternal purpose. This includes all the gospel influences, work of the Spirit and so on, that lead a man to repent of his sins and accept Christ. So far as man’s freedom is concerned, the doctrine of election does not mean that God decrees to save a man irrespective of his will. It rather means that God purposes to lead a man in such a way that he will freely accept the gospel and be saved.”*

B. H. Carroll, in *Commentary on Ephesians*, page 79:

*“To ordain is to decree, and foreordination is a decree beforehand. Who were ordained? The individuals that were chosen. Unto what were they ordained. Unto adoption as sons. Through whom were they adopted as sons? Through Christ. According to what was this foreordination of adoption as sons through Christ? According to the good pleasure of His*

*will. It could not be according to anything in us; it was anterior to our being.”*

J. R. Graves, in “The Seven Dispensations,” p. 100:

*“**The Seed of Abraham**’ were those who had Abraham’s faith, a Spiritual Seed, - believers; they were all whom God foresaw from the beginning would believe on His Son Jesus Christ, and come to Him. But as God’s foreknowledge rests upon His determinate counsel, this ‘seed’ is composed of all, in all ages, whom God determined to save, and those in time, He effectually would by His Holy Spirit, and without doing violence to their wills or moral agency, draws to His Son.”*

John A. Broadus, in his comment on **Matthew 22:14**:

*“From the divine side, we see that the Scriptures teach an eternal election of men to eternal life simply out of God’s good pleasure.”*

J. M. Pendleton, in “Christian Doctrines,” pages 107 and 108:

*“There are some who make faith and good works the ground of election. That is, they suppose that God elected His people because He foresaw their faith and good works. This view transposes cause and effect, for it makes election dependent on faith and good works, whereas faith and good works are scripturally dependent on election ... The Arminian view is without foundation in the Word of God; for election is the source, The only source, whence spring faith, holiness, and good works.”*

E. C. Dargan in “The Doctrines of our Faith,” page 128:

*“Are there conditions to God’s choice? Does He choose because He foresees that men will repent, or on the condition of faith? No; in choosing to save men God is sovereign, free, untrammelled, gracious; acting on His own initiative.”*

A. H. Strong in “Systematic Theology,” page 427:

*“Election is that eternal act of God, by which in His sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, He chooses certain of the number of sinful men to be recipients of the special grace of his Spirit, and so to be made voluntary partakers of Christ’s salvation.”*

E. Y. Mullins, in “The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression,” page 343:

*“Does God choose men to salvation because of their good works or because He foresees that they will believe the gospel when it is preached to them? Beyond doubt God foresees their faith. Beyond doubt faith is a condition of salvation. The question is whether it is also the ground of salvation. The Scriptures answer this question in the negative. The gospel is efficacious with some and not efficacious with others because God’s grace is operative in the one case beyond the degree of its action in the other.”*

J. P. Boyce, in “Systematic Theology,” page 427:

*“God of His own purpose, has from eternity determined to save a definite number of mankind as individuals, not for or because of any merit or work of theirs, nor of any value to Him of them; but of His own good pleasure.”*

## **XVIII. ELECTION, AS SET FORTH HEREIN, IS A PROFITABLE DOCTRINE**

Unconditional election has proved itself in the lives of its advocates. The most eminent, the most courageous, the most aggressively missionary, and the most holy men of the religious world have held it. The greatest religious revolution in history - the Reformation, was wrought by Calvinists. Calvinists have furnished nearly all the martyrs. Arminianism does not generate the stuff that martyrs are made of. It is built largely on sentiment, and sentiment never made a martyr. “Whatever there is of evangelical doctrine and of civil and religious liberty in the world, must be traced, under God, to the writings and preaching of Calvinists” (Rice, *God Sovereign and Man Free*, p. 15). “*During the dark ages, sound doctrine and pure morality*

*found a retreat in the fastness of the Alps, and were wonderfully defended and preserved by the Calvinistic Waldenses and Albigenses” (ibid, p. 14). Of the Calvinistic army of Cromwell, Macaulay says: “That which distinguished the army of Cromwell from other armies was the austere morality and fear of God which pervaded all ranks.” Present day world-wide missionary effort was born among Calvinists in both hemispheres. Speaking of Calvinism, Spurgeon says: “By this truth I make a pilgrimage into the past, and as I go, I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me. Were I a Pelagian or a believer in free will (in the erroneous sense), I should have to walk for centuries alone. Here and there a heretic, of no very honorable character, might rise up and calls me brother. But taking these things to be the standard of my Faith, I see the land of the ancients peopled with my brethren” (Sermons, Vol. 2, p. 69). Looking into the immediate past, we find that nearly every Baptist worthy taught unconditional election.*

The profitableness of unconditional election, as evidenced in the foregoing, if based on the fact that -

#### 1. IT GIVES AN EXALTED VIEW OF GOD.

When Moses had told Israel of God’s sovereign choice of them, not because of anything in them, he said: “Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God” (**Deuteronomy 7:9**). It is one of the purposes of election to teach this. The God of Calvinists is “**high and lifted up**” and “**the whole earth is full of his glory**” (**Isaiah 6:1, 3**). The god of Arminians is constantly trampled under the feet of men and the whole earth is full of his defeat. With the God of Calvinists, “**all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?**” (**Daniel 4:35**). But with the god of Arminians, the earth is peopled with giants that are bigger than he is. He does his best to do his will among men, but alas! the lordly will of man is too strong for him. His hand is woefully stayed, for he is trying to save all men, yet succeeding in saving only a minority of accountable adults. He dare not discriminate between men; for then haughty man could rightfully challenge him and



demand “What doest thou?” This is in reality the imaginary god that the Arminian worships. An exalted God works fear in men. With such a God men attempt great things and expect great things. They also possess a holy boldness.

## 2. IT STIMULATES FAITH.

All the questions involved in election cannot be reasoned out to the full satisfaction of the carnal mind. Hence the Word of God on election must be accepted by faith. When one has thus accepted it, he will find that his faith has been tested and strengthened. An exalted God also inspires indomitable faith.

## 3. IT PREPARES THE WAY FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF OTHER TRUTHS.

When one has accepted the mystery of election by faith, he has been led away from reason as the standard of his faith. He is then prepared to take the Word of God on every subject without doubtful questions.

## 4. IT LEADS TOWARD THE PREACHING OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL OF GOD.

So many preachers make diplomacy the guide of their preaching instead of seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit. The reason for this is that they do not have the faith to trust God to bless the portions of His Word that are not so readily accepted by men generally. But when one has learned to believe and preach election, he has learned to trust God to bless His Word even when it is calculated to evoke the opposition of men. This prepares the way for preaching other much needed, but unwelcome truths.

## 5. IT IS THE MOST FORMIDABLE BARRIER AGAINST MODERNISM.

Not only is this true for the reasons just stated. It is also true because so long as man believes in his absolute spiritual impotency by nature, he cannot logically deny the need of a supernatural revelation and a supernatural

intervention of grace for his salvation. *“The history of the Christian church affords not an instance of a sect holding the doctrines of Devine Decrees and man’s Free Agency and rejecting any doctrine fundamental to Christianity”* (Rice, God Sovereign and Man Free, p. 18).

#### 6. IT GIVES THE MOST ENDURING FOUNDATION FOR THE SECURITY OF THE SAVED.

Without sovereign election, the security of the saved rests in mid air with no logical support. And most of those who have denied sovereign election have also denied the security of the saved. They are consistent. The two rightfully stand and fall together, from a logical viewpoint.

#### 7. IT EXCLUDES ALL BOASTING AND BEGETS HUMILITY, GRATITUDE AND DEVOTION

God has arranged the economy of His grace so that boasting is excluded (**Romans 3:27**) and **“that no flesh should glorify before God”** (**I Corinthians 1:29**). This is accomplished through the sovereign bestowal of His grace upon His chosen ones wholly out of His own good pleasure and not for or because of anything in them. Under election, the believer can say nothing more than **“by the grace of God I am what I am”** (**I Corinthians 15:10**). And in response to the question, **“Who maketh thee to differ?”** (**I Corinthians 4:7**), he must answer, “God.” Only unconditional election teaches this. Conditional election gives man occasion to boast. According to it, the saint has made himself to differ from the unbeliever. But, according to unconditional election, the difference between the saint in the sanctuary and the drunkard in the ditch is due wholly to the efficacy of God’s sovereign grace. This fact begets humility. It also begets deep gratitude to know that God, by His sovereign, irresistible grace, has saved us when He might, in justice to us, have left us to suffer the deserved consequences of our sins in the fires of gehenna. This gratitude will produce devoted service by **“faith working through love”** (**Galatians 5:6**), for **“we love, because he first loved us”** (**I John 4:19**).

#### 8. IT ENCOURAGES THE USE OF MEANS.

We have already emphasized the fact that election is inseparably joined to the means ordained of God for bringing about the salvation of the elect. Seeing that means are included in God's plan, if our hearts are right with Him, we shall be glad to employ them. Then we have the encouragement of knowing that God will ever bless our use of means when we are directed of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit will never lead us otherwise than in accordance with God's plan. It is only on the basis of unconditional election that God can promise us that His Word shall not return unto Him void. And it is thus that we can know that our labor "**is not in vain in the Lord**" (**I Corinthians 15:58**).

The doctrine of unconditional election, held in its proper setting and connection, will ever make believers in it missionary. It furnished Paul his missionary motive (**II Timothy 2:10**). It will furnish our motive, too, when we believe the whole truth concerning it. It is not strange that all the great early missionary leaders were believers in unconditional election.

#### 9. IT PROVIDES THE RIGHT MOTIVE IN EVANGELISM.

God saves men for His own glory (**Ephesians 1:12**). The glorification of God, then, should be our prime motive in evangelism, rather than keeping men out of Hell. It is unconditional election that impresses this deeply upon our hearts.

#### 10. IT PRODUCES SANE EVANGELISM.

Conditional electionists imagine that God is doing His best to save as many as possible. For that reason they become obsessed with counting noses and reporting numbers. This obsession leads them to compass land and sea for professions. And they make most of their converts twofold more children of Hell than before. Thus we have in our churches an uncircumcised throner that speaks the language of Ashdod and constantly lusts after the flesh pots of Egypt. Unscriptural high pressure evangelism has been the greatest single curse Baptists have ever suffered.

But unconditional election teaches us, as Alvah Hovey says, that "God has some other reason than that of saving as many as possible for the way in

which He distributes His grace.” For that reason, unconditional electionists do not go out after numbers, but simply to do the will of God. Like Paul, they “**endure all things,**” not for the sake of numbers, but “**for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory**” (II Timothy 2:10). For that reason, unconditional electionists are willing to stay within God’s plan in evangelism and “**strive lawfully,**” knowing that God is able to accomplish His will and that no human high pressure is needed; since none can come to Christ without the sovereign drawing of God, and since all that God draws come through the preaching of the Word of God. Thus unconditional electionists preach the Word “**in season, out of season,**” both publicly and privately, and then prayerfully wait on God for results; for they know that it is “**God that giveth the increase**” (I Corinthians 3:7).

#### 11. IT TENDS TOWARD THE SALVATION OF SINNERS.

Election is not specifically for sinners. It is theirs to be thinking about their need, rather than to be wondering about whether they were elected to salvation or not. Every man that will come to Christ will find that he was elected. But, while election is not specifically for sinners in general; yet Christ preached it to hardened sinners (Matthew 11:25, 26; John 6:37, 44, 65; 10:26). And, if it is preached at all, sinners are sure to hear it. They having heard it, it is better that it be cleared of its misrepresentations. Thus it is folly to talk of not preaching election to sinners. C. H. Spurgeon, the greatest modern evangelist, preached it often to sinners, and on one occasion he said that he had never preached it without conversions. When properly presented, election, being the truth of God, is profitable, even to sinners, as God is pleased to use it. It tends toward the salvation of sinners in the following ways:

(1) *It tends to drive the sinner from all hope in his own efforts.*

Election teaches that salvation is wholly of God. Hence man’s efforts at saving himself are absolutely futile. Thus we may observe with Spurgeon: “*in the first place, the doctrine of election, applied by the Holy Ghost, strikes dead forever all the efforts of the flesh. It is the end of Arminian*

*preaching to make men active, - to excite them to do what they can; but the very end and object of gospel preaching is to Make men feel that they have no power of their own, and to lay them dead at the foot of God's throne"* (Spurgeon's Sermons, Vol. 8. p. 235).

*(2) It tends to awaken careless sinners.*

There are two causes for the lack of concern on the part of sinners with regard to their salvation. (1) Either the sinner's mind is so filled with thoughts of worldly things that thoughts about salvation are crowded out, or (2) the sinner comforts himself with the thought that e'er he dies he will turn to Christ. Election is so contrary to the carnal mind that it obtrudes its way into the mind of the first class of sinners when it is preached. They cannot keep it out when they have heard it. When once in the mind, election prepares the way for the question of whether the individual sinner is one of the elect or not. Having come to reflect on this question, the sinner is ready for the message on how he may know that he is one of the elect. That message is **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."** A contemplation of the doctrine of election should lead the sinner to say. "Is it so? Am I absolutely in God's hands? Can He save me or damn me as He will? Then I will cry to him, 'O God save me from wrath to come-from eternal torment-from banishment from thy presence! Save me, O God! What wouldst thou have me do? Oh! what wouldst thou have me do, that I may find favor and live?'" (Spurgeon's Sermons, Vol. 8, p. 239).

Then election shows to the second class of sinners mentioned above that they have no reason to hope that they will be able to turn to Christ in the eleventh hour, since ability to turn is not in man by nature. This should awaken them to present thought and direct their minds along the course outlined above.

*(3) It gives encouragement to the awakened sinner.*

It does this in the two following ways, as pointed out by Spurgeon:

A. "We are all prisoners, condemned to die, God, as sovereign, has a right to pardon whom He pleases. Now, imagine a number of us shut up in a

condemned cell, all guilty. One of the murderers says within himself: ‘I know that I have no reason to expect to be delivered. I am not rich: if I had some rich relations ... I might be found insane, and delivered ... If I had the education of some men, I might expect some consideration. I am not a man of rank or position; I am a man without merit and influence, therefore I cannot expect that I should be selected as one to be saved. No; I believe that if the present authorities of our land were the persons to be taken into consideration, a man who was poor might have a very poor chance of expecting any gratuitous deliverance. But when God is the great sovereign, the case is different. For then we argue thus: ‘Here am I; my salvation depends entirely upon the will of God: is there a chance for me?’ We take down the list of those whom He has saved and we find that He saves the poor, the illiterate, the wicked, the godless, and the worst of the worst, the base things, and the things that are despised. Well, what do we say? ‘Then why may He not choose me? Why not save me? If I am to look for some reason in myself why I should be saved, I shall never find any, and consequently never shall have hope. But if I am to be saved for no reason at all but that God wills to save me, ah! then there is hope for me. I will to the gracious King approach; I will do as He bids me; I will trust His dear Son, and I shall be saved.’ So this doctrine opens the door of hope to the worst, and the only persons it discourages are the Pharisees, who say, lord I thank thee that I am not as other men are, - those proud, haughty spirits who say, ‘Oh; if I am not saved for something good in myself, then I will be damned!’ as damned they will be, with a vengeance, too” (Spurgeon’s Sermons, Vol. 8, p. 236).

B. “Moreover, do not you see, dear friends, how the doctrine of election comforts the sinner in the matter of power? His complaint is, ‘I find I have no power to believe; I have no spiritual power of any kind.’ Election stoops down and whispers in his ear, ‘But if God wills to save you, He gives the power, gives the life, and gives the grace; and therefore, since He has given that power and might to others as weak as you, why not you? Have courage; look to the cross of Christ, and live’” (ibid, p. 237).

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## FOOTNOTES:

[34] By a general call and a general invitation we mean such as are extended to others as well as the elect. We take Christ's invitation to expressly include those striving for salvation through legal observances, being thus heavy laden. It is too much to assume that all of this class that heard these words came to Christ. Thus this invitation was general.

[35] God's secret will is the same as His will of purpose.

[36] God's revealed will is the same as His will of approbation.

## **Chapter - 21. THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT**

The word “**atonement**” occurs but once in the King James version of the New Testament. See **Romans 5:11**. Here it is a translation of “**katallage**.” This Greek noun occurs in three other passages: once in **Romans 11:15**, where it is translated “**reconciling**”; once in **II Corinthians 5:18**, where it is translated “**reconciliation**”; and once in the following verse, where it is again translated “**reconciliation**.”

The Greek verb “**katallasso**,” corresponding to the noun “**katallage**,” is also found in **II Corinthians 5:18, 19**, and in **Romans 5:10** and **I Corinthians 7:11**. In each of these instances it is translated to mean “**to reconcile**.”

According to the use of the Greek, the word “**atonement**” may be used of either the provision of the objective basis of salvation, in which we have a potential atonement, or of the actual accomplishment of salvation, in which we have an actual atonement in the application of the benefits of Christ’s death and the offering of His blood in the heavenly temple.

The Greek verb “**katallasso**” is used in the former sense in **II Corinthians 5:19**, where we read: “**God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them**.” The meaning here is that God was reconciling the world unto Himself by laying their trespasses on Christ. The passage refers, then, to what was accomplished in the death of Christ and not to what was accomplished through His preaching ministry.

It is in this sense that the word “**atonement**” is ordinarily used in theological discussions, and it is in this sense that we use it in this chapter.

### **I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ATONEMENT**

The atonement is the central theme of Christianity. Everything that precedes it looks forward to it, and everything that follows looks backward to it. Its importance may be seen by reviewing the following facts.



## 1. IT IS THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity is the only religion with an atonement. It is related that some years ago, when there was held a Parliament of Religion at the World's Fair in Chicago, Joseph Cook, of Boston, the chosen spokesman for Christianity, arose, after other religions had been presented, and said: "*Here is Lady Macbeth's hands, stained with the foul murder of King Duncan. See her as she perambulates through the halls and corridors of her palatial home, stopping to cry, 'Out damned spot! Out, I say! Will these hands ne'er be clean?'*" The representative of Christianity turned to the advocates of other religions and triumphantly challenged: "*Can any of you who are so anxious to propagate your religious systems offer any cleansing efficacy for the sin and guilt of Lady Macbeth's crime?'*" They were speechless; for none of them had an atonement to offer.

## 2. IT VINDICATES THE HOLINESS AND JUSTICE OF GOD.

There could be no true holiness and justice in God if He allowed sin to go unpunished. Holiness forbids such an encouragement of sin. Justice demands retribution.

## 3. IT ESTABLISHES GOD'S LAW.

Without the atonement the salvation of believers would leave the law void, a dead letter. See **Romans 3:31** and **Hebrews 2:2**.

## 4. IT MANIFESTS THE GREATNESS OF HIS LOVE.

In no other way could God have manifested greater love for His people than by giving His only begotten Son to die in their stead. See **John 3:16; 15:3; Romans 5:8; I John 4:9**.

## 5. IT PROVES THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES.

We see in Christ's atonement the beautiful antitype of Old Testament sacrifices. And we see in these sacrifices an effective method of pointing to

the necessity of atonement and such a picture of real atonement as would lead the spiritually enlightened to press through the veil of shadow to the true light. The divine authority of Old Testament sacrifices presents no difficulties to him who believes that Christ's death was substitutionary. But those who wish to deny this latter fact deny also that God instituted the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament.

## 6. IT FURNISHES THE ACID TEST OF THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS.

By their attitude toward the atonement, theological systems classify themselves as pagan or Christian. Their position on the atonement also reflects their idea of the nature of God, of His law, and of sin.

## II. THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

### 1. FALSE VIEWS OF THE ATONEMENT.

#### (1) *The Governmental View.*

This view holds that the purpose of the atonement was to prevent God's pardoning of sinners from encouraging sin. The salvation of sinners requires no bearing of the penalty of their sins. Their turning from sin to God is enough to justify God in saving them. But the pardoning of the guilty, without some exhibition of God's hatred against sin and of His regard for His law, would license sin and rob the law of any authority over the consciences of men.

#### (2) *The Example View.*

This view holds in common with the governmental view that Christ's death was not substitutionary. It holds that God did not need to be propitiated in behalf of the sinner; that the only hindrance to the salvation of sinners lies in the sinner's continued practice of sin. Reformation, therefore, is the adequate remedy, and this can be effected by man's own will. To encourage us in this Jesus died as a noble martyr, exemplifying an unselfish devotion that chose death rather than the compromise of His duty to God and man. We

are saved, not by trusting Him as our sin-bearer, but by trusting in God according to His example and thus devoting ourselves to righteousness.

(3) *The Moral-Influence View.*

This view holds in common with both the former that sin brings no guilt that must be removed. It is not the guilt, but the practice of sin that hinders salvation. Christ's death was only an exhibition of love to soften man's heart and lead him to repentance. "*Christ's sufferings were necessary, not in order to remove an obstacle to the pardon of sinners which exists in the mind of God, but in order to convince sinners that there exists no such obstacle*" (Strong).

(4) *The Gradually-Extirpated-Depravity View.*

This view is defined by Strong as follows:

"Christ took human nature as it was in Adam, not before the fall but after the fall, - human nature, therefore, with its inborn corruption and predisposition to moral evil; that notwithstanding the possession of this tainted and depraved nature, Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, or of His divine nature, not only kept His human nature from manifesting itself in actual or personal sin, but gradually purified it, through struggle and suffering, until in His death He completely extirpated its original depravity, and reunited it with God. This subjective purification of human nature in the person of Jesus constitutes His atonement, and men are saved not by any objective propitiation, but only by becoming through faith partakers of Christ's new humanity."

There are two other views of the atonement that theologians commonly discuss under false or inadequate theories of the atonement that we shall not give special treatment here. We refer to the accident view and the commercial view. The former holds that the death of Christ was an unforeseen accident and not anticipated by Christ. This view is so manifestly absurd that it does not deserve here the space that it would take to refute it. We do not give special treatment to the commercial view of the atonement

here because it embodies so much truth that it will find consideration under the head of the correct view of atonement.

## 2. THE CORRECT VIEW OF THE ATONEMENT.

The view of the atonement that we conceive of as being the correct one recognizes the element of truth in each of the foregoing theories that have received special mention and also combines what are usually termed the commercial and the ethical views; but it goes farther than any of them.

### (1) *Truths Recognized in Other Views.*

#### A. A Failure to Punish Sin Would Overthrow Divine Government.

This is the element of truth in the government view. But this is only one of the many elements of truth involved in the atonement. And a mere exhibition of God's hatred against sin without the meeting out of a just penalty therefore does not fully secure and conserve the interests of divine government. Any exhibition of divine hatred toward sin will act as a deterrent to sin, and thus will tend to maintain government; but to the extent that such exhibition of divine hatred falls short of the just penalty it fails to furnish such a deterrent to sin as will fully honor divine government.

#### B. In Christ's Death We Have An Inspiring Example.

It is an example of unselfish devotion to God and to man. And saved people (not lost ones) are commanded to follow this example. See **Matthew 16:24; Romans 8:17; I Peter 2:21; 3:17, 18; 4:1, 2**. But that Christ did not die merely as a noble martyr is evident from His own attitude toward His death. If He died only as an example, then He furnished a very poor example. Many a human martyr has gone to the stake without a show of anguish. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ sweat as it were great drops of blood in the garden. Many a martyr has enjoyed a vivid sense of God's presence in the hours of death. But the Lord Jesus Christ was deserted of the Father in His death. Contrast Christ's attitude toward death with that of Paul.

#### C. In Christ's Death We Have An Exhibition of God's Love.

See **John 3:16; 15:13; Romans 5:8; I John 4:9**. And this exhibition should move men to repentance. This is the element of truth in the moral-influence view of the atonement. But that the atonement was more than a mere exhibition of love will be made manifest as we proceed.

D. Through Christ's Death We Are Made Partakers Of Christ's Life.

See **II Corinthians 4:11; 5:14-17; 12:9, 10; Galatians 2:20; II Peter 1:4**. This is the element of truth in the gradually-extirpated-depravity view of the atonement. But we attain this new life in Christ in conjunction with faith in Him as our sin bearer. This the view just mentioned denies.

(2) *Other Truths Recognized.*

The true view of the atonement recognizes all the truths in other views, but it recognizes more. They err in emphasizing one element of truth to the exclusion of others.

Other truths recognized by the true view of the atonement are:

A. The Truth As To God's Nature.

All of the false views to which we have given special attention deny that there is in the nature of God any hindrance whatsoever to the pardoning of sinners. The hindrance is supposed to be all on the sinner's part. Christ's suffering was in no sense a satisfaction of any subjective principle in the divine nature.

Thus these views logically deny the holiness and justice of God. They picture God as being love only. Retributive wrath against sin is no element of divine nature.

That these views are false in respect to the view of divine nature furnished by them is evident from **Romans 3:25, 26**. We are told here that God set forth Jesus Christ not simply as a scenic exhibition of His hatred against sin to serve the exigencies of His government; nor as an exemplar of unselfish devotions to duty; nor as a mere manifestation of love through the

suffering of the creator with the creature; nor yet as the means of the subjective purification of human nature; but as a covering for sin (through expiation) that His justice might not be impugned in the justification of sinful men.

#### B. The Truth As To The Nature Of The Law.

All of the false views of the atonement to which we have given special treatment represent the law of God as a purely arbitrary appointment that may be relaxed partially or wholly at will instead of a revelation of the nature of God with no more possibility of change in its demands than there is of change in the nature of God. It demands an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It demands that every transgression and disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward. **Hebrews 2:2**. The view of the atonement that is correct must recognize this.

#### C. The Truth As To The Guilt Of Sin.

These false views that we are considering deny that sin involves us in objective guilt that requires expiation. The following Scriptures teach that it does: **John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 2:5, 6, 3:19; 6:23; Galatians 3:10; Ephesians 5:5, 6; Colossians 3:5, 6; Revelation 20:13**.

#### D. The Truth as to the Substitutionary Nature of the Atonement.

The following passages show that the suffering of Christ was a substitute for the suffering that believers would have undergone in Hell:

**“Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ... was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-6).**

**“... being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth *to be* a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the**

**sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at the present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:24, 25).** Propitiation is a synonym of expiation, which means “enduring the full penalty of a wrong or crime.” Propitiation appeases the lawgiver by satisfying the law in the rendering of “a full legal equivalent for the wrong done.”

**“... Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him” (Romans 5:8, 9).**

**“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” (Romans 8:33).** The implied answer is, No one. And the implied reason is, because Christ has paid their sin debt by suffering the penalty of the law in their stead.

**“Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4).**

**“... our passover also hath been sacrificed, *even* Christ” (I Corinthians 5:7).**

**“... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:3).**

**“Him who knew no sin he made *to be* sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (II Corinthians 5:21).** We become the righteousness of God in Christ, not through any moral influence of the death of Christ upon us, but by the imputation of righteousness to us through faith apart from works. See **Romans 4:1-8.**

**“... Christ ... gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God ...” (Ephesians 5:2).**

**“... offered one sacrifice for sins for ever ...” (Hebrews 10:12)”**

**“Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God ...” (I Peter 3:18).**

E. The Truth as to the Redeeming of Ransoming Features of the Atonement.

Note the following passages:

**“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).**

**“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (I Corinthians 1:30).**

**“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13).**

**“God sent forth his Son ... that he might redeem them that were under the law” (Galatians 4:4, 5).**

**“... in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).**

**“... who gave himself a ransom for all” (I Timothy 2:6).**

**“... who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity” (Titus 2:14).**

**“... through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12).**

**“Ye were redeemed ... with precious blood ... *even the blood of Christ*” (I Peter 1:18, 19).**

**“... thou wast slain, and didst redeem unto God with thy blood, *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Revelation 5:9).**



In the passages above in which “**redeem**” or one of its cognates appears we have four Greek words or their cognates: “**agorazo**,” meaning “*to acquire at the forum;*” “**exagorazo**” “*to acquire out of the forum;*” “**lutroo**,” “*to loose by a price;*” and “**apolutrosis**,” “*a loosing away.*” The Greek words in the passages where “**ransom**” appears are respectively “**lutron**,” “*a price,*” and “**antilutron**,” “*a corresponding price.*” The plain meaning of these passages, in the light of the rest of the New Testament, especially **Romans 3:25, 26**, is that the death of Christ was the price of our deliverance from sin’s penalty. See further **Romans 8: 1, 33, 34; 10:4. Galatians 3:13** describes exactly how we are redeemed when it tells us that we are redeemed from the curse of the law through Christ who became a curse for us. He bore the curse we deserve. He paid the penalty we owed. For that reason we go free.

Note that “**ransom**” in **I Timothy 2:6** means “*a corresponding price.*” This means that the price paid by Christ corresponded to the debt we owed. In other words Christ suffered the exact equivalent of that which those for whom He died would have suffered in Hell. If the justice of God demanded that Christ die in order that God might justify sinners, the same justice demanded that He pay the full penalty owed by the sinners. Justice can forego all the penalty as easily as it can forego the least part of it.

“For God to take that as satisfaction which is not really such is to say that there is no truth in anything. God may take a part for the whole; error for truth, wrong for right ... If every created thing offered to God is worth just so much as God accepts it for, then the blood of bulls and goats might take away sins, and Christ is dead in vain” (Hodge, Syst. Theol., 2:573-581; 3:188,189).

“God did not send Christ forever into Hell; but He put on Christ punishment that was equivalent for that. Although He did not give Christ to drink the actual Hell of believers, yet He gave Him *a quid pro quo* - *something that was equivalent thereunto*, He took the cup of Christ’s agony, and He put in there, suffering, misery and anguish . . . that was *the exact equivalent for all the suffering, all the eternal tortures of every one that*

*shall at last stand in Heaven, bought with the blood of Christ*" (Spurgeon, Sermons, Vol. 4, p. 217).

"The penalty paid by Christ is strictly and literally equivalent to that which the sinner would have borne, although it is not identical. The vicarious bearing of it excludes the latter" (Shedd, Discourses and Essays, p. 307).

"Substitution excludes identity of suffering; it does not exclude equivalence" (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 420).

Sometimes the opponents of the redeeming and ransoming nature of Christ's death ask whom the price was paid to. And they rather sarcastically remind us that some have been quick to say that it was paid to the Devil. No, it was not paid to the Devil. It was not paid to anybody as a commercial transaction. The price is the penalty demanded by the justice of God.

We adopt, therefore, as the true view of the nature of the atonement, a view that combines the commercial theory and the ethical theory as they are described by Strong. From the commercial theory we accept the idea expressed in **I Timothy 2:6** - the paying of a corresponding or equivalent price. And from the ethical theory we accept the fact that it was not divine honor and majesty that demanded the atonement, as the commercial view asserts, but the ethical principles of holiness and justice in God.

"Between the most orthodox creed of atonement by proper, real, and full satisfaction of justice, and the frank and utter denial of atonement that offers any satisfaction to law, there is absolutely no logical standing ground."

"Scripture without hesitation and without explanation represents salvation by Christ as a transaction analogous to the payment of debt, the ransom of a captive, the redemption of a forfeited inheritance. From the beginning to the end of the Bible there is no note of warning, no intimation that these comparisons may be misleading. It is always assumed that they do plainly set forth Christ's work of redemption.

"The outcry against the theology that compares Christ's work to the payment of debt, the redemption of a forfeited inheritance, the outcry against

the use of any one of the abounding scriptural allusions to financial transactions, is an outcry that betrays at once disregard for Scripture and a misconception of Christ's perfect work of redemption" (Armour, Atonement and Law, pp. 128, 137).

### **III. THE ATONEMENT AND THE DEITY OF CHRIST**

It is sometimes objected that Christ could not have suffered in a few hours the equivalent of the eternal suffering of the sinner in Hell. But this objection fails to take into consideration the fact that Christ was divine and, therefore, infinite in ability to suffer. He said that no man could take his life from him; that he would lay it down of himself. Having the power, therefore, of retaining His life at will, He did retain it through such intensity of suffering that He drank the last dregs of Hell's poison for all those to be saved through Him. What believing sinners would have suffered *extensively*, because finite, Christ suffered *intensively*, because infinite. A man with a constitution ten times as strong as that of the average man can suffer in one second the equivalent of all that the average man can suffer in ten. Correspondingly an infinite being can undergo any amount of suffering in as brief time as it may please him to do it.

### **IV. THE ATONEMENT AND THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST**

While it was necessary that Christ be divine in order to endure in a few hours the eternal suffering due believing sinners, it was also necessary that He be human to endure the equivalent of that which human beings are to endure in Hell. Human suffering can be endured only in human nature.

It was also necessary that Christ be organically one with man to make it perfectly proper for God to accept His suffering as a substitute for that of man. We are held responsible for the apostasy of Adam because we were organically one with Adam. Angels did not participate in this responsibility. Neither were we involved in the fall of angels. So it seems clear that it would not have been according to divine philosophy for our responsibility to be placed upon Christ without His becoming organically one with us.

### **V. THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT**

There are three theories as to the extent of the atonement.

## 1. THE THEORY OF A PARTIAL GENERAL ATONEMENT.

The reference here is to the notion that Christ paid the penalty for the Adamic sin for the whole race. This idea is usually held in conjunction with the idea of a supposed provisional basis for the salvation of all men, but its nature necessitates that we treat it separately.

It is thought by some that this theory is necessary to explain the salvation of those who die in infancy and native idiocy. But we have shown a scriptural basis for the salvation of such without this theory. See the chapter on ["Human Responsibility"](#).

**John 1:29** is the principal passage given as a basis for this theory. The singular form of "**sin**" is emphasized as referring to the sin of Adam. But the argument is of no force, because there are numerous other passages where the singular is used with reference to the personal sins of men in a collective sense. See **Romans 3:20; 4:8; 6:1; Hebrews 9:26**.

This theory supposes that the effect of Adam's sin upon the race is twofold: (1) imputation of guilt for the overt act of Adam in partaking of the forbidden fruit, and (2) corruption of nature. And it implies that guilt may be imputed apart from corruption. This we flatly deny. We become guilty through Adam's natural headship, from which we inherit a corrupt nature. We are under the penalty of sin because we sinned in Adam, our nature being one with him. **Romans 5:12**. If guilt may be imputed without corruption, then the law demanded the death of Christ, because He had a human nature; but the idea that He died in any sense for Himself is utterly foreign to Scripture. He is everywhere described and presented as having no guilt of His own, but as bearing the guilt of others. If to Him was imputed guilt for the Adamic sin, as necessarily was the case if this guilt is imputed to every descendant of Adam apart from corruption, then He knew sin, but the Scripture says that He knew no sin.

## 2. THE THEORY OF A GENERAL ATONEMENT.

(1) *The Theory Stated.*

The theory of a general atonement is that Christ died for every son of Adam—for one as much as for another, [37] removing the legal impediments out of the way of the salvation of all men and mankind, it objectively possible for every hearer of the gospel to be saved. Strong says: “*The Scriptures represent the atonement as having been made for all men, and as sufficient for the salvation of all. Not the atonement therefore is limited but the application of the atonement.*” Again: “*The atonement of Christ has made objective provision for the salvation of all, by renewing from the divine mind every obstacle to the pardon and restoration of sinners, except their willful opposition to God and refusal to turn to Him.*” Andrew Fuller says that if the atonement is viewed merely as “*to what it is in itself sufficient for, and declared in the gospel to be adapted to ... it was for sinners as sinners;*” but that with “*respect to the purpose of the Father in giving His Son to die and to the design of Christ in laying down His life, it was for the elect only.*”

This theory of the atonement is sometimes summed up by the saying that the atonement was *sufficient* for all, but *efficient* for the elect only, or as some would prefer, for those who believe. Or to put it another way, it is often said that Christ is the Saviour of all men *provisionally* and *especially or effectually* of believers.

Others have imagined that the sacrifice on Calvary was for all, but that the offering of Christ’s blood in Heaven was for the elect only.

All of these statements amount to the same thing - a general atonement with a limited application or design. This we believe and hope to prove is a *contradiction of terms, contrary to reason*, repugnant to, the nature of God, and not according to a consistent interpretation of Scripture.

(2) *The Theory Disproved.*

A. This theory provides no real satisfaction of God’s justice, or it involves God in the injustice of punishing those for whom justice has been satisfied. Here is a dilemma, and each advocate of a general atonement may

choose which horn he chooses to hang on. One of these propositions must be true.

The former proposition is probably the one that most advocates of a general atonement are logically forced to accept. No doubt most of them would subscribe to the declaration that if there had been but one sinner to save it would have been necessary for Christ to have suffered exactly and identically what He did suffer. Boyce says: “*What Christ needed to do for one man, would have been sufficient for all*” (*Abstract of Theology*, p. 314). Strong says: “*Christ would not need suffer more, if all were to be saved*” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 422).

This notion as to Christ’s suffering is altogether inconsistent with justice. A thousand sinners in Hell, all deserving the same degree of punishment, will suffer a thousand times as much as any one of them will suffer individually. It will take that to satisfy justice. Now will justice be satisfied in Christ for the entire thousand if Christ suffers only as much as one sinner would suffer? In other words, does justice demand one thing of sinners themselves and another of Christ as their substitute? This is exactly what the theory of a general atonement involves.

The theory of a general atonement no more satisfies justice than the governmental theory. In Christ’s death we have, according to the theory of a general atonement, only a scenic display of God’s wrath against sin; then God at will applies the benefits of this to whom He will. In other words, in view of what Christ did, God relaxes strict justice and saves a countless multitude of sinners, who deserved Hell and for whom justice has not been actually satisfied. So instead of Christ’s death affording God the means of being just and yet of saving believing sinners, it enables Him to relax His justice.

The only way of escape from this latter proposition is to consider the repentance and faith and obedience of those who are saved as making up what is lacking in Christ’s death. Arminians may say this (yet some of them do not view repentance, faith and obedience as being meritorious in

salvation), but others cannot without surrendering their belief in salvation as being wholly of God's grace.

Some may attempt to escape the dilemma set forth in the first paragraph under this heading by affirming that Christ actually suffered for the sins of all men, and that the lost in Hell will suffer for only the sin of continued unbelief. Several things might be said in refutation of this idea. (1) It leaves the heathen that have not heard the gospel nothing to suffer for in Hell, for no man can be justly charged for not believing in one he has never heard of **Romans 10:14**. That God will not charge those who never hear the gospel with the sin of unbelief is plain from **Romans 2:12**, which informs us that God will not by the law judge those who never hear the law. He will judge them only by the light of their own conscience. **Romans 2:14, 15**. One must sin against light before he can be justly punished for disobedience. Hence if none are to suffer in Hell for any sin except the sin of continued unbelief, those who never hear the gospel will have nothing to suffer for. John A. Broadus says very properly, in commenting on **Matthew 11: 22** - "*The heathen will not be condemned for rejecting Christ if they have had no opportunity to know of him; but only for disregarding their own conscience (Romans 2:14-16), the light of external nature (Romans 1:20), and any true religious ideas which may in whatever way have reached them*" (*An American Commentary on the New Testament*). (2) Every believer was from the time of hearing the gospel to the time of accepting it guilty of the sin of unbelief. This sin of unbelief, of course, had to be atoned for the same as any other sin. So Christ suffered for the sin of unbelief for those who are saved. Now, if He died for all, for one as much as for another, which is necessary if salvation was to be made possible for all, then He died for the sin of unbelief for all men. This leaves any that go to Hell with no sins at all to suffer for. If Christ did not die for the sin of unbelief for all guilty of that sin, then He did not die sufficiently for the salvation of all. (3) The Bible clearly teaches that the lost in Hell will suffer for all their sins. **Romans 2:5, 6; II Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 5:5, 6; I Peter 2:9-13; A. S. V.; Revelation 20:13**.

B. This theory is futile, in that it is not necessary as a basis for any scriptural fact, duty, or result, or as proof of any revealed truth.

(a) It cannot be argued that God was under obligation to provide redemption for all men without exception, for such an argument would exclude grace from the atonement. Grace means not only unmerited favor, but also favor that is not owed. Grace and obligation are mutually exclusive. Furthermore, if God was obligated to provide redemption for every son of Adam, He would be obligated likewise to give to each one the ability to receive that redemption by faith. This God has not done, as we have shown in the previous chapter on [“The Doctrine Of Election”](#). [38]

“Redemption, as well as creation, must also be a purely sovereign determination of the divine will. This is required by the necessities of the case, as well as plainly declared in Scripture. No doctrine of redemption that in any way casts the slightest shadow over the high mountain of Divine Sovereignty can be tolerated for a moment. All theologies that in any manner teach or imply there was any obligation upon God to do this or that for fallen, rebellious subjects of law, are unscriptural, unreasonable, if not blasphemous” (Armour, *Atonement and Law*, p. 20).

(b) Furthermore it was not necessary for God to provide a general atonement to make men responsible for rejecting Christ. Men reject Christ not because of a lack of atonement for them, but because they love darkness rather than light (**John 3:19**), because they will not have Him to reign over them (**Luke 19:14**).

(c) Nor was it necessary that Christ die for the whole Adamic race in order to make God’s general call sincere. It is the notion of some that God’s general call requires *men to believe that Christ died for them. This is not true*. The twenty-eight chapters of **Acts**, “*though replete with information about apostolic dealing with souls, record no precedent whatever for that now popular address to the unconverted - Christ died for you*” (Sanger, *The Redeemed*). “All men are called on in Scripture to believe the gospel, but there is no instance in Scripture in which men are called upon to believe that Christ died for them” (Carson, *The Doctrine of the Atonement and Other Treatises*, P. 146).



The following illustration from “The Blood of Jesus,” by William Reid, p. 37, also shows the compatibility of a limited atonement and the general invitations of the gospel. After describing passengers boarding a train at Aberdeen Station of the North-Eastern Railway, he says:

“Nor did I see any one refusing to enter because the car provided for only a limited number to proceed by that train. There might be eighty thousand inhabitants in and around the city, but still there was not one who talked of it as absurd to provide accommodations for only about twenty persons, for practically it was found to be sufficient.

“God, in His infinite wisdom, has made provision of a similar kind for our lost world. He has provided a train of grace to carry as many of its inhabitants to Heaven, the great metropolis of the universe, as are willing to avail themselves of the gracious provisions.

Suppose God had waited until the end before sending Christ to die, (as He could have done just as easily as He waited four thousand years after sin entered the world before sending Christ), and had then sent Him to die for all that had believed. It would then have been manifest that a limited atonement offers no hindrance to the salvation of any man that does not already exist because of the perversity of man’s nature. Surely it is clear to every thinking person that the occurrence of Christ’s death two thousand years ago does not change the case; for He died for all who shall ever believe, these having been known to God from eternity as fully as they shall be in the end.

We have intimated that God is as much under obligation to remove man’s spiritual inability to come to Christ as He is to provide an atonement for Him. In other words, man’s perversity of nature makes his salvation as impossible from a human standpoint as does the absence of an atonement.

But some may take exception to this by saying that whereas man’s perversity of nature creates a moral impossibility, the lack of atonement furnishes a natural impossibility. We reply that this is correct; but the moral impossibility is primary and is absolute. Therefore the natural impossibility can furnish no added hindrance.

(d) Neither is a general atonement necessary to the manifestation of God's love. The provision of an ineffective atonement would reveal nothing but a blind, futile love. Is this the kind of love God's love is? Nay, verily, God's love is intelligent, purposeful, sovereign, effective. God's redemptive love is wholly grounded within Himself, and does not proceed at all because the objects of it are lovely, nor because they deserve anything good at His hands. Therefore, it is wholly subject to His sovereign will (**Deuteronomy 10:15; Romans 9:13**). It is His immanent, peculiar, gracious delight in bestowing His favor upon chosen objects.

(e) Finally a universal atonement is not necessary for the maintenance of evangelistic zeal and a missionary spirit. It is freely admitted that there have been those who held to a limited atonement whose evangelistic zeal was far from what it should have been. However the fault was not in that doctrine, but in their failure to see and believe other truths. In the case of many, including the noble *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, as well as Spurgeon and many others of great note, overflowing evangelistic zeal and a stout belief in a limited atonement have dwelt side by side in the most glorious harmony. In fact, belief in a limited atonement, for reasons that we can not here take space to discuss, should make men more evangelistic than belief in a general atonement, while keeping them back from hurtful excesses.

### 3. THE THEORY OF A LIMITED ATONEMENT,

#### (1) *The Theory Stated.*

The theory of a limited atonement holds that Christ died for the elect and for the elect only; that the value and design or application, the sufficiency and the efficiency of it are the same; that Christ in no sense whatsoever died for any that shall perish in Hell. To this we give our happy and unqualified endorsement.

#### (2) *The Theory Proved.*

##### A. Arguments From Other Men.

“All those for whom Christ gave His life a ransom are either ransomed by it, or they are not, that all are not ransomed or redeemed from sin, the law, Satan, and the second death is evident ... Now, if some for whom Christ gave His life a ransom, are not ransomed then that shocking absurdity ... follows ... namely, that *Christ is dead in vain*, or that so far He gave His life a ransom in vain; wherefore it will be rightly concluded that He did not give His life a ransom for every individual man” (John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, p. 98).

“The so-called Scripture proofs of Universal Redemption depend upon human assumption, not upon the simple Word; Thus, as regards ‘**propitiation for the sins of the whole world**’, we are told that the ‘**world**’ must mean every worldling. But why must it mean this? That is the unanswered question. The word world means many different things in Holy Scripture, on which see *Crudens Concordance*. Connection alone is its true interpreter. To rule that it must mean this or that is but to indulge in rash and idle talk” (Sanger, *The Redeemed*, p. 7).

“If law can yield at all, if the universe created and uncreated can afford to have law in its higher realms melt like wax, if God’s love can in any respect be shown to violators of law at the expense of justice, if Christ having done all and having suffered all He was raised up to do and to suffer, justice, exact justice, pure and mere justice, did not *permit, require, demand, necessitate* the deliverance of those whom he represented and whom He came to redeem, then ‘*Christ died in vain,*’ then is the ‘**offence of the cross**’ taken away, then ‘**the wages of sin**’ is not ‘**death,**’ then are we all at sea as to the necessity for Christ’s intervention, then we are ready to disperse on voyages of discovery that we may find good reason for Christ’s coming into the world at all, and especially for His suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross” (Armour, *Atonement and Law*, p. 129).

“Whenever the Holy Scriptures speak of the sufficiency of redemption, they always place in it the certain *efficacy* of redemption. The atonement of Christ is sufficient because it is absolutely efficacious, and because it effects the salvation of *all for whom it was made*. Its sufficiency lies not in affording men a possibility of salvation, but in accomplishing their salvation with

invincible power. Hence the Word of God never represents the *sufficiency* of the atonement as wider than the design of the atonement” (Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, 1945 edition, Vol. 3, p. 76). Would that this last sentence could be emblazoned across the sky. **LET IT BE EMPHASIZED AGAIN, IN THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST SUFFICIENCY EQUALS EFFICIENCY.**

“Doubtless ‘universal’ and ‘redemption’ [used here as a synonymous with ‘atonement’: in the sense of ‘agorazo’], where the greatest part of men perish, are as irreconcilable as ‘Roman’ and ‘Catholic’” (John Owen, as quoted approvingly by C. H. Spurgeon, *Sermons*, Vol. 4, p. 220).

“Were the whole of mankind equally loved of God and promiscuously redeemed by Christ, the song which believers are directed to sing would hardly run in them admiring strains, ‘**To Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God,**’ etc., **Revelation 1:5,6**). A hymn of praise like this seems evidently to proceed on the hypothesis of peculiar election on the part of God, and of a limited redemption on the part of Christ which we find more explicitly declared (**Revelation 5:9**), where we have a transcript of that song which the spirits of just men made perfect are now singing before the throne and before the Lamb: ‘**Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.**’ Whence the elect are said to have been redeemed from among men. (**Revelation 14:4**)” (Augustus M. Toplady, author of “Rock of Ages,” in preface to *Absolute Predestination*, by Zanchius).

“That Christ is our life, and truth, and peace, and righteousness - our shepherd and advocate, our sacrifice, and priest, who died for the salvation of all who should believe, and rose again for their justification” (Article 7 of the Confession of Faith adopted in 1120 by the Waldenses, the most outstanding group of Baptist progenitors. See Jones’ *Church History*, p. 322).

“The doctrine of the atonement has been differently understood. The old churches pretty uniformly held that it was particular; that is, that Christ died

for the elect only, and that in His stupendous suffering no respect was had to, nor any provision made for, any others of Adam's ruined race" (Benedict, *General History of the Baptist Denomination*, p. 456).

"If there is anything plainly taught in the Scripture, it is that the sacrifice of Christ was made for those only who shall eventually be saved by it (Alexander Carson, *The Doctrine of the Atonement and Other Treatises*, p. 196).

"It cannot be, that one soul for whom He (Christ) gave His life and spilled His blood; whose sins He bore and whose curse He sustained, should ever finally perish. For if that were the case, divine justice, after having exacted and received satisfaction at the hand of the Surety, would make a demand on the principal; in other words, would require double payment" (Booth, *The Reign of Grace*, p. 235).

"Can a God of infinite ethical perfection, who with His own hand laid the awful burden of the sinner's guilt upon the adorable Surety, repudiate His own covenant engagements and withhold from Him the reward purchased at the cost of His most precious blood? To say so, is tantamount to an impeachment of the truth and justice of our covenant-keeping God" (Prof. Robert Watts, *Sovereignty of God*, comprising articles of Pres. C. W. Northrup, published in the *Standard* of Chicago, and those of Prof. Watts in reply, which latter articles were written at the suggestion of T. T. Eaton and published in the *Western Recorder* during Eaton's editorship).

"They [certain 'divines'] believe that Judas was atoned for just as much as Peter; they believe that the damned in Hell were as much the object of Jesus Christ's satisfaction as the saved in Heaven; and though they do not say it in proper words, yet they must mean it, for it is a fair inference, that in the case of multitudes, Christ died in vain, for He died for them all, they say; and yet so ineffectual was His dying for them, that though He died for them they are damned afterward. Now, such an atonement I despise - I reject it. I may be called Antinomian or Calvinist for preaching a limited atonement; but I had rather believe in a limited atonement that is efficacious for all men for whom it was intended, than an universal atonement that is not efficacious,

except the will of man be joined with it” (Spurgeon, *Sermons*, Vol. 4, p. 218).

“I believe that election elected the elect; that foreknowledge foreknew them; that they ‘were ordained to eternal life,’ and ‘foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son;’ that redemption redeemed them; that regeneration regenerated them; that sanctification sanctifies them; that justification justifies them; that preservation preserves them; that providence provides for them, and so on to glorification. Hence those to be glorified are those foreknown and redeemed. *I don’t believe in a general redemption and a special glorification* (J. B. Moody, *Sin, Salvation, and Service*, p. 40).

“Here are the five points of Calvinism: unconditional election or predestination, limited atonement or particular redemption, total depravity necessitating prevenient grace, effectual calling or irresistible grace, and preservation or perseverance of the saints. And the writer does not hesitate to subscribe to all five points” (C. D. Cole, *Definitions of Doctrines*, Vol. 1, p. 131).

The author gives an enthusiastic “Amen” to all of these. He is not ashamed to be found in their company and in the company of many other eminent saints of God who have held the same sentiments. He is willing to be found contending for the historic faith of Baptists, the faith of ancient churches; the faith of the Waldenses, “those eminent and honored witnesses for the truth during the long period when the church and the world were overrun with gross error and immorality (Rice, *God Sovereign and Man Free*).

## B. Arguments From Reason.

(a) *It is the only theory that makes the death of Christ truly substitutionary.* If Christ died for one man as much as for another, which He must have done if He made salvation possible to all men, then He died for some that will suffer eternally in Hell. His death, therefore, was not truly substitutionary.

(b) *It is the only theory that is compatible with the justice of God.* God's justice demanded that Christ pay the exact penalty of the sins of those who are saved. His justice also demands that He save all whose penalty Christ paid. This is an axiomatic proposition. It is also a scriptural proposition. What is the meaning of **I John 1:9**, in stating that God is "**just to forgive our sins**," if it does not mean that the forgiveness of our sins is an act of justice toward Christ? The theory of a limited atonement alone leaves any just reason for the condemnation of unrepentant sinners. If a general atonement has been made, then there is no justice in sending any sinner to hell. If it is sufficient for all men, then it demands the acquittal of all. Since the atonement was demanded as a satisfaction of God's justice, its *efficiency* must equal its *sufficiency*. The same justice that demands that the penalty of sin be paid, just as emphatically demands that the sinner be liberated when the payment has been made. There is absolutely no ground either in Scripture or reason for making a distinction between the atonement and the application of it, or between atonement and redemption or reconciliation, as to their extent or value. Atonement, redemption, and reconciliation all apply to the objective basis of pardon, and they all alike apply to actual pardon.

