

*Genesis
To
Revelation
Precious Truths
From
God's Word*

Oscar B. Mink

Genesis To Revelation:

Precious Truths

From God's Word

by

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This April, 2021 eBook edition is published by James L. Reynolds

eBook Conversion Notes

The text of this eBook is a compilation of forty-eight articles written by Elder Oscar B. Mink over a period of many years.

Some of these articles were published in *The Sovereign Grace Advocate*, a paper edited by Brother Oscar, some were published in *The Baptist Herald*, a paper edited by Elder Wm. Doyal Thomas, and some were published in *The Baptist Examiner*, published by the Calvary Baptist Church in Ashland, Kentucky.

If any spelling or formatting errors are found please contact me so that I may correct them.

James L. Reynolds
Cornersville, TN
April, 2021



Elder Oscar B. Mink

After Preaching His First Gospel Sermon

May 4, 1955

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A Plural Oneness

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

The title and text upon which this brief message is based are both paradoxical. It has been said that “A paradox is a truth which stands on its head to get attention.” This witticism may in some degree apply to the title (*A PLURAL ONENESS*), but it cannot in the least degree apply to the text, for God’s word needs not the linguistic acrobatics of man to get attention (**Isaiah 55:11**).

Being born of the Spirit of God does not erase natural or hereditary distinctions, but on the contrary, it rather highlights them. A Jew does not cease to be a Jew when he is saved, nay, on the contrary, he then in truth appreciates his Jewish nationality, ancestry, and rejoices over the fact that His Saviour was by birth a Jew. Saul of Tarsus, one of, if not the strictest Jew who ever lived (**Acts 26:5**), became a devout follower of Jesus, if not the most devout. However, not once did he ever deny being a Jew. Paul said after he was saved: **“I am a man *which am* a Jew” (Acts 21:39)**.

The primary characteristic of his Jewish culture which Paul set aside when he became a Christian was the Mosaic ordinances in which he trusted to make him acceptable unto God. Paul knew that Judaism had run its course, and had become null and void as the message and system of God. Paul also knew there was much in the Jewish manner of living which was not an offense to Christ, and that the life and teaching of Christ did not mitigate against these things. Even though the enthusiasm which Paul had manifested for the Jews religion was many times compounded, and transferred to the cause of Christ, he nevertheless held to many of the extra religious practices which were peculiar to the Jews.

Paul was a Roman by citizenship, a Greek by environment, and a Jew by birth. Paul maintained these distinctives all of his life, but he realized after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus that earthly advantages did not

count with God, and that the lowliest saint was one with him in Christ; for in the covenant of grace all are positionally equal before God.

“Neither bond nor free ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). It was a common practice in the time of Paul for men to place themselves under bond for a specified time to other men who were economically superior to them. The bond man was to render services without wages to the bondholder, and the bondholder was by agreement to treat the bond servant humanely.

Paul recognized the validity of such a bond, and sent Onesimus, a runaway bond person back to his master. Yet, in the Lord Jesus, the Christian servant and his Christian master are equal in the eyes of redemptive love and grace. God’s elective grace is not a respecter of persons, for all the elect are one in Christ Jesus.

“... there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). This present evil and God hating world, being spiritually blinded, has twisted and distorted these words of Paul in an effort to make him say something he never said, nor intended to say. The reason for the mishandling of this Scripture by the world’s theologians is to placate the various and vociferous women’s movements in this country who clamor for equality with man in every facet of our society. The United States government may authorize these movements, but there is no validity for them in Scripture.

Being saved or born of the Spirit of God does not erase the distinction between male and female, but magnifies that distinction. There is never more sameness realized between a man and woman than when they are united in a God honoring marriage. But even in this close and intimate relationship, gender identity is made all the more apparent. The **“one flesh” (Matthew 19:5)** of the marital union does not change the masculinity of the husband, nor the femininity of the wife, for at the beginning God made them male and female, and this Divine order of the sexes shall ever remain in spite of the deteriorating distinctives brought on by a world in spiritual chaos.

While there is no difference between men and women as respects the covenant of grace, they are unlike in many and various ways, and especially so concerning the government of the Lord's churches. Man is not only the head of his wife in the home, but also in the church, and the wife is not to usurp her husband's authority in the home, nor in the church (**Ephesians 5:23; I Timothy 2:12**).

To contend that women are equal to men in the authoritative work of the church, is to charge God with foolishness, for God would not command women to wear a head covering in church as an acknowledgment of their submission to the authority God has vested in the men of the church, and then in another place say; it is not important for the distaff side of the church to honor this rule of government (**I Corinthians 11:35**).