(c) *It is the only theory that gives to the death of Christ any argumentative value in proving the security of the believer.* The following statement will be recognized, no doubt as a strong argument for the security of the believer by all who believe that doctrine:

"Christ, in His death on the cross, suffered for all the sins of every believer. If the believer should go to Hell, he would suffer for the same sins that Christ suffered for. Both the believer and Christ would then be paying for the same sins, and God, in punishing two men for the sins of one, would be the most unjust tyrant of the universe. Perish the thought! The judge of all the earth must do right!"

But this argument has no force if Christ died for all, for one as much as for another, which He must have done if He made salvation possible for all, removing all legal obstacles out of the way of their salvation. Moreover, according to this argument, and also according to truth and logic, all those

who affirm that Christ suffered the penalty of the law for every man make God *“the most unjust tyrant of the universe.”*

### C. Arguments From Scripture.

(a) **Isaiah 53:11.** In this passage, the prophet, in speaking of Christ’s sacrifice, says that God **“shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall he satisfied.”** We take this to mean that the just demands of God, the penalty of the broken law, were satisfied in the death of Christ. But for whom? If for every son of Adam, then God cannot in justice damn any of them. Satisfied justice can demand nothing more. If the reader is minded to argue that the lost in Hell will suffer, not for their sins in general, but only for the sin of rejecting Christ, we refer him back to our discussion of the theory of a general atonement under” (2) The Theory Disproved.”

Furthermore this same passage represents God as saying: **“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”** This tells how Christ justifies men, that is, by bearing their iniquities. And note that this justification is not made to depend on anything else. If Christ had to bear men’s iniquities to justify them, then it follows, as the night the day, that those whose iniquities He bore must receive justification. By accepting this satisfaction at the hands of Christ, God puts Himself under obligation to Christ (not to the sinner) to communicate justification to every one for whom satisfaction is made, which He does by working repentance and faith in the heart.

(b) **John 15:13.** **“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”** If Christ laid down His life for every man without exception, then He has the greatest love for every man; and, therefore, loves those that perish in Hell as much as those He saves. Could Christ ever be satisfied with some of the objects of His greatest love in Hell?

Moreover, if it were true that Christ loves those that perish as much as He does those that are saved, we should have to attribute our salvation to ourselves rather than to the love of Christ.



(c) **Romans 8:32**: “**He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**” This passage argues that God’s greatest gift of His Son guarantees all lesser gifts. Hence it follows that God delivered up His Son for none except those to whom He freely gives all other spiritual blessings, that is, those who believe. See **Ephesians 1:3**.

(d) **Romans 8:33, 34**. These verses tell us that no charge or condemnation can be brought against the elect; that God will not charge them, for it is He who justifies; and that Christ will not condemn, because He died for them. This passage would be deprived of all logical force if Christ had died for any that He shall someday condemn in judgment. Hence He died for none except those who escape judgment.

(e) **II Corinthians 5:14**: “**For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died.**” There is here the undeniable assertion that all for whom Christ died, died representatively in Him. Hence death has no power over them, and none of them will suffer it; but all will receive justification and eternal life through faith. In commenting on the last three words of this passage, A. T. Robertson says: “logical conclusion . . ., the one died for all and so that all died when he died. **ALL THE SPIRITUAL DEATH POSSIBLE FOR THOSE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED**” (Caps ours - Word Pictures in the New Testament). Do not fail to note the use of “all” in this passage.

(f) **II Corinthians 5:19**: “**God was in Christ, reconciling (katalasso) the world unto himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM . . .**” This tells what God was doing in the death of Christ and it tells how He was doing it: He was reconciling men to Himself and He was doing it by laying their trespasses on Christ and, therefore, not imputing, reckoning, charging them to those for whom Christ died. Christ, in His death, accomplished full objective reconciliation for the objects of His death, which necessitates their being brought to experience subjective reconciliation. The only right conclusion from this is that Christ died for those and those only who eventually receive reconciliation. Note the use of the word “**world**” in this passage.

(g) **John 10:15; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25**. In these passages Christ is said to have purchased the **church**, to have given Himself for it, to have laid down

His life for the **sheep**. “I know that universal terms are sometimes connected in the Scriptures with the atonement; but if these are to be interpreted in their widest sense, why should the sacred writers have employed the restrictive at all? The universal terms ... may be readily made to harmonize with the restrictive, but no man can make the restrictive harmonize with the unlimited - (Parks, *The Five Points of Calvinism*).

### (3) *Scriptures Explained.*

We take up here the passages taken by some to teach a general atonement.

A. **John 3:16; I John 2:2**. In both passages the word “**world**” is used in connection with the saving work of Christ. One speaks of God as loving the “**world**,” and the other speaks of Christ as being a propitiation for the sins of the whole “**world**.”

Against the interpretation given of these passages by the advocates of a general atonement we reply:

(a) A love that would cause God to give Christ to die for each individual man of Adam’s race would also cause Him to save all. [\[39\]](#) Why should God discriminate between men in saving them if He loved all of them with the greatest of all love? See **Romans 8:32**.

(b) There would be no real expression of love in sending a Saviour to die vainly for men. What kind of love is it that performs an act that cannot really benefit? Would there be any real love shown by a father in buying a beautiful picture for a son that is totally blind?

(c) That God does not love all men without exception is proved, as already stated, by the declaration: “**Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated**” (**Romans 9:13**). Did God love Pharaoh? (**Romans 10:17**). Did He

love the Amalekites? (**Exodus 17:14**). Did He love the Canaanites, whom He commanded to be extirpated without mercy? (**Deuteronomy 18:3**). Does He love the workers of iniquity? (**Psalms 5:5**). Does He love the vessels or wrath fitted for destruction, whom He endures with much long-suffering? (**Romans 9:22**)” (Haldane, *Atonement*, p. 113).

(d) Finally, the word “**world**,” by no means, alludes to all men without exception in every case in the Scripture, and, therefore, it remains to be proved that it means this in these passages. “**World**” is used of unbelievers in distinction from believers (**John 7:7; 12:31; 14:17; 15:18, 19; 16:20; 17:14; I Corinthians 4:9; 11:32; Ephesians 2:2; Hebrews 11:7; I John 3:1; 3:13; 5:19**). It is used of Gentiles in distinction from the Jews (**Romans 11:12, 15**). It is used of the generality of known people (**John 12:19**). We believe in the two passages under consideration the word alludes not *to all men without exception*, but to *all men without distinction*; that is, to men of all nations, tribes, and tongues (a cross-section of which we see in **Revelation 7:9**); revealing that Christ did not die for the Jews alone, but for Gentiles also, even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The logical reason for the employment of the word “**world**” in this sense is given by John Gill as follows: “It was a controversy agitated among the Jewish doctors, whether when the Messiah came, the Gentiles, the world, should have any benefit by him; the majority was exceeding large on the negative of the question, and determined they should not ... that the most severe judgments and dreadful calamities would befall them; yea, that they should be cast into Hell in the room of the Israelites. *This notion the Baptist, Christ, and His apostles oppose, and is the trite reason of the use of this phrase in the Scriptures which speak of Christ’s redemption*” (*The Cause of God and Truth*, p. 66). [40] “As a typical Jew, Nicodemus thought God loved nobody but Jews, but our Lord told him that God so loved the world (Gentile as well as Jew), that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever (Gentile or Jew) believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Cole, *Definitions of Doctrines*, Vol. 1, p. 120). Note again the use of “**world**” in **II Corinthians 5:19**, where the “**world**” for whom Christ died were potentially reconciled by His death and are not to have their trespasses

imputed to them. In other words, they must receive the forgiveness He purchased for them.

**B. I Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:11.** The word “**all**” appears in both of these passages. But this word is used in the Scripture in a variety of senses. By no means is it always used in the absolute. Note a few of its limited uses: (1) *A great number* (**Matthew 3:5; 4:24; 14:35**). (2) *All kinds and classes* (**Matthew 23:47; Luke 2:10; John 12:32; Acts 13:10; Romans 1:29; 15:14; II Thessalonians 2:9; I Timothy 6:10**). (3) *All with manifest exceptions* (**Mark 11:30; Acts 2:46, 47; I Corinthians 6:18; 8:32; 9:22; 10:33; Titus 1:15**). (4) *All or every one of a certain class* (**Luke 3:21; Romans 5:18** - last part; **I Corinthians 8:2** compared with verses 7 and 11; **15:22** - last part; **Colossians 1:28**). Thus we can easily see that the meaning of “**pas**” must be determined according to the context and according to the teaching of Scripture in general. Therefore, in view of what has been said about the unscriptural implications of the idea that Christ died for all men without exception, we affirm that “**pas**” in the foregoing passages is used in the second sense listed above, and that the meaning is men of “*every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues,*” a cross section of which we find depicted in **Revelation 7:9**. The “**all**” for which Christ died is exactly coterminous with the “**all**” He draws to Him (**John 12:31**). [\[41\]](#) It is *all without distinction* rather than *all without exception*.

“It is observed that Christ is said, in ver. 6 (of **I Timothy 2**), to *give Himself a ransom for all*, which is understood of all men in particular; but it should be observed also, that this ransom is ‘*antilutron huper panton,*’ a vicarious ransom substituted in the room and stead of all whereby a full price was paid for all, and a plenary satisfaction made for the sins of all which cannot be true of every individual man for then no man could be justly condemned and punished ... It is better by ‘**all men**’ to understand some of all sorts ...” (John Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, p. 51).

**C. Hebrews 2:9.** There is no word here for “man” in the Greek. The expression is simply “all” or “every one.” Greek: “**pas**.” And the context supplies the explanation as to those included in this passage, viz., every son

that He brings to glory. Thus “all” is here used in the fourth sense listed above, that is, all or every one of a certain class.

D. **I Timothy 4:10.** The mere provision of salvation for all men does not make God their Saviour any more than it saves them. This does not satisfy the meaning of savior if it is applied to the salvation of the soul. The Greek is “**soter**,” and this word means “deliverer” and “preserver,” as well as savior. We are persuaded that this is its meaning here. God delivers all men (so long as it pleases Him to do so) from dangers both seen and unseen and preserves their lives. It is thus that He displays “the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering” which should lead men to repentance (**Romans 2:4**). What God does for all men in general He does in a special manner for believers.

E. **II Peter 2:1.** The word in this passage for lord is not “**kurios**,” which is used either of God or Christ; but it is “**despotes**,” which is never used of Christ. Hence the reference here is to God. Peter wrote especially to Jews. Doubtless, the false teachers were Jews also. And **Deuteronomy 82:6** explains how the Lord had bought them. God is here said to have bought the whole Jewish nation because He delivered them from Egypt.

F. **II Peter 3:9.** This passage does not mention the atonement, redemption, reconciliation or any such thing; but because it says that God is “**not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**,” it is very naturally used by the advocates of a general atonement. But this passage itself shows that the any and the all are not the whole race of men. It is not an act of longsuffering mercy toward the non-elect for God to withhold the return of Christ. Each day the non-elect are adding to their eternal suffering by further despising the gospel (if they have had it preached to them) and by adding to their store of sins. Moreover every day the number of accountable sinners in the world is increasing. Thus the withholding of Christ’s return is but increasing the final population of Hell. “All” is explained by the word “**usward**.” It is “all” the elect. God is waiting until, in His sovereign providence and by His Spirit, they are brought to repentance and faith.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[37] Some may object to this representation. But this statement is proved true of their theory when they state that the death of Christ made the salvation of all possible; that it removed every legal obstacle from the way of salvation of all men. If He did this for all, what more did He do for any? If He removed every legal obstacle from the way of salvation of all, then He satisfied the law of them. He did not do more than this for anybody.

And when the advocates of a general atonement try to escape the implications of their position, they only contradict themselves. For instance, the great J. R. Graves says that Christ “did not pay the debt each sinner owes to divine law, else each one will be saved; for the law cannot, in justice, demand payment again of tire sinner;” and yet he says that Christ, by His death, “removed all legal and governmental obstructions” from the way of the salvation of all. If Christ did not pay the debt of each sinner, then He did not remove the legal obstructions to the salvation of each sinner. To affirm one and deny the other is to utter a flat contradiction, or else language has no meaning.

There are but two consistent positions on the extent of the atonement. One is the straight Arminian view, which is that Christ died for sin, “but only in the sense that it makes it consistent for God to offer salvation to men on the ground of evangelical obedience, and not of perfect legal obedience” (Boyce, Abstract of Systematic Theology, p. 310). The other is the position advocated in this book. Those who try to take a stand between the two involve themselves in a contradiction, do what they will to avoid it.

[38] Throughout this chapter we assume the truth of unconditional election as set forth in the preceding chapter. We would not waste time trying to prove the truth as to a limited atonement to an Arminian.

[39] Bear in mind that we are writing in this chapter, as already remarked, for the benefit of those who already believe in unconditional election.

[40] Gill's fitness to speak on this matter is cited by Cramp, as follows: "In the diploma (from Marischal College, Aberdeen, awarding the degree of Doctor of Divinity) special mention was made of Dr. Gill's proficiency in sacred literature, in the Oriental languages, and in Jewish antiquities... Dr. Gill was a profound scholar. He was familiar with the whole circle of Jewish literature. None could compete with him on this his own ground" (Baptist History, p. 508).

[41] J. R. Graves, though teaching that the death of Christ "removed all legal and governmental obstruction" from the way of the salvation of all men, says:

**"Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy 2:6), should be interpreted by Christ's own words: 'Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' (Matthew 20:28). And when Christ said, 'If I be lifted up, I will draw all *men* unto me' (John 12:32), He certainly did not mean every sinner of Adam's race; for it would be notoriously untrue; but He meant all conditions and races of men, and, savingly, only all men given Him by the Father" (The Seven Dispensations, P. 102).**

## Chapter 22 - THE OUTWARD AND INWARD CALLS

Election has to do with the purposing and planning of salvation. The atonement has to do with the provision of it. We come now to study the application and communication of salvation to the elect.

### I. THE OUTWARD CALL

The Scripture clearly speaks of two different calls. The first one in the order of occurrence is known generally as the outward or external call. The following Scriptures refer to this call: **Isaiah 45:22; 55:6; Matthew 9:13; 11:28; 22:14; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32; Revelation 22:17**. There are other Scriptures that evidently refer to both calls. These are reserved until we take up the inward call.

#### 1. THE CALL IS THROUGH THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL.

It was by means of the gospel that Jesus called sinners to repentance. Today every presentation of the gospel is a call to men to forsake sin and trust Christ. The preaching of the gospel is also properly attended by a setting forth of man's need of salvation and of his duty and responsibility under God to repent and believe (**Acts 17:30**). There should also be the earnest entreaty to men to be reconciled to God (**II Corinthians 5:20**) and an invitation to all that labor (**Matthew 11:28**), and are athirst (**Isaiah 55:1; John 7:37; Revelation 22:17**).

#### 2. THIS CALL IS AN INDIRECT CALL OF THE SPIRIT.

See the discussion of the indirect work of the Spirit in the lost in [Chapter IX - "The Holy Spirit"](#).

#### 3. THIS CALL, THEREFORE, IS GENERAL.

By this we mean that it is not confined to the elect (**Matthew 22:14**). We are commanded to preach the gospel to all. This call is intended for all men, though all do not hear it. This is true just as all men are commanded to repent (**Acts 17:30**), even though all men do not hear this command.



#### 4. THIS CALL, OF ITSELF, IS ALWAYS INEFFECTIVE.

To Israel God said: “**When I called, ye did not answer**” (Isaiah 65:12). The call referred to here was an outward call similar to the call now under discussion. Because of man’s depravity, the preaching of the gospel alone is never sufficient to bring him to Christ. He needs more than an outward call. The gospel “**is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth**” (Romans 1:16); but “**the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged**” (I Corinthians 2:14). Man must be enabled to turn from sin and believe on Christ. **Jeremiah 13:23; John 12:39, 40; 6:44, 65.**

Nevertheless it is the immediate duty of all to accept this call - **Acts 17:30.**

#### 5. THIS CALL IS SINCERE.

Arminians object that the Calvinistic system of doctrine makes a general call insincere. Sincere means “*being in reality as in appearance. Intending precisely what one says or what one appears to intend.*” Having defined the term under discussion, we are now prepared to examine into the exact grounds of this objection. Three Calvinistic teachings are pointed out as rendering a general call insincere. They are:

(1) *The teaching that man by nature is unable to turn from sin to Christ.*

Arminians say if the case with the natural man were such as Calvinists represent it, and this were fully known to God, then God could not be sincere in inviting men to come to Christ. But there is nothing in the general call that makes it appear that all men are able to respond to it. This is nothing more than an unwarranted inference. And it has its foundation, not in the call itself, but in an erroneous conception of man’s state by nature. Hence this call is not insincere.

*“God’s call to all men to repent and to believe the gospel is no more insincere than His command to all men to Love Him with all the heart. There is no obstacle in the way of men’s obedience to the gospel, that does not exist to prevent their obedience to the law. If it is proper to publish the commands of the law, it is proper to publish the invitations of the gospel. A human being may be perfectly sincere in giving an invitation which he knows will be refused. He may desire to have the invitation accepted, while yet he may, for certain reasons of justice and personal dignity, be unwilling to put forth special efforts, aside from the invitation itself, to secure the acceptance of it on the part of those to whom it is offered” (Strong).*

Does God’s invitation or call to all men any more appear to indicate that all men can accept it than His command to all men to love Him supremely appears to indicate that all men can do it?

*(2) The teaching as to God’s elective purpose to save only a portion of Adam’s race.*

Arminians say if God has purposed to save only a portion of Adam’s race, then He cannot sincerely invite all men to come to Christ for salvation. Let it first be remarked as to this phase of the objection that the objector, to have even the semblance of consistency, must deny the foreknowledge of God. For, if God foreknew everything, then He certainly foreknew that all men would not believe the gospel, since we see that all do not. And certainly no evangelical would say that God purposed to save those who reject the gospel. So, if the foreknowledge of God be true, then God purposed to save only a part of Adam’s race, believers. Hence consistency demands that the Arminian surrender either this phase of the objection or else surrender the foreknowledge of God. He cannot be logical and hold both.

*(3) The doctrine of a limited atonement.*

This was touched on in relation to the sincerity of God’s general call through the gospel in the previous chapter. However we give it further brief notice. If one is going before a large number of people to offer to each one of

them a ten-dollar bill, and he has inerrant knowledge before hand that only a hundred out of that number will accept his offer, need he in order to make a sincere offer to all have more than one hundred ten-dollar bills? Surely not. Knowing that he has a sufficient number to supply all that will accept the offer, he can most freely and sincerely say, "Let every one of you that desires a ten-dollar bill come to me and I will give you one." Is it not manifest to all who can think logically that, in a case such as is described above, the failure of all the people except the hundred to receive a ten-dollar bill would be due to their refusal of the offer, and not to lack of provision?

God's general call is in appearance no more than it is in reality. And He appears to intend no more than He does actually intend. This does not appear as something that all men can respond to nor as something that will enable men to come to Christ or that will necessarily impel them to come. Nor does this call appear to affirm that God has made a futile provision of salvation for those who persist in unbelief. In this call God appears to intend that all men are welcome if they will come; that all who come will be received. He actually intends just this. It is just as much a Bible truth that all who come to Christ will be saved as it is that only the elect will be saved. We can heartily and gladly subscribe to the New Hampshire Declaration of Faith in saying that "*nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth except his own inherent depravity and voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ.*" In other words, these are the things that send the sinner to Hell.

## II. THE INWARD CALL

The following Scriptures refer to the inward call: **Acts 2:39; Romans 1:6; 8:28, 30; 9:11,24; I Corinthians 1:1,26; 7:15; Galatians 1:15; 5:8; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 3:15; I Thessalonians 5:24; II Thessalonians 2:14; II Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 9:15; I Peter 1:15; 2:9; 3:9; 5:10; II Peter 1:3,10; Jude 1.** Some of these Scriptures, as has been indicated already, seem to allude to both the inward and outward call.

### 1. THIS CALL IS A DIRECT CALL THROUGH THE SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit takes the preached gospel and opening the heart of the sinner (**Acts 16:14**), applies the word to the heart in regenerating power. It is then, and only then, that man is able to understand and receive the things of the Spirit of God. Thus the inward call is also through the gospel, but it is through the gospel as applied by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures touching on this work of the Spirit through the word will be given when we study regeneration.

## 2. THIS CALL IS PARTICULAR.

By means of it the chosen objects of God's saving grace are singled out. The difference here between the outward and the inward calls may be imperfectly illustrated by the difference between a general invitation extended by a church to the people of a community to attend its services and the personal invitations that are extended to particular individuals by the membership of the church. Of course, as we have said, this only imperfectly illustrates the difference between God's two calls. **Romans 8:30** shows the particularity of this call.

## 3. THIS CALL IS ALWAYS EFFECTIVE.

It is manifest that the Scriptures given at the beginning of the discussion of this call refer to an effective and efficient call. This call is never resisted; yet, in responding to it, man acts voluntarily and freely. See the chapter on ["The Free Agency of Man"](#). The effectiveness of this call is shown by **Romans 8:28, 30; I Corinthians 1:24**.

## Chapter 23 - THE NEW BIRTH

The last thing considered in the former chapter is the inward call. This call is communicated to men in the new birth. Thus we are brought logically to a study of the new birth or regeneration.

### I. THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH

#### 1. THE FACT OF ITS NECESSITY.

Jesus left no doubt as to the indispensable necessity of the new birth as a prerequisite to entrance into God's kingdom when He said to Nicodemus: **"Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"** (John 3:5).

#### 2. REASONS FOR ITS NECESSITY.

The new birth is necessary because -

(1) *God's spiritual blessings are for His spiritual children only.*

**Romans 8:16, 17.** Man by nature is not a spiritual child of God, though he is a child naturally. Adam is called **"the son of God"** (Luke 3:38). This sonship was based, not on birth, nor on mere creation, but on the likeness that inhered in the image of God in man.

That image was two-fold. Adam had a moral or spiritual likeness to God in holiness. He had a natural likeness to God in personality. For further discussion of these see the chapter on ["The Original State And Fall Of Man."](#) When man fell he lost the moral or spiritual likeness to God, and thus ceased to be a spiritual child of God. But he did not lose his personality, did not fall to the level of a brute, and thus he retained a natural basis of sonship. This explains **Acts 17:28, 29.**

Spiritually and morally man is a child of the Devil (**John 8:44; I John 3:10**), because he bears a spiritual and moral likeness to the Devil. Thus he

must be born again to inherit God's spiritual blessings, because these, as **Romans 8:16, 17** clearly shows, are for none except His spiritual children.

*(2) Man is spiritually dead and God's kingdom both here and hereafter is spiritual in nature.*

**Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13; I John 3:14.** The statement that man is spiritually dead means that man is, because of sin, devoid of divine spirit life; although he has natural spirit life. His spirit has lost all real affinity for God. He has no affection for God or spiritual things (**Romans 8:7, 8**). He has no ability in spiritual things (**Jeremiah 13:23; John 6:65**).

Hence there is nothing in man's nature that qualifies him for citizenship in a spiritual kingdom. One that is dead spiritually can no more inhabit a spiritual kingdom than one that is dead physically can inhabit a physical kingdom. Thus man must be born anew in order to enter God's kingdom.

*(3) Being in God's kingdom implies submission to the rule of God and man by nature is at enmity with God.*

**Romans 8:7, 8.** God's kingdom is His rule over the hearts and lives of His saints. To enter His kingdom, therefore, is to submit to His rule. But man by nature cannot do that because he is at enmity against God. The new birth is necessary in order that this enmity may be overcome.

## **II. THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH**

### **1. NEGATIVELY CONSIDERED.**

*(1) It is not an eradication of the old nature.*

The new birth may be called a "change of heart" in the sense of a change of the ruling disposition (including the mind and affections as well as the will), but the new heart does not displace the old. The old or carnal nature remains. See **Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 5:17**. The new heart or

nature is placed alongside the old, and the saint has two natures, as indicated in the foregoing passages. The new birth leaves the old nature unaltered.

The old or carnal nature, as distinguished from the new nature or ruling disposition established in the new birth, is designated in various ways in the New Testament. It is called (1) **the flesh** - Greek “sarx” (**John 1:13; Romans 7:18, 25; Romans 8:4, 5, 8, 9, 13; I Corinthians 5:5; II Corinthians 10:2; Galatians 5:13, 16, 17, 19, 24; Ephesians 2:3; Colossians 2:11, 23; I Peter 3:21; II Peter 2:10, 18; I John 2:16**); (2) **body** - Greek “soma” (**Romans 6:6; 7:24; 8:13; I Corinthians 9:27; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 2:11**); (3) **old man** - Greek “palaios anthros” (**Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9**); (4) **indwelling sin** - Greek “oikousa en emoi hamartia” (**Romans 7:17,20**); (5) **carnal mind** - Greek “to phronema tes sarkos” (**Romans 8:7**).

There are several things which these Scriptures do not mean, viz., (1) They do not mean that the physical matter of which the body is composed is sinful. There is in these passages no suggestion that matter is inherently evil, as the Manicheans taught. (2) They do not mean that there are in the saint two souls or two spirits. (3) They do not mean that the believer has two personalities. (4) They do not mean that the believer has two faculties of will

These passages do mean that out of the physical body while animated by the regenerated soul there arise lusts - evil desires (**Galatians 5:16, 17; Colossians 3:5; I Thessalonians 4:5; James 1:14, 15; I John 2:16**), which tend always to produce all the works of the flesh mentioned in **Galatians 5:19-21**; and thus the regenerated soul is hindered in putting forth effective executive volitions fully conformed to its immanent preference or its fixed choice of holiness as an ultimate end, as set forth especially in **Romans 7:15-25; Galatians 5:17**.

*(2) It is not a mere getting of religion.*

Man is naturally religious. Note the heathen Athenians in **Acts 17**. Recall also the various religions and forms of worship in heathen lands today. No matter how religious a man may become, without the new birth he

remains essentially sinful. In a Methodist tract we read: “*We believe that one may ‘get religion,’ may lose it, and be eternally lost.*” On the margin we wrote: “*I will go you one better than that. I believe a man may get religion, may keep it, and go to Hell, taking his religion with him.*”

(3) *It is not human reformation.*

Human reformation is superficial, leaving the whole nature essentially the same. For that reason human reformation is not likely to be lasting. The new birth will be followed by reformation, but it is reformation that issues from a fundamental change in the ruling disposition, and not that which is founded on a mere resolution of mind. Human reformation can never purge sin from the soul and implant a new disposition.

(4) *It is not adoption.*

Adoption is a legal term. It is the immediate result of justification. It is not the same as regeneration. Adoption makes us children of God legally, while regeneration makes us children of God experientially. Adoption brings a mere change of legal relationship. Regeneration changes our moral nature. Adoption has to do with us as the spiritual and moral children of the Devil by nature. Regeneration has to do with us as those who are by nature devoid of spiritual life.

(5) *It is not an alteration of the substance or essence of the soul, nor an infusion of new substance into the soul, nor the creation in the soul of any new faculties.*

In the fall man suffered no loss of, or alteration in, the substance or essence of the soul. Neither was he deprived of any natural endowment or faculty. After the fall, man was still able to know, to feel, and to will. He still had conscience.

The fall involved an ultimate choice of evil as an end. This perverted and blinded the mind to spiritual truth (**Genesis 6:1; Romans 8:7; I Corinthians 2:14; II Corinthians 4:3,4**), corrupted the heart (**Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:19; Matthew 15:19; Hebrews 3:12; I John 2:15**), defiled the



conscience (**Titus 1:15; Hebrews 10:22**), and enslaved the will (**Jeremiah 13:23; John 6:65; John 8:34; 12:39,40; Romans 6:16,17**). In regeneration all of this is reversed as we are enabled by the quickening power of the Spirit to make an ultimate choice of holiness as an end.

## 2. Positively considered.

*Regeneration or being born again is a supernatural, instantaneous work of God in the region of the soul below consciousness, whereby the sinful bent imparted to the faculties of the soul in the fall of the race is rectified and, through the instrumentality of the Word of God, the initial exercise of the holy disposition thus imparted is procured .*

From this definition of regeneration and from the Scriptures let us note that -

### *(1) It is a work of God.*

Man cannot give birth to himself. John plainly attributes regeneration to God when, in speaking of our being born again, he says: “**Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God**” (**John 1:13**). This passage tells us that the new nature is not hereditary; that it does not issue from the will of the old nature (flesh); and that it is not accomplished by the will of any man, but is wrought of God. This passage also means that regeneration is not the joint work of God and the human will. Repentance and faith are never made conditions of regeneration, but are gifts of God. In regeneration we do not have a man acted upon by himself or by some other man, but a man acted upon by God. Hence we may amplify the statement heading this paragraph and say that regeneration is a sovereign act of God - **John 3:8**. In its initial phase (quickenings) it is unconditional. Man does not by any act of his own dispose God to regenerate him. The agency of the Spirit in regeneration is declared in **John 3:5**.

### *(2) It is a supernatural work.*

In a sense the falling of rain, the blowing of the wind, and the flashing of the lightning are the works of God. But they occur according to natural laws.

The fleshly birth represents a work of God, but it is according to the natural laws of reproduction. The new birth is different. It is not accomplished basically by natural law or natural processes. The natural thing is for the sinner to go in sin. Neither the sinner himself, nor any other natural force or agency of itself, has any more power to reverse a sinful course of life than an Ethiopian has to change his skin or a leopard has to change his spots. **Jeremiah 13:23.**

(3) *It is an instantaneous work.*

Says A. H. Strong: “Regeneration is not a gradual work. Although there may be a gradual work of God’s providence and Spirit, preparing the change, and a gradual recognition of it after it has taken place, there must be an instant of time when, under the influence of God’s Spirit the disposition of the soul, just before hostile to God is changed to love. Any other view assumes an intermediate state of indecision which has no moral character at all and confounds regeneration either with conviction or with sanctification” (Systematic Theology, p. 458).

Regeneration consists of a begetting and a bringing forth, a quickening and a birth. And, because of this, some have tried to make out such an analogy between the physical and spiritual births as would interpose a lapse of time between begetting and birth. But separation in point of time between begetting and birth in the physical realm is brought about by conditions that are peculiar to the physical realm. No such conditions prevail in the spiritual realm.

Some have tried to interpose a time element between begetting and birth by making a distinction between passages of Scripture, listing some as referring to begetting and others as referring to birth or bringing forth. There are three Greek words used with reference to the new birth. They are: “**apokueo**,” used only once (**James 1:18**); “**anagennao**,” used only twice (**I Peter 1:3, 23**); and “**gennao**,” used many times and translated by both “**begat**” and “**born**”. The Greek words have the same substantial meaning. They refer to the entire work of regeneration, and so do the passages in which they are used.

(4) *It takes place in the region of the soul below consciousness.*

That there is a subconscious region of human personality is a proposition demanded as a basis for sound analysis of psychological phenomena, such as certain mental trends, amnesia, sleep, and dreams. Moreover this proposition is also demanded as a basis for understanding the workings of the Spirit in inspiring Biblical writers, and divine revelations through dreams, trances, and supernatural visions. See **Genesis 20:3; 31:11-13; I Kings 3:5; Job 33:14-18; Isaiah 1:1; Daniel 2:19; 7:1; 8:1; Obadiah 1; Nahum 1:1; Habakkuk 2:2; Matthew 1:20; 2:12; Acts 10:10-16; 16:9; 18:9, 10; 27:23-25; II Corinthians 12:1-4; Revelation 1:10; 4:1**, et seq.

Delitzsch says quite appropriately that we “*who live in an earthly body have, as the background of our being, a dim region, out of which our thinking labors forth to the daylight; and in which much goes forward, especially in the condition of sleep, of which we can come to a knowledge only by looking back afterwards.*” Then he says further: “*Certainly the depth of man’s internal nature, into which in sleep he sinks back, conceals far more than is manifest to himself. It has been [published in 1855] a fundamental error of most psychologists hitherto, to make the soul only extend so far as its consciousness extends: it embraces, as is now always acknowledged, a far greater abundance of powers and relations than can commonly appear in its consciousness*” (*A System of Biblical Psychology*, pp. (**Jeremiah 17:9**).

That it was in this subconscious region that depravity took place is evidenced by the fact that we are said to be dead in sin by nature (**Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:13**) and to have a heart whose deceitful wickedness we cannot fully know (**Jeremiah 17:9**).

That this is the region where regeneration takes place and where the Spirit dwells in union with the regenerated soul and carries on His work is proved by (1) *the fact that quickening must occur in the same region where we are dead* - that the natural state of spiritual death is back of the will (and, therefore, below consciousness) is further proved by the fact that whereas in the natural state we can will we cannot will that which is pleasing to God

(**Jeremiah 13:23; John 6:65; 12:33-40; Romans 8:7, 8; II Corinthians 4:3,4; II Timothy 2:24-26**); (2) *the fact that the life-giving power of the Spirit is said to operate as the wind* - beyond our control and understanding, and apprehended by us only in its effect (**John 3:8**); (3) *the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and seals us* (**John 7:37-39; 14:17; I Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 1:12-14**, moving us to pray **Galatians 4:6**), interpreting our unutterable groanings (**Romans 8:26, 27**), and yet are not conscious of a second person within us; (4) *the fact that God works in us to will* (**Philippians 2:13**), and thus must work back of the will. In this way alone can God guarantee that the child of God “cannot sin” (**I John 3:9**) in the sense of renouncing the *ultimate end upon which the will is fixed in regeneration*.

(5) *It rectifies that which occurred in the soul in the fall of the race.*

Before the fall, the bodies and souls of Adam and Eve were harmonious in holiness, their bodies being under the perfect control of their holy souls. The real fall was internal. “*The eating of the forbidden fruit is only the external performance of the deed which has already been internally committed*” (Delitzsch, *ibid*, p. 147). Under temptation, their moral natures being permitted of God (He not supplying the extra grace that would have prevented the fall) to weaken, bodily desires becoming inordinate, overpowered the soul and brought it into harmony with them. Thus the faculties of the soul were turned away from God. In regeneration these faculties are turned back to God. The body is allowed in this life to remain the seat of inordinate affection. But no sin remains in the soul, so that whereas before salvation, the soul, in departing from the body, is ready for perdition; after salvation it is ready for entrance into the presence of Christ upon its departure from the body. Faith wrought by the regenerating Spirit of God purifies the soul. **I Peter 1:22**.

Thus the believer has the image of God restored in the soul (**Ephesians 4:24**) and partakes of the divine nature (**II Peter 1:4**) as the holy faculties of the soul are brought to expression.

(6) *It is not complete until repentance and faith have been wrought in the soul.*

It is to these that we refer when we speak in the foregoing of “the initial exercise of the holy disposition,” which exercise is procured by regeneration. Repentance and faith should be thought of as a part of regeneration rather than as fruits of regeneration. The soul is not renewed so long as it remains in impenitence and unbelief. These attitudes of the heart are brought about in regeneration. This is confirmed by the fact that the truth is used instrumentally in regeneration. If regeneration did not consist of the working of repentance and faith in the heart, there would be no need of the instrumentality of the word.

From the foregoing we see that man is not wholly passive in regeneration. He is passive in the initial impartation of life, in which the moral faculties of the soul are recovered from the depravity of the fall and a holy ruling disposition is established; but in the initial exercise of this holy disposition, man is active.

### **III. HOW THE NEW BIRTH IS ACCOMPLISHED**

#### **1. NEGATIVELY CONSIDERED.**

(1) *Not by education or culture.*

Education and culture can bring nothing out of man that is not in him. Hence, since man is essentially sinful and totally depraved, education and culture can never produce that holy ruling disposition that is wrought in regeneration.

(2) *Not by baptism.*

That baptism is not instrumental in the new birth is proved by the following facts:

A. *There is no conceivable way in which baptism can remove sin from the soul or impart a holy ruling disposition.* Physical means can never work

a spiritual change. The idea of baptismal regeneration “*is part and parcel of a general scheme of mechanical rather than moral salvation, and is more consistent with materialistic than with a spiritual philosophy*” (Strong). If it be said that in baptism we come into contact with the blood of Christ, the reply is that this is an unscriptural and childish subterfuge that could be adopted by none except those who are defeated and do not have the honesty to admit it.

B. *Peter affirms that baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, (carnal nature) but the answer of a good conscience toward God (I Peter 3:21)*. A good conscience is one that has been purged by the blood of Christ (**Hebrews 9:14**). Until thus purged, the conscience is evil (**Hebrews 10:22**). And when one has been purged there is no more conscience of sins (**Hebrews 10:2**). Hence one who has a good conscience will never do anything in order to be saved, for he has no conscience of sins, no feeling of need of salvation. All of this proves that one is saved prior to baptism, and not through baptism.

C. *The words of Jesus in Matthew 3:15 imply that baptism is a work of righteousness, and Paul says we are not saved by works of righteousness (Titus 3:5)*.

D. *Faith must precede baptism (Acts 2:41; 8:37; 19:1-5), and when faith is exercised one is already saved (John 3:18; 5:24; I John 5:1)*. This is an argument that no advocate of the instrumentality of baptism in salvation has ever had the courage to face squarely.

E. *When faith has been exercised, regeneration is complete; hence baptism which follows faith cannot be instrumental in regeneration*. That faith is wrought in the heart in regeneration has been shown already, and will be made even clearer in the chapter on [“The Doctrine Of Conversion”](#).

F. *The thief on the cross was saved without baptism*. The supposition that this thief must have had John’s baptism previous to his crucifixion is groundless. Such baptism would have been no better than the baptism received by the twelve at Ephesus Jesus, because it would have been, like

theirs, without faith in Christ, and hence not valid. The notion that the thief and others during the personal ministry of Christ were saved apart from the gospel by some special dispensation of God or Christ implies Christ's death was unnecessary. If God could save a few apart from the gospel, He could just as well save all thus. The effort to make out that Christ's words to the thief formed a question instead of a declaration is absurd and without the slightest pretext in the Greek. That paradise is Heaven, the immediate presence of the Father is evident from **Revelation 2:7** and **22:1, 2**.

Passages thought by many to teach that baptism is necessary to salvation are treated in chapter on [\*"The Doctrine Of Baptism"\*](#)

## 2. POSITIVELY CONSIDERED.

Regeneration is wrought -

*(1) By the Holy Spirit.*

**John 3:5** tells us that the new birth is by the Holy Spirit. There are two serious errors with reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. One is that He operates (in some cases) at least entirely independent and apart from the written Word of God. This is held by the Hardshells. Consequently they believe that men may be saved without knowledge of the written Word. The passages that ascribe to the Word of God a place in regeneration, which passages will be noted under the next heading, refute this notion. The other error we refer to here is the teaching that the Spirit in regeneration does not act immediately upon the soul, but only immediately through the Word. This is the teaching of Campbellites.

“The scriptural assertions of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and of His mighty power in the soul forbid us to regard the divine spirit in regeneration as coming in contact, not with the soul, but only with the truth. Since truth is simply what it is, there can be no change wrought in the truth. The phrases, ‘*to energize the truth,*’ ‘*to intensify the truth,*’ ‘*to illuminate the truth,*’ have no proper meaning; since God cannot make the truth more true. If any change is wrought, it must be wrought not in the truth, but in the soul” (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 453).

Man's depravity and inability by nature to receive the truth and turn from sin to Christ and righteousness (**Jeremiah 13:23; John 6:65; I Corinthians 2:14**) also show the absolute necessity of the immediate impact and operation of the Holy Spirit upon the soul in regeneration. *"No mere increase of light will enable the blind to see; the disease of the eye must first be cured before external objects are visible. So God's work in regeneration must be performed within the soul itself. Over and above all influences of truth, there must be the direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart"* (ibid).

(2) *Using the instrumentality of the Word.*

The instrumentality of the Word in regeneration is taught by **John 3:5; Ephesians 5:26; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23**. It is evident from **I Peter 1:25** that the word in these passages is the written or preached Word rather than the incarnate Word (which is Christ). In **I Peter 1:23** the Word is characterized as that **"which liveth and abideth forever."** Then in verse **24** the perishable nature of other things is referred to. And in verse **25** the endurance of the Word is again referred to, and it is plainly specified that the Word referred to is **"the word of good tidings which was preached unto you"** (correct translation).

However it needs to be understood (as we have before implied) that in the first phrase of regeneration (quickening) the Spirit operates on the soul independent of the Word. The spiritually dead soul must be given life before it can see and act upon the truth. It is by quickening that one is enabled to come to Christ (**John 6:65**). It is thus that God gives men over into possession of Christ (**John 6:37**).

Here again, as we would expect, the falseness of Charles G. Finney's theology is manifested. He flatly contradicts himself. He makes regeneration the personal work of the Holy Spirit, and yet denies that the Spirit makes direct impact upon the soul. This he thinks would inject a physical influence into regeneration. He affirms that man has the natural ability to obey God, and yet teaches that no man can be saved apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. After one reads his treatment of regeneration, then he fully understands



why Mr. Finney for a time wavered on the matter of the perseverance of the saints. Really, according to his view of regeneration and human nature and the method of God in dealing with man, he has no logical reason for believing in the perseverance of the saints; and, no doubt, would not believe in it if he could find some way to nullify the plain declarations of Scripture with reference to it. See pp. 254, 288, 296, 324, 325, 552, of Finney's *Lectures of Systematic Theology*.

#### IV. EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH

##### 1. GENUINE TRUST IN GOD ALONE FOR SALVATION.

We have noted that faith is wrought in the heart as a part (the secondary part) of regeneration. This is necessarily so because the new nature cannot be in unbelief. The faith that is wrought in man in regeneration does not stop short of implicit trust and confidence in Christ as a personal Saviour. It is not merely belief about Him, but faith and trust in and on Him. This is so abundantly evident from all passages dealing with faith that it needs no further argument to substantiate it.

One has not been regenerated until he is willing to trust his eternal welfare wholly to Christ. He must have repented of dead works (**Hebrews 6:1**). All works engaged in for salvation are dead works. No faith is counted for righteousness, and hence is not saving faith, except the faith of him "who worketh not" for salvation (**Romans 4:5**). As long as one is looking to anything other than Christ he is not regenerated.

##### 2. THE WITNESS AND INDWELLING PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT.

**Romans 8:16, 9; I John 3:24; 4:13.** The witness and the indwelling of the Spirit is not evidenced by some vague, mystical, impractical feeling, but by the constant ruling power of the Spirit (**Romans 8:14**) producing devotion to God and an obedient life. It is by the constant indwelling of the Spirit and His operation in us that God performs until the end, the work that He begins in us in regeneration (**Philippians 1:6; 2:13**). The witness and indwelling of the Spirit is evidenced in all the ways that follow.

### 3. READINESS TO ACCEPT GOD'S WORD.

**John 8:47.** A regenerated person will ever show a desire to know the will of his Father in everything and to follow that will when it is made known. He will not be found walking continuously in stubborn rebellion against truth.

### 4. CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN.

**Romans 7:14-25; I John 1:8.** No saved person will think himself sinless. Those who do are deceived, and are without the truth, by which we are regenerated (**James 1:18**) and made free (**John 8:32**). This makes it plain that they are not saved. The new nature will ever recognize the presence of sin in the body, as in the case of Paul (**Romans 7:14-25**). This new nature has in it the enlightening unction of the Spirit (**I John 2:27**) and partakes of the nature of God Himself (**II Peter 1:4**), being created in righteousness and true holiness (**Ephesians 4:24**). It cannot be blind to sin.

### 5. LOVE OF GOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**John 8:42; Romans 7:22; II Corinthians 5:17; I John 4:16-19.** Along with the consciousness of indwelling sin will be a love of God and righteousness, just as in the case of Paul. He found sin in the body, yet he delighted in the law of God after the inward man.

### 6. A LIFE THAT IS OBEDIENT AS TO ITS MAIN TREND.

**John 14:21-24; Romans 6:14; 8:6, 13; Galatians 5:24; I John 1:6; 2:4, 15; 3:8, 9; II John 6.** The life of the saved person will not be perfect, but it will be righteous and obedient as to its main trend. For further discussion of this matter, see treatment of **I John 2:4**.

### 7. PROGRESSIVE PURIFICATION.

**I John 3:3.** While the believer never attains sinless perfection in this life, yet he ever wages war against his own sins.

## 8. LOVE OF OTHER BELIEVERS.

**I John 3:14; 5:2.** There is such an affinity between regenerated persons that they love each other. One evidence of this love is that they delight in the presence and fellowship of one another. But God has added another test of our love of the brethren. If we love God and keep His commandments, we know that we love the children of God. See second Scripture above. So we are brought back again to the matter of obedience to God.

## 9. PATIENT CONTINUANCE TO THE END.

**Matthew 10:22; Romans 11:22; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:23; I John 3:9; 5:4.** Perseverance is as much a doctrine of Scripture as is preservation. By God's preservation of us we are made to persevere. These two doctrines are perfectly consistent, and need to be held and preached as twin truths. None will reach Heaven except those who hold out to the end and overcome the world. See promises to overcomers in **Revelation 3** and **4**. No promises to others. But all of the regenerated will overcome (**I John 5:4**).

## Chapter 24 - THE DOCTRINE OF CONVERSION

Turning from the divine to the human side of salvation we are brought to a consideration of conversion. We note:

### I. CONVERSION DEFINED

#### 1. CONVERSION PROPER.

By conversion proper we mean the technical and theological sense in which the term is commonly used. In this sense it has been defined as follows:

“Conversion is that voluntary change in the mind of the sinner, in which he turns, on the one hand, from sin, and on the other hand, to Christ. The former or negative element in conversion, namely, the turning from sin, we denominate repentance. The latter or positive element in conversion, namely the turning to Christ, we denominate faith.” And again: “Conversion is the human side or aspect of that fundamental spiritual change which, as viewed from the divine side, we call regeneration.” - A. H. Strong, in Systematic Theology, p. 460.

We may go further than Strong goes in the last quotation, and say that regeneration, or the new birth, in its broadest sense, includes conversion. It is thus presented in such passages as **James 1:18** and **I Peter 1:23**, where the Word of God is distinctly represented as the instrument of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. If the new birth meant only the impartation of life, then there would be no need of the instrumentality of the Word. So we may say that regeneration has both a divine and a human side. The divine side we may call quickening, and the human side we may call conversion.

#### 2. CONVERSION IN ITS GENERAL SENSE.

“From the fact that the word ‘*conversion*’ means simply a ‘*turning*’, every turning of the Christian from sin, subsequent to the first, may, in a subordinate sense, be denominated a conversion (**Luke 22:32**). Since regeneration is not complete sanctification, and the change of governing

disposition is not identical with complete purification of the nature, such subsequent turnings from sin are necessary consequences and evidences of the first (Cf. **John 13:10**). But they do not, like the first, imply a change in the governing disposition; they are rather new manifestations of the disposition already changed. For this reason, conversion proper, like the regeneration of which it is the obverse side, can occur but once.” - A. H. Strong, in *Systematic Theology*, p. 461.

In this chapter we have reference to the technical and theological sense of conversion as given in the first instance above.

## **II. THE LOGICAL ORDER OF QUICKENING AND CONVERSION**

As stated above, quickening and conversion seem to be the divine and human sides of regeneration or the new birth. It is our purpose at this time, therefore to consider the question as to which is logically first, the divine side or the human side, in regeneration. To propose this question is to answer it for all that are capable of logical thinking. The divine side is most certainly logically prior to the human side. In consideration of this position let us note:

### **1. PROOF STATED.**

*(1) Conversion Involves Turning From Sin, and Man By Nature Is Unable To Do This.*

Man by nature is able to reform his life to some extent. He can turn from some forms of sin. But he is unable by nature to change the governing disposition of his nature. This is proved by **Jeremiah 13:23**, which reads: **“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.”** The sinner is accustomed to do evil. Therefore it is impossible for him to turn from evil (or sin) until his governing disposition is changed. This is just as impossible as it is for the blackest Negro to make himself white, or the leopard to divest himself of his spotted robe.

*(2) Conversion is Pleasing to God, and the Natural Man Cannot Please God.*

No one can doubt the first part of the above statement. The last part is proved by **Romans 8:8**, which says: “**They that are in the flesh cannot please God.**” This includes all to whom God has not given a new nature.

*(3) Conversion is a Good Thing, and no Good Thing Can Proceed from the Natural Heart.*

Paul said that there was no good thing in his fleshly nature (**Romans 7:18**). This is the only nature man has until God gives him a new one. And since no good can come out of that in which no good exists, conversion cannot proceed from the fleshly nature. Therefore the giving of the new nature, or quickening, must come before conversion. To affirm otherwise is to deny total depravity, which means that sin has permeated every part of man’s being and poisoned every faculty, leaving no good thing in the natural man.

*(4) Conversion Involves Subjecting Oneself to the Will or Law of God, and This is Impossible to the Natural Man.*

That such is impossible to the natural man is established by **Romans 8:7**, in which we read: “**The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.**”

*(5) Conversion Involves Receiving Christ as One’s Personal Saviour, which is a Spiritual Thing, and the Natural Man Cannot Receive Spiritual Things.*

This latter truth is declared in **I Corinthians 2:14**, as follows: “**The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.**” If the truth of Christ’s saving power through faith is not a thing of the Spirit of God, that is, a thing which man can understand only through the revelation of the Spirit then what truth is a thing of the Spirit of God?

*(6) Conversion is a Spiritual Resurrection, and in a Resurrection the Impartation of Life Must Always Precede the Manifestation of Life in Coming Forth.*

Conversion is represented as a spiritual resurrection in **Ephesians 2:4-6**, which says: “**God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**” The raising up here represents conversion. So the question we are considering is as to which is first, the quickening or the raising up. There can be no reasonable doubt that the quickening is first in a logical sense.

*(7) Conversion Involves Coming to Christ, and the Act of the Father in Giving Men to Christ Precedes Their Coming to Christ.*

In **John 6:37** we read as follows: “**All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me.**” This passage certainly places the Father’s act of giving men to Christ logically prior to their coming to Christ. This act of the Father is a discriminative, effective act, for all that are given come and all men do not come. Thus this act of giving could not allude to the mere giving of the opportunity of coming to Christ nor could it allude to so-called “*gracious ability*” which is supposed by its advocates to be bestowed upon all men. This act can refer to nothing short of the actual giving of men over into the immediate possession of Christ by quickening them into life. Men come to Christ in conversion. Thus quickening must precede conversion.

*(8) Conversion Involves Coming to Christ, and no Man Can Come to Christ Except God Give Him the Ability to do so.*

In **John 6:65** we read: “**No man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of my Father.**” This passage, as the one just noticed, does not refer to the mere giving of the opportunity to come to Christ, nor to the impartation of so-called “*gracious ability*” for the same reasons stated above in comment on **John 6:37**. This latter passage, like the former one, refers to a discriminative act. The context makes this clear in the case of **John 6:65**. The

words of this passage were spoken in view of and as an explanation of the fact that some believe not.

Neither of these latter passages can refer to any kind of mere assistance that God might be supposed to bestow on the natural man, for repentance and faith cannot proceed from the natural heart, as we have shown. Both passages can refer to nothing short of the quickening power of God, in which men are enabled to come to Christ.

## 2. SCRIPTURES EXPLAINED.

It being true that conversion is the result of quickening and therefore, not a condition thereof, it may be asked how we are to understand those Scriptures that make faith a condition of sonship. See **John 1:12; Galatians 8:26**. We reply that these passages refer to sonship through adoption and not to sonship through regeneration. As we have already noted, adoption is a legal term. It comes as an immediate result of justification. It is not the same as regeneration. It confers the right of sonship. Regeneration confers the nature of sons.

## III. THE CHRONOLOGICAL RELATION OF QUICKENING AND CONVERSION

Because quickening logically precedes conversion is not proof that it does so chronologically, or as to time. We maintain that quickening does not precede conversion in matter of time, but that they both are synchronous or simultaneous. Let us note:

### 1. ARGUMENTS IN PROOF OF THIS.

(1) *A Chronological Difference Between Quickenings and Conversion Would Involve the Monstrosity of an Individual With Life from Above and Yet in Unbelief.*

In the impartation of divine life we partake of the nature of God (**II Peter 1:4**). And it is impossible that such a nature should be in unbelief. All



unbelievers are spoken of in the Bible as being dead. Hence it cannot be that there is ever a time when there is life without faith.

*(2) The Scripture Declares That Only He That Hath the Son Has Life.*

This is declared in **I John 5:12**. Having the Son involves believing on the Son. Hence none have life except believers. Or, to put it another way, all that have life are believers; therefore there can be no period of time between quickening and conversion.

2. EXPLANATION.

How can there be a logical succession without a chronological succession. A number of illustrations could be given to show that this is possible, even in the physical realm. One apt illustration is as follows. Imagine a tube extending from the Atlantic coast of the United States to the Pacific. Now imagine also that this tube is filled with an incompressible fluid. If pressure is exerted on this fluid on the Atlantic coast, it will be registered instantly on the Pacific. Yet, logically, the exertion of the pressure must precede the registering of it at the other end.

Then we give the following beautiful illustration of the simultaneousness of quickening and conversion. It is from Alvah Hovey, as given by A. H. Strong: "At the same time that God makes the photographic plate sensitive, He pours in the light of truth whereby the image of Christ is formed in the soul. Without the sensitizing of the plate, it would never fix the rays of light so as to retain the image. In the process of sensitizing, the plate is passive; under the influence of light, it is active. In both the sensitizing and the taking of the picture, the real agent is not the plate nor the light, but the photographer. The photographer cannot perform both operations at the same moment. God can. He gives the new affection, and at the same instant He secures its exercise in view of the truth."

3. OBJECTION ANSWERED.

To the foregoing position it may be objected that "**godly sorrow worketh repentance**," and that one dead in sin cannot have godly sorrow.

This is true. But godly sorrow works repentance instantaneously, and is synchronous with repentance. It is impossible to conceive properly of a man having godly sorrow without possessing also a changed mind or attitude towards sin. Thus godly sorrow, the same as quickening, logically precedes repentance, but neither of them precede it chronologically.

## Chapter 25 - REPENTANCE AND FAITH

In the last chapter we noticed that conversion is made up of repentance and faith. This brings us then in our study to the consideration of these.

### I. REPENTANCE CONSIDERED ALONE

#### 1. ORIGINAL WORDS.

These two words are “**metanoeo**” (corresponding noun form being “**metanoia**”) and “**metamelomai**” (the noun form of which does not occur in the New Testament). Only the former word is associated with salvation. The latter word is used in **Matthew 21:29** (in the case of the son that first refused to obey his father’s command to work in the vineyard, but “**afterward ... repented himself and went**” ); **Matthew 21:32; 27:3** (in the case of Judas); **Romans 11:29; II Corinthians 7:8, 10**; and **Hebrews 7:21**.

Concerning these two words, Thayer says: “*That ‘metanoeo’ is the fuller and nobler term, expressive of moral action and issues, is indicated not only by its derivation, but by the greater frequency of its use ...*”

#### 2. TWO KINDS OF REPENTANCE.

There is an *evangelical repentance* and there is also a *legal repentance*. Legal repentance comes about wholly through fear of the consequences of sin. This is the kind Judas experienced. Evangelical repentance is accompanied by godly sorrow and is wrought in the heart by the regenerating Spirit of God. It is evangelical repentance that we are considering in this chapter.

#### 3. THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF REPENTANCE.

##### (1) *Sin Admitted - Conviction.*

Man must see himself as unlike God and in rebellion against God. He must see the opposition between his condition and the holiness of God. He must see that God abhors his condition and state. The recognition of sin that

enters into repentance unto salvation is concerned primarily, not with the fact that sin brings punishment, but with the fact that sin offends God. There is, of course, a fear of the eternal consequences of sin; but this is not the primary thing.

This recognition of sin is conviction, and it constitutes the *intellectual element* in repentance.

(2) *Sin Abhorred - Contrition.*

Godly sorrow enters into repentance. When one sees himself as he appears before God he is brought to regret his sin and to abhor it. This is the emotional element in repentance.

(3) *Sin Abandoned - Conversion.*

Repentance is not complete until there is an inward abandoning of sin which leads to an outward change of conduct. This is the *voluntary or volitional element* in repentance. Thus repentance concerns the whole inner nature: *intellect, emotion, and will.*

#### 4. REPENTANCE IS INWARD.

While true repentance always manifests itself outwardly; yet repentance of itself is inward, according to the meaning of the original. The Scripture distinguishes between repentance and “**fruits worthy of repentance**” (**Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20**).

#### 5. REPENTANCE AND PENANCE CONTRASTED.

The Roman Catholic translation of the Bible (Douay Version) substitutes “*penance*” for “**repentance**” as a translation of “**metanoeo.**” Thus we read from the Douay Version: “*Do penance; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (**Matthew 3:2**); “*Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish*” (**Luke 13:5**); and “*Testifying both to Jews and Gentiles penance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*” (**Acts 20:21**). And of penance, the comment in the Douay Version on **Matthew 3:2** says: “*Which*

*word, according to the use of the scriptures, and the holy fathers, does not only signify repentance and amendment of life, but also punishing past sins by fasting, and such like penitential exercises.” Three things may be said concerning this comment:*

*(1) It is absolutely false in saying that the “punishing of past sins by fasting, and such like penitential exercises” is a part of the meaning of the Greek word.*

As already noted, the Greek word signifies an inward change. “True repentance consists of mental and spiritual emotions, and not of outward self-imposed chastisements. Even the pious life and devotion to God which follows are described not as repentance, but as fruits meet for repentance” (Boyce, Abstract of Systematic Theology, p. 384). “**Metanoeo**” is made of “**meta**,” meaning “after,” and “**noeo**,” meaning to perceive, to understand, to think upon, heed, ponder, consider.

*(2) It denies the sufficiency of Christ’s satisfaction for our sins, in plain contradiction of the Scripture (Cf. **Romans 4:7, 8; 10:4; Hebrews 10:14; I John 1:7**).*

Since Christ made a full satisfaction for our sins, there is no punishment for us to endure, except the natural consequences of sin. God chastens the believer when he sins, but He never punishes him either in this life or the life to come. Punishment is retributive, and is based on “**an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.**” Chastisement is corrective, and is based on fatherly love. Christ left us nothing to pay, and we can truthfully sing:

“Jesus paid it all;

All to Him I owe.

Sin had left a crimson stain;

He washed it white as snow.”

*(3) It implies that the temporal acts of the creature can atone for sin.*

The Bible knows nothing of such a teaching. It teaches that Christ alone could make an atonement. Even in eternity the souls in Hell will never be able to atone for sin; for that reason there is no end to their punishment. Surely, then, the song speaks the truth when it says:

*“Could my tears forever flow;  
Could my zeal no respite know;  
These for sin could not atone,  
Thou must save and thou alone.”*

## 6. REPENTANCE IS A GIFT OF GOD.

The three following passages prove this:

**“Him did God exalt with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins” (Acts 5:31).**

**“And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).**

**“The Lord’s servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth” (II Timothy 2:24, 25).**

The meaning of this is simply that repentance is wrought in man by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, as we have already noted.

## II. FAITH CONSIDERED ALONE

We have reference here to saving faith. Hence we note:

### 1. SAVING FAITH DEFINED.

Saving faith is trust in and reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ as one's personal Saviour and sin-bearer. And, since salvation includes sanctification as well as justification, saving faith brings about a commitment of self to Christ.

## 2. SAVING FAITH DISTINGUISHED FROM ITS COUNTERFEITS.

### (1) *Historical Belief.*

This is mere belief in the facts of revelation as matters of history, including belief in the existence of God and that there was a man called Jesus who claimed to be the Son of God. It can be readily seen that such belief has no saving value.

### (2) *Intellectual Assent.*

This goes a step farther, bringing mental acceptance of the things revealed of God and Jesus Christ. Thus one who believes in the existence of God comes to believe Him to be such a being as the Bible reveals Him to be, and one who believes that such a person as Jesus lived comes to believe that He was the Son of God and that He died as a sacrifice for sin. This is a step toward saving faith, but it is not such faith.

Campbellism teaches that saving faith is nothing more than the foregoing. It relies on such passages as **I John 4:15** and **5:1**. But these passages must be understood in the light of all other Scripture, and other Scripture certainly forbids that the belief spoken of in these passages should be understood as being mere intellectual assent to the deity of Christ. Saving faith is not merely of the mind (intellect), but of the heart (emotions). See **Romans 10:9, 10**. The belief spoken of in the above passages is such as is produced in the heart by an experimental knowledge of Christ's power.

Then two facts as to the circumstances under which these expressions were uttered throw light upon them.

A. The danger of professing belief in the deity of Christ was such in apostolic days that none would do so unless prompted by true faith in Him.

B. Christianity presented such a contrast to Judaism and Paganism that none would believe in the deity of Christ without true faith in Him. Those who had not this faith would regard Him as an imposter.

### 3. FAITH IS A GIFT OF GOD.

This is proved by the passages already quoted that designate repentance as a gift of God; for as we shall see, repentance and faith are inseparable graces. Each one, when appearing alone in the Scriptures, embraces the other; for, if this were not true, the passages which mention only the one or the other would teach that one may be saved without both repentance and faith.

This is proved by passages which teach that our coming to Christ and believing on Him are the result of the working of God's power. See **John 6:37, 65; Ephesians 1:19, 20**. This is further proved by the fact that faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (**Galatians 5:22**).

### 4. FAITH HAS NO MERIT IN ITSELF.

Faith is merely the channel through which God's justifying and sanctifying grace flows into the soul. Faith is no more meritorious than the act of receiving a gift is meritorious. Faith in no way is a substitute for our obedience to the law, nor does it bring about a lowering of the law so that we can meet its demands. Faith is once referred to as work in the Scripture (**John 6:29**), not that it is of the law, but only that man is actively engaged in its exercise. "As a gift of God and as the mere taking of undeserved mercy, it is expressly excluded from the category of works on the basis of which man may claim salvation (**Romans 3:28; 4:4, 5, 16**). It is not the act of the full soul bestowing, but the act of the empty soul receiving. Although this reception is prompted by a drawing of the heart toward God, inwrought by the Holy Spirit, this drawing of the heart is not yet a conscious and developed love: such love is the result of faith (**Galatians 5:6**)" (A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 469, 470).

### 5. FAITH IS NECESSARILY EXPRESSES ITSELF IN WORKS.



Faith is a dynamic principle. It gives rise to love; and, therefore, works (**Galatians 5:6**). Faith that does not express itself in works is a dead faith, which is just another way of saying that it is spurious or unreal (**James 2:17**).

## 6. FAITH IS DISTINGUISHABLE FROM HOPE.

Faith and hope are very much akin; but the two terms are not synonymous. Faith and hope differ in the following ways:

(1) *Faith is trust; hope is expectation.*

The difference here is narrow, but is such a difference as is common between various somewhat similar terms. Both faith and hope involve “*the idea of trust,*” but with the use of different prepositions (Boyce). We “*trust in*” as an act of faith. We “*trust for*” in hope.

(2) “*Faith is reliance upon something now present as known or believed, Hope is looking forward to something in the future*” (Boyce).

(3) *Christ is the object of faith; while salvation, freedom from sin, glorification, and Heaven are the objects of hope.*

(4) *Hope results from faith, and, therefore, cannot be faith.* See **Romans 5:2-6; 15:4-13; Galatians 5:5; Hebrews 11:1.**

## 7. THE GROUND OF FAITH

Christ, objectively revealed to the mind and heart is the ground of faith. This is implied throughout the Bible, and it is unmistakably taught in **Romans 10:11-17**. We read there that “**faith cometh by hearing,**” and we find also there the question (implying an impossibility): “**How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard.**” The Bible knows nothing, absolutely nothing, about a so-called *secret faith* that can exist apart from knowledge of Christ, such as some Hardshells teach.

In the Old Testament Christ was revealed, not only through types and shadows, but through prophets, such as Isaiah. And we are told plainly that the gospel was preached to Abraham and to Israel (**Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 4:2**).

### **III. REPENTANCE AND FAITH CONSIDERED TOGETHER**

Repentance and faith are inseparable synchronous graces. We have reference here, of course, to that repentance (signified by “**metanoeo**” and “**metnaoia**”) which is unto salvation, and not to the kind (signified by “**metamelomai**”) that Judas experienced.

That repentance and faith are synchronous or simultaneous is evident from the fact that when a man is quickened into life there can be no lapse of time before he repents, nor can there be any before he believes. Otherwise we would have the new nature in rebellion against God and in unbelief. Thus there can be no chronological order in repentance and faith.

Another thing which shows the inseparableness of repentance and faith is the fact that the Scripture often mentions only one of them as the means of salvation. Because of this fact we must think of each one, when used alone, as comprehending the other.

In repentance and faith, as we have already pointed out in another chapter, the will is brought to choose righteousness as an ultimate end.

## Chapter 26 - THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

*Justification is that instantaneous, everlasting, gracious, free, judicial act of God, whereby, on account of the merit of Christ's blood and righteousness, a repentant, believing sinner is freed from the penalty of the law, restored to God's favor, and considered as possessing the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; by virtue of all of which he receives adoption as a son.*

### I. THE AUTHOR OF JUSTIFICATION

God is the author of justification. Man has nothing to do with his justification, except to receive it through the faith that the Holy Spirit enables him to exercise. The Scripture declares: **"It is God who justifieth" (Romans 8:33)**. Again we read: **"Being justified freely by his (God's) grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."** (Romans 3:24).

Christ can be said to justify us only in the sense that He paid the redemptive price.

### II. THE CAUSE AND GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION DIFFERENTIATED

It is only in the courts of the land that "*cause*" and "*ground*" find acceptable use as synonyms. In a suit in the courts a *cause* of action means the same thing as a *ground* of action. Elsewhere they are not to be confused, and most especially are they not to be confused with respect to justification. Strictly speaking, the cause of an action is the agent, force, motive, or reason by which, or because of which, the action is effected or produced. Insofar as it is proper to speak of a mediate cause, the reference here is to the ultimate or originating cause. *Ground*, as used here means *foundation, basis, that upon which something rests for support*.

With these definitions before us we are prepared to observe that *the love of God*, giving rise to His grace and mercy, is the *cause* of our justification; while *the death of Christ and the atonement wrought thereby*

is the *ground* of our justification. That the love of God is the cause of our justification is made crystal clear in the two following passages:

**“But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us ... hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4, 6).**

**“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).**

But God could not consistently ground our salvation on His love, because love of itself could not consistently overlook our sinfulness. The justice of God, arising from His holiness, had to be satisfied. Thus it was necessary that love provide a righteous basis for our salvation. **Romans 3:25, 26** tells in beautiful and striking language how that basis was provided. Out of love, God sent Christ to die that He might save sinners and remain just. Christ was a **“propitiation.”** A propitiation is that which propitiates. To propitiate is to appease, conciliate. A beautiful picture of the appeasement and conciliation that takes place in justification is given us in **Psalm 85:10** - **“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.”** What is the ground of this reconciliation? The mere love, mercy, or grace of God? Nay. These must find a ground, a righteous basis, before they can become effective in man’s pardon; otherwise mercy would violate truth and the righteousness of God would be set aside. *The ground of this reconciliation is the propitiation or atonement made by Jesus Christ.* The only people who will take issue with this statement are those who deny that Christ rendered a proper, real, full, exact, and absolute satisfaction to retributive justice by suffering in full the penalty of the law that believing sinners deserve to suffer in Hell for their sins. Such people will find the ground in the sovereign love and mercy of God or in something done by the sinner.

### **III. THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION**

Faith in the blood of Christ is the means of justification. See **Acts 13:39; Romans 3:24, 25, 28; 5:1, 9; Galatians 2:16.** It is well to note from

these passages that the faith by which we are justified is not faith in the love, grace, and mercy of God; but faith in that which the love, mercy, and grace of God have provided, that is, the blood of Christ. This fact throws further light upon the foregoing discussion.

It is by faith that justification is applied and made experimental. It is thus that we come into the enjoyment of the benefits of Christ's atoning death.

Faith, as we have noted previously, has no merit in and of itself. It is not a full hand bestowing, but an empty hand receiving. Exercising faith is inward obedience. It is because of this fact that the Scripture alludes to "**the obedience of faith**" (**Romans 16:26**), obedience to the gospel (**Romans 10:16; II Thessalonians 1:8; I Peter 4:17**), "**obeying the truth**" (**I Peter 1:22**), and obeying "**from the heart that form of doctrine**" (**Romans 6:17**). But this is not meritorious obedience. It is as fully without merit as is the act of a beggar in eating food that has been given him.

Justification is by faith for the following reasons:

1. *That it might be by grace.* **Romans 4:16.**

2. *That boasting might be excluded.* **Romans 3:27.**

3. *Because by faith we are identified with Christ in the same manner that we were identified with Adam by the natural birth.* **Acts 13:39** - should read, "**in Him**" instead of "**by Him**"; **I Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 2:5, 6; 15:22; Colossians 3:3; I John 4:17.** "Union with Adam and with Christ is the ground of imputation. But the parallelism is incomplete. While the sin of Adam is imputed to us because it is ours, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us simply because of our union with him, not at all because of our personal righteousness. In the one case, character is taken into account; in the other, it is not. In sin, our demerits are included; in justification our merits are excluded" (H. B. Smith, *Presbyterian Review*, July, 1881).

4. *Because faith "worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6) and is the medium by which Christ dwells in our heart (Ephesians 3:17-19; Galatians 2:20) and by which we are progressively changed into the image*

*of Christ in our lives (Romans 1:17; II Corinthians 3:18); and thus we are prevented from “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4). “Now God has so constituted the soul that the affections, and likewise the conscience, are affected and controlled by faith; and the purity of the one and the integrity of the other, and the activity of both, depend upon what a man believes; this being true, no mind can avoid the conviction that the principle of FAITH, which Christ has laid at the foundation of the Christian system is, from the nature of things, the only principle through the operation of which man’s moral powers can be brought into happy, harmonious, and perfect activity” (J. B. Walker, *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, P. 177).*

There is no conflict between James and Paul on the matter of justification by faith. Paul used the Greek word “**dikaioo**” to mean “*to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be,*” while James used the same word to mean “*to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous or such as he ought to be.*” Paul says that Abraham was justified, in the sense that he uses the term, before circumcision (**Romans 4:9, 10**); while James says that Abraham was justified, in the sense he uses the term, when he offered Isaac. Reference to **Genesis 17** reveals that Abraham was circumcised a year before the birth of Isaac, which is recorded in **Genesis 21**. Isaac was approximately twenty-five years old at the time Abraham offered him. Thus it is seen that Paul and James were not talking about the same thing.

For other cases where the Greek word is used in the same sense in which James uses it, see **Matthew 11:9** and **I Timothy 3:16**. Moreover note that James affirmed with Paul that “**Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness**” (**James 2:23**).

#### **IV. THE NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION**

##### *1. It is Instantaneous.*

It is an act, and not a process. It occurs and is complete the moment the individual believes. It admits of no degrees or stages. The penitent Publican is said to have gone down to his house justified. He was justified completely

the moment he put his faith in the propitiatory work of Christ. The justification of the believer is always put in the past tense. There is not in all the Bible the slightest hint of a continuous process in justification.

### *2. It is Everlasting.*

When one is justified, he is justified for all eternity. justification can never be revoked or reversed. It is once for all time and eternity. For that reason God asks: “**Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect?**” (**Romans 8:33**). Christ paid a full ransom, and made a complete satisfaction for all believers; otherwise Christ would have to die again, or else the believer would come into condemnation for his future sins. But we read that Christ’s offering was once for all (**Hebrews 10:10**), and that the believer “**shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life.**” (**John 5:24**).

So far as the believer’s standing is concerned, he has already passed the judgment. He has stood trial, and has been fully and everlastingly acquitted. That Paul taught an everlasting, unchangeable justification is shown by the fact that he felt called on to defend his doctrine against the attacks of those who would contend that it gave license for sin. This is the indictment that is brought today against the doctrine we are setting forth.

Lastly, we read: “**By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified**” (**Hebrews 10:14**). It is true that it is the sanctified that are under consideration in this quotation, but it is applicable to the justified also; for the sanctified and the justified are one. If the sanctified are perfected forever, so are the justified. The perfection here is perfection of standing before God.

### *3. It is Gracious and Free.*

The sinner deserves nothing at the hands of God, except condemnation. Therefore justification is wholly of grace. It is everywhere thus set forth in the Scripture, except by James who used the secondary sense of the term. In the primary sense of the term, justification is never represented as being through works or obedience of man. See **Romans 3:20; 4:2-6; Titus 3:5**.

And, while justification is on the basis of Christ's meritorious and atoning work, yet it is free and unconstrained on the part of God, inasmuch as God was under no obligation to allow Christ to act as our substitute.

*4. It is judicial and Declarative Only.*

Justification, in its primary sense, is a forensic or law term. It is an act of the court of Heaven. It does not make the believer inwardly righteous or holy. It makes him righteous only as to his standing. Many endlessly confuse justification and sanctification. But they are not the same. Justification is presented as the opposite of condemnation; while sanctification is presented as the opposite of a sinful nature. See **Romans 5:18**.

## **V. THE BENEFITS OF JUSTIFICATION**

*1. Restoration to the Favor of God.*

Justification does not merely free a man from the penalty of the law; it makes him in God's sight as one who has never broken the law. Justification makes the believer as innocent before God in regard to his standing as Adam was before the fall.

*2. The Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ.*

The following Scriptures teach that Christ's righteousness is imputed or reckoned to us in justification: **Romans 3:22; 4:3-6; 10:4; Philippians 3:9**.

That the righteousness spoken of in these passages is the righteousness of Christ is proved by the fact that Christ is "**made unto us ... righteousness**" (**I Corinthians 1:30**) and we have that righteousness "**in**" Christ (**II Corinthians 5:21**). This is further proved by **Romans 5:13, 19**, where we are said to receive justification "**by the righteousness of one**" and to "**be made righteous**" "**by the obedience of one**," which "**one**" is certainly Jesus Christ. D. B. Ford comments very appropriately:

"Paul has nowhere used the precise phrase: God imputes to us the righteousness of Christ apart from works, but it amounts to the same thing



when he speaks of the righteousness of God which shall be ours through faith in Jesus Christ; when he asserts that we are justified gratuitously and by grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; that ‘**justification of life**’ is through the righteous act and obedience of the second Adam; that our faith in Christ, through which we are justified, is imputed to us for righteousness; that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; that he is made unto us righteousness; and that we become the righteousness of God in him” (*An American Commentary on the New Testament*).

In the passages given in the foregoing discussion it is plain that the righteousness of Christ equals the obedience of Christ. The key to the meaning of the obedience of Christ is given in **Philippians 2:8** and **Hebrews 5:8**. *It was obedience rendered in a state of humiliation*. It is objected by some that as a man, Jesus owed obedience to the law for Himself; therefore He could not obey it for us. It is true that Jesus, as a man, owed obedience to *the law as it respects man, but, as God, He did not owe obedience to the law as it respects man*. As God, Jesus owed obedience to the laws of righteousness as they respect an infinite being. Even God is not exempt from law. He cannot disobey law as it respects an infinite being (that is, He cannot do what is wrong for Him) and remain God. But God, being infinite and, therefore, independent, has rights and prerogatives that do not belong to finite, dependent man. For instance, man is commanded not to kill; but God can take life as it pleases Him, because He is the giver of life. Man is commanded not to judge, but God does judge. Man is forbidden to glory in himself, but glory belongs to God inherently.

Therefore, when Jesus brought deity into union with humanity in the incarnation, deity was voluntary and gratuitously made subject to the law of God for man. This was as truly vicarious and substitutionary as His death on the cross. And it was needed to make us positively righteous. It is not enough that we be pardoned, forgiven. That would, of itself, exempt us from Hell; but it would not entitle us to Heaven. To be entitled to Heaven, we must have the positive and perfect merit of Jesus Christ. **Hebrews 10:14**.

### 3. *Adoption as a Son.*

We read: “**God sent forth his son ... to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons**” (Galatians 4:4, 5). It is on the basis of this redemption that we are justified. Adoption is the climax of justification. Christ took our place; therefore, when we believe on Him, we take His place as a son. It is thus that we receive the right to become sons. Adoption is in order that we may be legal “**heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ**” (Romans 8:17), and that we may have a legal right to the inheritance “**incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven**” for us (I Peter 1:4). When we were justified we were already children of the Devil. We could not be unborn as such. Hence we had to be transferred from the Devil’s family to God’s family by adoption. We became sons experientially by regeneration; but legally by adoption. Regeneration and adoption are not the same.

#### *4. Freedom from the Law.*

The following passages state this benefit. **Romans 6:14; 7:4-6; 10:4; I Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 2:19; 5:18**. What do these passages mean? They must be understood, if understood rightly, in the light of New Testament teaching as a whole.

(1) There are senses in which the believer is under the law of God and of Christ.

A. He is under the law of Christ as to the proof of salvation in his life. **John 14:24; I John 2:4**.

B. He is under the law of God as the Spirit works out in him the righteousness of the law. **Romans 8:4**.

(2) There are senses in which the believer is not under law.

A. He is not under the law as to the penalty thereof. **Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:13**. Christ, by His death, having met the law’s demands in full for believers, ended the power of the law to condemn. For this reason the believer can never come again into condemnation and does not have his sins charged to him as deserving the penalty of the law. **John 5:24; Romans 4:7**,

**8; 8:1, 33, 34.** The believer cannot sin with absolute impunity, but God deals with him under grace as a son, and not under law. **I Corinthians 11:31, 32; Hebrews 12:7.**

B. He is not under the law as an external force compelling his obedience. He has the law written in his heart (**Hebrews 8:8-10; 10:16; II Corinthians 3:6**).

C. He is not under the law in the sense of having to win from the law a meritorious righteousness. He already has that in Christ through faith, as already noted.

D. He is not under the Mosaic law as a whole, nor any part of it as such, in any sense whatsoever. The Mosaic law was God's law for an earthly nation. As such it was an adjustment of God's original and perfect rule of righteousness. This is shown in the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus went back of some of the precepts of the Mosaic law, showing their limited scope. That the believer is not under the law of Moses is shown in **I Corinthians 9:21**. Christ's law is simply the perfect, eternal rule of righteousness in the hands of Christ.

##### *5. Peace with God.*

**Romans 5:1.** The believer has peace with God because of, and through knowledge of, all the foregoing benefits.

## Chapter 27 - THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

We have reference in this chapter to the sanctification of the believer. The application of the word to other things will be referred to only to throw light upon the sanctification of the believer.

### I. THE MEANING OF TERM

The noun “**sanctification**” is the translation of the Greek “**hagiasmos.**” The Greek, verb is “**hagiazō.**” The corresponding Hebrew verb is “**qadash.**” The Greek noun is used ten times in the New Testament. Five times it is translated “**sanctification,**” and five times it is translated “**holiness.**” The Greek verb is used twenty-nine times in the New Testament. Twenty-six times it is translated “**sanctify.**” Twice it is translated “**hallow.**” Once it occurs in the passive voice, and is translated “**be holy.**” “**Hagios**” is another Greek word derived from “**hagiazō,**” and is used both as an adjective and as a noun. As an adjective it occurs ninety-three times with “**pneuma**” (Spirit) to designate the Holy Spirit. In sixty-eight other cases it is used as an adjective, and is translated “**holy.**” As a noun, it is translated “**holiest**” twice; “**holiest of all**” once; “**Holy One**” four times; “**holy place**” three times; “**holy thing**” once; “**sanctuary**” three times; and “**saint**” or “**saints**” sixty-two times.

Thayer’s Lexicon defines “**hagiazō**” as meaning “to render or acknowledge to be venerable, to hallow, to separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate; to purify,” either externally - whether ceremonially (**I Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 9:13**) or by expiation (**Hebrews 10:10; 13:12**), or internally. The meaning of “**hagiasmos**” and “**hagios**” follow from the meaning of “**hagiazō,**” according to their proper use.

### II. THE BELIEVERS PAST SANCTIFICATION

There is a sense in which saved people have been sanctified already.

#### 1. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO IT.

**Acts 20:32; 26:18; I Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 9:14; I Peter 1:2.**

## 2. THE NATURE OF IT.

The past sanctification of the believer is a three-fold sanctification:

### (1) *Consecration.*

The believer has been consecrated or dedicated to the service of God. We have the type of this in the sanctification of the tabernacle and temple with their furnishings and equipment. See **Exodus 29:37; 30:25-29; 40:8-11; Leviticus 8:10, 11; Leviticus 21:23; I Kings 7:51; II Chronicles 2:4; 5:1; 29:19.**

Sanctification similar to that which is now under consideration may be seen in **Genesis 3:2; Joel 1:14; Jeremiah 1:5; John 10:36.** Sanctification in this sense is a formal and external setting apart for or separation unto God. There is no thought of inward holiness.

### (2) *Legal Cleansing.*

This is the kind of sanctification referred to in **I Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:10; 13:12.** In the eyes of the Old Testament law, the believer is holy; because Christ, by His death, has paid the penalty of the law, and, by His blood, has washed away all guilt (**I Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 3:13; Revelation 1:5; 7:14**).

### (3) *Moral Cleansing of the Soul.*

We have already, in another chapter, pointed out that regeneration removes all depravity from the soul, or spiritual nature of man; so that the only sin that remains in man is the sin of the fleshly nature, which is often referred to as the body. We believe this kind of sanctification is referred to in **II Thessalonians 2:13** and **I Peter 1:2**; also **I Corinthians 6:11.**

So far as the removal of the presence of sin from the soul is concerned, the believer has a perfect moral sanctification, as well as a perfect formal and legal sanctification. There remains in the believer, as we shall see, the need of further sanctification; but this further sanctification does not have to do with the removal of sin from the soul. The soul is made sinless in regeneration; and in this sense is perfectly sanctified.

### 3. HOW IT IS ACCOMPLISHED.

(1) *God, of course, is the Author of it.*

He is the author of everything good. He elected us to it. He purposed and planned it

(2) *The Holy Spirit is the Agent of God in the Accomplishment of it.*

**I Corinthians 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2.**

(3) *The Death of Christ is the Basis of the Holy Spirit's Work.*

See the passages given above under legal cleansing.

(4) *Faith is the Means.*

**Acts 26:18.** Faith is the means by which the soul is cleansed (**Acts 15:9; I Peter 1:22**).

(5) *The Word of God is a Secondary Means.*

This is true because “**belief cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ**” (**Romans 10:17**).

## **III. THE BELIEVER'S PRESENT SANCTIFICATION**

There is a sense in which the believer is being sanctified.

### 1. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO IT.

**John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:19-22; 15:16; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 2:11; 10:14; 12:14; I Peter 1:15.** We have listed here only passages where “**hagiasmos**,” “**hagiazō**,” or “**hagios**” appear in the original. There are many other passages which indirectly refer to the believer’s present sanctification.

## 2. HOW IT IS ACCOMPLISHED.

(1) *God is the Author of It.*

**John 17:17; I Thessalonians 5:23.**

(2) *The Holy Spirit is the Agent.*

**Romans 15:16.** The Holy Spirit accomplishes our present sanctification by leading (**Romans 8:14**), transforming (**Romans 12:2; II Corinthians 2:18**), strengthening (**Ephesians 3:16**), and making fruitful (**Galatians 5:22, 23**).

(3) *The Death of Christ is the Basis.*

The death of Christ provides the basis for all of the Holy Spirit’s Work.

(4) *The Word of God is the Instrument of the Spirit.*

**John 17:17.** This is proved by all passages which teach that the truth promotes obedience, prevents and cleanses from sin, makes us hate sin, and causes us to grow in grace. See **Psalm 119:9, 11, 34, 43, 44, 50, 93, 104; Hebrews 5:12-14; I Peter 2:2.**

(5) *Faith is the Chief Means.*

It is through faith that the instrumentality of the Word is made effective. Faith is at once the result of the sanctifying work of the Spirit and the chief means for His further sanctifying work.

(6) *Our Own Works Are Also A Means In Our Present Sanctification.*

**Romans 6:19.** As physical exercise is necessary to physical growth, so spiritual exercise is necessary to spiritual growth. Physical exercise develops an appetite for food, from which we receive nourishment that produces growth. Spiritual exercise develops an appetite for the Word of God, from which we receive spiritual nourishment that produces growth in grace.

*(7) Other Less Direct Means.*

Among other less direct means in our present sanctification may be named prayer, God's ordained ministry (**Ephesians 4:11,12**), church attendance and association with believers in church capacity, observance of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the keeping of the Lord's day, and the chastening and providences of God.

All of these things help toward our present sanctification, not because of any intrinsic virtue of their own, but only as, in one way or another, they bring us in contact with divine truth, enlighten our minds with regard to it, and bring us to a higher appreciation of it and fuller obedience to it. It is only in this way that baptism and the Lord's Supper contribute to our present sanctification. They are not grace-giving sacraments. The grace received through the ordinances is not received *ex opere operato* - from the mere act of observance.

3. THE NATURE OF IT.

It is "that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened" (Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 483). In spite of the quibbling arguments of Mr. Finney, the immanent preference of the will established in regeneration can be strengthened.

*(1) What It Is Not.*

*A. It is not an improvement of the flesh.*



Our present sanctification includes the body (**I Thessalonians 5:23**), but not so as to essentially alter the sinfulness of the flesh. The flesh always lusts against the Spirit (**Galatians 5:17**). Even in an aged and seasoned soldier of the cross, such as the Apostle Paul was, we see that the flesh was still unaltered (**Romans 7:14-24**). The body is included in that the soul is, by means of sanctification, given greater control over it; and thus it is kept back to some extent, from overt acts of sin. But its essential sinfulness is undiminished.

*B. It is not a gradual elimination of sin from the soul.*

As we have already noted, the soul is made sinless in regeneration and is united with the Holy Spirit. No sin remains in the soul therefore, to be eliminated by our present sanctification.

*(2) What It Is.*

*A. It is a progressive maintenance and strengthening of the soul in holiness.*

By means of our present sanctification the holy bent given to our faculties in the new birth is strengthened. The mind is taught. By beholding more fully the beauty of the Lord, we are constrained to love Him more fervently. Thus the will is strengthened (we get will power) and enabled to put forth more effective executive volition in the interest of its immanent preference. If this were not possible, then there is no conceivable way in which we could grow in grace.

In regeneration, the faculties of the soul are all set upon God in the fullness of the strength possessed at that time. But that strength can be increased. This is all beautifully set forth in **Ephesians 3:16-19**, which the student is urged to read at this point.

*B. It is wholly subjective.*

Our past sanctification is partly objective, but our present sanctification is wholly subjective.

*C. It is practical.*

Although it is inward, yet it manifests itself outwardly in practical Christian living.

*D. It is experimental.*

Our past sanctification may be only very dimly experiential at the time it occurs, but our present sanctification is definitely experiential. The believer feels and knows the working of the Spirit in his heart, strengthening him, transforming him from grace to grace (**II Corinthians 3:18**), moving him to prayer, Bible study, and other Christian exercises and activities. And this work of the Spirit in the believer is the source of his assurance. It is in this way that the Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God. **Romans 8:16.**

*E. It is always in the life.*

The new life never gains perfect control over the fleshly nature. This leads us to consider -

#### **IV. THE DOCTRINE OF SINLESS PERFECTION REFUTED**

A study of the Bible doctrine of sanctification is not complete without a consideration of the teaching that sinlessness is attainable in this life. We urge the following -

##### **1. OBJECTIONS TO THIS DOCTRINE.**

(1) *The Apostle Paul, whom God set forth as a human example for believers (I Timothy 1:16), and in whose life we are not sure that any fault may be seen, had not, even in his old age, attained sinless perfection.*

This is evident from **Romans 7:14-25**. It is absurd to refer this to Paul before regeneration. With the fourteenth verse there is a significant change from the past tense to the present. To make the verses beyond verse fourteen refer to Paul's life before regeneration is to make of them a grammatical

monstrosity. The latter part of verse twenty-five shows that the victory over sin through Jesus Christ does not come in this life. This is shown also in **Romans 8:23-25**. The victory comes only with the redemption of the body, which will take place in the resurrection.

Again, the language of **Romans 7:14-25** shows that it refers to a saved man. “*No unregenerate man can truly say, ‘I consent unto the law that it is good’; ‘To will is present with me’; ‘For I delight in the law of God after the inward man’; ‘So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God’*” (Pendleton, *Christian Doctrines*, P. 301).

The idea that in **Romans 7** we have the experience of Paul after having been saved but before he was sanctified, while in **Romans 8** we have his experience after having been sanctified, is also absurd. As we have pointed out, the eighth chapter of Romans no more teaches sinless perfection than the seventh chapter. In the eighth chapter Paul teaches that believers still groan under the sinfulness of the body and are waiting for its redemption (Verse **23**), being saved by hope (Verses **24, 25**). All talk about the believer, in his experience, getting out of the seventh chapter of Romans into the eighth is senseless. Every believer lives all his life in both chapters, for both chapters are but parts of one connected discourse. The “**therefore**” of verse **1**, chapter **8**, directs us back to the latter part of the seventh chapter for the basis of what is said in the eighth.

The epistle to the Romans was written before Paul’s trip to Rome. After having been taken to Rome, and while a prisoner there, he wrote some epistles. One of them is the epistle to the Philippians. In this epistle Paul still disclaims absolute perfection. He said that he did not consider himself as having been made perfect already. **Philippians 3:12**.

(2) *The model prayer given by Christ to His disciples implies continued sinfulness on the part of saved people.*

As is well known, Christ taught His disciples, in the model prayer, to confess their sins. Nor did He at any time or in any way insinuate or imply

that there would ever be a time when they could properly dispense with this confession of sin and petition for forgiveness.

(3) *The fact that all of God's children are chastened of him shows that all of them sin (Hebrews 12:5-8).*

**“If ye are without chastening, whereof all are made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Hebrews 12:8).** There can be no chastening without sin. God might deal with us in a providential way if we were perfect, but His dealings could not be called chastisement.

(4) *James Declares That All Sin.*

**“In many things we all stumble” (James 3:2).** This cannot be confined to teachers; but if it could, the principle would be the same.

(5) *John Declares That One Who Professes Sinlessness Is Deceived.*

**“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (I John 1:8).** “We” certainly refers to believers. And the present tense shows that the passage refers, not to a denial of former sin, but to a denial of present sin. And this passage tells us that professors of sinless perfection are self-deceived. They are self-deceived as to at least four things; viz.,

A. *The nature of God's law (the law of Christ - I Corinthians 9:21) for believers.*

Instead of viewing God's law for believers as a transcript of His holiness, a perfect standard of righteousness, they view it as a sliding scale that accommodates itself to our ability. *“This view reduces the debt to the debtors ability to pay, - a short and easy method of discharging obligations. I can leap over a church steeple, if I am only permitted to make a church steeple low enough; and I can touch the stars, if the stars will only come down to my hand” (Strong).*

B. *The scope of sin.*

They would have us believe that “*involuntary*” transgressions are not sins. John Wesley, one of the most prominent advocates of the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life, said: “*I believe a person filled with the love of God is still liable to involuntary transgressions. Such transgressions you may call sins, if you please; I do not.*”

Involuntary means: 1. *Contrary to one’s will or wish.* 2. *Not under the control of will.* As applied to moral acts, the word must have the first meaning. The second meaning applies only to such things as digestion, the beating of the heart, and other natural functions of the body. And the meaning of will or wish in the first definition must be understood in the narrow sense of the normal tenor of the will. In the broad sense one never acts contrary to his will or wish, except when overcome by physical force. No saved person normally wills to get angry and speak cutting words. But, under serious provocation, one loses his temper and says things he should not have said. These are involuntary acts, according to the only sense in which involuntary can be applied to moral acts. Therefore, according to John Wesley and other perfectionists, these acts are not sins. The same things may be applied to David’s murder of Uriah, and his adultery with Bathsheba.

### *C. The power of the human will.*

To affirm that the human will, even normally, can put forth, at every moment, *executive volitions* fully conformed to its *immanent preference* (*ultimate end*) and the perfect will of God is to deny the conflict that exists always between the two natures of believers, as set forth in **Galatians 5:17**. Charles G. Finney does this. In his view, indwelling sin is merely a sinful choice. Now in regeneration, this sinful choice is reversed. Thus there is no indwelling sin left. See pp. 254,294. Then he says: “When an end is chosen, that choice confines all volition to securing its accomplishment, and for the time being, and until another end is chosen ... it is impossible for the will to put forth any volition inconsistent with the present choice” (p. 235). This is glaringly false, both psychologically and scripturally, as is about nine-tenths of all that is found in Mr. Finney’s book. It represents a miserable effort to effect a compromise between Calvinism and Arminianism. As said before, special attention is being given to Mr. Finney’s theology because his book

has been urgently and widely recommended to young Baptist preachers, especially those who are Calvinists.

*D. Their own salvation.*

When John says, “**the truth is not in us,**” he refers not to abstract truth, but to the “truth of the gospel, bringing the light of God into the soul, and so revealing sins as the sunlight does the dust” (Sawtelle). “The truth is to be taken objectively as the divine truth in Christ, the absolute principle of life from God received into the heart” (Lange). This meaning is confirmed by verse 10, which says: “**If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him (God) a liar, and His word is not in us.**” This passage reveals the truth of verse “The persons supposed to say this are viewed at the point when they should be offering their confessions confession of sins beginning in the past and reaching down to the present; hence, the perfect tense” (Sawtelle). And the expressions, “**the truth is not in us**” and “**his word is not in us,**” deny the Christian character of every professor of sinless perfection. According to these passages, all of them are lost.

## 2. SCRIPTURES EXPLAINED.

We take up the following Scripture passages which are advanced by sinless perfectionists to prove their theory.

(1) *The passages that speak of the believer as being “perfect.”*

We refer here to such passages as **Luke 6:40; I Corinthians 2:6; II Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:11; Philippians 3:15; Colossians 4:12; II Timothy 3:17.**

The perfection of these passages is not absolute. It is only relative perfection. Sometimes the word “**perfect**” refers only to Christian maturity in contrast with the weakness of babes in Christ. Sometimes it means only that those whom it describes are free from any grievous fault. Thus we are told that “**Noah was a righteous man, and perfect**” (**Genesis 6:9**), even though he got drunk (**Genesis 9:21**). And thus it is said that Job “**was perfect and upright**” (**Job 1:1**).

The use of the word “**perfect**” in **Philippians 3:15** throws interesting and instructive light on its usual meaning in Scripture. In verse **12**, as we have already noted, Paul disclaims perfection. Then in verse **15** he addresses an exhortation to “**as many as are perfect.**” It is quite evident, then, that in verse **12** he has reference to absolute perfection, while in verse **15** he alludes to those who are relatively perfect or mature. And he exhorts these to be “**thus minded.**” By this he means that they are to disclaim absolute perfection, as he did, and press forward to higher things. Thus we see that “**perfect,**” in the light of the usual meaning of the term in Scripture, when applied to believers, requires that believers disclaim absolute perfection and yet press on to higher things. The individual that professes sinless perfection and he who is not pressing on are not “**perfect.**”

**(2) Matthew 5:48 - “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”**

In this passage Jesus set for His disciples the ideal of absolute perfection. He could have set nothing less than this without condoning and encouraging sin. But there is nothing here or elsewhere to imply that the followers of Christ will ever reach this ideal in the flesh. In fact, it is impious to affirm that they do reach this ideal; for the perfection held out is the perfection of God Himself.

**(3) I Thessalonians 5:23 - “And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

This passage must be understood in the light of Paul’s own experience, and in the light of Scripture as a whole. If Paul prayed for the complete sanctification of the Thessalonians in this life, then he prayed for something for them that he himself had not experienced, or else he later lost his complete sanctification; for when he wrote to the Romans much later, as we have noted, he did not profess sinlessness.

The sanctification that Paul prayed for God to work in the Thessalonians was indeed complete sanctification, as evidenced by the

Greek “**hototeles**”; but he does not indicate that it was to be fulfilled in this life. Scripture very definitely condemns the notion that he expected it to be fulfilled in this life. And the mention of the coming of Christ suggests that he looked forward to this time as the time when His prayer was to have a full answer. Paul prayed for the carrying on of progressive sanctification, just as Christ prayed for the same for His disciples (**John 17:17**), which progressive sanctification would, at the second coming of Christ, issue in complete sanctification.

**(4) I John 2:4 - “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”**

Along with this passage we may class other similar passages such as **John 14:23; Romans 8:12; I John 1:6.**

These passages have reference to the normal tenor of the Christian life. They cannot be held to teach that one who is saved keeps the commandments of God perfectly at every moment, because other passages deny this.

The Mississippi River affords an excellent illustration of the Christian life. If one is asked which way the Mississippi River flows, he will answer that it flows southward. But the fact of the matter is, this river sometimes flows in a northerly direction. But, despite this fact, we go on saying that it flows southward. We speak thus because we view the river as a whole. We see the main trend of the river. Thus it is with the Christian life. When it is viewed as a whole, or as to its main trend, it is seen to be a life of righteousness. But the current as to its main trend is not as swift near the edges as it is in the center. And it will not always keep its usual direction. It will strike obstructions that will turn it aside temporarily, but always it will again assume its normal course by and by.

**(5) I John 1:7 - “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”**

Some have the idea that this passage means that the blood of Jesus Christ renders us sinless as to state. But not so. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us only as to our standing before God. This passage has reference



to justification and legal sanctification, but not to progressive, practical sanctification.

The need for the constant cleansing of recurring defilement was taught by Jesus when He washed the disciples' feet. He said: "**He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit**" (John 13:10). The remainder of this passage, "**and ye are clean, but not all,**" which is explained in the next verse as meaning "**Ye are not all clean,**" and as referring to Judas, shows that Jesus was drawing an analogy between physical cleansing and spiritual cleansing. Just as one who had bathed the body would not need to bathe it again, but would need to wash away the dust from the feet; so one who has been bathed in Christ's blood will not need that bath again, but, nevertheless, he will be in daily need of the cleansing away of the defilement that attaches itself to him in his contact with the world. He "**is clean every whit**" as to his standing before God, but in need of daily confession and forgiveness that he may maintain fellowship with God.

(6) **I John 3:9 - "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his (God's) seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."**

Concerning this passage we have the following to say:

*A. It refers to the actual standard of Christian living, and not to a mere ideal standard.*

The passage speaks of what the Christian really is in conduct, and not merely of what he ought to be. This is evident from the next verse, which says. "**In this (that is, in this inability to sin) the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil.**"

*B. It refers to the whole man, and not merely to the new nature.*

It is evident that the "**seed**" in this passage refers to the new nature. The Greek here is "**sperma.**" It is used forty-four times in the New Testament. In forty-one of the forty-four instances it means, not seed for planting, but

progeny, offsprings. When the Word of God is called “seed” the Greek has not “sperma,” but “spora” or “sporos.” See **Luke 8.11; I Peter 1:23.**

Another weighty objection to the view that “seed” here represents the Word of God and the “whosoever” the new nature, is that it is not the Word of God that makes it impossible for the new nature to sin. It is the quality of the new nature that makes this impossible. If the new nature were sinful, then the Word of God would no more prevent its sinning than the Word of God prevents the flesh from sinning.

Thayer makes “seed” in this passage refer to the divine energy of the Holy Spirit operating in the soul, by which we are regenerated. But this is a purely arbitrary interpretation. We have no reason to believe that either the Holy Spirit or His energy is ever referred to as “sperma.”

Therefore, taking the “seed” to refer to the new nature, we necessarily interpret “whosoever” as referring to the whole man; for it is “he,” the whole man, in whom the “seed,” the new nature, abides, that cannot sin.

*C. It affirms, not that a regenerated person cannot commit a single sin, but that he cannot follow a continuous course of sin; he cannot live in sin.*

We adopt this interpretation of this passage for the following reasons:

(a) It is the only view that is in harmony with the context. It is manifest from the context, as already remarked, that John was speaking of that which is outward and actual, something that makes a manifest difference in and of itself. Then, too, this passage evidently means the same as verses six and eight, and, if possible, they are less favorable to the other interpretations.

(b) While it is true that the whole man is not born of God, yet in such general passages as the one under consideration the Scripture makes no distinction between the two natures of the believer; but loosely refers to the man as a whole. The Scripture says: “**Except ONE be born anew,**” and not “*except one have a new life born within him,*” “**if any man is in Christ, HE is a new creature,**” not “*he has a new creature in him;*” “**hath quickened**

**US with Christ**” not *“hath quickened a new life within us,”* **“he brought us forth by the word of truth,”** not *“he brought forth something within us by the word of truth.”*

(c) It is the only view that takes account of the present infinitive **“sin”** (Greek - **“hamartanein”**) in the latter part of the passage. The present infinitive always signifies durative, linear, progressive action-action in its continuance. Because of this meaning of the Greek infinitive, Weymouth translates the passage: *“No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin. A God-given germ of life remains in him and he cannot habitually sin.”* And Sawtelle explains **“doeth no sin”** and **“cannot sin”** as meaning; *“Does not do it as the law of his life, as the ideal tendency of his being; does not belong to the sin sphere.”*

D. *Let sinless perfectionists note the following facts about this passage:*

(a) Its affirmation applies to all saved people; not just to some that have reached a supposed high plane of living. Thus this passage kills the *“second-blessing” theory*. This passage is talking about what the believer is by virtue of regeneration; not what he is by virtue of a supposed “second work of grace.”

(b) The passage affirms that the character referred to cannot sin. Thus, according to their own theory, they would have to interpret the passage as teaching that one who has attained sinlessness can never lapse back into sin. This they will not admit. Thus they show that their only interest in this passage is to bolster up their ignorant, senseless heresy.

## **V. FRUITS OF PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION**

We think it well here to list four things which J. M. Pendleton, in “Christian Doctrines,” gives as evidences or fruits of the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit in our progressive sanctification.

“1. A DEEP SENSE OF UNWORTHINESS.”

No person in whom the Holy Spirit has done any considerable work has any disposition to boast of his goodness. For examples of the sense of unworthiness on the part of God's saints see **Job 38:1, 2; 40:4; 42:5, 6; Ephesians 3:8; Isaiah 6**. Also **Philippians 3:12-15**.

“2. AN INCREASING HATRED OF SIN.”

No saved person loves sin; that is, love of sin is not the dominant affection of his life. The sins he commits are not the result of a normally dominating love of sin, but of an occasional rising up of the flesh or of the constant friction between the flesh and the spirit.

“3. A GROWING INTEREST IN THE MEANS OF GRACE.”

The more the Holy Spirit works in one the more he appreciates the Word of God, prayer, worship, and the like; and the more he avails himself of the benefits of these.

“4. AN INCREASING LOVE OF HEAVENLY THINGS.”

This love replaces the former love for sin; and causes the child of God to seek those things which are above.

All of these fruits of the sanctifying process prevent the fact that one cannot attain sinlessness in this life from encouraging sin. The presence of sin in the life of the Christian affords him no consolation. Instead it affords him grief. He would fain be free of his earthly weight and soar upward that his soul might bask itself in the sunlight of righteousness. Every saved person can say with Paul: “**Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?**” (**Romans 7:24**). He wishes that he might be sinless; but is unwilling to wrest the Scripture and practice self-deception in order to fancy that he is sinless. His very desire for sinlessness prevents his practicing hypocrisy and perpetrating a sham, as all sinless perfectionists do.

## Chapter 28 - THE TENSES OF SALVATION

Salvation is a very broad term. C. I. Scofield, in his comment on **Romans 1:16**, says very aptly: “The Hebrew and Greek words for salvation imply the ideas of *deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness*. Salvation is the great inclusive word of the Gospel, gathering into itself all the redemptive acts and processes: as *justification, redemption, grace, propitiation, imputation, forgiveness, sanctification, and glorification*.”

Salvation, therefore, in its broad sense, has to do with both the soul and the body, with the present life as well as with future life. It has reference, not only to the remission of sin’s penalty and the removal of its guilt, but also to the conquering of the power of sin and to the final removal of the presence of sin from the body. It is only by recognizing this that one can grasp the full sweep of the Bible doctrine of salvation. And it is only by being able to classify each passage dealing with salvation on the basis of the foregoing facts that one can avoid the confusion that exists in the mind of the average believer. We can best accomplish this end by noting that salvation is spoken of in three tenses, and in carefully considering each tense. All three tenses are roughly summed up in **II Corinthians 1:10**: “**Who delivered us** (*past tense*) **from so great a death, and doth deliver** (*present tense*): **in whom we trust that he will** (*future tense*) **yet deliver us.**”

### I. THE PAST TENSE OF SALVATION

We have been saved from the PENALTY of sin.

Note the following passages:

“**Thy faith hath saved thee**” (**Luke 7:50**). “**By grace have ye been saved through faith**” (**Ephesians 2:8**). “... **who saved us and called us with a holy calling**” (**II Timothy 1:9**). “... **according to his mercy he saved us**” (**Titus 3:5**).

All of these passages, and many more like them, speak of salvation as a work finished in the past. This tense of salvation is coincident with the

believer's past sanctification, as considered in the former chapter. It has to do (1) with the soul; (2) with the remission of sin's penalty, the removal of guilt, and even the removal of sin's presence from the soul.

In this sense the salvation of the believer is complete. As we have said of justification, so we may say of this tense of salvation: it is an act, and not a process. It occurs and is complete the moment the individual believes. It admits of no degrees nor stages.

It is under this tense of salvation that we are to classify the passages that speak of the believer as possessing eternal life now. See **John 5:24; John 6:47; 17:2, 3; I John 3:13; 5:11, 13**. This means simply, as expressed in **John 5:24**, that the believer has passed from under all danger of condemnation and the power of the second death.

## **II. THE PRESENT TENSE OF SALVATION**

We are being saved from the POWER of sin.

**“The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved (marg., are being saved) it is the power of God” (I Corinthians 1:18).**

The Greek participle in the above passage is in the present tense, and denotes “those being saved, the act ... being in progress, not completed” (E. P. Gould).

It is with reference to the present tense of salvation that **Philippians 2:12** speaks when it says: **“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”** The meaning of this passage is that the Philippian believers were to make effective in their lives the new life that God had implanted in their hearts.

There are other passages in which salvation is not mentioned, which, nevertheless, refer to the present process of salvation; such as **Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:19, 20; II Corinthians 3:18**.

In the present tense of salvation believers are being saved through the work of the indwelling Spirit from the power of sin to hinder the new life. It is thus equivalent to progressive sanctification. It has to do not with the soul, nor with the body, but with the life.

### **III. THE FUTURE TENSE OF SALVATION**

We shall be saved from the PRESENCE of sin.

In the following passages salvation is spoken of as something yet future. **Romans 5:9, 10; 8:24; 13:11; I Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:13, 14; I Thessalonians 5:8; Hebrews 10:36; I Peter 1:5; I John 3:2, 3.**

Paul tells us in **Romans 8:23** what this future salvation is in the main. It is “**the redemption of our body,**” by which he means the application of redemption to the believer’s body. This will take place in the resurrection of those who sleep in Christ (**I Corinthians 15:52-56; I Thessalonians 4.16**) and in the rapture of those who are alive at Christ’s coming in the air (**I Thessalonians 4:17**). It is only then that the regenerated spirit will enter into the full fruition of salvation. Thus we read that the spirit is to be saved “in the day of the Lord Jesus” (**I Corinthians 5:5**). This tense of salvation has to do mainly with the body and the presence of sin in the body.

It is under this head that we are to classify all the passages that speak of eternal life as something the believer will receive in the future. See **Matthew 25:46; Mark 10:30; Titus 1:2; 3:7.**

Thus we have the beautiful harmony that exists between all the passages that touch on the subject of salvation. There is no conflict between these passages, because they refer to different phases of salvation. It is absurd and heretical for any man to take one set out of the three, no matter which set he takes, and seek to deny or nullify one or the other or both of the two remaining sets. The way of truth is to take all of them rightly divided.

Let it be remarked in closing that salvation in all its tenses and phases is of the Lord. Paul gives us God’s method of work in salvation from beginning to end in **Philippians 1:6** and **2:13**. He begins the work of salvation and He

carries it on to its consummation. All along the line He works in us “**both to will and to do His good pleasure.**” Moreover it is all of grace through faith. “**For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith**” (Romans 1:17).



## Chapter 29 - THE PERSEVERANCE AND PRESERVATION OF THE SAVED

The perseverance and preservation of the saved are twin Bible doctrines. God has joined them inseparably in His infallible Word. Let no man put them asunder.

Some have erred in presenting the preservation (safety, security) of the saved as if it were independent of perseverance. Such a presentation tends toward antinomianism. It also tends to represent salvation as physical or mechanical, rather moral and spiritual accomplishment. It furnishes the Arminian with ammunition. It teaches only a half truth. It is not calculated to make saints as considerate as they ought to be walk. Inspired writers avoided this extreme and its dire results by combining both the human and divine phases of salvation. They taught that salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end. But they also taught that God saves men, not by mechanical law, nor irrespective of their response to Him; but in full harmony with their nature as voluntary creatures, by requiring them to obey His will and working in them in such a way as to move their will and elicit their cooperation with Him as He fits them for His presence. Thus He is glorified in them in both time and eternity. Thereby grace is prevented from being a cloak of lasciviousness.

The framers of the New Hampshire Declaration of faith were wise and happy indeed in their statement on this matter, which is as follows: *“We believe that such only are real believers as endure to the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark that distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”*

The statement of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith is also eminently worthy of note: *“Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace...but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved ...”*

Note that both of these statements emphasize perseverance as well as preservation. We are in perfect harmony with these historic statements of Baptist and Bible faith; and while in our elaboration of the subject we shall have occasion to discuss things not mentioned in these statements, we shall not be required in stating our convictions freely and fully to say anything contrary to them.

## **1. PERSEVERANCE REQUIRED**

We believe God in His Word puts upon believers the responsibility of persevering in faith and righteousness. We cite the following passages in proof of this:

**“If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye any disciples indeed” (John 8:31).**

**“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me ... If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:4, 6).**

**“... continue ye in my love” (John 15:9).**

**“Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord” (Acts 11:23).**

**“Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).**

**“Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but**

toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off” (Romans 11:19-22).

“... he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 10:22),

“... the gospel ... by which ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain” (I Corinthians 15:1-2). To believe in vain is to have only intellectual faith.

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel ...” (Colossians 1:21-23).

“Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised); ... For if we sin wilfully (sin as the law of our lives, live under the power of sin) after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin” (Hebrews 10:23, 26).

“Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:14, 15).

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Revelation 2:7)

“He that overcometh shall not be death” (Revelation 2:11).

Many and varied are the attempts that are made to explain away the evident meaning of these passages, but all such attempts are futile. They defy all impractical theorists, an advocates of preservation as a coldly abstract logical deduction, in teaching that none will reach the final abode of God’s saints except those who abide in Christ, cleave unto the lord, continue in the faith and the goodness of God, endure to the end, keep in memory the gospel,

follow holiness, and overcome. This we believe as strongly as did Arminius or any of his followers; for it is the indisputable truth.

## II. PERSEVERANCE ASSURED

But this does not mean that any whom God saves will be lost. Nay, verily; the Scripture is just as emphatic in declaring that all true believers all the regenerated, will persevere.

Note the following passages:

**“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith” (I John 5:4).**

**“No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin A God-given germ of life remains in him and he cannot habitually sin” (I John 3:9 - Weymouth’s translation). [\[42\]](#)**

If escape from the second death, and the privilege of eating of the tree of life are for overcomers, then these things are for all whom God regenerates. A regenerated person cannot sin as “the law of his life, as the ideal tendency of his being; does not belong to the sin sphere” (Sawtelle). Thus a regenerated person cannot go back into sin, but is certain to persevere to the end; because God’s seed (“the divine principle of life” - Vincent) perpetually abides in him.

This does not mean that the child of God cannot back - slide temporarily and fall into much sin; but it does mean that he will not again live permanently in sin. David and Peter are instances in point here.

## III. PERSEVERANCE ACCOMPLISHED

Perseverance is brought about by the power of God. This is a part of the work of salvation, and ‘**salvation is of the lord**’ (Jonah 2:9).

It is here that our discussion of perseverance merges with preservation. God’s children persevere because He preserves them. Lees note how God

does this:

1. *By His Spirit.*

**“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).** The Spirit in our hearts keeps us in fellowship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is ... faith” (Galatians 5:22).**

**“... in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased Possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13, 14).**

**“... he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).** This good work is sanctification begun in regeneration. God begins it and will finish it. He does this through the working of His Spirit.

**“... it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).**

God not only, through the spirit, maintains our faith but he also works in us to cause us to obey His will.

2. *Through His Word.*

It is for this reason that He gave the commands and warnings already noted. Other portions of the Word especially adapted to eliciting the saints' perseverance in holy living are as follows:

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).**

**“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Romans 6:12).**

**“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Romans 8:13).**

**“... deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (I Corinthians 5:5).** If God let us alone and did not, in His own ways, subdue the flesh, then the spirit would not be saved. In other words, we should be lost.

**“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh ... And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16, 24, 25).**

**“... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).** This was addressed to saved people, and is an exhortation to voluntarily cooperate with God in saving us.

**“... if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:11, 12).**

**“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world ...” (Titus 2:11, 12).**

**“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead” (James 2:20).**

**“And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue ... knowledge ... temperance ... patience ... godliness ... brotherly kindness ... charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our**

**Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was once purged from his old sins [the apostle argues here from one's own profession]. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall ..."** (II Peter 1:5-10).

**"He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"** (I John 2:4).

**"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"** (I John 2:15).

**"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure"** (I John 3:3). That is, the man on with the hope of likeness with Christ in the resurrection will carry on, as God works in him, a process of purification, fighting, fighting back against the motions of sin in his body.

**"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him"** (I John 3:15).

That these commands and warnings do not imply an absolute possibility of believers falling away from Christ is proved by a parallel case. In **Acts 27:22-24** we have account of God's revelation to Paul enroute to Rome. We read:

**"And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."**

But a little later, when the storm had grown worse, and the shipmen were about to desert the ship, we read:

**"Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved"** (Acts 27:31).

Was it actually possible that any on the ship would be lost? He who says so, blasphemes God; for he says that it is possible for God to lie. God said there should be no loss of any man's life. This had to prove true, because it was the word of the God who cannot lie. But Paul told the centurion and the soldiers that this could be fulfilled only by the shipmen staying in the ship. **AND THEY STAYED.** God used that warning to accomplish His predetermined will.

So it is with warnings about losing our faith. They do not imply an actual possibility of it, for God that cannot lie has declared that He will glorify all He justifies. These warnings are God's objective means of accomplishing the very thing He has determined. From a human standpoint, falling away from Christ is possible, but God, will not permit it. He uses His Word to elicit our voluntary perseverance. Thus He deals with us as personal beings, and not as machines or inanimate objects.

### *3. Through the Intercessory Work of Christ.*

In addition to all the means already mentioned, God also preserves and keeps us through the intercessory work of our great High Priest. While here on earth, He prayed:

**“Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*” (John 17:11).**

And now **“he is able to save them to the uttermost (to the last one, absolutely, completely), that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).** God always hears Jesus when He prays (**John 11:41, 42**).

### *4. On the Basis of Christ's Atoning Work.*

Note the following passages:

**“Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Romans 4:7, 8).**



**“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4).**

**“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:33, 34).**

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ...” (Galatians 3:13).**

**“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).**

These passages require little comment. They teach very clearly that Christ fully satisfied the law for us and that the law, therefore, now has no power to condemn us. We are under it no longer with respect to our standing before God. Christ took our place on the cross. We now take His place in our standing before God, **“that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world” (I John 4:17).**

#### *5. Under the New Covenant.*

Having passed from under law, we are now under grace and the new covenant (**Hebrews 8:6-12; 10:16-22; Jeremiah 32:40**), in which God says, **“I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; ... their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”** and **“I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.”**

#### *6. Through His Dealing With Us As His Children.*

**“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (I Corinthians 11:32).**

**“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Hebrews 12:6).**

This means that, although God does not deal with the believer under the law, does not mete out legal punishment to him; yet He does not let him go on in sin. He chastens him as a son, and thus preserves him that he should not come under the condemnation of the world.

*7. In Execution of His Eternal Purpose.*

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also foreordained *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren: and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8:29, 30).**

We do not need here to enter into a discussion of the ground of our election, since we have done that in a previous chapter. No matter what that was, the above passage unmistakably informs us that those whom God saves He knew beforehand, even in eternity, because He was infinite in knowledge in the beginning. Then all that He knew as His own, as those whom He would save, He foreordained, called, justified, and glorified in His purpose. That is, He determined that they should be called, justified, and glorified. Thus all He justifies He will glorify. That obliges Him to maintain their faith, for there can be no justification without faith.

Because of God’s eternal purpose we have the following guarantees of our perseverance and preservation:

**“Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (I Peter 1:5).**

**“... we are more than conqueror through him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).**

**“We (the saved) are not of them (false professors) who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:39).**

**“For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever ...” (Psalm 37:28).**

**“Whosoever drinketh (the Greek means ‘once for all’ - Robertson) of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst (never need to be saved again); but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).**

**“For the gifts and calling of God are not repented of” (Romans 11:29).** This means that He never changes His mind and takes back the gift of salvation or revokes the calling that brings us to Him. Note **Romans 8:30** and **II Timothy 1:9** for meaning of calling.

**“... after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13,14).** This sealing is nothing less than the abiding and inseparable presence of the Spirit in the heart of the believer, by which the believer is constrained to persevere in faith and righteousness.

**“For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14).** All the saved are sanctified in the sense of this passage. It means that they have an eternally perfect standing before God on the basis of Christ’s death. This means that Christ suffered for all our sins up to the very end of our lives. God, having laid them on His Son, cannot now punish us for them.

**“... him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).**

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to *his* purpose” (Romans 8:28).** Since all things work for our good, nothing can bring about our condemnation.

**“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish” (John 10:27, 28).** These are all positive statements. There are no ifs in the passage.

## IV. OPPOSING ARGUMENTS ANSWERED

The following passages and cases may be cited as disproving what we have said about perseverance and preservation:

### 1. I Corinthians 3:12-15.

Some may urge this passage against our position as to the perseverance of the saints, taking it to teach that a believer can so live as to have no reward in Heaven. This passage teaches no such thing. The case is hypothetical. It shows what would take place if a believer should so live as to lose all reward. It does not affirm that this will be true of any believer. And in the light of **I John 5:4** and **3:9**, as well as other passages, we are not justified in concluding that such can be true.

### 2. CERTAIN KNOWN CASES.

Some people will argue that a saved person can lose his salvation because of certain ones known to them who, they believe, were saved and then went back into sin permanently, even sinking lower in sin than they had ever been. Our reply to this argument is: “**Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar**” (**Romans 3:4** - translation by A. T. Robertson). God has said that all that are born of Him overcome the world. **I John 5:4**. He has said that those who are born again cannot “go on sinning” (**I John 3:9**). He has said they cannot perish and that nothing can separate them from His love. **John 10:27, 28; Romans 8:35-39**. Shall we believe God or man?

All such cases as are now being considered are decisively disposed of by **Hebrews 3:14**, which reads: “**For we are become** (Greek perfect tense, should be ‘have become’ - Robertson) **partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.**” If we don’t, it proves that we were not made partakers of Christ, were not saved, in the beginning.

### 3. FALLEN ANGELS AND ADAM.

Certain angels and Adam fell from their righteous estate and were involved in condemnation, but this does not prove that the saved today can do

likewise. Note these contrasts between fallen angels and Adam on the one hand and those saved through Christ on the other hand:

(1) Angels and Adam fell under law, but the saved are under grace. **Romans 6:14.**

(2) God had not elected and predestinated them to stand, but He has elected and predestinated the saved to ultimate glorification. **Romans 8:29, 30.**

(3) God had not said that either angels or Adam would overcome the world, but He has said this of the saved. **I John 5:4.**

(4) Neither angels nor Adam had promises that they would be kept and that they would not perish, but the saved have such promises. **I Peter 1:5; John 10:28.**

(5) Neither angels nor Adam were sealed by the Holy Spirit, but believers are. **Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:25.**

(6) Neither stood on the basis of Christ's atoning death.

#### 4. THE JEWS

The Jews fell as a nation and not as individuals. They fell under law and not under grace. They fell from national privileges and not from salvation. Hence their case, like that of angels and Adam, proves nothing concerning the matter under consideration.

#### 5. MOSES.

**Deuteronomy 42:48-52.** Because of sin, Moses was not permitted to enter Canaan, but that he did not lose his salvation is proved by his appearance on the mount of transfiguration with Elijah and Christ. **Matthew 17:3.**

#### 6. KING SAUL.

We must interpret Scripture by Scripture to get the truth. In the light of New Testament teaching that every regenerated soul will overcome the world as a result of God's preservation we must deny that Saul was ever saved, though it is said of him that "**God gave him another heart**" (**I Samuel 10:9**). Scripture binds us to understand from this that God gave him only new intentions and impulses; not a new heart in the sense of regeneration.

#### 7. DAVID.

**Psalm 51:11, 12.** In this passage David prayed, "**Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.**" This was due to the fact that the Holy Spirit, under the old dispensation, did not abide constantly in believers. His presence was a special favor of God and could be lost by sin. But since Pentecost the Holy Spirit has dwelt permanently in every saved heart, and, by means of His presence and work, the believer, as we have noted, is sealed until the day of redemption. Thus now He remains. For further discussion, see [Chapter 9 "The Holy Spirit"](#). It is well, before passing to note that David did not pray for a restoration of salvation, but only of the joy of salvation. This may be lost, and is lost when any coldness or sin temporarily disturbs the believer's fellowship with God.

#### 8. EZEKIEL 18:24.

This passage is easily explained by **Ezekiel 33:13**, which reads: "**When I say to the righteous man, *that* he shall surely live: IF HE TRUST IN HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS and commit iniquity,**" etc. The passage under consideration speaks of the doom of the man who is righteous as to his own works and turns there-from. This passage has nothing to do with the man to whom God has imputed righteousness without works. **Romans 4:6-8.** The death threatened is death in the Babylonian siege that was to come. All the way through Ezekiel God promises to save the obedient, but to destroy the wicked in this siege.

#### 9. MATTHEW 12:43-45.

The going out of the unclean spirit here does not represent conversion, since the house from which he went was left empty. The heart is not left empty in conversion, but is occupied by the Holy Spirit; by whom we are sealed, sealed against the return of sin, until the day of redemption. **Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13, 14.**

We have here in general a picture of human reformation, but in particular it is a description of Jews. They had formerly abandoned the evil spirit of idolatry, but now had become worse than ever through their rejection of their Messiah.

#### 10. **II PETER 2:20-22.**

It is not said of these false teachers that they were ever saved. If they had been, they would not have turned back. **I John 5:4; 3:9.** They had escaped “**the pollutions of the world**” through reformation. They are likened to a hog or a dog. A saved person is neither a hog nor a dog, but a sheep; and Christ said of His sheep: “**My sheep hear my voice, ... and they follow me**” (**John 10:27**).

#### 11. **MATTHEW 13:20-22.**

Since all the regenerate overcome the world, those represented in these verses (parable of the sower) must be regarded as having only intellectual faith. An intellectual faith may work a great change in the life, and there may seem to be real indication of conversion; but after a while, under difficulty and trial, it fails. There are multitudes of cases of this kind today.

#### 12. **JOHN 15:2.**

The branches in this parable must be thought of as grafted branches, for none are in Christ by nature. Some branches are grafted properly, so that they have life-giving and sustaining connection with the vine. Others are grafted improperly, and do not have such connection with the vine as to continue to grow permanently and to bear fruit. It is thus with disciples. The branches here are all who profess faith in Christ. Some of these branches are grafted to Christ with real heart faith. They live and bear fruit. Others are grafted with

only intellectual faith, as those indicated in **Matthew 13:20, 21**. They do not endure, and bear no acceptable fruit. They are the ones that are pruned away. All true branches remain, as we have indicated.

### 13. **I CORINTHIANS 9:27.**

This passage is equivalent to **Philippians 3:8-14**. In both passages Paul recognizes that the only final proof of one's salvation is perseverance in faith and righteous living to the end, as we have emphasized. Paul knew that unless he proved his salvation by overcoming the world, he would be proved to have believed in vain and to be a reprobate. This is all these passages indicate. They are perfectly in harmony with the teaching of this chapter.

### 14. **HEBREWS 6:4-6.**

It is the opinion of the author that this passage describes believers, saved people. The principal reason for this conviction is the statement that if there are any who fall away it is impossible **“to renew them AGAIN unto repentance.”** The Greek for **“renew”** is a form of the word found in **Titus 3:5**, where we read of **“the renewing of the Holy Spirit.”** This seems to mean that the ones alluded to had been once renewed by the Holy Spirit unto repentance, or, in other words, had been regenerated.

But the passage is only hypothetical. It does not say that a saved person can fall away; it only says that if he should, he could not be saved again. And this is not believed by the advocates of the doctrine of apostasy. They believe that a man can lose his salvation and get it back again. Sometimes in Scriptures issues are considered wholly apart from other issues. This seems to be the case here. The author confines his attention to the one issue of what would be the state of a man if he did fall.

### 15. **REVELATION 8:5.**

This passage does not mean that some may have their names in the book of life and, because of unfaithfulness, have them blotted out. It is simply an assurance to believers that no matter what they must go through with, their



continued faith and perseverance is an assurance that they will receive all the blessings of salvation. It is an assurance that Christ will not forsake them.

## 16. REVELATION 22:19.

We must interpret this passage in the light of all the declarations and promises of God's Word respecting believers. In the light of this fact, this passage can be taken as applying only to those who merely profess to be saved. Such ones must be considered as addressed on the basis of their own profession, as is often the case in the Bible. We have noticed that no overcomer will have his name blotted out of the book of life. **Revelation 3:5**. Then since all that are born of God will overcome (**I John 5:4**), none of them can suffer the loss here indicated.

The difficulty in the book in the thought of a man losing his part of life when he never did have such a part, as is true with mere professors, is explained by a comparison of **Matthew 13:12** and **Luke 8:18**. These passages are parallel. In the first we read: "... **whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.**" Is this not impossible? But note the second passage: "... **whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he THINKETH HE HATH**" (R. V)." So it is with the loss referred to in this passage.

## ENDNOTES:

[42] For detailed exposition of this passage see refutation of theory of sinless perfection in this life in the chapter on ["The Doctrine Of Sanctification"](#). Please turn to it.

Further, A. T. Robertson says: "The present active infinitive **hamartanein** can only mean 'and he cannot go on sinning'" (Word Pictures).

## Chapter 30 - THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

### Chapter 30 - The Doctrine of the Church

When one is saved the next consideration that should claim his attention is the church. Gratitude to God for salvation should make him as conscientious about church affiliation as about matters pertaining to salvation.

#### I. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

##### 1. VARIOUS FALSE CONCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH.

###### (1) *The Roman Catholic Conception.*

Roman Catholics believe that the church is a world-wide, hierarchal organism under the visible headship of the pope at Rome. J. F. Noll, editor of "*Our Sunday Visitor*," of Huntington, Indiana, in "*The Fairest Argument*," likens the church to a tree, and says: "The leaves represent the Catholic laity throughout the entire world. They are in direct communion with their respective parish priests (the smaller branches of the mystic tree). The priests, in their turn, are in direct communion with their bishops, that is, the larger branches. And all the bishops are in direct and constant communion with the Sovereign Pontiff, that is, the trunk, or stem, of the entire tree."

Sometimes Roman Catholics expand their conception of the church so as to make it include "*all the faithful who have existed from Adam up to the present day, or who shall exist to the end of time*" (*Catechism of the Council*, as put forth in 1566).

###### (2) *The National Conception.*

This is exemplified in the "*Church of England*," a national institution with the King of England as its head.

###### (3) *The Denominational Conception.*

We hear of the “*Methodist Episcopal Church*,” Then there is the “*Presbyterian Church in the United States*.” And some people, ignorant of Baptist polity, speak of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention as the “*Southern Baptist Church*.”

(4) *The Universal Conception.*

A very popular notion is that the church is composed of all the saved throughout the world at any given time or of all saved people that have ever lived, whether now living or dead. Thus the church is conceived of as being universal and invisible.

(5) *The Aggregate Conception.*

All churches and religious groups, taken in the aggregate, are sometimes spoken of as “the church” in distinction from the world.

## 2. THE SCRIPTURAL CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH.

All the foregoing conceptions of the church are false and unscriptural.

The scriptural conception of the church may be seen by noting -

1. *The Meaning of “Ekklesia.”*

The Greek word for “church” is “**ekklesia**.” The English word “**church**” is not a translation of the Greek word; it is a substitution.

“**Ekklesia**” comes from “**ekkletos**” and this latter word comes from “**ekkaleo**,” to call out or forth. *But “ekklesia” does not mean “the called out.”* Let this statement be pondered well. Usage, not etymology, determines the meaning of words. For instance, “prevent,” by etymology, means to anticipate or precede. But usage has made that meaning archaic. By usage, “prevent” means forestall, frustrate, circumvent, hinder.

“**Ekklesia**” had its original application to “*a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place*” (Thayer). Then it came

to mean any assembly of people or gathering or throng of men, even when gathered by chance or tumultuously. See **Acts 19:32, 39, 41**. The resultant meaning is “assembly.” *The word never did mean simply “the called out.”* It always implied that the called out ones would gather or assemble. Thus, according to culmination, the word always did mean “assembly,” and later came to mean this alone.

In this sense, after Aristotle’s day, according to Hatch, in *Organization of the Early Churches*, it came to be applied to local, self-governing secular clubs and associations.

Nor is the simple meaning of “assembly” contradicted by the use of “**ekklesia**” in the Septuagint. Sometimes in the LXX “**ekklesia**” is used to translate the Hebrew “**qahal**.” From this fact some have “*inversely and most illogically inferred that, since **qahal** sometimes means the whole Israelitish people and is sometimes translated by **ekklesia**, therefore **ekklesia** must always take on a like breadth of meaning. Reference to the LXX, however, will show that the Greek translators of the Old Testament, so far from encouraging such an implication, have carefully precluded it. For when **qahal** has the broad sense it is never translated by **ekklesia**, but by another Greek word*” (Thomas, *The Church and the Kingdom*, p. 200).

This fact is borne out by B. H. Carroll, who made a collation of all the occurrences of **ekklesia** in the LXX, finding them to be ninety-two; and finding that in not a single case was there given to **ekklesia** a broader meaning than an actual, literal, bona fide assembly.

## *2. The Distinction Between the Church and the Kingdom.*

Those who believe the theory of the existence of a universal, invisible church, for all practical purposes confuse the church and the Kingdom. But the Bible never confuses the terms or uses them interchangeably.

“It will be readily inferred ... that the word **ekklesia** would call up, in the mind of an ordinary Greek, or Greek-speaking person, a conception not only not identical with, but in every particular the antithesis of, that suggested by **basilcia**” (Thomas, *The Church and the Kingdom*, p, 213).

That this distinction is maintained in the New Testament is manifest from the following contrasts between the church and the kingdom:

- (1) The church is an assembly; the kingdom is the domain of the King.
- (2) The church as an assembly is necessarily local; the kingdom is universal.
- (3) The church is spoken of as that which was to be built (Matthew 16:18); the kingdom is never thus spoken of.
- (4) Christ said: “**Tell it to the church**” (Matthew 18:17); no such command is ever given concerning the kingdom.
- (5) The church is called a body (**Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18; I Corinthians 12:27**); the kingdom is never thus spoken of.
- (6) The church is a democracy under the headship of Christ, as we shall presently note; the kingdom is a monarchy.
- (7) Therefore the church has organic character, being visible and having officers (**I Corinthians 12:28**); the kingdom is neither organic or visible (**Luke 17:20**).
- (8) Church membership is subject to the democratic action of the body (**Romans 14:1; Acts 9:26; I Corinthians 5:5; II Corinthians 2:6**); while God, purely independent of church action, puts men in His kingdom by the new birth (**John 3:5; Colossians 1:13**).
- (9) The kingdom was preached and, at one time, was announced as at hand (**Acts 20:25; 28:31; Mark 1:15**); but such language is never used with reference to the church.
- (10) We read of the gospel of the kingdom (**Mark 1:14; Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14**); but never of the gospel of the church.

### *3. New Testament Usage of “Ekklesia.”*

It is rashly unreasonable to assume that Christ and the apostles took up a Greek word that had a well-established meaning and gave to it another meaning without one word of explanation. Consequently we find that in every passage in the New Testament where **ekklesia** occurs it can be taken in its true sense of **assembly**. There is not a passage that demands a broader sense. We find in the New Testament, in full harmony with the common use of words, a three-fold use of **ekklesia**, viz.,

(1) The Abstract or Generic Sense.

Terms that are commonly concrete in an abstract or generic sense. Such is true of *home*, *marriage*, and *man*.

We find such a use of “**ekklesia**” in **Matthew 16:18**; **Ephesians 3:10, 21**; **I Corinthians 12:28**, and possibly in some other passages.

The church as thus represented is conceived of as an institution similar to the home in the expression, the *American home*, and similar to marriage in the sentence, *Marriage is a divine institution*. “**Church**” in **Acts 9:31**, *the better manuscripts have the singular instead of the plural, either refers to the members of the church at Jerusalem that had been scattered, or it refers in a generic sense to that church and various others that may have been established in Judea*.

(2) The Prospective Sense.

There are two passages of Scripture where “**ekklesia**” refers to a future assembly. We refer here to **Ephesians 5:25-32** and **Hebrews 12:23**: In **Ephesians 5:25-32** the church embraces the elect of all ages; but, according to the etymology of the original word, the church in this sense cannot be conceived of as actually existing at the present time. The word is thus used prospectively. The same is true of **Hebrews 12:23**.

(3) The Present Concrete and Particular Sense.

Of all the 113 cases in the New Testament where “**ekklesia**” refers to the institution founded by Christ, in all except the cases already noted, and a

few others where there is possibly a mixed use, it refers to a particular, concrete, local church, or a plurality of such churches; such as “**the church which was at Jerusalem**” (Acts 8:1); “**all the churches of the Gentiles**” (Romans 16:4); “**the churches of Macedonia**” (II Corinthians 8:1); “**the church in thy house**” (Philemon 2); and “**the churches of God**” (II Thessalonians 1:4).

#### 4. The Fact that the Church is Called “**the Body of Christ.**”

A body is a compact, living, working association of parts. It is a medium through which action is obtained. It is a functioning entity. The human body exists to perform the functions determined by the mind working through the brain located in the head. It is manifestly because of the relationship between the human head and the rest of the body that the church is called the body of Christ. Just as the human body carries out the purposes formed in the head, so the church exists to carry out the purposes of its head, Christ Jesus.

Now the imaginary universal, invisible church never functions collectively. It holds no services, observes no ordinances, sends out and supports no missionaries. It is simply a colossal nonentity, without function, purpose, or reason for existence.

It is the local church that functions for Christ. And it is the local church alone that can rightly be called **the body of Christ**. See **I Corinthians 12:27**.

The author, therefore, affirms emphatically that the universal, invisible church theory is without foundation in the Greek outside the Bible, it is without foundation in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and it is without foundation in the New Testament usage. It is primarily the product of wishful thinking, and it is the mother of a motley array of heresies. It is appropriate to close this portion of our study with these words from Armitage: “The Romish figment of an impersonal and invisible Church never existed until the fourth century, when it was created in order to bring the local Churches under the yoke ... The local Church was the only Church known to the Apostles themselves, the only body which they ever addressed,

and which they knew collectively as the ‘Churches scattered abroad’” (*History of Baptists*, p. 121).

## II. THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

### 1. TWO ERRONEOUS CONCEPTIONS.

(1) *The notion that the church was founded on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.*

There is not the slightest hint of the founding of anything on this day. The church that existed at the close of the Day of Pentecost, existed before Pentecost. Before Pentecost the church had the gospel and had preached it. It had baptism and the Lord’s Supper. It also had a ministry and held services. Before Pentecost the church was a body of baptized believers, banded together to carry out the will of Jesus Christ. That is what a church is.

(2) *The notion that **Matthew 16:18** marks the time of the founding of the church.*

This is quite a general notion among those who reject the Pentecost theory of the founding of the church. But Jesus did not say: “**Upon this rock I will found my church.**” He used the word “**build**” instead of the word “found.” And the Greek word here translated “**build**” means to build the superstructure. The same word occurs in **Acts 9:31**, and is translated “**edified.**” Christ was then still building His church just as He said He would do in **Matthew 16:18**. This explains the future tense (I will build) in **Matthew 16:18**.

What we have said of the Day of Pentecost, we may also say of the day that Christ uttered the words of **Matthew 16:18**. The church that existed at the close of that day, existed before that day. There is nothing that can be called a church that came into existence on that day, so far as the inspired record informs us.

### 2. THE TRUE TIME OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH.



In locating, the founding of the church we must find a time when something that answers to the description of the church came into existence. This rule points us to the time, when, after a night of prayer, Christ selected the twelve disciples. With this selection, these twelve men, for the first time, became a body. They had a head - Christ. They had a treasurer - Judas. They were supposed to be baptized believers. They were banded together to carry out Christ's will. What more than this did they become on the day that their Master uttered the words of **Matthew 16:18**?

### **III. THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH**

There is much controversy regarding the meaning of “**rock**” in the words of Christ, “**Upon this rock I will build my church.**” The Roman Catholics and others take the rock to be Peter. But the difference in gender and exact meaning between “**Petros**” translated Peter, and “**petra**” translated rock makes this idea untenable. In classical Greek the distinction is generally observed (see “**petra**” in Thayer's Lexicon), “**petra**” meaning “*the massive living rock,*” and “**petros**” meaning “*a detached, but large fragment.*”

Others take “**petra**” as meaning the faith of Peter; still others Peter's confession.

We regard Christ here as using a play upon words. We take “**petra**” as referring to Christ divinely revealed and implanted in the hearts of men (**Colossians 1:27**). We think this interpretation is borne out by **I Corinthians 3:11**. This passage speaks of the foundation of the church at Corinth. This foundation had been laid by the preaching of the gospel and the divine revelation and implanting of Christ in the heart.

### **IV. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH**

In the broad sense an ordinance is merely a commandment, and any commandment is an ordinance. But common usage of the present day limits the term ordinance in religious parlance to special forms and ceremonies that belong to the church and are observed under its jurisdiction. In this sense we find but two church ordinances in the Bible. They are -

## 1. BAPTISM.

Baptism, which is the immersion in water of a penitent believer in the name of the Trinity or of Christ upon proper authority and for the purpose of showing the believer's death to sin and resurrection to walk in newness of life, was the initiatory rite of New Testament churches. None were received without this rite. Paul says that it is the mode by which believers are made a part of Christ's body, the church (**I Corinthians 12:13**).

Baptism is such a broad subject that an entire chapter will be devoted to it later on. Further consideration, therefore, is reserved for that chapter.

## 2. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The Lord's Supper is the memorial instituted by Christ in which His churches are commanded, by the use of unleavened bread and wine, to show forth His death. Further consideration of this ordinance will come in a later chapter wholly devoted to it.

## V. THE ORDAINED OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

The New Testament mentions only two ordained officers in the church. They are:

### 1. ELDERS OR BISHOPS.

The title "**elder**" or "**bishop**" designated the chief officer in New Testament churches. The occupants of this office presided over the services, taught and led the people in Christian doctrines and duties, and took general oversight of the churches.

These two titles are used interchangeably in the New Testament, and, therefore, designate the same office. Their interchangeable use may be seen in **Acts 20:17** and verse **28** of the same chapter. In the first passage it is said that Paul sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus, and in the second passage he calls them "**overseers**," which is the literal translation of the word which is elsewhere translated "**bishops**." Cf. **Philippians 1:1**. The

interchangeable use of the two titles under discussion may also be seen in **Titus 1:5, 7**.

The term “**pastor**” is another term, used only once in the New Testament (**Ephesians 4:11**), which seemingly designated the same office as **elder** and **bishop**.

It seems to have been the rule in New Testament churches to have a plurality of elders, as is plainly seen in the case of the church at Ephesus (**Acts 20:17**), and in the case of the church at Philippi (**Philippians 1:1**); and as seems to be indicated in the case of other churches from **Acts 14:23** and **Titus 1:5**.

The chief reason, perhaps, for having a plurality of elders in New Testament churches is that it was customary to have only one church in any city, with this one church likely having a number of preaching places over the city.

A graded ministry is unknown in the New Testament. A bishop was an officer in a particular church, and not an overseer of the churches of a given district, as is the case today in some denominations.

## 2. DEACONS.

Cf. **Acts 6:1-8; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-13**.

There is so much to be said with reference to the deaconship that we reserve further treatment for a later chapter devoted exclusively to this subject.

## VI. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

New Testament churches were independent and democratic in government. This fact is seen in -

### 1. THE SELECTION OF MATTHIAS.

While the method used in the selection of Matthias is not the usual method of voting employed today, Luke's account (**Acts 1:23-26**) implies that the entire church participated in his selection. "**They appointed**" (verse **23**), "**they prayed**" (verse **24**), and "**they gave forth their lots.**" The entire group of one hundred and twenty (verse **15**) is the most natural antecedent of the pronoun "**they**" in these expressions.

## 2. THE SELECTION OF THE SEVEN DEACONS.

When the need arose for these seven servants of the church, the apostles did not assume the authority of appointing them, but "**called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business**" (**Acts 6:2, 3**). "**And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose**" the seven men whose names are given. The multitude of the disciples, that is, the church, did the choosing.

## 3. THE SETTING APART OF BARNABAS AND SAUL.

In this we see the independence of New Testament churches. The church at Antioch, although it was much younger than the church at Jerusalem, acted in this matter independent of the church at Jerusalem and without so much as consulting the church at Jerusalem. Cf. **Acts 13:1-3**. Neither did the church consult the apostles.

## 4. THE EXCLUSION AND RESTORATION OF THE INCESTUOUS MAN AT CORINTH.

Paul addressed the church as a whole about this matter. Cf. **I Corinthians 5**. And in his recommendation concerning the restoration of this man (**II Corinthians 2:6**) he speaks of his punishment as having been inflicted by "**many,**" literally, the greater part or majority. This distinctly implies that the church was democratic in the exclusion of the man. It was not done by the elders, nor by the deacons, but by the many or the majority.

## 5. THE SELECTION OF TRAVELING COMPANIONS FOR PAUL.

Cf. **I Corinthians 16:3; I Corinthians 8:19, 23**. Paul recognized the right of the churches to have their own representatives accompany him in his travels among the churches in making up the offering for the saints at Jerusalem. We, no doubt, have these “*messengers of the church*” mentioned in **Acts 20:4**. Thus Paul was not a lord over God’s heritage, but recognized their right of self-government. He speaks of these brethren as having been selected of the churches. This implies that the churches acted as bodies in their selection. They were not appointed by the elders. The only way a church can act as a body is by some method of voting. Any proper method of voting is an expression of democracy.

## 6 THE DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WHOLE CHURCH TO -

### (1) *Maintain Unity of Action.*

See **Romans 12:16; I Corinthians 1:10; II Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4.3; Philippians 1:27; I Peter 3:8**. Strong very justly remarks on these passages that they are not “mere counsels to passive submission), such as might be given under a hierarchy, or to the members of a society of the Jesuits; they are counsels to cooperation and to harmonious judgment.”

### (2) *Preserve Pure Doctrine and Practice.*

**I Timothy 3.15; Jude 3**. See also the exhortations to the churches in **Revelation 2 and 3**.

### (3) *Guard the Ordinances.*

**I Corinthians 11:2, 23, 24.**

And we may conclude by saying that in no instance in the New Testament do we see the independency and democracy of the church contradicted.

## VII. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The mission of the church is clearly outlined in the parting commission of our Lord as recorded in **Matthew 28:16, 20**. There are three elements in this commission.

### 1. MAKING DISCIPLES.

The phrase “**teach all nations**” may be translated “*disciple all nations*,” and this is its meaning. From Mark’s rendering of the commission we find that the disciples are to be made by the preaching of the gospel. In the light of other passages it cannot be held that the discipling was done through the act of baptizing, as some would have it. We find that the Master, the author of the commission and our perfect example, “**made and baptized**” disciples (**John 4:1**); which implies that the disciples were made and then baptized, and not made by or through baptism.

We need to note that this commission authorizes world-wide preaching of the gospel. We are to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (**Mark 16:15**), making disciples of all nations. Nor can it be sensibly held that this pertained only to the apostolic age. The promise of the presence of Christ to the end of the age (**Matthew 28:20**) implies a continuation of the commission to the end of the age, by which is meant the end of the present dispensation which will come at the return of Christ.

### 2. BAPTIZING THEM.

While baptism has nothing to do with the making of disciples and has no saving power, yet it is commanded of our Lord, is, therefore, important.

Christ’s commission expressly forbids the baptizing of infants and other unaccountable persons. The antecedent of “**them**” is the ones who are disciplined. No one is entitled to baptism unless he can be taught, and then he is not entitled to it until he has been taught and has received that teaching. Cf. **Acts 2:41; 8:36, 37; 19:1-5**.

### 3. TEACHING THEM.

We are not through when we have made disciples and baptized them. We are enjoined to teach them, and to teach them all that Christ has commanded.

We have already referred to the promise of Christ's presence that is attached to this commission. The promise not only indicates that the commission has a perpetual application to the end of the age, but it also indicates that Christ addressed the apostles, not as individuals, but as constituting the church. These apostles are long dead, and yet the end of the age has not come. Christ, therefore, must needs have been speaking to them as a body that would perpetuate itself to the end of the age. The commission, therefore, was committed to the church. The carrying out of it, then, is primarily a church responsibility.

## **VIII. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

Of what kind of persons did New Testament churches consist? Was there such a thing as infant church membership? We may answer this latter question with an emphatic negative. Every word in the New Testament that in any way touches the matter of church membership is wholly against the idea of infant church membership. We find not even the slightest hint that there was ever received into a New Testament church any unaccountable person. New Testament churches were composed of supposedly regenerate persons only. Those who have departed from this have departed from the Word of God, and their institutions are unworthy of being called New Testament churches.

## **IX. THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH**

Discipline may be defined as treatment suited to a learner or disciple, or the training of one to act in accordance with established rules.

From the great commission we have seen that the teaching or training of the disciples of Christ has been committed to the church. This teaching or training must needs be suited to the needs of different classes of disciples, and it must needs consist of more than a mere announcement of the truth. We

find this to be true according to the epistles to the churches and according to Christ Himself. We note, therefore, -

## 1. THREE KINDS OF DISCIPLINE.

### (1) *Formative Discipline.*

This is the primary and simplest form of discipline. It consists in teaching, instructing, and guiding the willing-hearted in the ways of truth and righteousness.

Churches should engage themselves diligently in this form of discipline. It is the best and most satisfactory method. If it is faithfully used, other less desirable forms of discipline will not be so much needed.

### (2) *Corrective Discipline.*

But the most diligent formative discipline will not prevent lapses from the straight and narrow path on the part of all believers. Some are sure to be overtaken by sin.

This class is spoken of in **Galatians 6:1**. These are not the stubbornly and persistently sinful, but such as live righteously in the main but are overcome by some temptation or habit and thus fall into sin. They are to be restored by the spiritually minded in the church. The spiritually minded in the church should go to those who have erred and, in meekness, seek to recover them from their sin. If this plan is followed out, many will be saved from greatly injuring themselves and the church.

Another instance of corrective discipline is found in **Matthew 18:17**. Here we have the case of one brother offending against another. After the offended one has taken the first two steps and they have been of no avail, he is to bring the matter to the attention of the church. The church is then to judge the case and seek to reconcile the two estranged brethren. This is corrective discipline.

### (3) *Excisive Discipline.*



By excisive discipline is meant the cutting off or excluding of a member of the church for some wicked offense or for a persistent course of sin. No matter how well a church may acquit herself in the use of both formative and corrective discipline, she will find the necessity, now and then of withdrawing from some person the hand of church fellowship. May we note -

A. The purposes of excisive discipline.

(a) The good of the excluded. Whenever the one excluded seems to be a saved person, this should be the uppermost thing. And even when it is clear that the offending person is lost, we should hope that his exclusion will help to bring about his salvation.

Paul recommended the exclusion of the incestuous man at Corinth first of all for **“the destruction of the flesh,”** i.e., the carnal nature. We should pray for the excluded that God will use the discipline for their own good.

In the case of the man at Corinth we see that the discipline accomplished its desired purpose. From **II Corinthians 2:6-8** we see that this man repented. Many a disciple has been awakened and brought to his senses by exclusion from the church.

(b) The good of the church. Paul assigned another reason for the exclusion of the man at Corinth. He tells them to purge out the old leaven because **“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”** Cf. **I Corinthians 5:6-8**. The church must exclude the wicked in order to protect the rest of her membership. The example of the wicked, if they are left in the church, will tend to corrupt the entire church.

(c) The glory of Christ. Even though the church did not need to exclude the wicked for the sake of the wicked themselves and as a protection to the rest of the membership, she would need to do it for the glory of Christ. The church is His body. It represents Him in the world. It dishonors Him for His body to be defiled with wickedness. Paul argues against divisions in the church on the ground that Christ is not divided (**I Corinthians 1:13**). Likewise we may argue against the permission of wickedness in the church on the ground that there is no wickedness in Him.

## B. Offenses worthy of excisive discipline.

These offenses may be divided into three kinds; viz.,

(a) Personal offenses. This class of offenses is referred to in **Matthew 18:15-18**, and the method of dealing with them is indicated. A church should not allow one of its members to bring before it a grievance against another member until the two preceding steps prescribed by Jesus have been taken.

(b) Doctrinal offenses. Cf. **Romans 16:17**; **I Timothy 6:3-5**. From each of the foregoing passages excisive church discipline, in the case of the persistent teachers of error, is a reasonable inference. Those spoken of in **Romans 16:17** evidently were not members of the church. But suppose they had been. Could the membership of the church so avoid them as to prevent them from doing much harm without excluding them from the church? Would it be in good order to retain in the church persons that the membership as a whole would need to avoid? And suppose these false teachers insisted on speaking their errors in the meetings of the church? Answer these questions sensibly, and you will see the clear inference that such characters as referred to in **Romans 16:17**, if in the church, must needs be excluded from the church in order that Paul's instructions be carried out in an orderly and effective manner.

And would it be right for Timothy to withdraw himself from members of the church? Would not such a course produce schism in the body, which should never exist in the body of Christ? Thus we have the same inference from this second passage.

But note that in both cases the false teachers are spoken of as propagating their errors and causing division in the church. Such conduct calls for discipline. However, the case is different with those who do not understand the truth as they should, but are teachable and do not conduct themselves so as to cause division in the church. It is of this class that Paul speaks when he says. "**Him that is weak in the faith receive ye**" (**Romans 14:1**).

(c) Moral offenses. Cf. **I Corinthians 5:1-7**; **II Thessalonians 3:6, 14**.

## 2. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON DISCIPLINE.

### (1) *Appointment of committee not obligatory.*

Let it be noted that nothing is said in any of the Scriptures referred to, nor is anything said in any other passage, as to the necessity of sending a committee to see an offending member before disciplinary action is instituted.

We do not say that this should never be done. But we do wish to emphasize that the Scripture in no wise binds the church to do this in any case. In fact the Scripture never once mentions the appointment of a committee in cases of discipline. The church is left free under the leadership of the Holy Spirit to decide when a committee is needed.

Some seek to use **Matthew 18:15-17** to prove that a committee must always be appointed to see the offending person. But there is here no mention of a committee appointed by the church. In this passage we have directions for personal offenses. This has nothing to do with other offenses.

### (2) *Personal visitation not obligatory.*

It is not said in the Scripture that someone must labor privately with the person guilty of a doctrinal or moral offense before the case is brought before the church for excusive discipline.

Again we do not say this should not be done. In the case of ordinary doctrinal and moral offenses we are not bound to this procedure in all cases. And in the graver and grosser offenses, it should not be followed. In such cases, only immediate exclusion can accomplish the desired results. Notice that Paul recommended immediate exclusion, without any intermediate steps, in the case of the man at Corinth. Cf. **I Corinthians 5:1-7**.

### (3) *Church trials unnecessary and unwise.*

Nothing is said anywhere in Scripture about a church trial for an offender.

In the matter of personal offenses, there may come occasions when the accused should be heard in his own defense. And in such cases, he should be heard, unless the facts concerning his guilt are too well known to admit of any doubt. But in such cases it is better that his defense of himself be brought to the church by a committee rather than by the accused person himself. And in other offenses, if the church deems it well, it may permit the accused to defend himself; but then, likewise, it is much better that his defense be made through a committee. Otherwise much evil may be wrought by bitter words being spoken and improper matters being presented to the church.

In any case where a church is sure of the guilt of the accused, she need not permit him any defense. A church should never exclude a member, however, without being sure of the grounds. She should always take the necessary steps to ascertain the facts. But she is not bound to any stereotyped form of procedure. The church is not a court, and cannot be forced to act under the rules of a court.

We call attention to these matters because they are some of the things which the Devil uses to block discipline and injure churches in various ways. In most churches a matter of discipline will always call some traditionalist to his feet to insist that the church follow certain steps that were customary in the backwoods when he was a boy. If the church allows herself to be brought under such tradition, she will seldom ever fulfill her duty in the matter of discipline. Committees to see offending parties seldom function, and are continued from one business meeting to another until the matter wears itself out and is forgotten. If the church will refuse to be made a slave of backwoods tradition and follow the Word and Spirit of God instead, she will find herself much better off.

## **X. THE PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH**

The author holds that **Matthew 16:18** guarantees the perpetuity of local churches. He believes, as already, indicated, that “**church**” in this passage refers to the church as an institution, expressing itself in local bodies.

The word translated “**build**” (*oikodomeo*) means “*build up*,” and is often translated “**edify**.” Christ was here talking, we believe, about the perpetual building up of His church, by means of which it would be kept alive; just as the human body is kept alive by being constantly built up, worn out cells being replaced.

“**Hades**” (which is the Greek word brought over into English) does not allude distinctly to the place of torment; but to the realm of the dead or abode of the departed. “**Gates**” signify entrance. We take it therefore, that Christ was saying, that His church would not be swallowed up in the realm of the dead, would not die, in other words; because he would build it up perpetually.

The author believes this promise has been carried out. In the second century many churches drifted away from the New Testament pattern. A break between these and most of the true churches came about the middle of the second century. The true churches came to be known mainly as Montanists. Later these true churches were known by such other names as Novatians, Donatists, Paulicians, Albigenses, and Waldenses. As early as the third century the general name of Anabaptists was given to these churches. This name means “rebaptizers.” It was given because these churches refused to recognize the baptism administered by the false churches. Finally the prefix “*ana*” was dropped and the simple name “Baptist” was left.

It is not maintained that any of the churches under the various names given were perfect, or that there were not some called by these various names that were false. But it is maintained that these groups, in the main, held the essentials of New Testament faith.

## **XI. THE IDENTIFYING MARK'S OF THE CHURCH**

If, as we believe, the church of Christ has been perpetuated then it is in the world today and been in the world since its founding. By what means, then, are we to identify this church in any age? In order to have a church, there must be -

### **1. A LOCAL INDEPENDENT BODY.**

The Roman Catholic Church cannot qualify as the church of Christ. Neither can any branch of the Methodist Episcopal persuasion. Nothing such as these existed in New Testament times. New Testament churches were local, independent bodies. No hierarchal institution can qualify as a church.

## 2. HOLDING THE TRUTH AS TO THE WAY OF MAKING DISCIPLES.

The primary purpose of Jesus in putting the church in the world was that His gospel should be preached. No institution that preaches a false gospel is recognized of him who even threatened the church at Ephesus with the removal of its candlestick because it had merely lapsed in its zeal and grown negligent concerning the work He had committed to His churches.

No institution that teaches any form of salvation by works is holding to the truth about the way of making disciples. A church must teach salvation wholly by grace through faith.

## 3. HOLDING THE TRUTH AS TO BAPTISM

Scriptural baptism is essential to a true church because it is the door into the church. Cf. **I Corinthians 12:13**. Hence there can be no church without baptism. An organization that practices anything but immersion, or that does not hold to believers' baptism, or that baptizes people in order that they may be saved, surely is not recognized of Christ as one of His churches.

## 4. RECOGNIZING CHRIST ALONE AS ITS HEAD, AND SEEKING TO CARRY OUT HIS WILL AND COMMANDS.

The church is a mystical body. Consequently it belongs to its head. If its head is Christ, it is His church. If its head is the pope, it is the pope's church. If its head is a conference, then it is the conference's church. If its head is a presbytery or synod, then it belongs to the presbytery or synod instead of to Christ.

Wherever is found a local body possessing all of the attributes, there is a church. Without all of them there can be no church.

And we do not hesitate to say in closing that, as regards the regular denominations, at least, only Baptist churches today can, by the foregoing tests, be identified as New Testament churches.

## Chapter 31 - THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

Baptism is perhaps the most controverted subject in the Bible. For centuries it has been a theological battleground, and on it many noble soldiers of the cross have fought, bled, and died. Perhaps more martyr-blood has been shed over baptism than over any other thing. Controversy has raged mainly around four aspects of baptism. Our discussion, therefore, will deal with these four aspects.

### I. THE ADMINISTRATOR

Does it make any difference who the administrator of baptism is? Some say that it does not. They reason that baptism is an act of obedience on the part of the one being baptized, and that the administrator is of no moment. But can those that take this position imagine that it would have been the same in the eyes of God if the people in the days of John the Baptist had received baptism from some Pharisee or Sadducee instead of receiving it from John? God had a divinely appointed administrator in that day, and our Lord walked a great distance to receive baptism at his hands. If God had a divinely appointed administrator in that day, is it not likely that He has one today? We believe He does. Let us note:

#### 1. BAPTISM IS A CHURCH ORDINANCE.

In proof of this we offer the following Scriptures:

##### (1) **Matthew 28:18-20.**

In the above place, as is well known, we have Matthew's report of the last commission of Christ, commonly called the great commission.

To whom was Christ speaking when He uttered His last commission? The promise which is attached to it shows that He was not speaking to the apostles as individuals. He promised His presence to the end of the age. Certainly He did not think that the apostles would live that long. Then He must have addressed them in some official or corporate capacity. Did He address them as an apostolic teaching body that was to be perpetuated? We



hardly think so, since nothing is said about the perpetuation of the apostolic office. To be a member of the original twelve, it was necessary that one should have accompanied with the others from baptism of John and must have been a witness of the resurrection (**Acts 1:21, 22**). Paul was an apostle in a slightly broader sense, in that he had a personal commission from Christ, who appeared to him and commissioned him on the Damascus road. In a still broader sense others are called apostles. But not a hint is given of the perpetuity of the office down to the end of the age. Neither is there a hint that the office could be transmitted from one to another.

We believe Christ spoke to the apostles as constituting the church. This we believe because -

A. The Church is the Body of Christ.

It is thus represented too often to make it necessary to mention any Scripture reference. Since the head always performs its work through the body, we believe Christ committed His work to His body.

B. The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Cf. **I Corinthians 3:16**. In this Scripture Paul was not speaking of the human body of the believer, which is elsewhere called the temple of the Holy Spirit (**I Corinthians 6:19**). He was plainly speaking of the church. This chapter deals with church building.

Since the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is here to direct the work of Christ, it appears that it is through the church that He will do His work, and hence that it was to the church that Christ gave the great commission.

C. The Church is the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.

Cf. **I Timothy 3:15**. The whole of the truth is compassed in the great commission. Since the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, the commission must have been entrusted to it.

## (2) I Corinthians 12:13.

This Scripture reads: “**In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.**” Some hold that this passage refers to baptism in the Holy Spirit, but there is no scriptural ground for such a notion. There is no hint in Scripture that each believer receives Spirit baptism either in or after regeneration. This is an assumption pure and simple.

This passage means that being in or under the power of the Holy Spirit we were all brought by the Lord to baptism, and thus were made members of His body, the local church. Thus baptism is the ceremonial door into the church.

This being true, and it also being true that the church is a democratic body, it follows that it has charge of its own door; or, in other words, the church has the authority to receive members. This is implied in the exclusion of the sinful and the reception of them again if and when they repent (**I Corinthians 5:1-7; II Corinthians 2:6-8**). And it is also implied in Paul’s injunction to the church at Rome, “**Him that is weak in the faith receive ye**” (**Romans 14:1**). Thus baptism is a church ordinance.

2. BAPTISM, THEN, CAN BE ADMINISTERED ONLY BY THOSE WHOM THE CHURCH AUTHORIZES.

Of course the church as a whole cannot baptize. It must perform the ordinance through those whom it authorizes, just as Jesus baptized through the apostles (**John 4:1, 2**).

It is on this basis that sound Baptist churches reject the immersion administered by groups which they cannot consistently recognize as New Testament churches. The name Baptist, is derived, as we have seen, from Anabaptist; and this name was applied to various groups because they rejected the immersion administered by false churches. The acceptance of alien immersion threatens the very existence of true churches. It puts them on a par with man-made organizations. This leads toward open communion, unionism and exchange of letters. And all of these lead toward destruction.

## II. THE SUBJECT

What are the qualifications, if any, that must be possessed by the subject before baptism can be administered properly? The position of some is that the only qualification demanded of adults is “a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins” (Wesley). [43] Others teach that a mere intellectual belief in the deity of Jesus Christ qualifies one for baptism, holding also that baptism has saving efficacy. For a discussion of the Scriptures that are relied on to teach that gospel faith is a mere intellectual belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God see chapter on [“Repentance And Faith”](#). It is held also by some that the infant children of believers may properly receive baptism.

But what saith the Scriptures? The Scriptures are clear and unmistakable in their teaching that-

### 1. PERSONAL SAVING FAITH IS A PREREQUISITE TO BAPTISM.

Saving faith is trust in and reliance on Jesus Christ as one’s personal and all-sufficient Saviour. For further discussion of this see chapter referred to above.

*(1) There is no indication in the Scripture that any person was ever baptized without faith.*

A. Where the details are given the faith of the subject is clearly indicated.

For instances of this, see **Acts 2:41; 8:12, 37; 18:8; 19:4**. Two of these passages (**Acts 8:37** and **19:4**) are sufficient to show that the connection of faith with baptism in these passages is neither incidental nor accidental. In **Acts 8:37** we have the virtual declaration of Philip that the eunuch could not be baptized except he believed. And in **Acts 19:4** it is plain that Paul baptized the twelve men at Ephesus because they had not properly understood John’s preaching of faith in the coming Messiah (that preaching having been imperfectly transmitted to them by Apollos, perhaps), and hence had not believed; thus making their prior baptism invalid.

B. In other passages where the details are not made explicit the faith of the subjects is implied.

See **Matthew 3:1, 2, 6; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; John 4:1; Acts 9:17, 13; 10:47; 16:30-33**. John preached repentance and demanded fruits meet for repentance of those he baptized. And repentance and faith are synchronous, inseparable graces. In the great commission Jesus coupled faith with baptism (**Mark 16:16**) and put the making of disciples before the baptizing of them (**Matthew 28:19**). The Revised Version rightly translates this passage to read, “**Make disciples of all nations,**” instead of “**Teach all nations**”; for the word translated “**teaching**” in the next verse is different from the word in the nineteenth verse that is translated “**teaching**” in the common version. That disciples are not to be made by baptism is evident from **John 4:1**, which indicates that both John and Jesus “**made and baptized disciples.**” Disciples in New Testament times were first made and then baptized. And Mark’s version of the great commission shows that disciples were made through the preaching of the gospel and the believing of it. The alleged baptism of unaccountable infants in the case of household baptisms will be cared for when we come to deal with infant baptism.

*(2) The symbolism of the ordinance demands faith upon the part of the subject.*

The symbolism of baptism is clearly set forth in **Romans 6:2-5; Colossians 2:12**. It signifies our death to sin and resurrection to walk in newness of life. Such an experience can come only through faith. The passage from Colossians informs us that it comes “**through faith in the working of God.**” [\[44\]](#)

## 2. HENCE WE ARE TO BAPTIZE ONLY SAVED PEOPLE.

If the faith demanded as a prerequisite of baptism is saving faith, then only saved people are to be baptized. That this faith is saving faith is made evident by the fact that salvation is conditioned on faith and the believer is said to possess eternal life. See **Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 5:24**. We are not to baptize people in order to save them, nor because they want to

be saved, but only because they are already saved. The symbolism of the ordinance further proves this. When one is baptized without having died to sin through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, which is the only way that one can die to sin, he professes a falsehood to the world.

### 3. INFANT BAPTISM, THEREFORE, IS FORBIDDEN.

Infant baptism is left without any authority or ground in the Scripture. Faith as a prerequisite of baptism is indicated, implied, or demanded by every passage of Scripture that touches the question. Barring the alleged baptism of infants in household baptisms, which we shall dispose of presently, there is not in the Scripture the least semblance of a hint that infants were ever baptized. It has been strikingly said that the passages that are used by the advocates of infant baptism fall into three classes. One class mention *baptism*, but *do not mention infants*. Another class mention *infants*, but *do not mention baptism*. And a third class mention *neither infants nor baptism*.

Some pedobaptists, under the weight of evidence against them, have gravitated to the position of regarding the baptism of infants as little more than a dedication of them to the Lord just as we dedicate buildings. W. A. Swift, in a series of articles in *The Methodist Herald* (now extinct), of Jackson, Tenn., on "*Why Methodists Baptize by Pouring and Baptize Babies*" thus argues. He says: "*Why dedicate a church building to God? Why dedicate a ship, a stone monument, or anything else? Are not children of more value than stones and buildings?*" And he relates the account of a service in a Baptist church in Chicago in which two mothers dedicated their children to God as Hannah did Samuel, but without the use of water, and he adds: "*What does it hurt to use water?*" Such an argument surrenders the idea that baptism is "*a sign of regeneration, or the new birth.*" Yet Methodists still so declare. [\[45\]](#)

And in the face of the foregoing scriptural facts most pedobaptist scholars will not attempt to maintain that infant baptism was an apostolic institution. This we shall see in noting -

(1) *The testimony of pedobaptist scholars on infant baptism.*

LUTHER -

“It cannot be proved by the sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles.”

ERASMUS -

“It is nowhere expressed in apostolic writings that they baptized children.”

OLSHAUSEN -

“There is altogether wanting any conclusive proof-passage for the baptism of children, in the age of the apostles, nor can any necessity for it be deduced from the nature of baptism.”

GEORGE EDUARD STEITZ, - SCHAFF-HERZOG ENCY. - *Art. Bapt.*

-

“There is no trace of infant baptism in the New Testament.”

A. T. BLEDSOE, LL. D. -

“It is an article of our faith (Methodist Episcopal), that the baptism of young children (infants) is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable to the institution of Christ. But yet, with all our searching, we have been unable to find in the New Testament a single express declaration or word in favor of infant baptism” (Southern Review, Vol. 14). And this same writer says: “*Hundreds of learned pedobaptists have come to the same conclusion, especially since the New Testament has been subjected to a closer, more conscientious, and more candid exegesis than was formerly practiced by controversialists.*”

H. A. W. MEYER, Th. D. (called “the prince of exegetes”). -

“The baptism of the children, of which no trace is found in the New Testament, is not to be held as an apostolic ordinance ...”

NEANDER -

“Baptism, at first, was administered only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive of baptism and faith as strictly connected. There does not appear any reason for deriving infant baptism from an apostolic institution; and the recognition of it, which followed somewhat later, as an apostolic tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis” (*Church History*).

GEORGE HODGES -

“The recipients of baptism seem originally to have been persons of mature life. The command, ‘Go, teach all nations, and baptize them,’ and the two conditions, ‘**Repent, and be baptized,**’ and ‘**He that believeth and is baptized,**’ indicate adults” (*The Episcopal Church, It’s Faith and Order*, p. 51).

A. C. MCGIFFERT -

“Whether infants were baptized in the apostolic age, we have no means of determining” (*History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, p. 54’).

ROBERT RAINY, in treating the period A. D. 98-180 -

“Baptism presupposed some Christian instruction, and was preceded by fasting. It signified the forgiveness of past sins, and was a visible point of departure of the new life under Christian influences and with the inspiration of Christian purposes and aims” (*Ancient Catholic Church*, p. 75).

HARNACK, in dealing with the post-apostolic period -

“There is no sure trace of infant-baptism in the epoch; personal faith is a necessary condition” (*History of Dogma*, Vol. 1, p. 20).

H. M. GWATKIN -

“We have good evidence that infant-baptism is no direct institution either of the Lord Himself or of His apostles. There is no trace of it in the New Testament” (*Early Church History to 313*, Vol. 1, p. 250).

Space forbids that we continue. These quotations show the majority position of pedobaptist scholars.

But, notwithstanding, in the face of a that has been said, there are some who make a determined effort to prove the apostles practiced infant baptism. Hence we notice -

## (2) *Arguments for Infant Baptism Answered.*

A. The boldest attempt that has been made to justify infant baptism is by seeking to prove that the child is saved. “*The babe and the converted person are both in a state answering to regeneration. If one is entitled to baptism, so is the other. If it is necessary to baptize a converted adult, then for the same reason it is necessary to baptize an infant ... We can never be sure that the adult is saved when we baptize him, but concerning the children there is no possibility of mistake.*” [46] And the ceremony used by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in administering “baptism” to infants, reads in part as follows: “*Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men, though fallen in Adam, are born into this world in Christ the Redeemer, heirs of life eternal and subjects of the saving grace of the Holy Spirit, etc.*” [47]

There are two passages that are used to prove that infants are saved. One of them is mentioned by the Methodist discipline quoted above just following the words quoted. This passage is found in **Matthew 19:14**; **Mark 10:14**; and **Luke 18:16**. In it, in speaking of children, Jesus said: “**Of such is the kingdom of God,**” or “**to such belongeth the kingdom of God.**” The following quotations show the truth of this passage:

“**Such**’ certainly means childlike persons, and apparently does not mean children at all. So the Memphitic, ‘*for persons of this sort, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*’ And the Peshito takes great pains, ‘*for those who are like them, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*’ All the Greek commentators explain it as meaning the childlike, none of them mentioning children as



included, and several expressly stating the contrary. Nor does any Greek commentator, so far as we can find, mention infant baptism in connection with this passage, though they all practiced that rite” (Broadus, on Matthew).

*“Not little children, but men of childlike disposition”* (Meyer).

“Of that reference to infant baptism which it is so common to seek in this narrative, there is clearly not the slightest trace to be found. The Saviour sets the children before the apostles as symbols of spiritual regeneration, and of the simple childlike feeling therein imparted” (Olshausen).

But, regardless of the meaning of this passage, it does not authorize infant baptism. The purpose of the bringing of children to Him is stated explicitly, and the objection of the disciples shows clearly that this was even unusual. So the passage is dead against infant baptism, no matter what interpretation is put upon the words **“of such is the kingdom of God.”**

The other passage used to prove that infants are saved is **I Corinthians 7:14** - **“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean but now are they holy.”**

But, first of all, it needs to be noted that this passage proves too much for pedobaptists according to their use of it. If it proves that children of a union between a believer and unbeliever are entitled to baptism by virtue of their connection with the believing parent, then the unbelieving parent is also entitled to it, without further qualifications; for the same holiness that is imparted to the children of such a union is imparted to the unbelieving member.

The holiness mentioned in this passage is clearly not moral holiness, but only an outward sanctification making the association in the home lawful for the saved member. “The pertinence of Paul’s argument may be more obvious, if it is borne in mind that a Judaising influence was already working powerfully in the church. It is, therefore, probable that these Christians who had come under this influence, and who had unbelieving husbands or wives, were in fear of ritual contamination by conjugal intercourse with the

unbelievers. This, however, Paul declares to be a groundless fear; for, as every kind of food is hallowed by prayer (**I Timothy 4:5**), so that a Christian may receive it without ritual contamination, every lawful associate or companion in life is hallowed to the Christian” (Alvah Hovey).

And this passage really proves the falsity of the contention that infants are saved. If infants are saved, then all are holy; and Paul’s argument would be inapposite.

Furthermore this idea of infant salvation denies the universal necessity of regeneration. When correctly translated, the words of Jesus to Nicodemus about the new birth are not, “**Except a man,**” etc., as though they apply to adults only; but they are, “**Except one,**” etc. Roman Catholics use this passage to prove that infants must be born again to be saved, and thus, because they wrongfully believe that baptism is necessary to regeneration, find ground for infant baptism. If they were right in their view of baptism, then they would be wholly right in their whole view of this passage. This passage does teach that all, not excepting infants, must be born again in order to be saved. When infants that die receive regeneration is not revealed in the Bible. But it is plain that they are not born saved, and it is plain that they must be regenerated to be saved. Our opinion is that regeneration in dying infants takes place the moment of the separation of the soul from the body. We have dealt at length with the salvation of those dying in infancy in the chapter on [“Human Responsibility”](#).

B. There is likewise no scriptural warrant whatsoever for the assertion that baptism came in the room of circumcision. Not a hint of such a thing appears anywhere in the New Testament, not even in the discussion at the conference over circumcision in Jerusalem. In fact, this conference clearly proved that circumcision did not give way to baptism; otherwise the question at issue could have been settled promptly by simply saying that the Gentiles were not to be required to be circumcised because baptism had taken the place of circumcision. A pedobaptist would have been sure to propose that solution if he had been there. And that, by the way, is proof that there were no pedobaptists there. Jewish believers continued to practice both circumcision and baptism without a hint from the apostles to the contrary.

C. The next argument for infant baptism that we shall take up is based on **Acts 2:39**. It has been stated thus: “*Peter, addressing a multitude of Jews on the day of Pentecost, said (Acts 2:39): ‘For the promise is unto you and to your children.’ Can you comprehend this statement? These Jews had been taught to receive children and give them the token of the Abrahamic covenant. There is no doubt with us about children being baptized on the day of Pentecost.*”

But this statement very tactfully omits the last part of the passage quoted, according to the usual tactics of pedobaptists.

This last part explains the passage; and, if properly considered, will show that any children baptized on Pentecost, or at any other time in the New Testament age, were only such as were called of the Lord. This necessitates their being old enough to receive the gospel and act upon it. The part of the passage we refer to reads: “***Even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.***” We shall be happy to baptize all the children that the Lord our God calls, but not more; for we have no ground for baptizing those whose baptism God has not authorized.

D. The next and last argument for infant baptism that we shall notice is based upon the household baptisms mentioned in the New Testament.

(a) Such an argument assumes two things for which there is no proof: (1) That there were infants in these households. (2) That these infants were baptized, and that in direct opposition to everything revealed in the Bible about the meaning of baptism and the qualifications of the recipients of it.

From Knapp’s Theology (Knapp was a pedobaptist) we read: “It may be objected against those passages where the baptism of the whole families is mentioned, viz., **Acts 10:42-48; 16:15-33; I Corinthians 1:16**, that it is doubtful whether there were any infants in those families, and if there were, whether they were then baptized.”

(b) An inspection of the five household baptisms recorded in the New Testament leaves no proof whatsoever of infant baptism, but rather, in most

cases, it furnishes conclusive proof to the contrary.

Cornelius is said to have been **“a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house”** (Acts 10:2). And we read that **“the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word”** (Acts 10:44), which thing was evidenced by their speaking in tongues (v. 46). If there were any infants in the family of Cornelius, they were not included when his house was mentioned in its relation to God, and hence would not be baptized. And again, if any infants were baptized on this occasion, then they also received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.

The strong probability is that Lydia was not a married woman. She was a merchant woman, and at the time of her conversion was far from her home in Thyatira. Even if she had been a married woman, the fact that she was in business would make it unlikely that she had infant children. Her household, no doubt, consisted of servants and employees, as in the case of **“Caesar’s household”** (Philippians 4:22). This expression cannot refer to or include any of Nero’s children, for certainly none of them were members of the church at Rome.

When Paul said to the jailor at Philippi: **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house,”** his words mean that the other members of the jailor’s family were to be saved by their personal faith, and certainly not by the jailor’s faith; for if so, then adults in the family were to be saved without personal faith. And it is said that the jailor **“rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.”** All of this shows that there were either no infants in the jailor’s family or else they were not taken into consideration in the things that went on that night.

Nothing is given of the details of the conversion of the household of Stephanas. Paul tells us that he and his household were among the few he baptized at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:16). But three or four years later Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and spoke of the household of Stephanas as having, **“set themselves to minister unto the saints”** (I Corinthians 16:15). It is unlikely that this would have been said if the household that was baptized a few years previous had included infants.

In the case of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, it is distinctly said that “**he believed in God with all his house.**” No infants here.

So this is the case of the household baptisms that pedobaptists depend so much upon. Not a scintilla of evidence that there were infants in any of these households, and far less that they would have received baptism if there had been.

We shall not waste time answering the attempts of pedobaptists to justify infant baptism by arguments other than those drawn from Scripture. These studies are prepared for those who believe in following Christ and the apostles, and no argument can induce such a countenance that which is subversive of their practices; and this is certainly true of infant baptism.

### **III. THE DESIGN**

What is the purpose or design of baptism? Is it in order to salvation, as some maintain? Or is it, as others contend, for the purpose of manifesting salvation, showing forth the believer’s death to sin and his resurrection to righteousness? We take the position that the latter is true. In consideration of this position we take -

#### **1. THE PASSAGES WHICH SHOW THAT BAPTISM HAS NO SAVING EFFICACY.**

All passages that tell us that salvation is not of works, such as **Romans 4:1-6; 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5**, show that baptism has no saving efficacy. Baptism is a work, a physical act. Jesus distinctly implied that it is fulfilling of righteousness (**Matthew 3:15**). It is thus established as a work of righteousness.

All passages that condition salvation on repentance and faith alone show that baptism has no saving efficacy. Cf. **John 3:16, 18; 5:24; Luke 13:3; Acts 16:31; Romans 4:5; Romans 4:5**; Ephesians 2:8. If baptism is essential to salvation, why was it left out of these passages which propose to point out the way of life to lost men? It is true that all of them do not mention

both repentance and faith, but the reason for this is that either repentance or faith is implied in the other. But this is not true of baptism.

**I John 1:7** and all similar passages, by showing that the blood of Jesus cleanses from sin, forbid the belief that baptism has cleansing power.

Passages that show that baptism is not a part of the gospel, in the light of **Romans 1:16**, forbid the view that baptism is essential to salvation. In **I Corinthians 15:1-5** Paul gives a very full account of the content of the gospel, and baptism is not mentioned. Then, in **I Corinthians 1:14-16**, he thanks God that he baptized only a few of the Corinthians (can one imagine a Campbellite preacher's doing this?); and follows with a clear distinction between baptism and the gospel, saying: "**Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.**" Moreover, in **I Corinthians 4:15**, he said to the Corinthians: "**For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.**"

## 2. THE PASSAGES WHICH SOME TAKE AS GIVING TO BAPTISM SAVING EFFICACY.

There are other passages which some take as teaching that baptism does have saving efficacy. We have already seen that such a meaning is foreign to the Scripture as a whole, but we shall examine these passages so that we may see fully that they are not out of harmony with other Scripture.

### (1) **Mark 16:16** - "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.**"

If this Scripture were taken alone, it would seem to teach that salvation is conditioned on both faith and baptism. But this cannot be true in the light of other plain Scripture. In the light of Scripture as a whole, and this is the only sound method of interpreting any passage, this passage can mean no more than that he who believes and proves the genuineness of his faith by being baptized will be saved. We need to remember that one may believe in vain (**I Corinthians 15:2**). One may have a mere intellectual faith, which is a dead faith (**James 2:20**). This is the kind of faith alluded to in **Matthew 13:20**.

Note also the force of the latter part of this passage. It says not: “He that is not baptized shall be damned,” but “**He that believeth not,**” etc. Thus we see that it is faith that saves. Baptism and other acts of obedience only prove the genuineness of our faith.

(2) **John 3:5** - “**Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**”

Many take “**born of water**” to refer to baptism, and they take this passage to teach that the new birth is accomplished in baptism. But in the light of the Scripture as a whole we cannot understand this passage to teach baptismal regeneration. Others have understood “**born of water**” to refer to the natural birth. They think of Jesus saying: “*Except a man be born of the flesh and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” But it was needless for Jesus to say that a man could not enter into the kingdom of God without being born of the flesh. Nobody would suppose otherwise. And it seems manifest that the passage refers to but one birth. It does not say: “*Except a man be born of water and also of the Spirit,*” etc. We understand water here to be a symbol of the word. In behalf of this interpretation we urge the following considerations:

A. Regeneration is a washing. **Titus 3:5.**

B. Regeneration is through the Word. **James 1:18; I Peter 1:23.**

C. The Word is likened to water in its cleansing power. **Ephesians 5:25, 26.**

Now when these facts are all put together we think there is nothing simpler than that “**born of water**” means “*born of the Word.*” Thus we have in **John 3:5** an allusion to both the agent (the Spirit) and the instrument (the Word) in the new birth.

(3) **Acts 2:38** - “**Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**”

In considering this passage let us note:

A. The question asked in the preceding verse is not the restricted: “**What must I do to be saved?**” of Acts 16:30, but the broad: “**What shall we do?**” Hence it is not strange that we have here a broader answer than in Acts 16:31.

B. Repentance is placed before baptism; and when one has repented he is already saved; and hence cannot be baptized in order to be saved. Repentance is a complete change of mind based on a new disposition that has been implanted by the Holy Spirit. Repentance and faith are inseparable and simultaneous, as shown by the fact that sometimes one and sometimes the other is mentioned alone as the means of salvation. And when one has believed he is already a child of God. See **I John 5:1**.

C. The passage does not say: “Be baptized for or unto the receiving of the remission of sin,” and he who affirms that this is the meaning must shoulder the burden of proof.

D. The meaning of the passage, as interpreted in the light of the common tenor of Bible teaching is: “*Be baptized for or unto the acknowledging, symbolizing or showing forth of the remission of sins.*”

It makes no difference whether we follow the common version and read “**for**” or the revision and read “**unto**,” the meaning is the same; and the New Testament affords striking illustration of the meaning.

If “**for**” be taken as the correct English translation of the Greek preposition “**eis**,” then we turn to **Luke 5:12-14** for an illustration. Here a man already cleansed of leprosy is commanded: “**Show thyself to the priest, and offer FOR thy cleansing as Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.**” The man was to offer sacrifices FOR a cleansing he had received already. In like manner we are baptized FOR the remission of sins already received. The understood antecedent of “**them**” is the people in general. So baptism is a testimony on our part to all that behold it that we are saved.



If “**unto**” be regarded as the proper translation, then we have two excellent illustrations of the meaning. The first one is found in **Matthew 3:11**, where John speaks of his baptism as “**unto repentance.**” This cannot mean that John baptized people in order that they might repent. Baptism has nothing in it that can produce repentance. On the other hand, John represented repentance as a condition of baptism, and with him most men agree. The meaning is that John baptized unto the acknowledgment of repentance.

See **I Corinthians 10:2**, as treated presently, as other illustration of “**unto**” with regard to baptism.

In studying **Acts 2:38** it is well also to keep in mind that Peter spoke these words to Jews, who were steeped in the language of symbolism.

**(4) Acts 22:16 - “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.”**

The washing spoken of in this passage is figurative. It is the blood that actually cleanses (**I John 1:7**). Water cannot wash away sin. And, as we have noticed, Peter says this is not the purpose of baptism.

**(5) Romans 6:3 - “Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ we were baptized into his death.”**

The Greek for “**into**” (**eis**) is the same word that is translated “**unto**” in **I Corinthians 10:2**. Baptism puts us into the same relationship to Jesus that the crossing of the Red Sea put the Israelites in with reference to Moses. By this means the Israelites were manifested to be the followers of Moses. Baptism manifests us to be followers of Jesus.

**(6) Galatians 3:27 - “As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.”**

This passage explains the foregoing one. Baptism is a putting on of Christ. It is a public declaration of our discipleship. It is assuming before the world the obligation to live for Christ.

(7) **Titus 3:5** - “Not by works *done* in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

The “**washing of regeneration**” is the moral cleansing of the soul by the Word of God in regeneration (**Ephesians 5:26; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23**).

(8) **I Peter 3:20, 21** - “... the ark ... wherein, few that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh ...”

This passage is truly a boomerang in the hands of those who believe that baptism has something to do with accomplishing salvation. Because it says that baptism saves us, these people hasten to invoke this passage; but it says too much to be of any real service to them. The passage truly says that baptism saves, but it tells just how and in what sense it saves, viz.,

A. Not by “**the putting away of the filth of the flesh.**” Only those who are more interested in their own ideas than they are in the truth will take the absurd position that Peter alluded to the physical body in using “**sarx**” (**flesh**). All others will see that such an affirmation was needless, and will understand the reference to be the carnal nature; and thus they will see that the passage says plainly that baptism does not literally take away sin.

B. But only in the same sense that the water at the flood saved the occupants of the ark. Wherefore note: (a) The water of the flood did not save the occupants of the ark by putting them in the ark. They went in before the water came. If any waited, hoping that the water would put them in the ark, they perished. In the same manner baptism does not actually put us in Christ. (b) The water did not save the occupants of the ark by making them any safer after it came than they were before it came. (c) The water saved the occupants of the ark in only a declarative or demonstrative sense. By lifting the ark and carrying it on its bosom, the water manifested that God’s favor rested on those inside the ark. Baptism likewise manifests and declares our salvation.

## IV. THE MODE

Here it is our purpose to inquire whether baptism can be scripturally administered by any mode other than immersion. We maintain that it cannot, and we offer the following proofs:

### 1. THE MEANING OF “**BAPTIZO.**”

The author has read quite extensively in the field of controversy over the meaning of this Greek word in the New Testament. But here it is possible, because of limits of space and time, to give only a resume of the evidence in support of the position taken.

#### (1) *The Testimony Of Lexicons.*

We cannot here begin to list the testimony of all the lexicons, but shall give that of the three outstanding. These three are: Liddell and Scott's, for classical Greek; Sophocles', for the Roman and Byzantine periods; and Thayer's for New Testament Greek.

##### A. Liddell and Scott:

*“To dip in or under water; Latin - immergere.”*

##### B. Sophocles:

*“To dip, to immerse, to sink ... There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks.”*

##### C. Thayer:

*“In the New Testament it is used particularly of the rite of sacred ablution, first instituted by John the Baptist, afterwards by Christ's command received by Christians and adjusted to contents and nature of their religion ... viz., an immersion in water, performed as a sign of the*

*removal of sin, and administered to those who, impelled by a desire for salvation, sought admission to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom."*

*(2) The Present Practice Of The Greeks.*

Greek Christians immerse for baptism, and De Stourdza, the greatest modern Greek theologian, wrote that "**baptizo** signifies literally and always 'to plunge.'" He also added:

*"Baptism and immersion are therefore identical, and to say 'baptism by aspersion' is as if one should say 'immersion by aspersion' or any other absurdity of the same nature. The Greek church maintains that the Latin church, instead of a 'baptismos,' practice a mere 'rantismos' (sprinkling), - instead of a baptism, a mere sprinkling."*

*(3) The Testimonies of Encyclopedias.*

We have not space to quote the encyclopedias, but shall merely mention the name of those which speak either of the meaning of the Greek word of the original nature of the ordinance or both, and which give the meaning of the word as "immersion" or speak of the original mode of the ordinance as such, or both.

They are: *Encyclopedia Americana, Metropolitan Encyclopedia, Penny Cyclopedia, Chamber's Encyclopedia, National Cyclopedia, Ree's Cyclopedia, Brand's Cyclopedia, Encyclopedia Ecclesiastica.* [\[48\]](#)

*(4) The Testimony of Pedobaptist Scholars and Leaders.*

A. Luther:

*"Baptism is a Greek word, and may be translated immersion, as when we immerse something in water that it may be wholly covered; and, although it is almost wholly abolished (for they do not dip the whole children, but only pour a little water on them), they ought, nevertheless, to be wholly immersed, and then immediately drawn out, for that the etymology of the word seems to demand."*

B. Calvin:

*“The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church”* - from comment on **Acts 8:38**.

C. Zwingli:

*“Into His death. When ye were immersed (intingere-mini) into the water of Baptism, ye were engrafted into the death of Christ.”* - Annotation on **Romans 6:3**.

D. Meyer:

*“Immersion, which the word in classic Greek, and in the New Testament, everywhere means”* (Comment on **Mark 7:4**).

E. Lightfoot:

*“That the baptism of John was by plunging the body (after the same manner as the washing of unclean persons and the baptism of proselytes - was) seems to appear from these things which are related of him; namely, that he baptized in Jordan, that he baptized in Enon, because there was much water there,”* etc.

F. James Macknight, noted Scottish Presbyterian author and leader:

*“Jesus submitted to be baptized - that is, buried under water by John, and to be raised out of it again, as an emphasis of his future death and resurrection.”* - *Apostolic Epistles*, Note on **Romans 6:4, 5**.

G. Whitfield:

*“It is certain that in the words of our text (**Romans 6:4**), there is an allusion to the manner of baptism by immersion.”*

H. Augusti:

*“The word ‘baptism’ according to etymology and usage, signifies to immerse, submerge,” etc.*

I. Lange:

*“And were baptized, immersed, in the Jordan, confessing their sins. Immersion was the symbol of repentance.”* (Comment on **Matthew 3:6**).

J. Geo. Campbell:

*“The word baptism, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse.”*

K. Chalmers:

*“The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion.”*

L. Schaff:

*“Immersion, and not sprinkling, was unquestionably the original form (of baptism). This is shown by the very meaning of the Greek word **baptidzo, baptisma**, and the analogy of the baptism of John, which was performed in the Jordan ...”* (History of the Apostolic Church, page 568).

These quotations could be multiplied.

## 2. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE ORDINANCE DEMANDS IMMERSION.

The Scripture alludes to baptism as a burial (**Romans 5:4; Colossians 2:12**). A burial requires Immersion. The objection that these passages do not allude to water baptism, but to Spirit baptism or to conversion in a figurative sense, is groundless, and gives clear evidence of having been born of prejudice rather than of a fair and impartial consideration of the passages. As long as pedobaptists refer to baptism as a “*sign of regeneration*” as we have remarked, they cannot, in consistency with themselves, eliminate from these passages an allusion to the symbolic meaning of baptism. Nor will they ever

find this meaning in pouring and sprinkling. The only sensible way to interpret language is to take it as having its usual sense, unless another sense is indicated or demanded. This rule requires that baptism mean water baptism, except where some other kind of baptism is specified or in some way demanded. Neither is true in the case of the passages under consideration. The retort that if these passages refer to water baptism, they teach baptismal regeneration is groundless in the light of the fact that they manifestly speak of baptism as to what it symbolizes and not as to what it actually accomplishes.

### 3. THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT INDICATE IMMERSION.

#### (1) *John baptized in the river Jordan.*

**Mark 1:5.** The most natural meaning of this, and the one we must take, unless good reasons can be adduced to the contrary, is that the rite was administered in the river as we understand such an expression; and not merely in the vicinity of the river. Verse **8** confirms this when, according to the better translation, it says, “**I baptize you in water.**”

“This is not negated by the use of the dative of instrument, as in **Luke 3:16, Acts 1:5; 1:16**. Clark well says: “The Greek view could equally well contemplate the enveloping element, locally, as that in which, or, instrumentally, as that with which, the dipping was effected. And while it is awkward for us to speak of immersing a thing with water, it is simply a matter of familiarity, of idiom; and we need only take a synonymous verb, ‘*to overwhelm,*’ and it is perfectly natural for us to speak of ‘*whelming with water*’” (Comment on **Luke 3:1**). Conant, moreover, points out that the use of the *instrumental dative* is for the purpose of distinguishing “*the element*” used for immersion in one case from that employed in another”; and adds: “The simple dative occurs, in the New Testament, only where the material or element used for immersing is to be thus distinguished. In all these cases, the distinction is between the element of *water and the Holy Spirit* ...; and as the latter could less properly be conceived as the mere instrument of an act, it is in every such case construed with the local preposition in...This is the only

explanation of the use of both the simple dative, and the dative with the preposition in the same connection and relation” (*The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, p. 100).

And the argument that the Jordan, at the place where John is supposed to have baptized, is too shallow or too swift to allow immersion in it has been proved false time and time again by those who have visited it.

(2) *At another time John baptized in Enon, “because there was much water there.”*

**John 3:23.** Sprinklers and pourers try to make out that the water was needed for other purposes than baptism, as at a Methodist camp meeting. But Hovey ably replies:

“This passage virtually affirms that baptism could not be conveniently administered without a considerable body of water. The plea that water was needed for other purposes than baptizing is set aside by the language of the sacred writer. For the reason why John was baptizing there (not why he was preaching there), was because there was much water in the place” (Comment on **John 3:23**). Literally “**much water**” is, in the Greek, “many waters.” But it is held by eminent Bible scholars to mean “**much water**,” and is so rendered by the revisers, most of whom were pedobaptists. The reason why this expression here is held to really amount to “**much water**,” is supplied by C. R. Condor (*Tent Work in Palestine*, I., p. 91 sq.). He tells that at the almost certain cite of Enon “head springs are found in an open valley, surrounded by desolate and shapeless hills. The water gushes out over a stony bed, and flows rapidly down in a fine stream surrounded by bushes of oleander. The supply is perennial, and a continual succession of little springs occurs along the bed of the valley, so that the current becomes the principal western affluent of Jordan, south of the Vale of Jezreel. The valley is open in most parts of its course, and we find the two requisites for the scene of baptism of a huge multitude - an open space, and abundance of water.” Enon means “springs,” and three miles south of the valley described above is found a village called Salem. The “many waters” are the “head springs” and the



“continual succession of little springs.” And these “many waters” unite in a sizable stream, thus making “much water.”

3. *Philip took the eunuch “into the water” to baptize him.*

**Acts 8:38, 39.** The Greek preposition for “into” is **eis**. It can mean “unto.” But, as Hackett points out, here it cannot mean “*unto the water,*” as though they went only to the edge of it; but must mean “**into the water,**” because it is used in contrast with “**out of the water**” - **ek tou hudatos**, in the next verse. And Plumtre remarks: “The Greek preposition (i. e. **eis**) might mean simply ‘*unto the water,*’ but the universality of immersion in the practice of the early church supports the English version” (Ellicott’s *New Test. Commentary*).

It is hardly necessary to remark that it would be unnatural for the candidate to be taken into the water in order to be sprinkled or poured upon.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[43] “What the Adult Applicant for Church Membership Should Know” (Tate), published by the Board of Managers of Tract and Evangelistic Literature, Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

[44] These passages manifestly refer to water baptism. And such an understanding of them cannot be consistently objected to by those, such as Methodists, who say that baptism is “a sign of regeneration, or the new birth.” See “The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1930,” p. 24.

[45] “The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church, South” (1930), P. 4.

[46] *Methodism*, by Ethalmore V. Cox, published by the Board of Managers of Christian Literature, Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

[47] The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1930.

[48] Quotations on baptism from all these may be found in “Before the Footlights” (Iams), beginning on page 112.

## Chapter 32 - THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is the second church ordinance. It was instituted by Christ on the eve of His betrayal and crucifixion. And Christ indicated that it was to be observed until His return.

### I. THE NATURE OF THIS ORDINANCE

#### 1. IT IS NOT A SACRAMENT

The Roman Catholics make the Lord's Supper, which they call the Eucharist, one of their seven sacraments. And in their compendium of theology known as the Catechism, a sacrament is defined as follows: "*A sacrament is a visible sign or action instituted by Christ to give grace.*" But there is no ground in the Scripture for such a view of the Lord's Supper. It contradicts the real nature of grace, for grace is unmerited favor. If grace is received through an outward act of obedience it is not wholly unmerited. It contradicts the teaching that eternal life is a gift (**Romans 6:23**), and that we are justified freely, which means gratuitously, for naught (**Romans 3:24**). It also contradicts the teaching of the Scripture that we are not saved through works (**Ephesians 2:8; Titus 3:5**).

#### 2. IT IS A SYMBOLIC ORDINANCE

This denies the following two things:

(1) *That the body and blood of Christ are actually present in the bread and wine.*

"The Catholic Church has always taught her children that at the moment the priest, at Mass, pronounces the words of consecration over the bread and wine they are changed into the sacred Body and Blood of Christ" (*The Seven Sacraments*, Vincent Hornyold, S. J.).

In an effort to substantiate this teaching as to the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine, Catholics appeal to the words of Jesus in **John 6:48-58**, and they make two groundless assumptions. *First*, they assume, in direct

antagonism to Christ's own words, that He spoke literally when He said: **“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves” (John 6:53)**. In verse **sixty-three** He plainly indicated that He had spoken figuratively in the foregoing verses. He said: **“It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.”** *Second*, they assume, contrary to the context, that He alluded to our partaking of Him in the so-called Eucharist. Verse **forty-seven** shows that we partake of Him through faith. It is plain to anyone not blinded by prejudice that verses **forty-seven** and **fifty-three** are parallel in meaning.

Catholics then carry their unwarranted literal interpretation into every other passage that speaks of the body and blood of Christ in connection with the Lord's Supper. This literalism issues from the paganistic mysticism imbibed by Roman Catholicism. The fundamental principle of salvation by works also makes its contributions to this perversion of scriptural simplicity.

*(2) That the celebration of the supper constitutes a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ.*

To the celebration of the Eucharist the Catholics have applied the name “*Mass*.” And we read:

*“Now, in the Mass a real sacrifice is offered to God, for Our Blessed Lord's humanity, by being placed under the forms of bread and wine, is reduced to the equivalently lifeless state of a victim offered to the Eternal Father by the Priest” (The Seven Sacraments, Hornyold, P. 10).*

In reply to this, Strong says:

*“It involves the denial of the completeness of Christ's past sacrifice and the assumption that a human priest can repeat or add to the atonement made by Christ once for all (Hebrews 9:28 **apax prosenekueis**). The Lord's Supper is never called a sacrifice, nor are altars, priests, or consecrations ever spoken of in the New Testament. The priests of the old dispensation are expressly contrasted with the ministers of the new. The former ‘ministered about sacred things’ i. e., performed sacred rites and*

*waited at the altar; but the latter ‘preach the gospel’ (I Corinthians 9:13, 14).”*

## **II. THE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

*1. It is a commemoration of the Lord’s death.*

Jesus said: “**This do in remembrance of me**” (I Corinthians 11:24). The Lord’s Supper, then, is intended to refresh our minds concerning Christ’s vicarious death.

*2. It is a proclamation of His death.*

Jesus also said: “**As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come**” (I Corinthians 11:26). So the supper is a preaching ordinance, as well as a commemorative one. This fact is in favor of observing the ordinance in the presence of the entire congregation instead of dismissing the congregation and having the church observe it privately. Since it is a preaching ordinance, let all witness it who care to.

*3. It is a reminder of Christ’s second coming.*

We notice in the passage just quoted the words, “**Ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come.**” Thus every time the ordinance is observed we are reminded that we are observing it because of the absence of Christ’s bodily presence, and that someday the symbolic will give place to the literal.

*4. It symbolizes the fact that we are saved by feeding on Christ.*

We have already pointed out that our feeding on Christ is not literal. We partake of Him by faith. And thus we are saved. This is symbolized in the Lord’s Supper.

*5. It pictures our need of constantly partaking of Christ for spiritual sustenance.*

The repetition of this ordinance manifests that faith, by which we partake of Christ, is not merely a momentary thing, but a continuous thing, by which the soul is constantly sustained.

6. *It points out the unity of the church.*

In I Corinthians 10:16, 17 we read: “**The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of (or participation in) the blood of Christ? The bread (or loaf) which we break, is it not a communion of (or participation in) the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread (or loaf), one body: for we all partake of the one bread (or loaf).**”

These verses bring out the fact that the unity of the church is manifested by the members in partaking of one loaf. For that reason, the bread should be brought to the table in one loaf or piece. Otherwise the type is not so impressive.

### **III. THE ELEMENTS OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

There are two, and only two, scriptural elements. They are:

#### **1. UNLEAVENED BREAD**

Strong says: “*Although the bread which Jesus broke at the institution of the ordinance was doubtless the unleavened bread of the Passover, there is nothing in the symbolism of the Lord’s Supper which necessitates the Romanist use of the wafer*” (Systematic Theology, p. 539). As to the exact words of this statement, we agree with Strong. And we go farther and say that the Romanist use of the wafer (a small flat disc of bread) tends to obscure a part of the symbolism of the supper. But we take it that Strong’s statement connotes that the symbolism of the supper does not necessitate the use of unleavened bread. It does and for three reasons, viz.,

(1) *Only unleavened bread can fitly represent the sinless body of Christ.*

Leaven is characteristically a type of sin, and it is so represented in **I Corinthians 5**, in connection with the Lord's Supper.

(2) *Unleavened bread also answers to the sincerity of heart in which we should partake of the supper.*

**“Let us keep the feast, not ... with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (I Corinthians 5:8).**

(3) *Unleavened bread, moreover, emphasizes the need of purging the church.*

**“Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, *even Christ*: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, etc.” (I Corinthians 5:7, 8).** This passage, following Paul's injunction to exclude the incestuous man, shows that he connected unleavened bread with the purity of the church.

For the above reasons, crackers and lightbread should never be used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is better not to celebrate it than to celebrate it improperly.

## 2. FERMENTED WINE

We offer three reasons why fermented wine should be used:

(1) *Christ used wine in the institution of the supper.*

Upon this point we offer the following quotations.

**“Every Jew in the night of the Passover must have four cups of red wine” (The Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper, by Harry Singer, erstwhile superintendent of the Hebrew-Christian Mission of Detroit, Mich.). Reference to **Proverbs 23:31** will show what kind of wine “**red**” wine is.**

“Every Jew knows that the Passover Supper must be celebrated by the drinking of real wine and not unfermented grape juice ... You will find all of this fully corroborated if you will consult the Jewish Encyclopedia, which is most dependable and authoritative on all matters Jewish” (From a personal letter to the author by J. Hoffman Cohn, General Secretary of the American Board of Missions to the Jews, of Brooklyn, N. Y.).

Leopold Cohn, editor of “The Chosen People” in reply to the question: “Was the wine of the Passover fermented or not,” said: “Yes, according to the Jewish ritual no wine can be so called and used in the ceremonies unless it is intoxicating. Furthermore, the wine used at the Passover was so strong that it had to be mixed with water.”

“A great attempt has been made to prove the wine drunk at the Lord’s Supper was unfermented, by and for the sake of temperance workers of our day and nation. Such attempts are apt to do more harm than good among those familiar with eastern customs today, or the history of those nations. But the Apostle Paul has stated the case for total abstinence in **Romans 14** in such a way that it does not need the treacherous aid of doubtful exegesis for its support” (Peloubet’s Bible Dictionary).

Some assume that Christ abstained from all use of wine. But this is assumed in the face of the fact that Christ, just before His death, drank “vinegar” (**Mark 15:36; Matthew 27:48; John 19:28-30**), which, according to Thayer, Broadus, Hovey, and W. N. Clarke (the latter three being writers in “An American Commentary on the New Testament) was the sour wine that the soldiers drank.

*(2) The church at Corinth used fermented wine in the supper and received no correction from the Apostle Paul.*

We know the church at Corinth used wine because, through the abuse of the supper, some became drunk (**I Corinthians 11:21**). A Greek lexicon will show that the Greek word here means exactly what we commonly understand from the English term “**drunken**.” other cases of the use of the same Greek word (**methuo**) will be found in **Matthew 24:49; Acts 2:15; I**



**Thessalonians 5:7.** Concerning this word, we read in “An American Commentary on the New Testament”.

“The word itself means ‘is drunk’, and nothing softer. The passage is conclusive as to the wine used by them at the Lord’s Supper.”

Marcus Dods says:

“Although the wine of Holy Communion had been so badly abused, Paul does not prohibit its use in the ordinance. His moderation and wisdom have not in this respect been universally followed. On infinitely less occasions alterations have been introduced into the administration of the ordinance with a view to preventing its abuse by reclaimed drunkards, and on still lighter pretext a more sweeping alteration was introduced many centuries ago by the Church of Rome.”

(3) *The symbolism of the supper demands fermented wine.*

Fermented wine alone corresponds to unleavened bread, and is required for the same reasons that unleavened bread is required.

In reply to our inquiry, Frederick J. Haskin, Director of Information Bureau at Washington, D. C., gave the following significant reply: “*The Bureau of Plant Industry of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture says that grapes naturally contain a leavening agent and that this is present in the juice.*” We then asked what happened to this leaven in the process of fermentation. To this Mr. Haskin replied: “*The leaven is used up in the process of fermentation so that the finished product or wine does not contain any.*”

But someone asks what is to be done about the pledge that some have made never to touch any intoxicants. We reply that scriptural consistency and a proper commemoration of the Lord’s death should come before a pledge or anything else. It is better to break a pledge than to fail to properly keep this memorial. God does not hold one responsible for the keeping of a pledge that hinders him in properly honoring Christ. Let those who have made the pledges stick to them in general; but let the pledge not come between them and the proper commemoration of Christ’s death.

## IV. CLOSE COMMUNION VINDICATED

Close communion is a historic Baptist practice. Many pedobaptists have recognized Baptist consistency in close communion, having recognized that the Scriptures do not sanction the coming of the unbaptized to the Lord's table. No practice of Baptists is better grounded in the Word of God than close communion; yet, perhaps, no other practice is more misunderstood and more opposed. Let it be understood that Baptists do not deny that members of other denominations are saved. It is simply that they do not believe they have been scripturally baptized.

Baptists practice close communion -

1. *Because Christ instituted close communion.*

When Christ instituted the supper only the eleven apostles were present with Him, Judas having already gone out. He did not have His mother there. Neither did He have others of His followers in Jerusalem there. He did not, so far as we have any record, invite the man in whose house the supper was instituted. Why? Because the supper was for none but His church. Hence, since Baptists do not regard others as members of Christ's church, they do not invite them to the supper.

2. *Because the scriptural order observed on Pentecost and thereafter leads to close communion.*

The order on Pentecost and thereafter was (1) *faith*; (2) *baptism*; (3) *church membership*; and (4) *the Lord's Supper*. See **Acts 2:41, 42**. This is exactly the order insisted on by Baptists. They do not deny that others may have faith, but they do deny that they have received valid baptism and that they are members of a church of Christ.

3. *Because the interests of scriptural church discipline demand the practice of close communion.*

In **Romans 16:17** and **I Timothy 6:3-5** we have implied ground for excusive discipline in the case of persistent teachers of doctrinal error. The

need of unity in the church also makes excisive discipline necessary in the case just mentioned.

Now suppose a church finds it necessary to exclude a false teacher. If the church practices open communion, this false teacher can still commune with the church, notwithstanding the fact that partaking of the Lord's Supper is one of the most intimate and sacred privileges of church membership. Allowing such would go a long way toward nullifying church discipline. It would involve the church in glaring inconsistency. If one is not fit to be in the church, he is not fit to partake of the Lord's Supper.

*4. Because it is impossible to observe the Lord's Supper by open communion.*

A church may eat unleavened bread and sip wine with a group in which divisions are present, but Paul plainly says that, "**it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper**" under such circumstances. See **I Corinthians 11:19, 20** in R. V.

*5. Because the Lord's Supper is a local church ordinance.*

The meaning of this statement is that it is to be observed by the members of one local church. Not all Baptists recognize this. But it is recognized by most of the stricter Baptists. And where it is recognized, it becomes the most conclusive proof of close communion.

In proof of this proposition two proofs are offered:

*(1) The one loaf in the supper symbolizes the unity of the one body.*

For a discussion of this, see division two of this chapter. Now, for others, than the members of the church observing the supper, to partake is incongruous with this symbolism.

*(2) There are certain classes that a church is commanded not to eat with.*

See **I Corinthians 5:11**. When a church invites those outside its membership to partake of the supper, it is boldly disregarding this injunction; for it cannot know that some of those invited are not of the classes mentioned in **I Corinthians 5:11**.

## Chapter 33 - THE OFFICE OF BISHOP

### THE OFFICE OF BISHOP

The chief officers in New Testament churches were called **bishops**, or **elders**, or **pastors**. “*That the appellations ‘bishop’, ‘presbyter’ (or elder) and ‘pastor’ designate the same office and order of persons, may be shown from Acts 20:28 ...*” (Strong). To the same effect are the words of many others, including those of Conybeare and Howson and passages quoted by Giessler (Church History, Vol. 1, p. 90). See **Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1, 8; Titus 5:7; 1 Peter 5:1, 2**.

The first plausible objection to the identity of elders and bishops was advanced by Calvin on the basis of **I Timothy 5:17**. But instead of showing that the terms designate two offices, this passage merely shows that the one office involved two kinds of work, teaching and ruling or overseeing. Some occupants of the office were more successful in one than in the other, with teaching being regarded as the highest function of the office. The following passages show that teaching and ruling belonged to the same individual: **Acts 20:28-31; Ephesians 4:11; Hebrews 13:7; I Timothy 3:2**.

The plurality of elders or bishops in New Testament churches was incidental, and is not incumbent on all churches; that is, a plurality of elders is not essential to the existence of a New Testament church. It was the size and scarcity of the churches, and the great expanses of destitution that gave rise to a plurality of elders. [\[49\]](#)

### I. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE BISHOPS

These qualifications are given in **I Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:5-9**. They are:

#### 1. BLAMELESS

By this it is not meant that the bishop must be morally perfect. No man in the flesh is. It means that he must be above serious reproach. This

requirement it explained and amplified in both of the passages given above, as follows:

**“Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (I Timothy 3:7).**

**“For the bishop must be blameless, as God’s steward; not self-willed, not soon angry; no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre” (Titus 1:7).**

If the public does not have a high regard for the moral integrity of a man, he should never be made a bishop.

## 2. PROPER CONJUGAL RELATIONS

He is to be the husband of one wife. Of course this means that he is to be husband of but one at a time. He must not have two living wives. This neither requires that a preacher be married - though, in most cases, it is best that he should; nor forbids him to marry again if his wife dies. [\[50\]](#)

## 3. VIGILANCE, SOBRIETY, AND GOOD BEHAVIOR

These are given together in **I Timothy 3:2**. They are given in the Revised Version as meaning that the bishop is to be temperate, sober-minded, and orderly. And this version leaves out the reference to wine in the next verse. Temperance means self-control in everything. It involves total abstinence from that which is harmful or evil.

## 4. HOSPITALITY

Hospitality refers to entertainment of visitors in the home. In New Testament days hospitality was *“a service specially necessary ... when the Christian traveler was exposed to peculiar difficulties and dangers, and a duty, therefore, which was often insisted on”* (Harvey, on Titus). Hospitality may not be so urgently necessary today, but it is nonetheless beautiful and beneficial.

## 5. APTNESS TO TEACH

This includes both love for teaching and ability in it. This requires knowledge and the ability to impart it.

## 6. PEACEFULNESS

The qualifications that follow aptness to teach are given in the better translation as follows: "... **no brawler, no striker, but gentle, not contentious.**" The bishop is not to have a disposition that tends to stir up strife. He is not to be by nature violent and combative, but a man of a gentle, forbearing spirit, adverse to quarrelling and dispute. See **II Timothy 2:24**. Yet he must contend for the faith, and fight evil.

## 7. LACK OF COVETOUSNESS

He must not be a lover of money, for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. He must not put money above faithful discharge of the will of God.

## 8. DISCIPLINARY ABILITY

The test of this is the way in which he controls his own children, and the Scripture says if he cannot control them, he cannot care for the church of God.

## 9. A SEASONED CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

The bishop must not be a *novice*, that is, one newly come to the faith. He must possess a considerable degree of Christian maturity.

## 10. SOUNDNESS IN THE FAITH

For the eight foregoing qualifications we have followed the epistle to Timothy, and have not tried to list everything mentioned in both epistles, talking it that in Timothy we have, in a general manner, all that is included in Titus. But the last stipulation in Titus we wish to notice. It reads as follows:

**“... holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that they may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).**

This means that the bishop is to be one who holds to the Word of God in spite of all temptation to forsake it.

## **II. THE DUTIES OF THE BISHOP**

The duties of the bishop are as follows:

### **1. TO RULE THE CHURCH**

**I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17.** The ruling here, however, is not autocratic ruling (**II Peter 5:3**), but only the rule of oversight and leadership. In our consideration of the church we have shown that the church is a democracy, receiving and excluding members, and managing its own affairs. And we have pointed out that “*ruling elders*,” in the modern sense are not authorized by **I Timothy 5:17**.

### **2. TO TEACH**

**I Timothy 3:2; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:7.** This is the principal work of the preacher. Nothing should be allowed to interfere with it. If he fails in this, he has failed in all. Everything else is secondary to the work of teaching.

### **3. TO SHEPHERD THE FLOCK**

**Ephesians 4:11.** In this passage we have the bishop called a pastor. This means that he is a shepherd. He is to have the same interest in and unselfish devotion to his flock as was the case with the ancient shepherd and his sheep. He is to feed them, shield them from danger, comfort them in distress, and strengthen them when weak.

### **4. TO ADMINISTER THE ORDINANCES**



It seems in keeping with the nature of the bishop's office to consider the administration of the ordinances as a peculiar function of bishops. And, as we have remarked before of baptism, so we may now say of both baptism and the Lord's Supper, that we have no certain indication that any but bishops ever administered them.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[49] The bishop is not an official priest. The word in the Greek for priest is entirely different from the ones translated bishop, elder, pastor. New Testament churches had no official priests. All believers are priests. See. **I Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 5:10**. Here is the pitifully weak attempt once made by a leading Catholic to justify the priesthood: "The very word 'priest' in our language is derived from the New Testament word '**presbuterous**.' **Presbuterous** became presbyter; presbyter became priester; priester became priest. This is sufficient indication of the office and proof that the Catholic priesthood is 'scriptural'"

[50] Let those who think that the requirement that a bishop "**be blameless, the husband of one wife**" demands that he be a married man, reflect upon the fact, first of all, that such a demand would require the immediate resignation of a pastor whose wife dies. Moreover, let these note, in the second place, that **Titus 1:6** adds, "**having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly.**" If the foregoing requirement means that a bishop must be married, then this one means that it is not enough for a man to be married - he is not to be ordained as a bishop until he has children and they are saved. Let's try to be consistent, brethren.

## Chapter 34 - THE DEACONSHIP

It is quite certain that we have the origin of the deaconship in the sixth chapter of **Acts**. The word for “**serve**” (**diakoneo**) in **Acts 6:2** is exactly the same word that is used to designate the office of the deacon in **I Timothy 3:10, 13**; and is the verb corresponding to the noun for deacons in **Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8,12**.

It is interesting and instructive to note how the first deacons received their office. They were elected by the church. The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said. “**It is not fit that we should forsake the Word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business**” (**Acts 6:2, 3**).

The apostles set the deacons in their office, or ordained them, as we see in verse six, this being the meaning of “**appoint**” in verse three; but the apostles did not presume to select them. They left this to the church. They did not even recommend to the church the ones they should elect. They left the church to find this out from the Holy Spirit. This was an exceedingly important matter, but the apostles were not afraid to trust it to the church. This is an excellent example of the democracy of New Testament churches.

### I. THE DUTIES OF THIS OFFICE

The first seven deacons were selected and ordained to “**serve tables**,” that is, to distribute food to the needy, especially widows. But from the fact that the office became a permanent one (**Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-13**) and from the fact that no church other than Jerusalem, so far as we know, had the community of goods that called for the original establishment of the office, as well as from the qualifications given in **I Timothy 3:8-13**, we infer that the duties of the office must have undergone expansion. Perhaps the deacons came to have charge of all the secular affairs of the church and to be the pastor’s helpers in spiritual matters.

However, let it be borne in mind that deacons are “*servants*,” according to the meaning of the title, and not bosses. They are to take instructions from the church rather than dictating to the church. They are to help the pastor rather than telling him what to do. Let them ever remember that their office is subordinate to that of the pastor. The abuse of the office of deacon has rendered deacons useless or worse than useless in many churches. Perhaps this is because proper attention has not been given to the scriptural qualifications of deacons, to which we shall now direct our attention.

## II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

### 1. As Given In Acts 6.

#### (1) *Men of Good Report.*

Deacons are to be men of good reputation in general. They are to be men in whom the people have the utmost confidence. Of course, first of all, they should be men that are scrupulously honest; men that can be trusted.

#### (2) *Full of the Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit is in every believer (**John 7:38, 39; Romans 8:9, 14; I Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13**). He is received at the time we are saved, and abides with us forever afterward. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we receive all of Him, for He is a person and, therefore, indivisible. The doctrine that the Spirit is received today subsequent to conversion, as was the case with believers on the day of Pentecost, is not a scriptural doctrine. There can no more be a repetition of Pentecost than there can be a repetition of Calvary. All the works of grace are definite, and those who are still talking about the second one are to be pitied. Those who are truly saved have received innumerable definite works of grace. Folks who do not have the Holy Spirit abiding in them need not seek the second blessing; they have not yet received the first.

Though all saved people have the Spirit in them, they are not all filled with Him. They have all of Him, but He does not have all of them. The need is not that they should seek the Spirit, but that they should surrender to the

Spirit already in them so that He will fill them with His presence and power. His is an expansive presence, and He fills so much of us, and only so much of us, as is not filled with something else. If the Spirit is to fill us, we must empty our lives of self and the world. It is only of men that have made a full surrender to the Spirit that we are to make deacons.

(3) *And of Wisdom.*

Deacons are to be men of discernment and skill. The wisdom here spoken of is not human wisdom, but that wisdom which is from above (**James 1:5; 3:17**). “*Sanctified common sense*” is a misnomer. There is no such thing. Common sense is the ordinary thinking of man. And the ordinary thinking of man is the thinking of the carnal mind. And the carnal mind is enmity against God (**Romans 8:7**). Therefore one might as well talk about sanctified enmity against God as to talk about sanctified common sense. God’s estimate of man’s sense will be found in **James 3:15**. Much harm results from trying to carry on God’s business after the manner of secular business. **James 1:5** tells how to secure the wisdom necessary to a deacon.

2. As Given in **I Timothy 3**.

(1) **Grave.**

This means that they are to be dignified, serious minded, and free from levity and frivolity. It does not mean that they are to be grouchy and long-faced.

(2) **Not Double-tongued.**

This means that deacons are not to be men who talk one way to one person and another way to another. Such a deacon will be an endless source of shame to the church. Deacons are to be men whose word can be trusted.

(3) **Not Given to Much Wine.**

In the New Testament times alcoholic drinks had not been abused as they have today; therefore they were not absolutely forbidden. Only the abuse

of them was prohibited. But today they have been subject to such abuse that it is well for all believers, and especially pastors and deacons, to abstain wholly even from wine, except for medical and sacred purposes.

**(4) Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre.**

A deacon must not be a man that has an inordinate love of money. If he is, he will likely misappropriate funds entrusted to him. Great has been the shame brought upon churches because men greedy of filthy lucre have been entrusted with church funds.

**(5) Holding the Mystery of the Faith in a Pure Conscience.**

Deacons should be sound in the faith. They are not official teachers, but they will have much opportunity for private witnessing. Nothing but a sound Baptist should ever be elected as a deacon. One that believes that one church is just as good as another, or one who is the least tainted with modernism or Arminianism, or one that denies any fundamental Bible truth is not fit to be a deacon. The deacon is to hold the faith in a pure conscience - one that has been purged by the blood of Christ and renewed by the Holy Spirit. Such a conscience will be free from gross selfishness and hypocrisy and will be regulated by devotion and sincerity.

**(6) Let Those Also First Be Proved.**

As with bishops, so with deacons, we should lay hands suddenly or hastily on no man (**I Timothy 5:22**). And like a bishop, a deacon should not be a novice, or one newly come to the faith (**I Timothy 3:6**). We should not elect men as deacons just to honor them, nor because they are influential or wealthy; but only when they have proved themselves to be in possession of the scriptural qualifications.

**(7) *Their Wives Must be Grave, Not Slanderers, Sober, Faithful in All Things.***

It is contended by some that female deacons are here referred to. And while this view may seem to have some things in its favor; yet we consider it

far from being established. Let us note the usual arguments offered as proof that the reference here is to female deacons:

*A. It is affirmed that such an office existed in some New Testament churches at least, since Phebe is called a “**diakonos**” (Romans 16:1).*

But “**diakonos**” appears in many other places where the office of deacon is not signified. See **II Corinthians 2:6; 11:22; Ephesians 3:7; 6:21; Colossians 1:7, 23, 25; I Thessalonians 3:2; I Timothy 4:6**, where “**diakonos**” is translated by “**minister**.” This word and its cognate forms appear in many other places similar to the above also. In view of this, we certainly have a very slight foundation for the office of a deaconess because “**diakonos**” is once applied to a woman. It is quite evident that Phebe, out of her strength and her own wealth had been a “**succorer of many**” and of the Apostle Paul also (**Romans 16:1**); therefore she was called a “**diakonos**,” or one that ministered to the needs of others. There is no proof that she served officially in this capacity.

*B. It is supposed also that the women mentioned in **Philippians 4:8** were deaconesses.*

But there is less evidence here for the office than there is in the former case. Not the slightest hint is given here that these women were deaconesses. There were some women who assisted Christ in His work; wonder if they were deaconesses too?

*C. It is argued that such an office existed in post-apostolic churches.*

But many things existed in most of the post-apostolic churches that were not of divine institution.

*D. It is said that “the Greek has not ‘**their wives**,’ but simply women, without article or pronoun, and it is, therefore, properly rendered, not ‘**their wives**,’ but women, and, in this context female deacons” (H. H. Harvey).*

It is true that the Greek does not expressly say “**their wives**,” and, while the word for “**wives**” is a word which may mean simply “*women*,” yet it is the only word in the New Testament for wives, and is, therefore, the word that would be used to denote wives. The possessive pronoun is easily understood since deacons are under discussion. As for the omission of the article, that is not significant as there is no article before deacons in verse **8**. And when we read in the succeeding verse that the deacon is to be husband of one wife, it adds force to the view that wives of deacons are intended in verse **11**.

*E. It is argued that there is no reason for defining the qualifications of deacons' wives while nothing is said of the wives of bishops.*

There is no reason for limiting “**their wives**” to the wives of deacons. We believe it refers both to the wives of deacons and also to the wives of bishops. Such an interpretation has nothing against it. And we believe it is the correct one.

**(8) Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their own children and their own houses well.**

A deacon must have but one living wife. He must have his children in subjection. One of the greatest practical needs of this day is a revival of old time parental authority. The lax authority, if authority indeed it can be called, in the average Christian home today is a shame and a disgrace. No wonder the younger generation is conspicuous for its absence at church services in most places. They are reared to have their own way, and it is not according to their own way to go to church. Most children today, for the most part, obey only when they please. The deacon is to RULE his children and not to let his children rule him. And the deacon is to be head of his house, for the Scripture not only specifies that he is to rule his children, but also his whole house. The divine plan is for the husband to be the head of the home. When the man is a Christian, and this is recognized, the home will be the happiest of homes. If the man is not a Christian and the woman is, then she will have to make the best of it. If she was a Christian when she married, she violated the Word of God (**II Corinthians 6:14**), and must make the best of the chastisement that

she will receive. It has been said and quite truly, if a woman marries a child of the Devil, she can expect to have trouble with her father-in-law.

### **III. THE TEMPORAL RECOMPENSE OF A DEACON**

Verse **13** gives us the temporal recompense of a deacon. If he serves well as a deacon, he purchases a good degree and great boldness in the faith. The New Testament pictures the deaconship as an exalted office. It has been much degraded through our failure to respect the qualifications laid down in the Scripture and by our altering the work of deacons to suit our own notions.



## Chapter 35 - THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Times have changed.

Yes.

*“One hundred years ago, today,*

*Wilderness was here;*

*The man with powder in his gun,*

*Went out to hunt the deer.*

*But now the thing has changed somewhat,*

*And on another plan,*

*The dear, with powder on her face,*

*Goes out to hunt the man”*

But for the changing times we have the changeless word - the word that is eternally fixed in Heaven; that has withstood both the violent attacks of enemies and the abuse of friends.

Mere customs may change without injury or loss. But divinely ordered conduct must be held inviolate by those whose hearts are ruled by the fear of God.

“The authority of Scripture means everything to Baptists. It is by this alone that they justify their tenacity as to the mode of baptism. Give up the doctrine of the absolute authority and inerrant character of the Scriptures and Baptists may allow any change in church polity that human wisdom seems to justify” (A. H. Strong).

“What is called the ‘*Woman’s Movement*’ is the most insidious and malicious conspiracy ever concocted against the inspiration of the Bible” (W. P. Harvey, *Feminism*, J. W. Porter, p. 118).

“To say the very least, it is not Baptist to distort the Bible into justification of any practice. Our glory has been that we have twisted our behavior, when it needed it, into conformity with the New Testament. We have always been willing to meet the Bible with open face and heart ready to obey its clear teaching. Let us do so here” (A. T. Robertson, *Feminism*, J. W. Porter, P. 110). [\[51\]](#)

In speaking of woman’s place in the church, we have reference to her place in the service of God as a church member. Therefore our discussion will have to do with more than the conduct of women in the public gatherings of the church.

Our subject implies a truth that needs emphasis. That truth is that there is a place for women in the church. Sometimes our opposition to unscriptural usurpations by women seems to create an impression that woman has no place in the church. This is far from true. She has a very important place, and a neglected one - neglected because so often she has been far more concerned with trying to take man’s place than she has with filling her own God-given sphere. Woman’s glory will be found in her own sphere. Her shame comes when she gets out of that sphere.

Let us note first:

## **I. THINGS WOMEN ARE FORBIDDEN TO DO**

### **1. THEY ARE FORBIDDEN TO TEACH.**

“**I suffer not a woman to teach**” (**I Timothy 2:12**). The infinitive “**to teach**” is without an object and the passage means simply that women are not to occupy the office of teacher in the church. They may teach privately and informally, but not publicly and officially.

### **2. THEY ARE FORBIDDEN TO OFFER PUBLIC PRAYER.**

**“I desire therefore that the men pray in every place” (R.V. I Timothy 2:8).**

The Greek word for “**men**” is the word (**aner**) that distinguishes men from women and children, and not the generic word (**anthropos**). The article is also present before men, and, that of itself, would serve to distinguish men from women. Hence, although, as Fausset observes, the emphasis is not on “**the men,**” but is on the matter of praying; yet the fact remains that the passage distinguishes the men from the women and limits praying in every place of public worship to the men. For the women the apostle gave other instructions (v. 9). This is in accord with every commentator or scholar of note.

**3. THEY ARE FORBIDDEN TO ACT IN ANY CAPACITY THAT INVOLVES THE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY OVER MEN.**

Paul, after speaking of suffering not a woman to teach, adds: “**Nor to have dominion over a man**” (I Timothy 2:12). [\[52\]](#) A bossy woman is as much a monstrosity as an effeminate man.

**4. THEY ARE FORBIDDEN EVEN TO SPEAK IN THE CHURCH.**

**“As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church” (I Corinthians 14:34, 35).** The reference here is to the public assemblies and not to the church building.

**5. THEY ARE NOT TO APPEAR IN THE SERVICES WITH UNCOVERED HEADS.**

See **I Corinthians 11:3-10**. It is quite evident that this refers to public worship. It may be said that inasmuch as women are not allowed to prophesy, that this does not apply when women keep their places. But praying is mentioned also. And, although women are not to lead in public prayer, yet they should pray silently and thus participate in the worship. This passage by

no means intimates that if a woman has long hair, this is all the covering she needs. Paul simply states that the fact that it is natural for women to have long hair is only an indication of the need of an additional covering. This covering is to be worn in public worship as a sign of the woman's subjection to her husband, or to man in general if the woman is unmarried.

6. THEY ARE NOT TO APPEAR IN IMMODEST OR SHOWY APPAREL.

See **I Timothy 2:9, 10**.

## **II. REASONS FOR THESE PROHIBITIONS**

Paul gives two real reasons for these prohibitions:

### 1. THE PRIORITY OF ADAM IN CREATION.

See **I Timothy 3:13**. The priority of Adam in creation his headship of the race. Public teaching on the part or their exercise of any authority over man is with that headship.

### 2. THE DECEPTION OF THE WOMAN IN THE FALL.

See **I Timothy 2:14**. The woman was beguiled by the serpent into thinking that the eating of the forbidden fruit would bring instead of banishment. Man partook of the fruit, but was not deceived. He knew what the consequences would be; and probably partook of the fruit because he preferred to be cast out with his wife rather than be separated from her. The deception of the woman in the fall shows the susceptibility of women to deception.

This is not because of any general inferiority of women to men. It is because of a difference in temperament and nature. Woman's nature fits her for the home and for rearing children. To this end she has a very delicate temperament and a strongly emotional nature. Thus she is characteristically swayed more easily than a man. Her nature disposes her to come to conclusions by intuition rather than by candid consideration. All of these

facts unfit women for public leadership or teaching. If there ever has been a woman preacher that has preached the truth, even on other things than the place of women, we have never known it.

### **III. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THESE PROHIBITIONS ANSWERED**

Many arguments are brought by those who would escape and set aside the evident meaning of the passages already cited. We note the most prominent of these arguments. It is argued: -

1. THERE WERE WOMEN IN THE BIBLE THAT DID THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE SAID THAT WOMEN ARE FORBIDDEN TO DO.

The following cases are cited:

(1) *Deborah*.

See **Judges 4:5**. While Deborah did her judging in her own home (**Judges 4:5**), yet it is true that her place of leadership was inconsistent with New Testament prohibitions. But that by no means sets aside these prohibitions. We must not assume that all that was done by even the outstanding characters of the Bible was according to the will of God. And certainly we must not set aside the plain commands of God because some acted inconsistently with these commands.

Besides, what God permitted in the Old Testament dispensation is no standard by which to determine his will for the New Testament dispensation. He permitted polygamy, then regulated it by prescribing through Moses the necessity of a written divorcement; but finally, in the New Testament, there was a return to the original meaning and spirit of marriage, which permits divorce only for fornication (**Matthew 19:3-9**).

So it is with reference to the place of women. The New Testament reverts to the original order, despite that which God permitted in the Old Testament dispensation. And the prohibitions noticed apply to the church. Certainly, then, nothing permitted out of the church can annul them.

(2) *Anna.*

See **Luke 2:36-38**. There is no proof that Anna made a public address, and hence there is no proof that she violated **I Timothy 2:12**. She was not in the church, and hence did not violate **I Corinthians 14:34**. It is evident that she simply spoke informally to those she saw around the temple. This is no violation of Scripture, as we shall see more clearly later. Besides, it is the commands of God and not conduct of Anna, or that of any other persons, that reveal God's will. Anna's conduct can no more be taken as a criterion than that of Deborah, or other erring characters.

(3) *The Women that Helped Jesus and Paul.*

See **Luke 8:2, 3; Romans 16:1, 2; Philippians 4:3**. Mrs. M. B. Woodworth-Etter says:

“Paul worked with the women in the gospel more than any of the apostles; Priscilla and Phebe traveled with Paul preaching and building up the churches. (**Acts 18:2-18, 26; Romans 16**).

“He and Phebe had been holding revivals together; now she is called to the city of Rome; Paul cannot go with her, but he is very careful of her reputation, and that she is treated with respect; he writes a letter of recommendation: ‘**I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant of the church (which signifies a minister of the church) at Cenchrea, that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you, for she has been a succourer of many and of myself also**’ (**Romans 16:1-2**).” (Signs and Wonders, p.211).

This is a fair sample of the adding to and glaring misrepresentation of the Scripture by those who plead the example of the women mentioned above as an argument against the prohibitions Paul pronounced against women. There is not the slightest hint that any of these women preached or did anything else inconsistent with Paul's prohibitions. In the case of the women associated with Christ, it is plainly stated that they “**ministered unto him of**

**their substance.**” Phebe, and probably the other women that labored with Paul did the same to Paul. Some of them may have done personal work also.

*(4) The women that were sent from the tomb of Jesus with a message for the apostles.*

**Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-9; John 20:1-18.** These women were sent on an informal errand. They were not commissioned to make a public address.

*(5) The women of the church at Jerusalem on Pentecost.*

*Acts 2. No woman made a public address on the day of Pentecost so far as the record goes. Peter was the only one that made a public address that day.*

Whatever speaking was done by the women that were members of the church and filled with the Spirit was done as they passed around among the people, and was the same informal witnessing that Anna did. The Spirit has never led women to violate His own prohibitions spoken through Paul, for He does not contradict Himself.

*(6) The Samaritan Woman.*

**John 4:16.** The only thing Jesus commanded this woman to do was to go call her husband. Whatever else she did was of her own accord and without necessary divine authority. However there is no indication that she did more than speak informally to those she met.

*(7) Philip’s Daughters.*

See **Acts 21:9.** *There is no record of Philip’s daughters ever violating either the letter or the spirit of the prohibitions we have already noticed.* Thus the objector has nothing to base his argument on. The fact that they were prophetesses by no means proves that they delivered public addresses or that they ever usurped authority over a man. In fact, while Paul was in the home

of Philip, God sent a prophet all the way from Jerusalem to deliver a message to him.

(8) *Prophetess in the last days.*

See **Acts 2:18**. The fact that Philip's daughters were prophetesses and yet never, so far as we know, delivered a public address or usurped authority over men shows that this passage need not be taken as indicating anything in women more than their private witnessing. The burden of proof is on the objector and he has nothing to offer as proof.

(9) *Priscilla and Aquila.*

See **Acts 18:26**. Priscilla did what is indicated here in the privacy of her own home and in conjunction with her husband. *The Bible says nothing against the private witnessing of women.* They may show the lost the way of salvation, or they may witness to the truth privately even to men. And certainly when the wife does this in conjunction with her husband, she is not getting out of her scriptural place.

(10) *The Women Prophetesses at Corinth.*

See **I Corinthians 11:5-16**. The women at Corinth were committing two offences. Not only were they speaking in the church, but they were doing it with uncovered heads. Paul, in the chapter just referred to, corrected the latter. In the fourteenth chapter he corrects the former.

For a similar approach to the partaking of idol feasts see **I Corinthians 8:10** and **10:14-21**. In the first passage, Paul simply says that the Corinthian saints were to be careful lest the partaking of idol feasts offend those who could not see that an idol was nothing. But in the latter passage he condemns the eating of idol feasts as a thing wholly out of place for the Christian.

2. THAT **Galatians 3:28** PROVES THAT THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SPHERE OF MEN AND THAT OF WOMEN.



It displays very poor judgment for the advocates of the public speaking of women before mixed audiences to plead Paul against himself. If the passage under consideration teaches full sex equality and identity of sphere, then it also teaches race equality, and the intermarriage of the white and black races is justified. The passage teaches nothing more than that all are saved alike and that all have the same gracious relationship to Christ. *“Race and sex have their respective gifts to be dedicated and used. The work and calling of the sexes continue different, although in Christ there is neither male nor female”* (Ministry of Women).

**3. THAT PAUL’S PROHIBITION IN I Corinthians 14:34 WAS AGAINST IDLE CHATTER ONLY.**

This notion is wholly without foundation. The Greek word for **“speak”** is a common one for any kind of speaking.

**4. THAT THIS PROHIBITION FORBADE ONLY THE ASKING OF QUESTIONS IN PUBLIC THAT WOULD CAUSE DISSENTION.**

But the prohibition of the asking of questions by women is only secondary to the prohibition against their speaking at all in the church.

**5. THAT THIS PROHIBITION REFERS TO THE BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH.**

It was not a business meeting that Paul was writing about, but such a meeting as we would call a “testimony meeting.”

**6. THAT, SINCE THE WOMAN IS TOLD TO ASK HER HUSBAND AT HOME ABOUT MATTERS SHE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND, THIS APPLIES ONLY TO MARRIED WOMEN.**

It would be queer indeed for Paul to prohibit the married woman to speak, while allowing the unmarried woman to do so; since married women are usually older and more judicious than single women. In this passage Paul gives his instructions to cover normal circumstances, not feeling it necessary

to provide for exceptions. An unmarried woman may easily find some man whom she can ask concerning the things she does not understand.

#### 7. THAT PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CORINTHIANS APPLIED ONLY TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.

But Paul said (R.V.): **“As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches” (I Corinthians 14:34)**. It seems that it was only at Corinth that women were getting out of their place. In the above passage Paul instructed the church at Corinth to maintain the same order with reference to the women in public worship that was maintained in all the other churches.

#### 8. THAT THE PROHIBITION AGAINST WOMEN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP APPLIED ONLY TO THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

Objectors say that it was the common conception then that women who appeared in public unveiled and who performed any public function were of low character; and that it was for that reason that the apostle commanded women to be quiet and to wear veils. Thus the prohibitions are taken in the same light as Paul's exhortation to abstain from the eating of meat offered to idols; viz., in order to avoid offending others. Or, as A. T. Robertson says: **“Many modern Christians feel that there were special conditions in Ephesus as in Corinth which called for strict regulations on the women which do not always apply now.”**

But such notions are clearly disproved by the fact that Paul gives his command for the silence of women as a command of the Lord. He does not say this with reference to abstinence from meat offered to idols. Then Paul grounds the prohibition against women's teaching on the priority of man in creation and the deception of the woman in the fall. Thus he shows that this prohibition is founded on the very nature of things, and therefore is abiding.

### IV. THINGS WOMEN SHOULD DO

Having noticed what women are forbidden to do, let us now notice what they may and should do.

## 1. THEY SHOULD ATTEND PUBLIC WORSHIP.

This is the duty of all saved people. Women should attend public worship to learn and to receive such spiritual blessings as may come from the worship. The soul of every saved person needs the healing, purifying, elevating influence of public worship.

## 2. THEY SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE WORSHIP BY PRAYING SILENTLY AND BY ENGAGING, IF POSSIBLE, IN CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.

These are also general duties, as well as privileges. Some would say that if a woman is not permitted to speak in the church, then she can't sing. But we must interpret Paul by the intentions manifest in the context. He was not discussing singing, but speaking. And while singing involves speaking; yet, technically, singing is not speaking.

## 3. THEY SHOULD GIVE OF THEIR MEANS.

This, like worship, silent prayer, and congregational singing, is a general duty and privilege, and it belongs to women the same as men.

## 4. THEY ARE TO RECOGNIZE THE HOME AS THEIR CHIEF SPHERE OF ACTIVITY.

**Titus 2:5.** It is here that woman is to find her chief work not only in caring for her own family, but in entertaining others (**I Timothy 5:9, 10**). It is here and here alone that she can earn a prophet's reward by entertaining prophets (**Matthew 10:41**).

## 5. THE OLDER WOMEN ARE COMMANDED TO TEACH THE YOUNGER ONES.

**Titus 2:3-5.** They are especially charged to teach young women practical home duties, but this Scripture does not limit their teaching to this. They are to be “**teachers of good things**” (v. 3), and the reason for their teaching, “**that the Word of God be not blasphemed,**” open up a

considerable field of instruction. We find nothing in the Scripture against the teaching of women and children alone by women at any time and at any place. The Scripture does not say that their teaching is to be done only in the home, nor does it say that they must teach only one at a time. To teach privately does not necessarily mean to teach only one at a time. See **Luke 10:23**.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in the Scripture against women teaching Bible classes composed wholly of women or children, so long as they do it in subjection to the church pastor, and their own husbands. Those who would forbid women to teach women and children are simply adding to the Word of God.

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### **FOOTNOTES:**

[51] We retain this quotation even though we are well aware that the writer later changed his position on feminism, and struggled to find justification for the popular view. Let our readers consider Professor Robertson's later position in the light of this quotation.

[52] The phrase here quoted evidently gives the ground of the apostle's prohibition against women teaching publicly in the church, i.e., such involves them in having dominion over men. But the word for man here, as in the eighth verse, distinguishes men from women and children. Hence women are not forbidden to teach children apart from the public assembly and they are commanded to teach women, as we shall see later.

## Chapter 36 - THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DEAD

That men do not enter into the final state at death is too evident to require detailed proof. The resurrections, which are yet future, prove an intermediate state for the present dead. The thing we are specially concerned with is the nature of the intermediate state, and it is to this matter that we now address ourselves.

Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and some others, teach what is known commonly as "soul sleeping." But the real substance of this false teaching is that the spirit of the dead is non-existent between death and the resurrection. This is logically true of this theory, and it is so admitted by Adventists, at least. It is logically true, because a sleeping spirit (if such were possible) would be a non-existent spirit. The idea of the spirit being alive and being unconscious when free from the body is the limit of absurdity. And that this teaching amounts to a non-existence of the spirit is shown from the following words from "*Signs of the Times*," a Seventh Day Adventist paper (issue of December 1931): "*Surely no more forceful expression could possibly be used to show utter cessation of existence than this. In death 'I shall not be'*" (Comment on **Job 7:21**, by Carlyle B. Haynes, one of their noted writers).

### I. THE DEAD ARE NOT NON-EXISTENT

Against this theory we assert and undertake to prove from the Scriptures that man's spirit does not cease to exist in death. By the term, "**spirit**" we mean the immaterial nature of man in its higher relationship. We use the term "**spirit**" in preference to the term "**soul**" because we believe spirit best expresses the immaterial part of man in distinction from bodily life.

"The immaterial part of man, viewed as an individual and conscious life, capable of possessing and animating a physical organism is called **psuche** (**soul**); viewed as a rational and moral agent, susceptible of divine influence and indwelling, this same immaterial part is called **pneuma** (**spirit**)" (A. H. Strong). The spirit is man's immaterial nature looking Godward. "The spirit is the highest, deepest, noblest part of man. By it he is

fitted to comprehend eternal things, and it is, in short, the house in which dwell faith and the Word of God. The ... soul is this spirit, according to nature, but yet in another sort of activity, namely, in this, that it animates the body and works through it” (Luther). “Soul is spirit modified by union with the body” (Hovey).

Sometimes both the Hebrew and Greek words for spirit denote wind or breath; but that they do not always do so is evidenced by **Matthew 26:41**; **Luke 23:46**; **Acts 7:59**; **I Corinthians 2:11**; **5:5**; **7:34**; **14:14**; and **I Thessalonians 5:23**. Let those interested study these passages and substitute breath in the place of spirit and see what sort of sense is made. Then we know that spirit may signify more than breath because “**God is a spirit**” (**John 4:24**).

*1. Physical death does not bring about the non-existence of man’s spirit, because it is not subject to physical death.*

We have the proof of this in **Matthew 10:28**. If man cannot kill the spirit, then physical death has no power to end the existence of the spirit. Man can kill anything that is subject to physical death. In physical death the body ceases to function and begins to disintegrate, and man ceases to be a “**living soul**” in the distinctive sense of the term “**soul**.” But the spirit cannot be killed and is never spoken of as ceasing in death. Instead we find Jesus at death committing His spirit into the hands of God and Stephen committing his spirit into the hands of Jesus (**Luke 23:46**; **Acts 7:59**). Physical death is merely the separation of the spirit from the body.

*2. The representation of death as sleep does not teach that the spirit sleeps, and is, therefore, non-existent.*

Sleep is purely a physical phenomenon. Death is sleep only by analogy; not actually. And the analogy is in the appearance of the body, and not in the state of either the body or the spirit. In sleep the spirit is still united with the body, and, therefore, conditioned by it. But in death, as all are forced to admit, the spirit and the body are separated. And the spirit separated from the body is no longer conditioned by the body.

Stephen fell asleep (**Acts 7:50**), but his spirit did not cease to exist, because he committed it into the hands of Jesus; and a non-existent spirit could not be committed into the hands of anybody. Paul described death as sleep (**I Corinthians 15:6**; **I Thessalonians 4:14**), but he did not teach the non-existence of the dead. Paul looked upon death, not as a cessation of existence, but as a departing to be with Christ (**Philippians 1:23**). To Paul, being absent from the body meant not to be non-existent, but to be present with the Lord (**II Corinthians 5:6**). That which is non-existent cannot be present anywhere or with anybody.

3. *Reference to the wicked dead as “spirits in prison” shows that the dead are not non-existent (I Peter 3:20).*

A non-existent spirit is a nonentity, and a nonentity cannot be anywhere; for to be is to exist.

4. *Moses did not cease to exist when he died, for centuries afterward he appeared with Christ on the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:3).*

Will some say that Moses was resurrected immediately after burial? If so, a refutation for them is waiting in **I Corinthians 15:20**. Christ’s being the first fruits of the dead forbids the theory that Moses was resurrected immediately after his burial.

5. *The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah did not cease to exist when they died (Jude 7).*

Jude describes them in New Testament times as “**suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**” The word for suffering in this passage is a present participle, and a present participle expresses progressive, durative action. And that this is not a historical present is shown by the present tense of the verb “**are set forth.**”

6. *The rich man and Lazarus did not cease to exist when they died (Luke 16:19-31).*

This is not a parable, but no matter if it were. The Son of God did not resort to misrepresentation even in parables. All of His parables are true to facts.

*7. Christ and the penitent thief did not cease to exist when they died.*

Christ was not dependent on the body for life, for He lived before He had a body (**John 1:1, 2, 14**). And on the Cross Christ asserted that He and the thief would that day be together in paradise. Non-existent spirits could not be anywhere, much less together.

*8. The spirits that John saw under the altar had not ceased to exist (Revelation 6:9).*

*9. The resurrection proves that the dead are not now non-existent.*

If they were non-existent, then there would need be a re-creation instead of a resurrection. And this would wholly destroy the basis of rewards, for those who come forth from the grave would be different individuals from those who wrought works here in this world.

*10. The fact that the righteous dead have not attained to their highest state of bliss, and must yet pass through the resurrection does not prove that they are now non-existent.*

“**That blessed hope**” (**Titus 2:13; I John 3:2, 3**) is the union of the spirit with the glorified body. This only will bring the full satisfaction of the believer’s longing (**Psalms 17:15**). But God has chosen to suspend the realization of this hope until a future time. And while the disembodied state is not the ideal one, yet it is better than continuing in the flesh (**Philippians 1:23**); and those who are in this state are present with the Lord (**II Corinthians 5:8**).

*11. The fact that the wicked dead are yet to be judged and cast into the lake of fire does not prove that they are now non-existent.*



It has pleased God to confine the spirits of the wicked dead in prison (**Isaiah 24:22; I Peter 3:19**), finally to bring them forth and consign them altogether to the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:11-15**). But that the wicked dead are already in conscious fiery torment we have previously shown (**Luke 16:19-31; Jude 7**). The final misery of the wicked, like the final bliss of the righteous, awaits the resurrection of the body; at which time the wicked will be cast, both body and soul, into Hell (**Matthew 10:28**).

*12. The fact that eternal life is received through faith does not prove that those who do not possess it do not have eternal existence.*

Eternal life in the Scriptures means more than eternal existence. It is in contrast with spiritual death (**John 5:24; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13; I John 3:14**). Spiritual death is inner slavery in a state of sin and separation from God, in which one is devoid of divine spirit life, although he possesses human spirit life. Eternal life is freedom and fellowship with God. Spiritual death makes one subject to the second death, which “is a continuation of spiritual death in another and timeless existence” (E. G. Robinson). Eternal life is exemption from the second death.

*13. The fact that immortality is revealed in the gospel and attained only in the resurrection does not prove the men by nature do not have eternal existence. See **Romans 2:7; I Corinthians 15: 53, 54; II Timothy 1:10**.*

While in both Classical Greek and English, “immortality” is used synonymously with “endless existence,” it is not so used in the Scripture. In the Scripture, immortality means incorruption, deathlessness. The disembodied human spirit is not deathless, for it is held in that state by death; nevertheless, as already shown abundantly, it has endless existence.

*14. The ascription of immortality to God alone (**I Timothy 6:16**) does not mean that no others possess eternal existence.*

This passage of Scripture means that God alone possesses essential and underived immortality. It does not deny that the elect angels now possess immortality (**Luke 20:36**). Neither does it prove that men by nature do not

possess endless existence. As already pointed out, immortality, in the Bible, means more than endless existence.

15. *The statements of Jesus in **John 3:13** and **13:33** do not teach that the righteous dead are non-existent.*

Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture. Therefore, the first passage above cannot be taken with absolute literalness. For in **II Kings 2:2, 11** it is twice stated that Elijah was taken up into Heaven. The meaning of Christ's statement here then, can be no more than that Jesus alone had ascended up to Heaven and came back to reveal the mysteries there communicated to Him. The second passage is explained by the thirty-sixth verse. Christ meant merely that for the time being those to whom He was talking could not follow Him; not that they were never to follow Him, for in that case they could never go to Heaven.

16. *The statement of Peter in **Acts 2:34** does not mean that David was non-existent.*

This statement concerning David is elucidated by the statement of Christ to Mary Magdalene concerning Himself (**John 20:17**). Christ said: "**I have not yet ascended unto the Father.**" But Christ's spirit had ascended to the Father (**Luke 23:43, 46; Revelation 2:7; 22:1, 2**). The meaning, then, of Peter's statement about David, and that of Christ about Himself is that they had not ascended in body.

17. *Old Testament Scriptures do not prove the non-existence of the dead.*

Scripture must be explained by Scripture. The incomplete and indistinct revelations of the Old Testament must be explained by the fuller and clearer revelations of the New Testament. And in the light of these fuller and clearer revelations some statements in the Old Testament concerning the state of the dead can be taken only as the language of appearance. Old Testament writers, not having a clear revelation concerning the state of the dead, often spoke of the dead from the standpoint of this life. It is in this sense that we are to

understand such Scriptures as **Job 3:11-19; 7:21, 22; Psalm 6:5; 88:11, 12; 115:17; Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20; 9:10; Isaiah 38:18.**

## **II. THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD ARE WITH THE LORD**

We have alluded already to the state of both the righteous and wicked dead. But, for sake of clearness, we restate the teaching of Scripture on this matter.

The righteous dead are with the Lord. This is proved by the following Scriptures:

**“Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; ... we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:6-8).** Thus for the righteous to be absent from the body - that is, to be in that state brought about by death - is to be in the Lord’s presence.

**“I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ” (Philippians 1:23).** Paul was unable to decide whether he preferred to remain in the flesh, that is, to continue to live here on earth, or to die in order to be with Christ. Thus, for the righteous, a departure from this life is an entrance into the presence of Christ.

To the dying repentant thief Jesus said: **“Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”** Paradise is the third heaven of the Jews, the place of God’s throne (**II Corinthians 12:2, 4**). Further proof of this is found in the fact that the tree of life is in paradise (**Revelation 2:7**), and it is near the throne of God (**Revelation 22:1, 2**).

## **III. THE WICKED DEAD ARE IN CONSCIOUS, FIERY TORMENT**

This is shown by the story of the rich man and Lazarus (**Luke 16:19-31**). Some reply that this is only a parable. But there is not one hint that it is. And the fact that one of the persons involved is named is inconsistent with all other parables. But suppose it is a parable. Did Christ misrepresent facts in

His parables? What purpose could He have had in doing so? Would not a misrepresentation of facts in the Scripture under discussion teach an error? Those who seek to evade this on the ground that it is a parable, show the hopelessness of their theory by such a miserable dodge.

This fact is also shown, as we have pointed out already, by the words of **Jude** in verse 7 of his epistle concerning the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. He describes them as “**suffering** (present tense) **the vengeance of eternal fire.**”

The place where the wicked are confined is called a prison (**I Peter 3:19**). They are as condemned criminals waiting in prison until the time of their being placed in God’s eternal penitentiary, the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:15**). This is to take place at the judgment of the great white throne. At that time both the body and the soul of the wicked will be cast into fire (**Matthew 10:28**).

#### **IV. NO PROBATION AFTER DEATH**

The notion that there is probation after death takes two forms. The first is contained in -

##### **1. THE CATHOLIC TEACHING CONCERNING PURGATORY.**

“The Catholic Church teaches the existence of Purgatory, where those who die with slight sins on their souls, or who have not satisfied the temporal punishment due their sins, are detained until they are cleansed sufficiently to enter Heaven” (*What The Protestant Bible Teaches About The Catholic Church*, Patterson).

The passages given to substantiate this teaching are: **Matthew 5:26; 12:32; I Corinthians 3:13-15; Revelation 21:27; I Peter 3:18.**

Before briefly commenting on these passages, it is in place to remark that the above teaching clearly contradicts all that the Scripture teaches about justification and salvation wholly by grace through faith in Christ. We have seen that God does not charge sins to the believer (**Romans 4:8; 8:33**). The

believer has been everlastingly acquitted of all sin. Furthermore, **Hebrews 9:27** clearly implies that no change is possible between death and the judgment. These passages, not to mention many others, show that Purgatory is a human invention.

As to the passages used to substantiate the doctrine of Purgatory: **Matthew 5:26** is manifestly to be taken as referring to the Roman prison. **Matthew 12:32** makes simply “a strong and expanded declaration” that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. To find here the implication that some sins may be forgiven in the age to come is to found a far-reaching doctrine on an uncertain inference. Such a doctrine, if true, would certainly find a clearer statement than this passage affords. In **I Corinthians 3:13-15** we have only a strong allusion to the testing of men’s works in the days of Christ. There is here no purging or cleansing, as Catholics suppose to take place in Purgatory; but only a stripping of unacceptable works. **Revelation 21:27** declares only that the wicked cannot enter New Jerusalem. The spirit and glorified body of the believer have no sin in them. The spirit is purged of all sin in regeneration. The last passage (**I Peter 3:19**) will find treatment under the next head.

The second form of this notion of probation after death lies mainly in -

## 2. THE BELIEF THAT CHRIST PREACHED TO THE WICKED DEAD.

This belief is based on **I Peter 3:19, 20**. This form of the notion of probation after death is different from the Catholic teaching of Purgatory, in that it includes only *unbelievers*, while the Catholic teaching includes only *believers*, as having probation. According to this form of the doctrine of probation after death, unbelievers will have opportunity to repent and be saved after death. This is argued at length in *What Happens After Death!* by William Striker, published by the American Tract Society.

It must be admitted that the common translations of **I Peter 3:19, 20** lend encouragement to this belief. But even at that, it is strange that Jesus

should have preached only to those who were disobedient during the days of Noah, or that, if all were preached to, these alone should be mentioned.

And the verb “**went**” cannot be insisted on as indicating that Jesus came into personal contact with the spirits in prison. “Great weight has been attached to this word in support of the view that Christ went in person to the prison of the lost. But the word does not necessarily imply personal locomotion (N. M. Williams, *Com. in loco*). Instances of a similar word where personal locomotion is not indicated are found in **Genesis 11:5-7** and **Ephesians 2:17**.

Furthermore it is not at all necessary to translate the Greek as in the common versions. The clause, “**who aforetime were disobedient**,” in the revised Version, is the translation of just two words in the Greek - “**apiethesasi pote**.” The first Greek word is a participle in the first aorist tense, expressing past action. The second Greek word is a *pronominal adverb*, expressing *indefinite time*, and may have the general meaning of *formerly*. If the participle “**apiethesasi**” were preceded by the article, then it would be definitely attributive; and the relative clause of the Revised Version would be unquestionably the correct translation. But this participle is without the article, therefore it can be considered predicate. See Robertson’s *Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 194. As a *predicate participle* it may be considered circumstantial, as expressing time relative to the main verb, which is “**ekeruxeit**” (**preached**), another first aorist. Now an aorist participle (especially when used, as in this case, with an aorist verb) may express “time coincident with that of the verb.” See Goodwin’s *Greek Grammar*, p. 276, also Robertson’s, p. 197.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that it makes perfectly good Greek to adopt the following translation. “... **in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, *WHILE FORMERLY THEY WERE DISOBEDIENT*, when the longsuffering of God waited ...**” This means that Christ in spirit preached in the days of Noah, through Noah and others, to the spirits that were in prison at the time Peter wrote, which spirits were at the time of preaching disobedient. For further and extended discussion of this

passage in line with the foregoing, see *An American Commentary on the New Testament*.

It may be asked why the King James, the Revised, and the Bible Union Versions all translate this construction with a relative clause. We answer that this is evidently because of the influence of the Vulgate, and the theological bias of Christendom that has favored the notion of probation after death. But the New Testament is everywhere opposed to the idea of probation after death, without which this supposed preaching to the wicked dead was useless. Such probation is not needed to vindicate the justice of God, for even the heathen without the gospel are “**without excuse**” (**Romans 1:20**).

**I Peter 4:6**, which is another passage used to teach probation after death, means that the gospel was preached to the dead while they were living.

## **Chapter 37 - THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**

The second coming of Christ has been the crowning expectation, the daystar, of the people of God since the promise of His coming was communicated to them. It has cheered, strengthened, and encouraged them in the darkest hours. Christ and the apostles implanted in the hearts of early believers the fact of Christ's coming and its immanency as a motive for godly living and faithful service.

We should let neither the perversions of fanatics, nor the denials of critics, nor the controversy over the details of the second coming of Christ drive us from a careful study of God's revelation concerning it, nor from a proper appreciation of it.

### **I. THE FACT OF CHRIST'S COMING**

The Second Coming Of Christ is -

#### **1. FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS.**

**Isaiah 11:1-11; Zechariah 14:3-5; Jude 14.** Many Old Testament prophecies, as is the case with **Isaiah 11:1-11**, refer to both His first and His second advent to the earth.

#### **2. ALLUDED TO BY JOHN THE BAPTIST.**

**Luke 3:3-6.** The language of this passage is not fully applicable to the first advent of Christ. Like much prophecy it has a double application. See **Malachi 3:1** for a similar prophecy.

#### **3. PROMISED BY CHRIST HIMSELF.**

**John 14:2, 3.**

#### **4. DECLARED BY ANGELS.**

**Acts 1:11.**



## 5. TAUGHT BY THE APOSTLES.

- (1) Matthew. **Matthew 24:37, 42, 44.**
- (2) Mark. **Mark 13:26.**
- (3) Luke. **Luke 21:27.**
- (4) John. **I John 3:1-3.**
- (5) James. **James 5:7.**
- (6) Peter. **I Peter 1:7, 13.**
- (7) Paul. **I Thessalonians 4:15-17.**
- (8) The Writer to the Hebrews. **Hebrews 9:28.**
- (9) Jude. **Jude 14.**

## II. THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S COMING

Having ascertained the fact of Christ's coming, it is important to know the nature of it; for, without a knowledge of the nature of His coming, a knowledge of the fact of it is practically valueless. It is needful, in studying the nature of Christ's coming, to consider negatively and then positively.

### 1. NEGATIVELY CONSIDERED.

Christ's coming is not to be -

- (1) *Successive, as in Death.*

The idea that one's death is the second coming of Christ for him is the sheerest nonsense in the light of God's Word. There is not that accompanying death that answers to that which the Bible reveals as accompanying the second coming of Christ.

(2) *Continuous, as in the Spread of Christianity.*

Modernism would have it that Christ will never return bodily to the earth, but that He is “coming as fast as He can get into this world,” in the spread of Christianity. Modernists hold that Jesus pictured His return in the terms of the conceptions of the people, but that He did not intend that His words be understood literally. Of course, such a notion as this can be held only by those who deny the inspiration of the Bible. For that reason, we who believe in the inspiration of the Bible need not note it seriously.

(3) *Spiritual, as in -*

A. The Coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was in no sense the coming of Christ. Christ said He would send the Spirit.

B. The Destruction of Jerusalem.

In the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, we had a typical fulfillment of what is said in the Bible about the second coming of Christ, inasmuch as His coming will be accompanied by another siege of Jerusalem. See **Revelation 16:12-21; 19:17-21; Zechariah 13:8-14:3**. The destruction of Jerusalem was a type of this latter siege. Then, in the destruction of Jerusalem, we had a spiritual fulfillment of the promise of Christ’s coming, in that this destruction struck the final death-blow to Judaism, and marked the coming of the kingdom of God with power. Up until the destruction of Jerusalem Christianity seemed too many as a mere adjunct to Judaism. With the destruction of Jerusalem Christianity came into its own.

We believe it is in the light of these facts that we are to understand Jesus when He said: “There be some standing here which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (**Matthew 16:28**). See also **Mark 9:1** and **Luke 9:27**. The same is true, we believe, of the following words also: “**This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled**” (**Matthew 24:34**). See also **Mark 13:30** and **Luke 21:32**.

But there was not in the destruction of Jerusalem an actual coming of Christ. And the fact that after the destruction of Jerusalem we have additional references to His coming as future makes this indisputable.

## 2. POSITIVELY CONSIDERED.

The coming of Christ is to be -

### (1) *Bodily.*

**Acts 1:11.** His ascension was bodily, and the angel promised that His return should be in the same manner. Other passages that show that Christ's coming is to be bodily are: **Zechariah 14:4, 5; Matthew 25:31; John 14:3; Philippians 3:20; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 19: 11-21.**

### (2) *Visible.*

**Matthew 24:27.** All the passages above imply the visibility of His coming. But the passage just given under this latter head shows that His coming (in one of its phases) will be strikingly visible to the whole world.

### (3) *As A Thief.*

**I Thessalonians 5:1-4.** This passage describes His coming as it will be to the wicked, but specifies that it is not to be such to the righteous.

### (4) *In Indescribable Glory and Splendor.*

**Matthew 16:27; 24:29, 30; Mark 8:38; Titus 2:13; Revelation 19: 11-16.**

### (5) *Twofold.*

The coming of Christ will consist of two phases. Let us note them:

#### A. The First Phase.

This phase will be -

(a) In the air. **I Thessalonians 4:15-17**. There is no hint here that He will come on the earth at that time.

(b) For His people. **John 14:3**.

(c) As a bridegroom. **Matthew 25:1-10**. The marriage and the marriage supper (**Revelation 19:9**) are typical of the consummated blessings of salvation. Saved people make up the bride (**Revelation 21:2-27**).

B. The Second Phase.

This phase will be -

(a) To the earth. **Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 25:31**.

(b) With His people. **Zechariah 14:5; Jude 14; Revelation 19:14**.

(c) As a destroyer. **II Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:8**.

(d) As a judge. **Matthew 21:31-46**.

(e) As a king to conquer and to reign. **Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 19:11, 16; 20:1-5**.

### **III. THE TIME OF CHRIST'S COMING**

We do not refer here to the date of His coming. The business of date-setting is the work of religious charlatans. We have reference only to the relation of His coming to time.

The time of Christ's coming is represented in the Scripture as -

1. *Unknown to all except the Father.*

**Mark 13:32; Matthew 25:13**. Now the Son, equal once again with the Father, may know the hour; but in His flesh, when He regarded absolute

equality with God not as a thing to be grasped (**Philippians 2:6** - R. V.), He did not know it.

2. *Uncertain to Men.*

**Matthew 25:13.** No signs have been given that are explicit enough for any man to be assured that He will come at any particular time.

3. *Imminent.*

By the coming of Christ being imminent we mean that it is “threatening to occur at any moment.” Saved people are to be ever watching and looking for it (**Matthew 25:13; Titus 2:13**). It is represented in the Scripture as being the next dispensational event. We will discuss this further in a later chapter.

4. *When not Expected.*

**Matthew 24:44, 50; Luke 12:40, 46.**

5. *A Time of Spiritual Coldness, Sensuality, and Wickedness.*

**Luke 18:8; 17:26-30; Matthew 24:12; II Timothy 3:1-5.** When Christ comes He will not find a converted world where righteousness rules.

#### **IV. THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST’S COMING**

The purpose of Christ’s coming will be twofold because it will have to do with two classes. We note that purpose as it affects -

1. THE RIGHTEOUS.

As the coming of Christ affects the righteous, it is for the purpose of -

(1) *Raising the Dead.*

**I Thessalonians 4:16.** There is no hint whatsoever that this resurrection will not include all the dead in Christ. We have no patience with the notion

that only the most faithful will share in this resurrection. Every passage that speaks of it implies a total resurrection of the righteous dead. See **I Corinthians 15:23**; **Revelation 20:5, 6**. Paul's words in **Philippians 3:11** are similar to other utterances of his, and express his concern to prove that he was truly in Christ. See **II Peter 1:10**.

*(2) The Translation of the Living.*

**I Corinthians 15:51, 52**; **I Thessalonians 4:17**. We believe also that this win include all believers on earth at the appearance of Christ in the air. We have no patience with the "partial rapture" theory. Those who believe in such are apt to reply that we who do not believe in a partial rapture and partial resurrection of the saved destroy the ground of Christ's accountability. We do not destroy the scriptural ground of this; but, be that as it may, we are more concerned in knowing what God has revealed than we are in making our own theories and exploiting them. And those who teach a partial rapture and partial resurrection of believers, lower the standard of Christian living far below the scriptural level. God's Word teaches that all regenerated people overcome (**I John 5:4**), and the choicest blessings are promised to all overcomers.

We believe the glorified bodies of the saints will be like the ascension body of our Lord (**Philippians 3:21**; **I John 3:2**). Jesus evidently ascended in a visible body, and the angels said He would come back as He went. And when He comes back we are going to be like Him. The glorified body then will be a body visible to physical eyes, just as Christ was visible after His resurrection. But that body will be without sin and corruption.

*(3) The Rapture of All Believers.*

**I Thessalonians 4:17**. The translated living and the resurrected dead will all be caught up to meet Christ in the air.

*(4) The Judgment of Believer's Works.*

**I Corinthians 3:12-15**; **II Corinthians 5:10**; **II Timothy 4:8**. The believer's sins have been judged already in Christ **John 5:24**; **Romans 8:1**,

**33.** Hence no mention of his sins are to be made in the judgment. They are no longer charged to him (**Romans 4:8**), and are remembered no more (**Hebrews 8:12**). The idea of some that believers will be required in the judgment to tell why they did this or that and why they did not do this or that dishonors the death of Christ and denies the Word of God. We shall give an account to God, but this shall be done in our own hearts, without one accusation or word of rebuke from Christ. There is nothing penal about the judgment for the Christian. **II Corinthians 5:10** means no more than that we shall receive reward for our faithfulness and suffer loss for our unfaithfulness. Grace and penalty are mutually exclusive.

*(5) The Marriage of Christ to the Church.*

**Matthew 25:1-10; Revelation 19:7-9.** At present the church is only espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin (**II Corinthians 11:2**). The marriage will not take place until Christ returns.

2. THE WICKED.

As the coming of Christ affects the wicked, it is for the purpose of -

*(1) Slaying the Living and Casting them into Hell.*

**Revelation 19:19-21; Zechariah 14:3-12; Jeremiah 25:15-33; Isaiah 24:17-21; 26:20, 21; 34:1, 2.**

*(2) Judging them Because of the Way They Treat Israel.*

**Matthew 25:41-46; Joel 3:2.** Their attitude toward Israel will manifest their attitude toward Christ through unbelief.

The salvation of those living on earth at the revelation of Christ to reign on the earth (the second stage of His coming) will have been manifested by their treatment of the Jewish heralds of the cross during the great tribulation period. Of these things we shall see more presently. These will not be saved by treating these brethren of Christ kindly, but they will thus betoken their attitude toward Christ and hence their salvation.

*(3) Finally raising the dead and casting them into the lake of fire.*

**Revelation 20:12-15.** This is to take place, not immediately after the coming of Christ, but at the end of the little season during which Satan will be loosed after the millennium.

The wicked will have a resurrection body (**Matthew 10:28**), but of its nature we have little upon which to base our opinion. It will be capable of suffering, but will be indestructible. And it will not be righteous, as will the body of saved.



## Chapter 38 - THE TWO PHASES OF CHRIST'S COMING

In the foregoing chapter we have pointed out that Christ's coming is to consist of two phases. We also briefly pointed out some contrasts. In this chapter we are to discuss this matter more thoroughly.

We regard the fact of the two phases of Christ's coming as the key that is necessary to unlock the meaning of many passages of Scripture. Without a recognition of this fact the passages dealing with this great event are confusing.

### I. THE TWO PHASES CONTRASTED

1. The first phase will be in the air (**I Thessalonians 4:15-17**); the second phase will be to the earth (**Zechariah 14:4**).

2. The first phase of His coming will be for His people (**Matthew 25:6-10; John 14:2**); the second phase will be with His people (**Jude 14; Revelation 17:14**).

3. The first phase His coming will be as a bridegroom (**Matthew 25:6-10**); the second phase will be His coming as a king to judge and to reign (**Psalm 96:13; Zechariah 14:9; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 19:15; 20:4**).

4. At the first phase the righteous will be taken from among the wicked (**Matthew 25:6-10; I Thessalonians 4:15-17**); at the second phase the wicked will be taken from among the righteous (**Matthew 13:40-42**).

5. At the first phase the righteous on earth will meet the Lord in the air to go away into Heaven with Him (**I Thessalonians 4:17; John 14:2**); at the second phase they simply enter into the kingdom here on the earth (**Matthew 13:43; Matthew 25:34**).

6. At the first phase unbelievers are merely left on the earth (**Matthew 25:10-12**); at the second phase they are destroyed and cast into everlasting fire (**Matthew 25:41, 46**).

7. In connection with the first phase there will be a resurrection, the resurrection of the righteous (**I Thessalonians 4:15-17**); in connection with the second phase there will be no specific resurrection (**Matthew 25:31-46**).

8. The first phase is ever imminent (**Mark 13:35, 36; James 5:8; Revelation 22:12**); the second phase is to be preceded by certain definite things (**Matthew 24:14-29; II Thessalonians 2:1-8**).

## **II. THE TWO PHASES SEPARATED AS TO TIME**

Even a casual consideration of the foregoing contrasts shows that the two phases of Christ's coming cannot occur simultaneously or in close connection. But note these specific evidences that a period of time will intervene between them:

1. Since at the first phase the righteous will be taken from among the wicked and at the second phase the wicked will be taken from among the righteous (see No. 4 above), it is impossible for the two phases occur in close connection. All the righteous will be taken away at the first phase. Hence there must be sufficient time between the first and second phases for some to be saved.

2. Since at the first phase Christ is to receive His disciples into the "many mansions prepared for them in Heaven (**John 14:2**) and at the second phase the righteous on earth are to enter into the kingdom on earth (see. No. 5 above), it is again impossible that both phases occur in close connection. Those who enter into the kingdom at the second phase must be saved after the first phase.

3. Since the first phase may occur at any time (so far as man knows) and the second phase must be preceded by specific events (see No. 8 above), they cannot occur in close connection. One is imminent and the other is not. Hence one must be farther away than the other.

4. There must be sufficient time between the two phases for the "**Man of Sin**" (**II Thessalonians 2:3**) to be revealed and to run his course. He cannot be revealed until the hinderer is taken out of the way (**II Thessalonians 2:6**,

7). The hinderer is the Holy Spirit indwelling every saved person (**I Corinthians 6:19**).

That the Holy Spirit is the hinderer is proved by the personal pronoun that is applied to him and also in two ways by the process of elimination. The only other theory worth considering that has been advanced is that the Roman government was the hinderer. But the Roman government was taken out of the way some fifteen centuries ago, and the “**Man of Sin**” has not yet been revealed. Moreover the Roman government could not prevent the revelation of such a being as he is represented as being, but would rather contribute toward his revelation. The taking out of the way of the Holy Spirit will be accomplished when Christ takes His people out of the earth, which will be at the first phase of His coming. Sufficient time must elapse, therefore, between the first phase and the second for this monster to run his course, for he is to be destroyed at the second phase (**II Thessalonians 2:8**).

5. Also there must be sufficient time between the two Phases for all the events recorded in **Revelation 7:19**. This section of Scripture should include chapter six also, no doubt, but we can be sure that it must begin with chapter seven. For in chapter seven we have the sealing of the servants of God on earth, and only Jews are sealed. This shows that the first phase of Christ's coming has taken place already; for, otherwise, there would certainly be some Gentile servant's of God on the earth.

The hundred and forty-four thousand Jews mentioned as being sealed in this chapter are evidently those that will be saved immediately after the appearance of Christ in the air. And then, to confirm this view, immediately following the account of the sealing of these Jews, we have the innumerable multitude in Heaven (**Revelation 7:9**). These, manifestly, are those that were lifted from the earth at Christ's appearance in the air.

Then the second phase of Christ's coming does not appear until we reach the nineteenth chapter, and there is every evidence of a general chronological order. Thus the events of the intervening chapters are to take place during the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming.

Our opponents scoff at the idea of a period of time between the two phases of Christ's coming. They say we teach that there will be two comings instead of one. They can call it what they will. The New Testament speaks of but one coming, but it clearly reveals that this one coming will consist of two phases, separated by a period of time. We prefer to believe what it teaches, regardless of their perversions.

### **III. THE FIRST PHASE OF CHRIST'S COMING IS IMMINENT**

We have now shown that Christ's coming is to consist of two phases, and that these phases are to be separated by a period of time. We undertake here to prove that the first phase of His coming is imminent. Note that we are not attempting to prove that Christ's coming in judgment and to reign is imminent. So far as we know, all unfulfilled prophecies referring to this age (and there are many), without violence to them or any other Scriptures, may be fulfilled in the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming. They must be fulfilled before the second phase of Christ's coming, but we know of no prophecy that must be fulfilled before Christ comes for His bride.

Webster defines the word *imminent* as meaning "*threatening to occur immediately; near at hand; impending.*" We maintain that this is exactly the way God has taught in His Word that believers should regard the coming of their Lord to receive them unto Himself. The Scripture teaches that this event is ever "near at hand," and that believers, therefore, should ever be in the attitude of watchful expectancy. Note the following passages:

**1. Mark 13:35, 36 - "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping."**

Thayer says that the meaning of watch in this and similar passages is "*to take heed, lest through remissness and indolence some destructive calamity overtake one.*" Can there be any sensible reason for watching for an event, unless, so far as we know, it may take place now?

**2. James 5:8 - "Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."**

The Greek word for “**draweth nigh**” is in the pluperfect tense, and means, according to Thayer, “*has come nigh, is at hand.*” A similar form of the same word is said by Thayer to be used “*concerning things imminent and soon to come to pass.*” The verb in the above passage is translated “**is at hand**” nine times in the King James Version. **Matthew 26:46** furnishes a good example of its use.

**3. Revelation 22:12 - “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be.”**

The word in the passage for quickly does not mean suddenly, as some would have it; but it means “quickly, speedily, without delay” (Thayer). Good samples of its use may be found in **Matthew 5:25; 28:7, 8; Mark 16:8; John 11:29**. In the above passage, the coming of Christ is spoken of as God sees it; and a thousand years is as one day with God (**I Peter 3:8**). And it is so represented that the time of it may be uncertain to believers. So far as they know, it may occur at any moment. Therefore, to them it is ever imminent.

Many passages show the practical value of a belief in the imminent coming of Christ. Prominent among them is James 5:8, as given above. This passage shows that a belief in the imminent coming of Christ is an incentive to patience and strength in the midst of suffering and afflictions.

## Chapter 39 - THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD

We have seen that the second coming of Christ consists of two phases, and that these two phases are to be separated by a period of time. The author has stated his belief that this period of time will be the time of the future great tribulation. His reasons for this belief will appear in the course of this chapter. We shall study this period under the following heads:

### I. THE SCRIPTURES THAT DESCRIBE THIS PERIOD

The first Scripture we desire to notice is **Matthew 24:21, 22**, and reads as follows. **“For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved; but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened.”** That these words cannot be wholly referred to the sufferings of the Jews at the time of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A. D. 70, is shown by verses **29** to **31**. These verses tell us that immediately after the tribulation of those days Christ will come in power and great glory. This clearly refers to the second phase of Christ’s coming. Nothing that attended or resulted from the destruction of Jerusalem can fully satisfy these verses. It is true that according to verse **34** the destruction of Jerusalem brought about either a spiritual or a typical fulfillment of all that is predicted in this part of the discourse.

The destruction of Jerusalem struck the death-blow to Judaism, and marked the coming of the kingdom of God with power, as Jesus had foretold (**Mark 9:1; Matthew 16:28; Luke 9:27**). This was a spiritual fulfillment of all Christ said about His coming in this chapter. And the siege of Jerusalem (A. D. 70) brought about a typical fulfillment of all He said about Jerusalem in this chapter. But the literal fulfillment of that which Christ said about His second coming, and the anti-type of the siege of Jerusalem are yet to come. No believer in verbal inspiration can find in the destruction of Jerusalem a full and complete satisfaction of the prophecy of this chapter. Its ultimate reference must be to the final siege of Jerusalem in the battle of Armageddon (**Revelation 16:13-21; 19:11-21; Zechariah 12:2-9; 14:1-7, 12-15**), and to the personal and bodily coming of the Lord, as promised in **Acts 1:11**.

But in **Revelation 6-19** we believe we have a far more extended and detailed description of this period. We take these chapters as descriptive of this period for the two following reasons:

1. *As we saw in the last chapter, we have in chapter seven the sealing of the servants of God in the forehead; and only Jews are sealed.*

This shows that all Gentile believers (and previous Jewish believers) have been taken out of the earth, and, therefore, that the rapture of the saints (which will occur at the first phase of Christ's coming - **I Thessalonians 4:15-17**) has already taken place. Then the second phase of Christ's coming is clearly pictured in **Revelation 19:11-21**. Therefore we take the intervening section of the book as describing the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming. And we relate chapter six to this period because we regard the riders of the four horses (**6:2-8**) the same as the four angels (**7:13**) whose work is restrained until after the sealing of the servants of God.

2. *Then in Revelation 7:14 we have a reference to the great tribulation period as being in progress.*

**Revelation 7:14** reads: "**These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their clothes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**" These words were spoken of the numberless multitude in verse **9**. The original here is very emphatic. It says literally: "**These are they that are coming out of tribulation, the great one.**" It is not just tribulation in general that is spoken of here; it is a definite and particular tribulation, viz., the great one. In this verse the present participle, "**are coming out,**" shows the great tribulation to be in progress. Thus we assign this section of the book to the great tribulation period.

## **II. THE LENGTH OF THIS PERIOD**

It is our conviction that this period will be seven years in length. We hold this conviction because the combined time of the prophesying of the two witnesses (**Revelation 11:3**) and the career of the Beast (**Revelation 13:5**) is approximately seven years. Note that the witnesses are to prophesy "**a thousand two hundred and three score days**" (approximately three years

and a half); then the Beast is to arise and kill them (**Revelation 11:7**), and is to continue “**forty and two months**” (**Revelation 13:5**). It is our opinion that the witnesses will begin testifying soon after the rapture, and since the Beast is to be destroyed when Christ comes to judge and make war (**Revelation 19:11-21; II Thessalonians 2:8**), we conclude that the length of the intervening period is to be found by the above method. It will be noted that we take the **thousand, two hundred, and three score days** and the **forty-two months** literally. We do this in harmony with the rule mentioned in our last chapter. We find no reason for taking it otherwise either in the passages themselves, or in their context, or in any other Scripture.

We also hold the great tribulation to be seven years in length because we regard it as being Daniel’s seventieth week (**Daniel 9:27**).

### **III. THE HORRORS OF THIS PERIOD**

This period is to be the “day” of God’s wrath. During this period the God to whom vengeance belongeth will avenge Himself of the treatment this world has accorded His Son and His saints. He will fully avenge His elect (**Luke 18:7; Revelation 6:9, 10**). He will pour out the vials of His wrath to the last bitter dregs upon this old sin-cursed and devil-darkened earth. The earth will be wrested from the Devil and his people and given to the people of God (**Matthew 5:5**).

### **IV. WILL ANY BE SAVED DURING THIS PERIOD?**

This is a much controverted question, but we unhesitatingly give an affirmative answer as our opinion. In chapter eleven, as we have seen already, we have the mention of God’s two witnesses. We have stated already that we believe these two witnesses will prophecy during the interim between the two phases of Christ’s coming. We believe they will preach the gospel and announce the millennial kingdom, just as Christ and the apostles preached the gospel and announced the spiritual kingdom (**the kingdom of God**) and the temporal phase of the kingdom of Heaven. We can think of no other message God would have for the world during this period.



And we hold that the one hundred and forty-four thousand Jews of **Revelation 7** will be saved immediately after the beginning of the great tribulation period.

Then, because of the present tense in verse **14**, we regard the multitude in **Revelation 7:9-17** as containing some who are saved during this period, and who, having been martyred or having otherwise died, are immediately caught up to Heaven, somewhat after the same manner as the two witnesses in **Revelation 11:7-12**.

Also we take the sheep in the judgment of the nations (**Matthew 24:31-46**) to be people who have believed and been saved during this period.

It may be asked how people will be saved during this period. We answer that they will be saved in exactly the same way that all others have been saved. God has never had, and never will have, but one way of salvation. That one way is by grace through faith. "*But,*" someone may say, "*how can people be saved after the Holy Spirit has been taken out of the world?*" The answer is that they will be saved just as they were before the day of Pentecost. During the great tribulation period the Holy Spirit will have access to the world just as He did before the day of Pentecost.

## Chapter 40 - THE MAN OF SIN

We have already touched somewhat upon the Man of Sin in previous chapters, but now we come to study him more closely. Before proceeding further, let the student turn and read the following Scriptures: **II Thessalonians 2:3-10; Revelation 11:1-7; 13; 16:13-16; 17; 19:17-20; Daniel 7:8-27; 8:8-25**. These last two Scripture passages have reference to Antioches Epiphanes, the type of the Man of Sin.

### I. THE IDENTITY OF THE MAN OF SIN

#### 1. HE IS TO BE AN ACTUAL INDIVIDUAL.

As stated before, we interpret any passage of Scripture literally, unless there is something in the passage, or in the context or in some other Scripture that indicates a figurative meaning. We find absolutely no reason for taking the description of the Man of Sin otherwise than literally. No institution or agency could sit in the temple of God. See **II Thessalonians 2:4**.

#### 2. HE AND THE BEAST OF REVELATION ARE TO BE THE SAME INDIVIDUAL.

We hold this conviction for the following reasons:

(1) *Both are to run their course during the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming.*

Below we show this to be true of the Man of Sin. And in a previous chapter we have shown that the section of the book in which is recorded the career of the Beast belongs to that period.

(2) *Their activities are similarly described.*

**II Thessalonians 2:4-10; Revelation 13:6-8.**

(3) *Both are to be destroyed at the final coming of Christ to the earth.*

## **II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:11-20.**

3. HE IS TO BE A WORLD KING WITH HIS SEAT OF POWER AT ROME.

See **Revelation 17:1-11**. We hold the seven mountains (verse **9**) to be the seven celebrated hills of Rome. The five fallen kings we hold to be Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Greece. The one that then was we believe was pagan Rome. The one that was yet to come was “Christian” Rome, or the so-called Holy Roman Empire. The former six kingdoms (the term for kings meaning either kings or kingdoms) culminated in the seventh. The Beast is to be the eighth king and his kingdom will combine all the power and evil of the seven. The deadly wound on one of the heads of the Beast (**Revelation 13:3**) we take to represent the fall of Rome, A. D. 476. We refer the healing of the wound to the reestablishment of the Roman Empire with its capital at Rome under the reign of the Beast. The sea out of which the Beast is seen to arise (**Revelation 13:1; 17:1, 15**) we take as representing the seething, turbulent, revolutionary mass of humanity to which the inhabitants of the earth will be reduced by the rapture of the saints.

We find no satisfactory ground for holding that the Man of Sin will be Judas reincarnated. It is certain that God would not actively work such a reincarnation. And the Devil has not the power to work it. He can possess and dominate men, but he cannot actually incarnate himself, nor can he reincarnate his dead followers. The basis of the notion that the Man of Sin will be Judas reincarnated, the fact that he was called “**a devil**” (**John 6:70**), and “**the son of perdition**” (**John 17:12**), and is said to have gone to “**his own place**” (**Acts 1:25**), is insufficient to establish such a radical idea. We regard this and some other notions concerning the Man of Sin as fanciful.

Nor is there scriptural ground for referring to the Man of Sin as the Antichrist in any exclusive sense. John alone, in his epistles, uses the term; and he applied it to the false teachers of his day that denied the humanity of Christ (**I John 2:18, 22; 4:3, 4; II John 7**). And he said there were many of them then in the world. The prefix “anti” may signify against or it may signify instead of. There is no evidence that John gave it the latter meaning. He used

it exclusively as applying to those who were against Christ; those who denied that Jesus was the Christ. [53] There is no evidence that the false teachers referred to by John tried to establish any one of their number as the Christ.

The Man of Sin will be an antichrist, but identifying him as “**the Antichrist**,” in an exclusive sense, and then taking the prefix to mean instead of and inferring that he will be a Jew that will pose as the Christ is unwarranted. The Man of Sin will sit in the temple and demand worship, but he could do that without posing as the Messiah. As a type of this, Antiochus Epiphanes erected the statue of Jupiter Olyniphus on the altar of burnt-offering. The seven forerunners of the Beast or Man of Sin were not Jews. We hold that the Man of Sin will be a Roman (Italian).

## II. THE TIME OF HIS CAREER

### 1. HE IS TO BE REVEALED IN THE INTERIM BETWEEN THE TWO PHASES OF CHRIST’S COMING.

As we have pointed out previously, no individual that fulfilled the description of the Man of Sin has yet been revealed on the earth. Some think that the papal line is the Man of Sin. But no pope has ever sat in the temple of God.

The Vatican is not the temple of God. Apostate Christianity is not the temple of God. Instead it is the habitation of devils (**Revelation 18:2**). The revelation of the Man of Sin is now being hindered by some individual (**II Thessalonians 2:6, 7**). We believe this hinderer is the Holy Spirit indwelling every true believer (**I Corinthians 6:19**) and every true New Testament church (**I Corinthians 3:16**). It is the Holy Spirit’s restraining influence exercised through believers that now prevents the revelation of the Man of Sin. Thus believers are the salt of the earth (**Matthew 5:13**). The taking out of the way of the hinderer, then, will mean the removal of the Holy Spirit from the earth. [54] This will require the taking out of the earth of every true believer. Since this will occur at the first phase of Christ’s coming (**I Thessalonians 4:15-17**), the revelation of the Man of Sin cannot come about

until after the first phase of Christ's coming. And since he is to be consumed and destroyed at the second phase of Christ's coming (**II Thessalonians 2:8**), he must be revealed and run his course during the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming.

## 2. THE LENGTH OF HIS CAREER WILL BE FORTY-TWO MONTHS.

**Revelation 13:5.** He is to be revealed about the middle of the great tribulation period and to continue through the latter half of it. We interpret the forty-two months literally because that seems most suitable in view of all other indications of time. Three years and a half answers well to "a time, times, and a half," during which he (evidently the man of sin, typified in Daniel) shall "scatter the power of the holy people (the Jews)" (**Daniel 7:25; 12:7**), and during which the woman (whom we take to represent the Jewish nation) is to abide in the wilderness (**Revelation 12:14**).

### III. HIS ACTIVITIES

#### 1. HE WILL SIT IN THE TEMPLE, PRETENDING TO BE GOD.

See **II Thessalonians 2:4**. The temple that the Man of Sin will sit in is doubtless the restored Jewish temple, which will be the center of worship during the millennium.

Every New Testament church is a temple of God (**I Corinthians 3:16**). But this could not be what is meant in **II Thessalonians 2:4**. To be seated in a local church would not be sufficient to satisfy the ambition of this monster of iniquity. And surely the Scripture indicates a more daring and far-reaching exaltation than this. The reference in **II Thessalonians 2:4** could not be to apostate Christianity, for, as we have remarked already, apostate Christianity is not the temple of God; but instead is the habitation of devils (**Revelation 18:2**). The reference is certainly to the Jewish temple that is to be restored by the Jews at Jerusalem some time during the great tribulation period. This, it seems clear, is the temple that comes into view in **Romans 11:1, 2**.

We do not believe that the Man of Sin will sit personally in the temple, but will be represented there by his image (**Revelation 13:14-17**). It is thus that he will pretend to be God, and not by posing as the Messiah. If he desired to be recognized as the Messiah, common sense would forbid the allowance of demanding worship of his image.

2. HE WILL CAUSE INDUSTRY TO PROSPER.

**Daniel 8:25.** He will give the world the newest of all “new deals”; will be a great industrial leader.

3. HE WILL DO MANY PRESUMPTUOUS THINGS.

**Daniel 7:25; 8:10-12, 23, 24.**

4. HE WILL SUPPORT AND RECEIVE THE PATRONAGE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

**Revelation 17:2-6.** We take the great whore to represent the Roman Catholic Church (**Revelation 17:1-7**). Her clothing and ornaments picture the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church. The abominations are her unscriptural doctrines and practices. Fornication represents her spiritual adultery in being espoused to the Pope instead of to Christ. The harlots of which she is the mother are Protestant denominations. Her being “**drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus**” pictures her persecution against true believers (particularly Baptists) through the dark and middle ages.

From **Revelation 18:4** we find that even at the very hour of her destruction she will have some of God’s people in her, as she doubtless has at this time. And God’s command now is the same that it will be at the end: “**Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues.**” We say that the Beast will support the Roman Catholic Church because we first see the whore riding on the Beast (**Revelation 17:1-12**). We say the Beast will receive the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church because we regard the second Beast (**Revelation 14:11-17**) as the Pope. Note that this second Beast has the appearance of a

lamb. This represents the professed sanctity of the Pope. Note also that, in contrast to the first Beast, the second Beast will arise out of the earth (**Revelation 13:11**). The first Beast will arise out of (the sea) turmoil and revolution. The second one will have a solid, compact, orderly source - the Roman Catholic system.

5. BUT FINALLY HE AND HIS TEN KINGS WILL TURN AGAINST THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND DESTROY HER.

**Revelation 17:16, 17.**

6. HE WILL PERSECUTE THE JEWS.

**Daniel 7:25; Revelation 11:7; 13:7.** This will doubtless be occasioned by the refusal of the Jews to bow to his authority and to worship his image.

7. FINALLY HE WILL LEAD THE KINGS OF THE EARTH AND THEIR ARMIES AGAINST JERUSALEM FOR THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON.

**Revelation 16:13-16; 19:17-21.** We regard the false prophet mentioned in these passages as being identical with the second Beast - the pope, who, after the destruction of the Roman Catholic Church, will remain in league with the Beast. The battle of Armageddon will engage our attention in the next chapter.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[53] “This position was held in two forms, (1) that Jesus Christ was not literal (**5:2**), and His humanity being denied, the Messiahship was denied, since the former was necessary to the latter; (2) that Jesus and the Logos were only temporarily and, as it were, mechanically connected; and as the Logos and the Messiah were held to be essentially identical, so Jesus could not be the Christ.”

[54] We refer here only to the removal of his special presence as abiding in believers and the church, which began at Pentecost. This will mark the end of the special dispensation of the Spirit. His ministry will then revert back to what it was before Pentecost.



## **Chapter 41 - THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON**

Many people have a mistaken notion, if they have any notion at all, about the Battle of Armageddon. Some thought the late World War was the Battle of Armageddon.

Others have advanced the idea that it will be a war between Catholics and non-Catholics. Still others teach that it is to be a mere spiritual conflict between good and evil without any literal reality. Yet others confuse it with the siege that is alluded in **Revelation 20:8**, which is to be after the Millennium. All of these ideas are unscriptural and unworthy of serious consideration.

Let us study this battle by noting the following:

### **I. WHY THE BATTLE IS SO NAMED**

The battle is named for the place in which it is to be fought. See **Revelation 16:13-16**. The Revised Version renders the name Har-Magedon. Har-Magedon is defined as meaning the “mountain of Megiddo,” which is located in the southwestern edge of Galilee. By this is meant, perhaps, not merely the mountain itself, but the mountain and the surrounding section. This section is described as “a high tableland surrounded by hills” (Carpenter). It forms a pass to the North, and so was famous as a battlefield. This vicinity was the scene of two notable victories and three notable deaths. The victories were that of Barak over the Canaanites and that of Gideon over Midianites. The deaths were that of Saul, that of Ahaziah (slain by Jehu), and that of Josiah. But the most famous event of all is yet to occur there.

### **II. WHO THE COMBATANTS ARE TO BE**

The combatants are to be the kings of the earth and their armies under the leadership of the Beast and false prophets on one side, and King of Kings and Lord of Lords and His people - the Jews and the glorified saints - on the other. See **Joel 2:11; Zechariah 12:2, 3, 8, 9; 14:3; Revelation 19:11-21**.

### **III. THE DETAILS OF THE BATTLE**

Near the close of the great tribulation period the Beast and the false prophet (the second beast - **Revelation 13:11**) will send out their emissaries to stir up the nations of the earth to gather against Jerusalem (**Revelation 16:13-16; 19:19**). In this they will be but fulfilling the purpose of God, for it is His design to gather all nations together for the purpose of judging them (**Joel 3:2**) and pouring out upon them His indignation and fierce anger (**Zephaniah 3:8**). The armies of the nations will be allowed to capture Jerusalem and work great destruction therein (**Zechariah 14:2**). In the approach of the armies and the capture of the city, two-thirds of the Jews in Jerusalem that are not killed will be either captured or driven out of the city (**Zechariah 14:2**). Then the Lord will appear to deliver His people (**Zechariah 14:4**). Then, judging from the fact that **Revelation 16:16** says that the nations are to be gathered in a place called Armageddon, we take it that the armies of the nations, alarmed by the events that will presage the coming of the Lord, will desert Jerusalem and retreat northward. At Armageddon the Lord will overtake them and visit His vengeance upon them as described in **Isaiah 66:15, 16; Zechariah 14:12, 13; Revelation 16:17-21; 19:20, 21**.

#### **IV. THE VENGEANCE OF THE LORD IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BATTLE WILL BE WORLDWIDE**

The vengeance of the Lord will be visited, not only upon armies of the nations that come against Jerusalem, but also upon all the wicked throughout the world. We believe this is shown in the following passages: **Jeremiah 25:15-33; Isaiah 24:17-21; 26:20, 21; 34:1, 2**.

#### **V. THE RELATION OF THIS BATTLE TO THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS**

We believe that the judgment of the nations, as depicted in **Matthew 25:31-46**, will take place in connection with the Battle of Armageddon. We believe that **Matthew 25:31-46** is a figurative description of God's dealings with the nations in the Battle of Armageddon and the destruction that shall attend it. It is in this all the tares are to be gathered out of His kingdom and burned (**Matthew 13:40-43**). No one will survive this ordeal except the

righteous. For the relation between this battle and the judgment of the nations see **Joel 3:2, 12, 13**. Also note **Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15, 16; Isaiah 13:10, 11** in connection with **Matthew 24:29**.

## **VI. THIS PERIOD OF WORLDWIDE DESTRUCTION WILL BE “THE DAY OF THE LORD”**

See **Isaiah 2:12; 13:9; 34:8; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:11; Amos 5:18-20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:15, 18; Zechariah 14:1** “The day of the Lord” is to be a day of extended length **Zechariah 14:6, 7**.

## **VII. A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH WILL EMERGE FROM THE DAY OF THE LORD**

See **Isaiah 34:4, 65:17-25; II Peter 3:10-13**.

## Chapter 42 - THE MILLENNIUM

The word “*millennium*” comes to us from the Latin, meaning “a thousand years.” It refers to the thousand years of **Revelation 20:1-7**. In these verses there are six references to this period of time. It is here given as the time during which Satan is to be bound and the saints are to reign with Christ.

When the opponents of pre-millennialism assert that the word “*millennium*” is not in the Bible they speak deceitfully. It is just as truly in the Bible as the expression “one thousand years.” Since these expressions are English, neither of them was in the original manuscripts. But the word “*millennium*” represents the meaning of the Greek as truly as the expression “one thousand years.” Thus there can be no point in saying that the word in question is not in the Bible, except it be said to prejudice one’s hearers or readers.

Our treatment of the subject will not justify the charge that premillennialism “*builds chiefly on one passage in Revelation 20:1-10,*” or that premillennialists “*start with a certain interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10 and then work their idea back into the epistles and gospels.*” Rather we shall begin with other Scriptures and interpret the passage in Revelation by them.

Moreover our discussion will conform to a rule enunciated by one of our opponents; viz., “*It is a sound principle of Biblical interpretation to begin with Him who is the Light of the World; in other words to begin with the study of the New Testament, and go back into the Old with the light of the New.*” That shall be our method of procedure exactly.

However, after we have done this, after we have let the New Testament focus the light of the Old upon this question, then we shall interpret **Revelation 20** in view of that light. And if our opponents wish to continue ranting about our *reading into the text what is not there*, we shall treat the accusation with complacent and tolerant disdain. There is not a one of them that does not “read into” such passages as **Luke 13:3** that faith as well as

repentance is a condition of salvation. Thus it is throughout the Bible. We take the various details of collateral passages and put them together to get the full truth.

## I. THE PRESENT AND FUTURE FORMS OF THE KINGDOM

### 1. THE PRESENT FORM OF THE KINGDOM IS NOT THE FINAL FORM.

This is plainly indicated by a number of passages that point to a future kingdom. See **Matthew 6:10; 25:34; Mark 14:25; Luke 13:28, 29; II Timothy 4:1**. Note also that some of the parables in **Matthew 13** indicate that the kingdom of Heaven now contains false professors (tares and bad fish), while other passages speak of a form of the kingdom of Heaven into which only the righteous will enter. See **Matthew 5:20; 7:21**. These passages evidently point to the period that shall follow the fulfillment of **Matthew 13:41**. “**The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity.**” Manifestly this is to be accomplished in the judgment at the end of this age (**Matthew 13:39, 40**), and then shall ensue the kingdom or form of the kingdom alluded to in **Matthew 5:20; 7:21**, and also in **Matthew 25:34**. *From these passages, then, we see clearly that the judgment at the end of this age will not bring an end to the Messianic reign, but rather will usher in its final form.*

Nor are we to regard this plain teaching as contradicted by **I Corinthians 15:24**. We can never hope to arrive at the truth unless we let the plainer passages suggest the interpretation of those that are somewhat obscure. Read verses. **22-24** in the revision. Note the reading, “**then they that are Christ’s at his coming**” instead of “**afterward they that are Christ’s,**” etc. Thus the revision gives “**epeita**” the same meaning as “**eita.**” “**Then**” is used to translate both. Notice, then, that the first “**then**” allows the lapse of time between the resurrection of Christ and His second coming. Therefore “**then cometh the end**” cannot be used to prove that “**the end,**” whatever it is, occurs immediately after Christ’s coming. “**Epeita**” and “**eita**” in these verses mark not immediate temporal succession, but rather

sequence in enumeration depending “*on the nature of things enumerated*” (Thayer). Certainly there is not the difference in the words that will allow the first to admit of a lapse of more than nineteen centuries while forbidding any lapse of time to the latter. Thus understood it will be seen readily that verse **24** itself suggests that “**then cometh the end**” does not fix the time “**when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God**” (better, “**whenever he shall deliver**” etc), but rather vice versa.

Moreover, as E. P. Gould says very significantly, “**At His coming**, may be translated, *in the parousia or presence* - i.e., during the time of Christ’s presence on the earth, following His second coming.” This is the meaning, if, as we believe, on the basis of **Isaiah 65:20** and implications in other passages, death will continue on the earth after the establishment of the “**new heavens and a new earth**” (**Isaiah 65:17**). [\[55\]](#) In other words, this passage admits of a continuous resurrection of the righteous through the reign of Christ on the earth, and we believe that the Scriptures in general demand it. As believers in natural bodies die they will be resurrected immediately. We can then give to “**then cometh the end**” its most natural meaning according to its context, understanding it to mean the end of the Messianic kingdom; which will come not immediately, but only after death is completely conquered.

## 2. CHRIST IS NOW KING, BUT HE IS NOT NOW ON HIS THRONE, THE THRONE OF DAVID.

The author flatly disavows the view that Christ is not reigning now. This is held by some premillennialists, but is not a necessary part of premillennialism. Christ is already king over a spiritual kingdom (usually spoken of in the New Testament as “**the kingdom of God**”), that is, a kingdom without visible head and physical boundaries, whose subjects may be distinguished by spiritual characteristics alone. That Christ is already king over such a kingdom is defiantly and unmistakable taught in **Matthew 28:18-20**; **John 18:36**; **Colossians 1:13**; **Revelation 3:21**.

But Christ is not now on His throne, the throne of David that was promised to Him. **Luke 1:32**. Note this significant passage:

**“To him that overcometh WILL I grant to sit with me in MY throne, even as I also overcame, and AM set down with the FATHER IN HIS THRONE” (Revelation 3:21).**

Notice that Christ is *now sitting with the Father in the Father’s throne*, and that it is implied that at some time in the future *He will sit on His own throne*, at which time overcomers (all the regenerated, **I John 5:4**) will sit with Him. The contrasts here are significant - the **“Father’s throne”** contrasted with **“my throne,”** and the present **“am set down”** contrasted with the future **“will sit.”** This passage is dead against those who contend that the millennium is now in progress, and we have never known a single one of them to try to deal with it.

**Acts 2:25-32** does not prove, as has been alleged, that Christ is now on the throne of David. Our opponents offer groundless arguments on the basis of this passage together with **II Samuel 7:12** - (1) *That this passage teaches that Christ was to sit on the throne of David immediately after His resurrection.* But the passage says nothing of the kind. It teaches that the resurrection was necessary to His sitting on the throne, but not that He ascended that throne immediately. Scriptures already cited show that this was not the case. (2) *That David understood from the promise quoted by Peter (II Samuel 7:12) that Christ would sit on David’s throne while David was still sleeping with his fathers, and not after the resurrection of the righteous dead.* This is marvelous logic to come from those who protest that we read into **Revelation 20:1-7** things that are not taught there.

The letter and natural phase of **II Samuel 7:12** referred to the placing of Solomon on David’s throne, and to insist that the fulfillment of the spiritual import of the promise conform to the letter is merely to argue absurdly for the support of a proposition that is too weak to stand. One could just as well argue that, inasmuch as the natural phase of the passage looked to an immediate successor to David, Christ ascended the Davidic throne at David’s death. In **Acts 2:29** Peter speaks of the fact **“that David is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day”** merely to prove that David could not have been speaking of himself when he said that his soul should not be left in Hades and that he should not see corruption.

This fact is evident to all, except those blinded by a desire to sustain an unscriptural theory.

### 3. CHRIST WILL ASCEND HIS THRONE AT HIS SECOND COMING.

This is made indisputable by the following passage.

**“WHEN the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory” (Matthew 25:31).**

In this passage we have further answer to the absurd contention noted above. It is at His second coming that Christ will sit on His throne. At that time will be established the future form of the kingdom referred to in **Matthew 13:43; 25:34**. This accords with **Luke 19:12**, where **“a certain nobleman”** represents Christ.

## II. THE NATURE OF THE FUTURE KINGDOM

### 1. IT WILL BE UPON THE EARTH.

This is a significant fact that is established by the two following passages:

**Revelation 5:10**, where the redeemed (twenty-four elders), after speaking of redemption through Christ, say:

**“And has made us unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign on the EARTH.”**

**Zechariah 14:9**: **“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one.”**

We have quoted the first passage from the revision, which follows the Alexandrine manuscript in reading **“they reign”** instead of the Sinaitic in reading **“we shall reign.”** Thus we must choose here between two



outstanding manuscripts in deciding whether the tense is present or future. However, A. T. Robertson, with no affinity for premillennialism, says that we have the “*futuristic use*” of the present active indicative. And who, except one seeking proof of a theory rather than the truth of the Scriptures, can doubt that we have here a reference to the same thing as in **Revelation 2:26, 27; 3:21; I Corinthians 6:2**, where it is consistently put in the future?

Note from this passage, then, that this reign is to be on the earth; and remember that **Revelation 3:21** tells us that the saints will sit with Christ on His throne. Thus we see that, since the saints’ reign is to be on the earth, Christ’s throne and, therefore, His kingdom, are to be here.

The second passage refers to that which is yet future. At no time up to the present has the whole earth been subject to the Lord. The passage is to be fulfilled after the events of the previous verses have taken place. Those who have tried to find a fulfillment of this chapter in the past have been able to make out only a mangled and garbled makeshift of a fulfillment. For instance one writer argues quite conclusively that the chapter was not fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, because at that time all instead of half of the people were “**cut off from the city.**” Moreover, at that time, *God did not fight for the Jews, but against them*; sending forth the Roman armies even as His own, He “**destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city,**” as Jesus said He would (**Matthew 22:7**). Furthermore it is pointed out that since that time Jerusalem has been “**trodden down of the Gentiles**” (**Luke 21:24**), and no one has gone there to “**keep the feast of tabernacles.**” But then this same writer goes on to try to make out a fulfillment in *God’s care of His people during the darkness and afflictions of the inter-biblical period*, referring it particularly to *the terrible persecutions* inflicted on the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, in the second century B. C. But he undertakes to find no detailed fulfillment, which, of course, he could not do. The following glaring differences exist between the siege described in **Zechariah 14** and the wars and persecutions under Antiochus:

(1) In **Zechariah 14:2** we read: “**I will gather all nations against Jerusalem, to battle.**” Under Antiochus only nations under Syrian rule came against Jerusalem.

(2) In **Zechariah 14** the siege was to last but one day (verses **6, 7**), while under Antiochus and his son there were attacks over a period of years; and at one time temple worship in Jerusalem was abandoned by the Jews for three years, during which time the Jewish religion was forbidden and the temple devoted to the worship of the Grecian god, Jove.

(3) In **Zechariah 14** the siege and victory are followed by a glorious period of blessing and spiritual prosperity, while the period following the wars under Antiochus was marked by further war, internal division, rivalry, intrigue, and civil war among the Jews, ending up in their subjugation to Rome. [\[56\]](#)

(4) In **Zechariah 14** a great plague is prophesied for the opposing armies (verse **12**). This did not occur at the time of Antiochus.

(5) In **Zechariah 14** the siege is to be followed by those who are left of the nations that came against Jerusalem coming up from year to year to worship and to keep the feast of tabernacles. This did not follow liberation from persecution under Antiochus any more than it occurred following the destruction of Jerusalem A. D. 70.

Our opponents acknowledge that “*someone’s feet are to stand upon the Mount of Olives,*” but they are not certain whom the person is. This is not certain to them because they are committed to a theory that forbids them to admit evident facts. To those not so bound it is clear that the unmistakable grammatical antecedent of “**his**” in verse **4** is “**the Lord**” in verse **3**. Also it is evident that the statement that “**the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee**” refers to the second advent of Christ, just as do similar statements in the New Testament. See **Jude 14; II Thessalonians 1:7; Matthew 25:31**. Thus we conclude that our point here is proved.

## 2. IT WILL BE IN THE NEW EARTH.

We wish here to call attention to **Matthew 19:28**, which reads:

“**And Jesus said unto them** (the twelve apostles), **Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the REGENERATION when the**

**Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, YE ALSO SHALL SIT UPON TWELVE THRONES, JUDGING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.”**

Commenting on the phrase, “**in the regeneration,**” A. T. Robertson says: “The new birth of the world is to be fulfilled when Jesus sits on His throne of glory.” John A. Broadus says: “When the Messianic reign is fully established there will be a new birth of all things, called a ‘**restoration of all things**’ (Acts 3:21, Revised Version), ‘**new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness**’ (II Peter 3:13) ...”

But more interesting than these comments are two Old Testament passages that link up with this passage in a very definite way. Note these two passages:

**“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree *are* the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they *are* the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust *shall be* the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.” (Isaiah 65:17-25).**

**“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 66:22, 23).**

Can there be any reasonable doubt that our Lord had these passages in mind when He spoke of **“the regeneration”**? Furthermore, is it not evident that Peter also had these passages in mind when he wrote of the **“new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Peter 3:13)**? The author regards it as definitely settled that Peter’s words allude to the same thing as do those of our Lord in **Matthew 19:28** and that the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ will be ushered in by the establishment of new heavens and a new earth.

### 3. IT WILL BE PREEMINENTLY JEWISH.

We have noted that believers will reign with Christ in His throne. But **Matthew 19:28**, which we have noticed already, tells us that *the twelve apostles will occupy twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. Of course the spiritualizers will anathematize us for taking the Lord to mean exactly what He says here, but we are not in the least afraid of, nor slightly worried by, their ruthless campaign to emasculate the Word of God.

Just as our Lord, steeped in prophesy as He was, very likely had in mind the passages already cited from Isaiah in speaking of **“the regeneration,”** so likewise there is another passage from Isaiah that He must have had in mind in referring to twelve apostles and their sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This other passage is **Isaiah 1:26**, which reads:

**“And I will restore thy JUDGES as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.”**

All of this implies, and the Bible conclusively teaches, the regathering of Israel, the conversion of Israel, and the restoration of Israel's national life. Let us note:

(1) *The Regathering of Israel.*

A. Scriptures that allude to it.

Note carefully the three following passages:

**“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall all the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in *that* day that the Lord shall set his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:10-12).**

**“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* a teraphim; afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king: and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days” (Hosea 3:4, 5).**

**“Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their god: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, and I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me” (Jeremiah 32:37-40).**

**“And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God” (Amos 9:14, 15).**

Note that these prophecies speak of a recovering, a return, a gathering, and a bringing again of the Jews. We affirm that they have reference to Israel as a nation and they have not yet had their complete fulfillment. We make this affirmation on the basis of the following facts:

(a) A distinction is made in the first passage between *the Gentiles* and *His people*. The Gentiles are to participate in the blessings of Christ’s kingdom, but it is His people, Israel and Judah, that are to be regathered.

(b) This is to be God’s **“second time to recover the remnant of his people.”**

(c) The gathering is to be, not merely from Assyria and Babylon and other adjacent countries, but from **“the four corners of the earth.”** [\[57\]](#) Thus it is to be a gathering of both Judah and Israel.

(d) This is to be accomplished in the day when **“there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people.”** This plainly refers to the times of the Messiah.

(e) The second passage affirms that in the day of their return the Israelites are to **“seek the Lord their God, and DAVID THEIR KING.”** This again plainly refers to the days of the Messiah.

(f) The third passage stipulates that at the time of this regathering God is going to make an **“everlasting covenant with them,”** with the result that He will never again **“turn away from them”** and **“they shall not depart”** from Him.

(g) The fourth passage tells us that when Israel has been regathered, **“they shall no more be pulled up out of their land.”** They were pulled up out of their land again after the return from captivity under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

B. Objections offered by our opponents against our interpretation of these prophecies.

These objections are many and they are urged with great insistence. But as far as space will permit, we will take them up and show that they are groundless.

(a) In spite of the facts to which we have called attention we are told quite confidently that the first passage given above (**Isaiah 11:10-12**) refers to the return recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

This is said on the basis of the fact that in **Isaiah 10:24-34** the prophet *“refers to the Assyrian.”* But this by no means proves that nothing in the following chapter can go beyond the historic return of Israel, even as our opponents themselves admit by referring a part of this prophecy to our times. Note is taken of the fact that **“the Lord shall set his hand A SECOND TIME to recover the remnant of his people,”** but we are told that the *“first time”* was their deliverance from Egypt. This is said simply on the basis of the fact that verse 16 says that in the day of Israel’s return **“there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people like as it was to Israel in the days that he came up out of the land of Egypt.”** [58] We leave the reader to form his own opinion of the validity of this argument. Does the mere mention of a thing by a prophet give us the liberty of reading it into his writings wherever we see fit?

**“In that day”** of **Isaiah 11:10** is wrested from its connection with the rest of the sentence and made to refer to the day of return from Assyria and Babylon. No account whatsoever is taken of the fact that this prophecy is “dated,” the whole thing being, attached to that day when **“there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people.”**

(b) However, despite all their efforts, our opponents cannot find a complete fulfillment of these prophecies in the Old Testament. Thus they fall back on a second line of attack, and affirm a fulfillment in this present gospel age. We are told that *the Holy Spirit has dated the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1-10 and has declared it fulfilled in this age. Romans 15:12* is given to prove this. We answer that Paul, in **Romans 15:12**, makes merely *an application of one and only one part* of this prophecy to show “that God’s purpose from the beginning was to comprehend both Jews and Gentiles in the wide embrace of His mercy, through the Messiah” (A. N. Arnold). There is not one thing in **Romans 15** or in any other New Testament passage that indicates that Christ and the apostles considered Old Testament prophecies concerning the Jews as finding consummate fulfillment in the Gentiles of this age. Paul, in **Romans 15:12**, quotes from **Isaiah 11:10** only insofar as this latter passage refers to the Gentiles, and that, as we have said, only by way of application. He says not one word about verse **11** and its prediction of the return of Israel. Neither does any other New Testament writer make a spiritual application of such prophecies.

Nevertheless we are told that *the New Testament explains and applies the prophecies of Israel’s restoration from captivity to this gospel era (Isaiah 52:11; Jeremiah 30:18-24; II Corinthians 6:17, 18), and hence that they are typical of our great deliverance by Jesus Christ*. Let the reader read carefully the passages referred to. There is here nothing more than the application by a New Testament writer of a principle and an appeal that find their first enunciation in the Old Testament. This constant practice of our opponents in reading into New Testament passages arguments that are not there is sufficient evidence of the utter falsity of their contention. If they had any real proof, they would use it.

Similarly it is affirmed that *Jeremiah’s prophecy of the new Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) was fulfilled and established in Christ*. Since the new covenant is a covenant of grace under which God deals with individual believers instead of with a nation, as under the old covenant, believers are now under it. BUT SO WAS ABRAHAM! **Galatians 3:6-18**. This covenant was first made known fully to Abraham, and was applied through him to his spiritual seed through Christ. This is the reason Gentiles participate in it. But



in **Jeremiah 31** and **32** it is revealed that Israel as a nation (the nation living at the time) shall come under this covenant. Whereas once God dealt mainly with them as a whole under the old covenant, then He shall deal with the whole nation as individuals under the new covenant. Then the writer to the Hebrews, writing to professed believers among the Jews, makes application of Jeremiah's words to prove to these Jews that the old covenant has been replaced. *There is nothing here to prove that there is not yet to be an application of this covenant to the whole house of national Israel.* This is the evident meaning of Jeremiah's words, interpreted in the light of all Old Testament prophecy. When our opponents spiritualize them they do so, not upon the basis of Scripture, but upon the basis of their own preconceived notions. The only safe method of interpreting God's Word is to consider it literal unless there is clear indication of a figurative or spiritual meaning. They have utterly failed to produce that clear indication.

When we come to **Isaiah 11:11, 14** our opponents are hard-pressed indeed. They know full well that they cannot find a fulfillment in the Old Testament, nor do they seek to find one; but rather they tell us that *it would require a miracle of raising from the dead the nations referred to* if these verses are to have a literal fulfillment in the future. They refer, we are told, *to the return in this age of the remnant according to election of grace from among the Jews, that is, their return to God and Christ.* No; the future literal fulfillment of these verses will not require the raising of the nations mentioned from the dead. The nations mentioned merely represent the nations of the earth, from among whom, even "**from the four corners of the earth**" and "**the islands of the sea,**" God shall "**assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah.**"

(c) But our opponents are not done yet. Lest there might be some bits of prophecy that have escaped the methods of elimination already noticed, they come with a third attack. We are told that *if there be any left, that are not properly included in the foregoing classifications, they must be considered forfeited and cancelled, because the conditions were not met.* It is alleged that Christ and the apostles declare this to be true in **Matthew 23:37, 38; Romans 11:10; I Thessalonians 2:15, 16.**

Let us examine these passages. In the first one (**Matthew 23:37, 38**) Jesus says: “**Behold your house is left unto you desolate.**” This, He told them in the next verse, was because He was going away from them, which in the purpose of God was in consequence of their rejection of Him. Hence they would not see Him henceforth - for how long? Not forever, but “**TILL YE SHALL SAY, BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.**” This points to the time when Israel will be no longer unbelieving, but will gladly receive Christ. This is to be, according to Christ, at *HIS COMING*. We shall notice more about this later.

The second passage is **Romans 11: 10**, which reads: “**Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway,**” a quotation from **Psalms 69:23**. This deprecation, when read, as certainly it should be, in the light of the whole of the sixty-ninth Psalm and the eleventh chapter of Romans, can be taken as APPLYING PRIMARILY TO THE GENERATION OF THE JEWS LIVING AT THE TIME OF CHRIST’S EARTHLY MINISTRY. Beyond that, it can APPLY TO THE CONTINUED NATION ONLY SO LONG AS THEY CONTINUE THEIR REJECTION OF CHRIST. Notice that David implies that they will not always reject the Messiah, when in verse **35** he says: “**For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah; that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.**” Paul develops this thought and makes its meaning unmistakable, viz., “**For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that a hardening in PART hath befallen Israel, UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES BE COME IN**” (**Romans 11:25**). This is the key verse of the whole chapter. The whole chapter is based on two facts: (1) That Israel’s hardness and unbelief are only IN PART, partial, not involving the whole nation-there being now “**a remnant according to the election of grace**” (**Romans 11:5**). (2) That it is TEMPORARY, extending only “**UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.**” Then, as the next verse states, and as we shall note more fully later, “**all Israel (the nation living at the time) shall be saved.**”

What we have just said about **Romans 11:10** also fully explains the third passage cited, **I Thessalonians 2:15, 16**.

This alleged forfeiture and cancellation of blessings promised to Israel is based on what our opponents call *the conditional element in prophecy*. As proof of this conditional element they cite **Deuteronomy 28:13-15, 25, 43, 44; Jeremiah 18: 17-10**.

To which we reply that God's blessings are always *conditional*. God's grace and blessings to believers in this age are conditioned [59] on their faithfulness and final perseverance. See **Matthew 10:22, 32; Acts 14:22; Romans 2:6-10; 11:22; Colossians 1:21-23; Revelation 2:7, 11**. Yet God declares in absolute terms that all who truly believe on Christ will be finally saved. It is only the Arminian that denies this. *And our opponents put themselves on Arminian ground when they allege the cancellation and forfeiture of the blessings promised to Israel*. They are no better on this score than the Arminian is in seeking to prove that saved people may fail to receive their eternal inheritance. We had just as soon argue one as the other. The cases are exactly parallel. The blessings promised to Israel are stated in terms fully as absolute as are the words spoken of and to believers. Turn and read again the Scriptures given on a previous page to prove the regathering of Israel. Words could not be more manifestly absolute.

*The explanation of it all is that with Israel, as well as with believers, God has guaranteed that the conditions will be met*. In both cases this guarantee is based upon God's eternal foreknowledge and choice, upon eternal, unconditional election, if you please. See **Romans 8:29, 30; 11:2, 27-29**.

This brings us then to note:

(2) *The Conversion of Israel*.

A. Scriptures that allude to it.

The following passages show that Israel will receive all the things promised of God by turning to Him as a whole in genuine repentance and faith through His grace and the operation of the power of the Holy Spirit:

**“And I will turn my hand upon thee, and thoroughly purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful town ... Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.” - Isaiah 1:25-27**

**“And it shall come to pass, *that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.*” - Isaiah 4:3, 4.**

**“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, ... we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” - Isaiah 25:9.**

**“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of the flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them.*” - Ezekiel 36:24-27.**

**“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” - Zechariah 12:10.**

**“And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have transgressed against me. And *this***

*city* shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it” (Jeremiah 33:7-9).

“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes; but as touching election, *they are* beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are not repented of” (Romans 11:26-29).

The “all Israel” that shall be saved is explained by Isaiah 4:3, given previously, viz.. “he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, ... every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.” This latter passage is further explained by Zechariah 13:8, 9 which reads: “And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off *and* die; BUT A THIRD PART SHALL BE LEFT THEREIN. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, *It is* my people; and they shall say, The Lord *is* my God.”

B. Objections offered by our opponents against our interpretation of these prophecies.

(a) Will any of our opponents say that these prophecies have been accomplished already in the experience of national Israel? If so, then let them note:

(1) That this conversion, according to Zechariah 12:10, was to come after the Jews had pierced Christ; for it is said, “... **they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,**” and it is evident that this passage refers to the same experience spoken of in the other passages we have given.

(2) There was no time in the history of Israel in the Old Testament when everyone *remaining in Jerusalem* was called holy, as declared by **Isaiah 4:3**.

(3) Paul's reference to the salvation of Israel (**Romans 11:26**) shows that this was not an Old Testament experience.

(4) The words of every passage given imply something surpassing anything experienced by Israel either in the return from Babylon or their liberation from Antiochus Epiphanes.

(b) Will our opponents say that the blessings mentioned were forfeited because the conditions were not met? If so, let them stipulate the conditions.

Are we not told that Israel will say, "**Lo, this is our God**"; that a **new heart** and a **new spirit** will be put within them, causing them to *walk in God's statutes and keep His judgments*; that there will be poured upon them **the spirit of grace and of supplications**; so that they shall be purged, *washed, cleansed, redeemed, and pardoned*? How could language be made more absolute? If the blessings of these passages were forfeitable, *then so also is the salvation of all God's elect*. Before we can believe that these promises are not absolute, we shall have to be convinced of the truth of Arminianism.

(c) No; perhaps not many of our opponents will take either of two views already noticed. Most of them will say that these promises are to be spiritualized and applied to believers in this gospel age; to which we reply:

(1) What is the meaning, then, of "**I will restore thy judges as at the first**" (**Isaiah 1:26**)?

(2) Furthermore, what is the meaning of "**every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem**" (**Isaiah 4:3**)?

(3) Again, what is meant when God says to Israel that He will "**build them, as at the first**" (**Jeremiah 33:7**)?

The whole question as to the spiritualization of the passages given may be resolved to the proper interpretation of **Romans 11:26**. The spiritualizers tell us that “**all Israel**” here is the elect of all nations, so-called spiritual Israel. But such an interpretation of this passage is nothing short of a ruthless wresting of it from its context. It is so absurd that we make bold to say that no careful reader will adopt it except that he is more interested in sustaining a theory than he is in knowing the truth. The contrast all the way through the chapter is between the Gentiles and Israel, and verse **25** makes it plain that this distinction carries right on into verse **26**. Therefore candid commentators, wholly apart from any interest in the millennial question, recognize that the allusion here is to national Israel, viz., “*The immediate context ... argues for the Jewish people ‘as a whole’*” (A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament). “*But surely it puts violence on words, and in thought, to explain ‘Israel’ in this whole passage mystically. Interpretation becomes an arbitrary work if ye may suddenly do so here, where the antithesis of Israel and ‘the Gentiles’ is the very theme of the message. No; we have here the nation, chosen once to a mysterious specialty in the spiritual history of man, chosen with a choice never cancelled, however abeyant. A blessing is in view for the nation; a blessing spiritual, divine, all of grace, quite individual in its action, but national in the scale of its results*” (H. G. Moule, The Expositor’s Bible). “*All Israel shall be saved: the great mass of the Jews, in contrast with the ‘remnant’ referred to in verse 5*” (J. M. Pendleton, The New Testament With Brief Notes). “**And so ... all Israel shall be saved** - that is, the literal Israel, in the collective sense of the word, all the posterity of Jacob. That the word is to be taken in this sense and not in the sense of spiritual Israel, including the Gentiles, is fairly inferred from the sharp distinction between Jews and Gentiles observed throughout this whole section; see **9:24, 30, 31; 10:12, 19-21; 11:11, 12, 13**, and especially in the immediate context, verses **17-31**” (A. N. Arnold, An American Commentary on the New Testament). “*In our view Paul teaches that ... Israel as a whole, perhaps ‘the whole nation which shall then be in existence’ (Prof. Turner), will accept Jesus as their Messiah ...*” (D. B. Ford, *ibid*).

### (3) *The Restoration of Israel’s National Life.*

A. The theocratic government of Israel will be restored. Christ will be their king and the twelve apostles will be their judges. **Isaiah 9:7; 32:1; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; Ezekiel 34:23, 24; Zechariah 3:14, 15; Zechariah 14:9, 16; Isaiah 1:26; Matthew 19:28.**

B. Jerusalem will be the center of government and religious life. **Isaiah 2:3, 4; Joel 3:16, 17; Zechariah 14:8, 9, 21.**

C. All nations will come to Jerusalem to worship. See **Isaiah 2:3** again and also: **Zechariah 8:21, 22; Zechariah 14:16, 17; Isaiah 66:22, 23.**

Our opponents say a literal fulfillment of these passages in the future will be impossible.

By which we are reminded that Sir Isaac Newton once predicted that it “was necessary for the fulfillment of prophecy that the means of rapid communication between all nations should be greatly extended ... as to enable men to travel forty miles an hour. On which opinion Voltaire made this remark: ‘What do you think Sir Isaac Newton said? Why, he actually predicts that the time will come when people will travel at the rate of forty miles an hour. See to what extremities the study of the Bible can drive a great and gifted mind’ (Urquhart, New Biblical Guide, Vol. 8, page 287). We smile at this from Voltaire. But the argument of our opponents is just as puerile and stupid. Do they think that it is impossible with God to bring this about? Do they know how much faster international communication shall become? Can they predict that geographical conditions in the new earth will not render this easier than at present? For ourself we believe that inasmuch as the mouth of God spoke the prophecy that same mouth will command its accomplishment; and it shall be done.

D. Worship will be in full accord with the finished work of redemption. We feel that neither logic, nor consistency, nor anything said in the Bible, obliges us to believe that the sacrificial system of the Jews will be wholly restored.

There will be a house of worship, called both a tabernacle and a temple (**Ezekiel 37:27; 43:5-7; Zechariah 6:12, 13; 14:21; Malachi 3:1**). The



temple shown **Ezekiel** in vision (chapters **40-47**) is perhaps a foreshadowing in general of that temple, especially in view of **Ezekiel 45:5-7; 47**, but as to the letter we regard the pattern as that which Israel should have followed in rebuilding the temple after returning from Babylon. [\[60\]](#) Here perhaps is a merging of the two: the temple that Israel should have built, and the one that the Lord Himself shall build; just as in other passages we have a merging of the two returns of Israel the two advents (**Malachi 3:1-5; Isaiah 61:1, 2** [\[61\]](#)), and the two sieges of Jerusalem (**Matthew 24** - the one that occurred in 70 A. D., and the one that shall occur in the battle of Armageddon, **Zechariah 14:1, 2; Revelation 19:19-21**). There are passages that speak of sacrifices in connection with the millennium. But these may be mere figurative expressions of worship. We feel sure that the work of priests under Christ's reign (**Isaiah 66:21**) will be so altered as to make it fit into His finished redemption. The sacrifices that were made in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles (**Zechariah 14:16**) and any other special seasons that may be observed, we feel sure, will be either abolished or so altered as to fit into the nature of Christ's reign. We are not the least afraid that God will not know how to fit these things into His plan.

To interpret references to sacrifices in the new earth as figurative does not mean that in order to be consistent we must ruthlessly spiritualize all prophecy that was not fulfilled to Israel in the former dispensation. There is absolutely no reason for spiritualizing the regathering, conversion, and reestablishment of Israel as a nation. They are never spiritualized in the New Testament, and there is nothing about them that is incongruent with the reign of Christ. But in the case of the sacrificial system, it is different. Thus we are sticking to our rule of interpreting Scripture literally, unless we have clear indication of, or good reason for, a figurative or symbolic meaning. Also our interpretation here is in harmony with the fact that the literal and the symbolic are sometimes mingled together in the Bible.

At this point it is appropriate to reply briefly to certain objections:

(1) There will not be a return from Christ to Moses, for Christ will be there in Moses' stead, according to **Deuteronomy 18:15**. Grace and the gospel will reign in the millennium as now.

(2) There will not be a return to the old covenant, but the application of the new covenant to Israel as foretold.

(3) There will not be a turning back to the Aaronic priesthood, except insofar as it fits into the reign of the Messiah. Christ will be the high priest then as now. He will appoint priests and Levites to assist Him, Isaiah 66:21. We are willing to trust Him to work this out in full harmony with His finished work.

(4) It will not be a backward step when the church gives way to redeemed Israel. Rather it will be a glorious climax. **Romans 11:12; Isaiah 11:10.**

(5) Christianity will not be superseded by Judaism, but rather the grace of God will triumph over and permeate Israel; and Israel will be made whatever it pleases God for her to be. We expect to be there and to rejoice in it. **Isaiah 65:17-19; 66:10-14.** We rejoice even now as we live in anticipation of it.

### **III. THE APOSTLES AND THE FUTURE KINGDOM**

The apostles, after attending upon Christ's ministry for three years, believed that the kingdom was to be restored to Israel as evidenced by their question, **Acts 1:6**. They had heard Him speak the words of **Matthew 19:28**, *which promised them that they would rule over Israel*, and the words of **Matthew 23:39**, which carry the inescapable implication that Israel would someday say: "**Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.**" Perhaps He had enlarged on these matters in their presence, and had spoken of them at times other than those referred to above. Christ's words had confirmed the hope that Old Testament prophecy had kindled in their hearts. They believed the fact, but were confused as to the time. Consequently they asked Him: "**Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?**" Here was Christ's opportunity to set them right if they were wrong. But He did not do it! Why? If our opponents had been in His place, they certainly would not have passed up the opportunity. They are very active and zealous today in trying to rescue from "heresy" those of us who believe

exactly what the apostles believed, i.e., *that the kingdom in due time will be restored to Israel*. Was Christ less zealous for the truth than they? Was He less interested in the apostles than they are in us? Why did He not tell those “erring” apostles, as surely our opponents would have done, *that this Jewish fable that had originated in the apocalyptic writings of the inter-Biblical period was not taught by the prophets* and that they were not to understand Him as teaching this in anything He had said; that the distinction between Jews and Gentiles had been obliterated forever; that all the prophecies of the Old Testament not literally fulfilled in that period, either had been forfeited or were to be spiritualized and applied to this age? We ask again, “Why did Christ not disillusion them?”

Christ’s failure to correct this supposedly wrong notion becomes even stronger evidence that it was not wrong in the light of **John 14:2** - **“In my Father’s house are many mansions; IF IT WERE NOT SO, I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU.”**

Then, when, instead of correcting them, He gave an answer that distinctly implies the truth of their belief, it furnishes certain proof that they were right. He said simply: **“It is not for you to know the times or the season, which the Father hath put in his own power.”**

#### **IV. THE FUTURE KINGDOM AND THE COMPARATIVE SILENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Our opponents make much of what they call the silence of Christ and the apostles as to the details of what we believe concerning the future kingdom. This silence is not so great as they would have us think. They deny everything that is said, and then shout that the New Testament is silent. They are like a disputant that forbids his opponent to speak and then uses his failure to speak as an argument against Him.

We have noted that the New Testament predicts a future kingdom. We have noted that it teaches unmistakably that Christ will ascend His throne when He comes, and that the apostles will occupy special positions of rule over Israel. We have shown how this connects up with prophecy. We have

seen that all believers will reign with Christ when He ascends His throne. We have observed that “all Israel” [62] in distinction from the Gentiles will be saved, saying “**Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord**” (**Matthew 23:39**), which event was manifestly in the mind of Paul when in speaking of the veil that is yet upon the heart of Israel he said: “**Nevertheless when it (the nation) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away**” (**II Corinthians 3:16**). In harmony with this, Christ taught that Jerusalem, after its devastation by Titus, 70 A. D., would be “**trodden down of the Gentiles**” not always, but only “**until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled**” (**Luke 21:24**). Then we have the much disputed passage of **Revelation 20:1-7**, concerning which we shall see more later. These references are enough to show the meaning of prophecy.

However it is true that the New Testament says much less than the Old Testament about the future of Israel as a nation. *This is because its primary application is to the times of the Gentiles.* This is similar to the fact that the Old Testament has comparatively little to say by way of good about the Gentiles.

On the other hand, let it be observed that the passages on which our opponents rely are comparatively few and inconclusive. They can find no reference to Christ’s sitting on the throne of David now. They can point to no statement from Christ or any apostle to the effect that prophetic references to the regathering of Israel refer to the gathering of the elect out of all nations; that Old Testament references to Jerusalem and the blessings that should come upon it have been fulfilled in this age or that they refer to “new Jerusalem”; that believers are now reigning with Christ on earth or in Heaven. Thus the discussion narrows itself down to two questions.

(1) *Are the New Testament references relied on by us stronger and more conclusive than those relied on by our opponents?*

(2) *Will Old Testament prophecy submit to the methods of elimination used by our opponents?* Every student must decide these questions for himself.

## V. THE FUTURE KINGDOM AND THE INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 20:1-7

We are ready now to inquire into the proper interpretation of this much-disputed chapter. It is altogether proper to interpret it in the light of the rest of the Bible, particularly the New Testament. When so interpreted, are we to conclude that Satan is now bound or that he has been bound at any time during this age, as some of our opponents contend? Are there any other references that suggest or commend this conclusion? We certainly do not believe so. The victory of Christ over the Devil at the Cross, so far as it affected the world in general, was potential, not actual. **Matthew 12:29**; **Luke 11:22** have reference to individual cases and not to the general binding of Satan. The same is true of Christ's giving of authority over devils to the apostles. That affected his work only in the case of those with whom the apostles came in contact. It left him perfectly free with others. Nor do **I John 5:18**; **John 10:28**; **James 4:7** have any reference to the general binding of Satan. Throughout the New Testament he is seen, not chained and in the bottomless pit, but catching "away that which was sown in the heart" (**Matthew 13:19**); sowing tares in the field (**Matthew 13:39**); sifting believers (**Luke 22:31**); holding the lost in his power (**Acts 26:18**) and blinding their eyes (**II Corinthians 4:4**); corrupting minds "from the simplicity that is in Christ" and transforming himself "into an angel of light" (**II Corinthians 11:3**); as "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (**Ephesians 2:2**); hindering believers (**I Thessalonians 2:18**); and walking about as a roaring lion "seeking whom he may devour" (**I Peter 5:8**). Such passages as in **Romans 16:20** and **Revelation 12:12** (if **Revelation 12** be interpreted as the birth of Christ) must be interpreted where the word "short" has been found already to allow the lapse of more than nineteen centuries.

Does it seem likely that the binding of Satan means no more than *that he should not prevent the preaching of the gospel to all nations*? Is not the language of **Revelation 20:2, 3** too strong to be adapted to such a weak meaning? Does the fall of the pagan Roman empire satisfy the fact that Satan, in the vision, was cast "into the bottomless pit," where he was shut up by a seal? Does this sound like a mere limiting of his activity? or does it sound

like complete restraint? Was paganism the only method of deception used by the Devil? Did not the so-called Holy Roman Empire become as great an enemy to true Christianity as paganism had ever been? Did it not imbibe much of paganism and bring it within the pale of Christianity, thus corrupting the truth? Was not this even worse deception than before? And has not this deception grown to great dimensions, involving people of all nations? In the light of **Revelation 3:21**, which shows that Christ is not now on His own throne, and **Matthew 19:28** and **25:31**, which give us the earliest time when He is said to sit on His throne, that is, at His coming, can we regard the saints as reigning with Him now either on earth or in Heaven? In the light of the use of “souls” in **Acts 2:41; 27:37; I Peter 3:20**, can one insist that the words, “*I saw the souls of them that were beheaded,*” etc., prove that those alluded to were to reign in the disembodied state? Is it not evident that the “beast” of Revelation is one and the same as Paul’s “man of sin” (**II Thessalonians 2:3**)? If so, then since the man of sin is to be destroyed “with the brightness of His (Christ’s) coming,” is it not manifest that **Revelation 19:11-16** depicts the coming of Christ, inasmuch as the event here described results in the destruction of the beast (**Revelation 19:20**)? If this is true, then, since the resurrection of the righteous will occur in connection with Christ’s coming (**I Corinthians 15:23; I Thessalonians 4:16**), is it not likely that the “first resurrection” referred to in **Revelation 20** is the actual resurrection of the righteous, rather than a spiritual or metaphorical resurrection? Does it not appear strained and illogical to regard the “first resurrection” as symbolizing *the revival of things for which martyrs had stood* and consequently the corresponding “second resurrection” as *symbolizing the revival and triumph of the things for which the wicked had stood*, when there in verses **12-14** an actual resurrection is depicted? In other words is it not poor exegesis to postulate a resurrection in verses **7-10**, where there is no mention of a coming forth from the dead, when the required “second resurrection” is provided in verses **12-14**, in which we have an actual coming forth of the dead? Is it not straining the ordinary use of language to insist on such exactness as to require the words, “**But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished,**” to mean that the “second resurrection” had to come exactly at the expiration of the thousand years and could not occur at the end of the following “little season”? Does

not verse 6 indicate that “the first resurrection!” is a bodily resurrection by implying that all who do not participate in it will come under the power of the second death? Can the “**first resurrection**” be considered representative of a *revival of the piety and principles of the martyrs* when verse 4 does not say that only martyrs sat upon thrones? John saw the thrones occupied, and he saw the martyrs; but the verse certainly does not prove that only the martyrs were on the thrones.

As we answer these questions for ourselves we conclude that the passage under discussion refers to the same kingdom that we have been considering; that kingdom that will ensue when Christ comes and ascends His throne. In our mind the evidence for this view is conclusive.

## **VI. THE FUTURE KINGDOM AND CERTAIN GENERAL OBJECTIONS**

As we have proceeded with our discussion we have tried to answer as many of our opponent’s specific objections as we have been able to deal with in an orderly way. We shall now turn to some more general objections to the things set forth in this chapter.

1. *We are told that the New Testament characterizes the days of this gospel era as the “last,” and that there can be, therefore, no further period of time beyond the end of the present age.* Passages cited in this connection are as follows: **Hebrews 1:1, 2; Hebrews 9:26; I Corinthians 10:11; 1 John 2:18; I Peter 1:20.**

The reply here is simple. These passages, speaking of “**the end of these days,**” “**the end of the ages,**” “**the ends of the ages,**” “**the last time,**” and “**these last times,**” must be understood in the light of the following passages: **Matthew 12:32; Luke 18:30; Ephesians 1:21; 2:7; Hebrews 6:5,** which speak of “**the world to come,**” “**the ages to come,**” and “**the age to come.**” In the light of these latter passages, the former ones can mean no more than that *we are now living in the last days, ages, and times of the present order of things,* while the latter passages tell us of other

ages yet to come. Those who deny this put themselves in direct and unmistakable opposition to the Word of God.

Nor is it ours to say arbitrarily what will be the divine order of things for the age that immediately follows this one. We must let the Word of God answer. This age will be terminated with judgment. See **Matthew 13:40; 25:31-46**. (Our opponents will agree with us this far.) This will be followed by the saved on earth entering into the kingdom prepared for them. **Matthew 25:34**. It is in connection with this judgment and this kingdom that we have the first mention of Christ's sitting on His throne. Then we learn more about the nature of this kingdom by turning to **Matthew 19:23**, where we find that it will be ushered in by "**the regeneration**," and by the twelve apostles sitting on thrones judging the tribes of Israel. "**The regeneration**" unmistakably points back to the "**new heavens and a new earth**" of **Isaiah 65:17-25**. It will be seen by reading these verses that they do not describe the final state of the righteous, but just such an order of things as one would expect under the promised blessings of God upon Israel and the binding of Satan. It is an order where death will yet prevail, where sin will enter, though it will not be present at first; where houses will be built, vineyards planted, and prayer offered.

We are living in the last days of gospel opportunity for those now living. None who die in unbelief or who are found in unbelief when Christ comes to judge the world will enter into His future kingdom, but will perish, **Matthew 25:41**. Hence none now living will have an opportunity to be saved beyond this life or age.

The judgment of **Matthew 25** is a judgment of nations in the sense of the individuals that make up these nations. None but saved individuals will enter the millennium. These are the sheep of this judgment. They are Gentile believers. On the other hand, we have shown that "**all Israel**," the nation that witnesses the return of the Lord (**Isaiah 4:3, 4; Zechariah 12:10**), will be converted as individuals. Hence only saved Jews will enter the millennium. But, if as we believe, these saved Gentiles and Jews will enter the millennium in their natural bodies, the race will continue to reproduce itself and the children that are born will need to be saved. Certainly the gospel



will not have lost its saving power for them. Let us remember that the term “gospel age” for this present period is of our own coining. The New Testament has not given it this designation. The Bible designation for this age is “**the times of the Gentiles**” (**Luke 24:21**). We have no ground, therefore, for inferring that this is the only age in which the gospel will be preached. Our opponents make unwarranted assumptions here as elsewhere.

*2. Our opponents find intolerable incongruity in the mingling of mortals and immortals in the millennial kingdom.*

We do not know just how much mingling there will be between the two. But the reply here is again very simple, exceedingly simple, and quite brief. The saints who reign with Christ will have bodies like that of Christ (**I John 3:2**; **I Corinthians 15:49**; **Philippians 3:21**): the body in which He was raised from the grave, in which He ascended, and in which He will come again (**Acts 1:11**). While here on earth in that body Christ mingled with the mortal disciples, being seen of above five hundred of them at one time **I Corinthians 15:6**. Seemingly He found no incongruity in this. Neither would our opponents if they were not hard-pressed for arguments.

*3. It is contended that the prophets saw the final fulfillment of their prophecies in the resurrection of all believers rather than in the return and restoration of national Israel.*

A. **Ezekiel 37** is given as teaching this. In this chapter the regathering and restoration of Israel is likened, not to a resurrection, but a restoration. Ezekiel saw sinews, flesh, and skin coming upon dried bones and these bones were made to live. Our opponents would see this if they would look for facts, instead of putting upon every passage they deal with the interpretation that suits them. The vision was given because the Israelites in captivity were saying: “**Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts**” (verse 11). Therefore the “**graves,**” mentioned in the next verse, out of which God promised to bring His people, are not holes in the ground, but the nations that swallowed them up. **Lamentations 2:16**; **Ezekiel 36:3**; **Hosea 8:8**.

The parable of the two sticks that follows that of the dry bones in the valley shows the meaning of the former. Ezekiel was to hold the two sticks joined into one before the eyes of the people, and say: **“Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land.”** Verses **20, 21**. Then the verses that follow show that this looked to Messianic times for its consummate fulfillment, a time when **“David my servant shall be king over them,”** and when **“they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob ... ”** (verses **24, 25**). There is nothing here that hints even remotely at the resurrection of believers.

B. Another passage used by our opponents in this connection is **Isaiah 25:2-9**. This passage makes allusion to the resurrection, but it cannot be taken that the prophecies concerning Israel’s restoration were to be fulfilled through the resurrection, for **“It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; ... we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation”** (verse **9**). These are the words of restored Israel, and they are the words, not of people resurrected, but of people converted. Verse **8** mentions the resurrection of believers as occurring along with Israel’s restoration, but not as the means of it.

C. **Daniel 12:1-3, 13** is also offered in defense of this position. But no such teaching is found there. Verse **1** speaks of one fact, the deliverance of the Jews, the living nation, while verses **2, 3, 13** speak of another, the resurrection of believers. Again the two are associated, but the latter is not made the means of the former.

D. In **Hosea 13:14** the restoration of Israel is expressed as a resurrection, but it is just as easy to understand this as being a figurative representation of the restoration of a living nation as it is to understand passages that describe such a restoration as being a figurative representation of a resurrection. We believe the Bible demands the former. The fact that Paul, in **I Corinthians 15: 55**, quotes from **Hosea 13:14** proves nothing as to the application of this passage to Israel. Its language alludes to a resurrection, and can therefore be applied to a resurrection. But the

application of the verse to Israel must be governed by the preponderance of scriptural testimony.

E. Acts 26:6-8 is used in an effort to prove that the resurrection of believers is the hope of Israel, but the passage says no such thing. The hope was, as Hackett points out, “**‘Of the promise’** - i. e., *of a Messiah* - **‘made unto our fathers.’**” The resurrection mentioned is that of Christ, as shown by Acts 13:32, 33, and not that of believers, as our opponents would have us think; “*because the resurrection, considered as involving the ascension and exaltation, was essentially the finishing act in the fulfillment of the promise relating to the Messiah*” (Hackett).

F. In somewhat loose connection with the foregoing passages, our opponents also use **Acts 3:24; I Peter 1:10-12.**

**Acts 3:24** says that “**all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.**” Yes, all the prophets have foretold of “**these days,**” but the passage does not say, as our opponents would arbitrarily assume, that ALL THAT THE PROPHETS WROTE HAS ITS APPLICATION TO THESE DAYS. They spoke of the first advent of Christ and His earthly ministry, but they also spoke of HIS SECOND ADVENT AND THINGS THAT WILL FOLLOW. Verse 21, for instance, speaks of “**the times of restitution** (or restoration) **of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.**” This looks beyond the second advent and alludes to “*a state of primeval order, purity, and happiness, such as will exist for those who have part in the kingdom of Christ at His second coming*” (H. B. Hackett, in An American Commentary on the New Testament). The word for “**restoration**” was “*used by the disciples to Jesus in Acts 1:6*” (“**Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel**”) and by Josephus “*of the return from captivity*” (Robertson).

Nor does **I Peter 1:10-12** teach that all that the prophets wrote pertains to believers of the present age. Peter says of the prophets that it was revealed unto them “**that not unto themselves, but unto you they did minister the things**” - What things? The remaining words of the verse give the significant

answer - the things “**which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you ...**” This is far from saying that the prophets wrote nothing that pertains to a future age.

4. *Our opponents also use **Luke 17:20, 21; John 18:26, 37** and **Luke 20:35, 36** against our idea of the millennium.*

A. In **Luke 17:20, 21** the Master told the Pharisees “**the kingdom of God cometh not with observation ... the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.**” The present tense here shows that Christ spoke of the present form of the kingdom. But we have shown that the kingdom is to have a future form; and our opponents, regardless of how much they differ with us as to the future form of the kingdom, must admit that it will come with observation. It will come, as we have shown, when Jesus comes again, and His coming is to be visible. His first act as a king on His own throne will be to judge the nations. This judgment will be visible. As a result of this judgment the sheep will enter into the kingdom, or form the kingdom, then to be established. All this will be visible.

B. In **John 18:36** Jesus said: “**My kingdom is not of this world.**” But He certainly did not mean that His kingdom is not in this world, for we have just noted a Scripture that says the kingdom is now in the midst of men. He meant that His kingdom was not of the material that worldly kingdoms are made of; that it was not permeated by the same spirit, not worldly in nature. This will be just as true of the future form of the kingdom as it is of this present form.

C. The statement of our Lord in **Luke 20:36, 37**, let it be noted, says not simply: “**But they which shall ... obtain that world, neither marry nor be given in marriage.**” Rather, it says: “**But they which ... obtain that world, AND THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD,**” etc. The statement applies only to those who come forth in the first resurrection. The question in the preceding verses, as well as the verse under consideration, shows this to be true.

5. *Our opponents have much to say about the book of **Revelation** being a “book of symbols.”*

It is thus that they would seek to frighten us away from the truth, and get us to accept their system of arbitrary interpretation. We realize that there is much that is figurative in the in the book, but we will never admit, as they do not, that all of it is figurative. Nor will we agree to follow them as they spiritualize at will in order to fit things into their preconceived theory.

We recognize that the rider of the white horse in **Revelation 19** is a symbol, a symbol of Christ. And when we read in this chapter, “**in righteousness he doth judge and make war,**” smiting the nations and ruling them with a rod of iron, taking the beast and false prophet and casting them into a lake of fire, common honesty will not allow us to say that this all alludes to the fall of the pagan Roman empire, A. D. 476. We see here the glorious second advent of Christ, for other passages tell us that when He comes He will come to judge (**Matthew 25:31**) and make war (**Zechariah 14:3-5**). We see in verses **19-21** the same thing that is described in **16:14-16**, as well as partially in **II Thessalonians 2:8**, and this to occur in connection with “**that great day of God almighty,**” which is manifestly the day of judgment for this world. Moreover when we read of the beast and false prophet that “**both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone,**” we believe it means the same thing that similar statements mean, i.e., that they were cast into Hell. This is confirmed by **20:10**, which refers to their presence there at the time of the judgment of the great white throne. Thus again we find connection between **Revelation 19** and **Matthew 25:31-46**.

Then when we come to chapter twenty we recognize some more symbols. We do not believe that Satan is to be bound with a physical chain or that he will be shut up in a physical pit. Neither a chain nor a pit could confine a spirit being. But we do recognize that this means that God by His power will temporarily suspend the work of the Devil. Our opponents not only want to spiritualize at will, but they want to rob some of their symbols of about all their force. We refuse to trifle with the Word of God by saying that this means merely that the Devil could not henceforth take believers out

of God's hand, or merely could not prevent the preaching of the gospel to all nations because of the overthrow of pagan political power.

Furthermore when we read of occupied thrones and reigning with Christ we see here all believers reigning, because other passages tell us that they will. See **Revelation 2:26; 3:21** in the light of **I John 5:4**. Moreover when we find this reigning consistently put in the future (**Revelation 2:26; 3:21; Matthew 19:28; I Corinthians 6:2, 3**), we are confirmed in placing this chapter where it rightfully belongs according to the events of the nineteenth chapter. Finally, observing the reign of the saints is to be on the earth (**Revelation 5:9, 10**), we conclude that this whole matter alludes to an earthly reign. This is confirmed by **Zechariah 14:9; Isaiah 2:4**.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[55] It is evident that “**a new heaven and a new earth**” alluded to by John in **Revelation 21:1** is not the same as the “**new heavens and a new earth**” mentioned by Isaiah. Manifestly John saw the results of a second renewal that is to follow the loosing of Satan and the consequent rebellion of Gog and Magog. See **Revelation 20:7-10**.

[56] Blaikie says: “It would be impossible to narrate all the sieges, battles, murders, and massacres, that gave their dark hue to this period of history” (Bible History, p. 398).

[57] For a prediction of the present general dispersion of the Jews, see **Deuteronomy 28:49-69**. This was fulfilled in 70 A. D. under the Romans. “The distance from which the Romans came, the rapidity of their marches, the emblem of their arms, their military training, and foreign tongue, could scarcely have been described in more accurate terms. The continued desolation that was to ensue is not applicable to the time of Nebuchadnezzar or of Antiochus” (Urquhart, The New Biblical Guide, Vol. 8, p. 275).

[58] Verse **16** is really a boomerang against our opponents when read in the light of the preceding verses. Verse **15** tells us there shall be a smiting of the “**tongue of the Egyptian sea**” so as to “**make men go over dryshod.**”

This explains the reference to Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Just as they crossed the Red Sea dryshod, so in their final return from captivity they will cross waters dryshod. Let our opponents oblige us by telling us how this was fulfilled in the return from Assyria and Babylonia.

[59] A condition, as here implied, is "an event, fact, or the like that is necessary to the occurrence of some other, though not its cause" (Funk & Wagnalls Desk Standard Dictionary).

[60] We do not have it positively declared in Ezekiel that God would bring about the construction of a temple according to all the details of this vision. On the other hand, it is positively declared that God will accomplish the return, conversion, and reestablishment of Israel. Thus we can consistently believe the latter without believing the former.

[61] Note how our Lord, in reading in the synagogue in Nazareth (**Luke 4:16-20**), stopped in the middle of this verse; because the rest of the verse had not to do with His first advent, but His second. In like manner, whatever there is in the vision of Ezekiel that does not fit into the reign of Christ on the earth we may consider as not applying to it.

[62] Another argument of our opponents as to the meaning of "**all Israel**" (**Romans 11:26**) is that it refers to the elect remnant among the Jews and not to the whole nation. But verses **16** and **25** make this very untenable for all who put truth above a theory. The former verse argues that the elect remnant of Paul's day was the "**first fruits**," and that inasmuch as these first fruits were holy, "**the lump** (the nation in prospect) **is also holy**." Then, as we have pointed out previously, the latter verse informs us that the blindness of the nation is not only partial, but also temporary, existing only "**until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in**."

## Chapter 43 - THE FINAL STATES OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

In this chapter we shall concern ourselves with the location and condition of both the righteous and the wicked in eternity. And inasmuch as the resurrection and judgment of both classes are involved in their final states, we have chosen to consider these subjects in this chapter also.

### I. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1. THERE IS TO BE A RESURRECTION OF BOTH RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED.

This is unmistakably and undeniably taught in **Daniel 12:2; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15.**

2. BUT THE TWO CLASSES ARE NOT TO BE RESURRECTED TOGETHER.

*(1) The Scriptures teach that there will be a separate resurrection for the righteous.*

The passages which teach this fall into two classes:

A. Passages which speak of a resurrection “**from**” the dead. There are two such passages. **Luke 20:35; Philippians 3:11.**

The first passage reads: “**But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.**” That this verse refers to a resurrection in which the righteous dead alone will participate is shown in two ways.

(a) The phrase, “**resurrection from the dead,**” is the same as that which is always used to designate the resurrection of Christ (**Acts 17:31; Romans 1:4; I Corinthians 15:20; I Peter 1:3**) and is manifestly different in meaning from the generic phrase, “**resurrection of the dead.**” The former



phrase is never used when the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked is alluded to. On the other hand, the resurrection of Christ is never said to be a “**resurrection of the dead.**” He was resurrected out from among the dead, and so it will be with the righteous according to the passage under consideration.

(b) This teaching is confirmed by the context of the passage. The verse following the one under consideration tells us that those who participate in this resurrection cannot “**die any more, for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.**”

The author was once confronted with these verses as an argument against the resurrection of the wicked. His reply took the form of the present treatment. Frankly, if he had believed in a general resurrection, he would have been wholly at loss for an answer to the argument.

The second passage finds Paul saying: “**If by any means I might attain unto THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD**” (Philippians 3:11). The theory of a general resurrection renders these words meaningless. Certainly Paul would not have needed to be concerned with participation in a general resurrection, for he believed tenaciously in the resurrection of both righteous and wicked. See Acts 24:15. Also the language here is very strong, employing the double **ek, ten exanastasin ten ek nekron**, meaning when translated fully, “**the out-resurrection which is from the dead.**” Language could not more strongly convey the meaning that we are here insisting on.

B. Passages which describe a resurrection of the righteous only. Such passages are found in **I Corinthians 15:21-23; I Thessalonians 4:14-16.**

The first passage here treats the subject of the resurrection as though only the righteous will be resurrected. [63] This is understandable on one ground only, and that is that there is a resurrection in which the righteous alone participate.

The second passage speaks of the resurrection of the righteous only and leaves no place at the time for the resurrection of the wicked. The righteous dead are to be brought forth in immortal bodies and are to be caught up

immediately with the translated living saints to meet the Lord in the air. There is no indication that Christ comes to the earth at this time, as would be necessary if the wicked dead are to be raised and judged at this point.

**Revelation 20:5, 6** speaks of the “**first**” resurrection, in which only the righteous participate. Our opponents, of course, as already noted, seek to rob these verses of their manifest meaning. But let it be noted that our interpretation of them fits in exactly with the simple meaning of other passages already cited, while our opponents must try to explain the verses away with no specific scriptural support.

*(2) The Scriptures also describe a resurrection in which none but the wicked are spoken of.*

The description here referred to is found in **Revelation 20:11-15**. And note that the statement that “**death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire**“ can mean nothing less than that all the occupants of death and Hades were at this time cast into the lake of fire; distinctly implying that the righteous will not be found among the dead at the time, having been resurrected previously.

The presence of the book of life at this judgment gives no evidence whatsoever that any written therein will be there. It will be there as evidence that the wicked have not their names there.

*(3) The Scriptures relied on by our opponents as teaching a general resurrection are inconclusive and yield to the passages already cited without suffering violence.*

The Scriptures relied on by our opponents are: **Daniel 12:2; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15**. On these passages we remark:

A. The association of the righteous and unrighteous together in their resurrection does not prove that they will be resurrected simultaneously. The Bible often associates similar things that are separated as to time. As a case in point we may refer again to Christ’s quotation of **Isaiah 61:1, 2**, where He stopped in the middle of verse two because the rest of the verse had not to do

with His current ministry, but with His second advent. See **Luke 4:18, 19**. Thus, in one brief verse, we have an interval that has extended already more than nineteen hundred years.

Again we may cite **Malachi 3:1-5** as referring to both advents of Christ, notwithstanding their separation as to time. As John A. Broadus aptly says, the purification mentioned in these verses “does not simply mean that He would purify individuals by consuming what was faulty in them, but **Malachi 4:1-3** shows it to mean that he would purify the nation by consuming the wicked individuals like ‘**stubble**,’ and then the truly righteous of the nation would rejoice and prosper.” Thus the passage cannot be applied wholly to Christ’s first advent. Furthermore, in **Matthew 3:11**, John the Baptist associated baptism “**in the Holy Spirit and in fire**,” where the next verse shows that the baptism in fire does not allude to the tongues of fire on the Day of Pentecost, but to the fire of judgment. Thus again two things separated by centuries are mentioned together as though they would occur at the same time.

B. The translation of **Daniel 12:2** by Tregelles completely relieves this passage of its supposed allusion to a general resurrection - **And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake, these that awake, shall be unto everlasting life, but those - the rest of the sleepers who do not awake at this time - shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt.**”

C. **John 5:28, 29** can be understood as referring to two resurrections as easily as it can be understood as referring to one. These verses mention “**the resurrection of life**” and “**the resurrection of judgment.**” And the use of “**hour**” in verse **28** cannot be insisted on as proving simultaneousness since the “**hour**” of spiritual resurrection, mentioned in verse **25**, covers this whole age. “**Hour**” here simply means time - the time is coming, etc.

Alvah Hovey remarks very fairly concerning these verses: “Whether the resurrection of the two classes here mentioned will take place at the same time, or at different times, is not made perfectly certain by this language; but if there is nothing elsewhere in the New Testament inconsistent with the view

that the resurrection of both will be at the same time, this is, certainly, the most obvious interpretation of the language here used.” We agree; but we insist, and believe we have shown, that there is that in the New Testament that is inconsistent with a general resurrection.

D. To interpret **Acts 24:15** as teaching a general resurrection is to set Paul at variance with himself. Twice he describes the resurrection of the righteous without mentioning the wicked. And once he speaks of his earnest desire to “**attain unto the resurrection from the dead**” (**Philippians 3:11**), using the strongest possible language to indicate that he was thinking of a selective resurrection.

### 3. THE TIME OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

In **I Thessalonians 4:15-17** Paul makes it clear that the righteous will be resurrected at the time of Christ’s appearance in the air - the first phase of His coming; at which time the living saints will be translated and raptured also. However the same writer, in **I Corinthians 15:23** connects the resurrection with the parousia or second phase of Christ’s coming. This is due, we believe, to the fact that Paul, according to a scriptural custom already alluded to, associates together the two phases of the Saviour’s coming, notwithstanding their separation in time.

In the light of other such instances of association, no argument can be found here against our position as to the temporal separation of the two phases of the second advent. This association becomes even more natural, if, as we believe, the first resurrection is a continuous one, beginning with the appearance of Christ in the air and continuing as saints die throughout the great tribulation and on through the millennium. Note in **Revelation 11:11** the resurrection of the two witnesses after three days. Note also, as already pointed out, that none of the righteous will be found in Hades at the time of the resurrection of the wicked. **Revelation 20:14**.

## II. THE JUDGMENT OF THE LIVING AND OF THE DEAD

All men are to stand before Christ in judgment in some manner and at some time, but not all in the same manner and at the same time. Note:

## 1. THE JUDGMENT OF LIVING GENTILES.

**Matthew 25:31-46.** This is to take place when Christ comes to reign. It will mark the end of this age, and the beginning of the millennial age. There will be three classes present at this judgment - sheep, goats, and brethren, but only sheep and goats will be involved in judgment. These will be separated on the basis of how they have treated Christ's brethren, not on the basis of how they have treated each other.

The only sensible view is that these brethren of Christ are believing Jews, who will preach the gospel during the great tribulation period. Under the beast none can befriend these Jewish missionaries except at the risk of death, and none dare to do it except believers. Thus it will be possible to make an infallible separation on this basis; not that good treatment of the Jews is that which will save the Gentiles, but rather that which will indicate that they are saved. The sheep here are those who are to be saved during the great tribulation. This judgment is manifestly of nations as individuals and not in the aggregate. A nation as such, apart from the individuals that compose it, cannot be cast into "**everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels**" (verse 41). For Old Testament reference to this judgment see **Joel 3:2, 11-14.**

## 2. The JUDGMENT OF THE JEWISH NATION.

Above we pointed out that the "**brethren**" are not judged with the Gentiles. Thus a separate judgment is implied for them. To this judgment the Scriptures make definite allusion. See **Isaiah 1:2, 5, 27, 28; 4:4; Zechariah 13:8, 9; Malachi 3:3.** This judgment will take place in connection with the conversion of Israel.

## 3. THE JUDGMENT OF THE GLORIFIED BELIEVER'S WORKS.

See **II Timothy 4:8; Philippians 2:16; I Peter 5:4; Revelation 22:12.** The believer's sins have been judged already. He can never come into condemnation for them. But his works are to be tried. **I Corinthians 3:13-15.** There is nothing penal about this judgment. The believer either receives reward or loses it according to what he has done and the quality of his work.

#### 4. THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST DEAD.

**Revelation 20:11-15.** This will take place at the end of the little season during which Satan will be loosed following the millennium. Just before this judgment the wicked on the earth will be killed. **Revelation 20:9.** Then all the wicked including perhaps those judged in **Matthew 25:31-46**, will be resurrected, judged, and cast into the lake of fire. Try as they may, our opponents cannot point to a single real hint that this is to be a general judgment. They try to identify this judgment with the one described in **Matthew 25:31-46**. But let us note:

5. CONTRASTS BETWEEN THIS JUDGMENT AND THE JUDGMENT OF LIVING GENTILES IN **MATTHEW 25**.

In <b>Matthew 25:31-46</b> :	In <b>Revelation 20:11-15</b> :
1. None are mentioned except the living.	1. None are mentioned except the resurrected dead.
2. The judgment is explicitly connected with the second coming of Christ.	2. No mention is made of the second coming of Christ in immediate connection with the judgment.
3. There is no hint of the millennium, nor even any perceptible place for a millennium of righteousness preceding this judgment.	3. It is definitely stated that the judgment comes at the end of the "little season" during which Satan is loosed after the millennium.
4. Nothing is said about the judgment of Satan.	4. The judgment and perdition of Satan are clearly revealed.
5. The basis of judgment is the treatment accorded Christ's brethren.	5. No mention is made of the brethren of Christ.
6. Two classes are distinguished, sheep and goats - saved and lost.	6. No mention is made of any except those cast into the lake of fire.

Every one of these contrasts fits beautifully into the premillennial system, while every one of them is dead against the view of our opponents. Most of them they ignore. A few of them they try to explain away. Now what shall be said of the logic of those who reject a view into which these contrasts enter, and then adopt a theory that is at variance with every one of them?

Furthermore, we find the beast and false prophet are already in the lake of fire before this judgment begins. Our opponents have no explanation of this fact, since the beast (being manifestly the same as the man of sin) is to be destroyed at the second coming of Christ. If this judgment occurs at the second coming of Christ, how account for the fact that the beast and false prophet are already in the lake of fire?

## 6. SCRIPTURES THAT ARE HELD TO TEACH A GENERAL JUDGMENT.

The passages used as proof texts by the advocates of a general judgment are: **Matthew 7:22; John 5:28, 29; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:5-9; 2:16; 14:10; II Corinthians 5:10; II Timothy 4:1; 4:8; II Peter 3:7; Revelation 11:18.** Concerning these passages we remark:

(1) **Matthew 7:22; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:5-9; 2:16; II Peter 3:7; and Revelation 11:18** *all refer to the judgment of the nations as described in Matthew 25:31-46.*

If it be objected that **Romans 2:9** mentions the Jew, we reply that the judgment of the Jewish nation will occur in close connection with this judgment, probably just before or just after. Both will come as a part of God's "**day of wrath and revelation of righteous judgment.**" If it be said that **Romans 2:5** implies that the people then living would be in the judgment alluded to, which will not be the case according to our view, we reply that this is on the basis of the fact that the second coming of Christ is commonly represented as an event that might occur during that generation.

Note in **I Thessalonians 4:17** how Paul uses "we" in connection with the appearing of Christ. The words, "**the time of the dead that they should be judged,**" in **Revelation 11:18** do not mean that the wicked dead will be resurrected and judged at the time referred to. This verse finds its simple explanation in **Revelation 6:10**, where the souls of martyrs under the altar cry, "**How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not JUDGE AND AVENGE OUR BLOOD ON THEM THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH.**" The slain martyrs are at this time to be judged in the sense of being vindicated in the wrath of God upon the nations of the earth.

(2) *As for **John 5:28, 29**, we have shown already that this passage is not conclusive in teaching a general resurrection.*

The same, therefore, is true of it with reference to a general judgment.



(3) **Romans 14:10; II Corinthians 5:10; and II Timothy 4:1**, we believe, may be properly grouped together as teaching that all - saved and lost, living and dead, are to be judged, as we said in our opening statement under the head of judgment.

But neither these passages, nor any others, teach that all these are to be judged at the same time and in the same manner.

(4) **II Timothy 4:8** refers to the judgment of the believer's works.

We have dealt with this judgment already. It is to come, according to this passage, at the appearing of Christ - the first phase of His coming.

### **III. THE FINAL PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED**

#### **1. IT WILL BE ETERNAL.**

**Matthew 25:41; Revelation 14:11.** The plain meaning of these passages is that the punishment of the wicked will be endless.

#### **2. IT WILL CONSIST OF CONSCIOUS SUFFERING.**

In the last Scripture given above we are told that the wicked shall "have no rest day nor night." That involves conscious suffering.

It is contended by some that the final punishment of the wicked will consist only of annihilation. The foregoing passage denies this. Nevertheless we shall examine the grounds of this contention. They are:

##### **(1) Malachi 4:1-3.**

This passage refers only to the physical destruction of the wicked just previous to the setting up of the millennial kingdom.

This passage, in substance, is parallel with **Isaiah 24:17-22; 26:20, 21; 34:1, 2; 66:15, 16, 24; Zechariah 14:12-15; Matthew 25:41-46; II Peter 3:7.** This destruction will take place in connection with the battle of

Armageddon. But there is here no annihilation. This is plain from **Isaiah 24:22** and **66:24**.

(2) *The description of this punishment as the “second death.”*

The “**second death**” corresponds to the death of the race in Adam, and not to physical death. By this death man was unfitted for God’s fellowship and brought under the wrath of God, but was not put beyond hope or the reach of God. The “**second death**” brings the execution of the wrath of God through “the continuation of spiritual death in another and timeless existence” (E. G. Robinson); a complete banishment from God’s presence.

Thus the “**second death**” no more implies non-existence than does the sinner’s present state of spiritual death. **Mark 9:48, 49** shows clearly that the wicked in Gehenna retain conscious existence. “**Salted with fire**” may mean that the fire will have a preserving quality like salt.

(3) *The declaration that unbelievers are to perish.*

**Luke 13:3; Acts 8:20; I Corinthians 1:18**. But that this perishing does not denote annihilation is proved by the fact that the Greek word in **Acts 8:20** is the same word used to describe the perdition of the Beast (**Revelation 17:8**), and we find that the Beast is still in the lake of fire a thousand years later (**Revelation 20:10**). An annihilated being can never afterward be anywhere. The Greek word in the other two passages is the same word used for “lost” in **Matthew 10:6; Luke 15:24; 19:10; II Corinthians 4:3**, where annihilation cannot be the meaning.

(4) *The representation of the final punishment of the wicked as destruction.*

**Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9**. The Greek word in **Romans 9:22** is the same as the one for “perdition” in **Revelation 17:8**, which does not express annihilation, as we have just pointed out above. And the Greek word in **II Thessalonians 1:9** is the same as the one used for the destruction of the carnal nature in **I Corinthians 5:5**; and we know that the carnal nature is not annihilated in this life.

Finally, the fact that there are to be degrees of punishment, because of which it will be “**more tolerable**” for some than for others (**Matthew 11:20-24**), shows that the final punishment of the sinner is not annihilation; for in such a case all sinners would suffer the same penalty, and it would be nonsense to speak of annihilation as being more tolerable for some than for others.

(5) *The scriptural representation of immortality as something to be sought by man* (**Romans 2:7**), *revealed by the gospel* (**II Timothy 1:10**), *and attained only in the resurrection of the righteous* (**I Corinthians 15:54, 55**).

See discussion of these passages in chapter on [“The Present State Of The Dead”](#)

### 3. IT WILL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR DESERT.

**Matthew 11:21-24; Luke 12:47, 48; Romans 2:6, 12; Revelation 20:13.** These passages teach that there will be degrees of punishment based on the light possessed by the individual and according to his deeds.

## IV. THE FINAL BLISS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

This is described in **Revelation 21**, where New Jerusalem is seen descending out of Heaven into the new earth. The saved will make up this heavenly city. There will be for them complete satisfaction. All annoyance and cause of sorrow will be gone. In the likeness of their Saviour the saved will bask in the sunlight of God’s love forever, worshipping and serving Him, and rejoicing in His fellowship and that of one another.

Perhaps “**glory**” is the one word that best describes the eternal bliss of the righteous. See **Romans 8:18; II Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 1:27; Hebrews 2:10; I Peter 5:1**. This glory will consist of being “**glorified together**” with Christ, sharing equally with Him all His acquired glory, that is, the glory that will accrue to Him because of His obedience here on earth and His redemptive work. We are joint-heirs with Him to this glory. See **Romans 8:17**.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[63] It is impossible by sound exegesis to make the clause, “even so in Christ shall all be made alive,” embrace the wicked. The wicked will not be made alive “in Christ.” Their resurrection is a matter of justice and not something that accrues from the atonement. If there had been no atonement, the same justice that now demands their resurrection would have demanded it just the same. The language of the entire verse has its parallel in Romans 5:18, where the “all men,” upon whom the judgment came, are all descendants of Adam; while the “**all men**,” upon whom the free gift unto justification of life came, are all believers.