God would not say: "**It is a shame for women to speak in the church**" and then call women to the ministry, or give them authoritative positions in the church (**I Corinthians 14:35**). Women are divinely forbidden to speak, pray audibly, or to publicly ask questions in the official worship service of the church (**I Corinthians 14:34, 35; I Timothy 2:8**). The original text of this article can be distorted or convoluted, but it cannot be forced to accommodate any violation of the Divine prohibitions stated in the foregoing paragraphs, and all who would so endeavor to use it, cannot but help to bring confusion and disorder (**I Corinthians 14:33**).

The Lord's church existed for a brief time without women members, but like Adam, it was not good for him to be without Eve. And even though New Testament church can exist without women members, it would be far better to have women members in it. Thus it was the Lord soon added some females to His precious church. So, let the brethren deeply appreciate their blood bought sisters in the faith, and remember, while there can be a church without women members, it takes godly and submissive women to give the church the tenderness and meekness it needs, and should always have.

The common interest of all faithful members of the church, is the glory of God in the church (**Ephesians 3:21**). But this coveted end does not depend on the sameness of characteristics, or equality of status in the church, but on

the grace which has made them one in Christ, and a consistent adherence to the faith the Lord delivered to His church (**Jude 3**).

(The Baptist Herald - May, 1992)

Alienation And Reconciliation

Alienation

“... Being alienated from the life of God ...” (Ephesians 4:18) To be alienated from the life of God is to be estranged from all that is decent, honest, and good. It is to be in a state of utter spiritual ignorance, a state wherein all that is pure has been debauched, and a state wherein desperate wickedness prevails and where there is a quench less hatred of God (**Romans 1 and 3**).

Sin has so ruined the natural man that there is not **“ONE”** good thing in him (**Romans 7:18**), his mind is enmity against God, his every thought only evil continually, and his will is utterly perverse (**Romans 8:7; Genesis 6:5; John 5:40**).

Man in his native state is not merely a deviate from the Divine standard, but he is absolutely depraved, and a relentless defiant of heaven’s authority. Man does not need to sit on the throne of Egypt to ask: **“Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?”** (**Exodus 5:2**), for man is born with a revolting and rebellious heart (**Jeremiah 5:23**), and man’s alienation from God is the seedbed of this earth’s abounding abominations (**I Peter 4:3**).

The Origination Of Man’s Alienation From God

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (**Romans 5:12**) As to the origin of evil, man is not the proto sinner. That infamous distinction belongs to the devil. But in the fall of Adam all of his posterity became as depraved as the devil, for there are no degrees in depravity; it is of the same extent in fallen angels and men.

There are no degrees in death, be it spiritual or physical. Both are, absolute and final apart from the quickening grace of God. In and by the sin of ancestral and federal Adam a malignant force was unleashed which brought an immediate cessation of spiritual life in Adam, and reduced him to

a mere mortal wherein his every step brought him closer and closer to the dust from which he was created (**Genesis 2:7, 3:19, 5:5**). However, let it be carefully noted in quantifying the offense of Adam against God, Paul says: **“all have sinned” (Romans 5:12)**. “Sinned”, antecedent to their corporeal being, but federally and spiritually every man was equally a constituent unit in the Edenic covenant, and that without residual innocence, for all men were as yet in the loins of Adam, and with him and in him **“all have sinned.”**

In the strict and judicial sense man is not alienated from the life of God because of the sin of ancestor Adam, for it unavoidably follows that all having partaken of the consequences of sin, must not have only had a character which was susceptible to sin, but were in collusion with Adam in originating mankind’s alienation from the life of God. No person suffers the consequences of Adam’s sin without being involved in and with equal degree of guilt as that of Adam, for the penalty is universal in scope and sameness; i.e., **“Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12)**.

Man’s corrupted character and his physical deterioration is owing to his seminal and federal union with rebellious Adam, and Adam’s sin was no more personal than it was corporate; for by it all men sinned and were alienated from their Creator. Adam’s spiritual demise was precisely that of all of his progeny, and from the standpoint of human nature there is no variation in man’s alienation from God, for all merited the same condemnation and the same measure of wages was contractually measured to every man (**Romans 3:23, 6:23**).

The alienation of the off springs of Adam is not owing to a transference of Adam’s sin to them, for the holy and just God does not exact penalty from any son of Adam who is not on his own guilty of sin. The contrary view which contends that Adam’s sin was strictly and exclusively his sin, in which only he participated, leaves the question of infant mortality painfully unanswered, and does away with human responsibility. However, they who believe in Christ to the saving of their soul, are not left to their own surmising in so great matters, but know the curse wrought by sin does not exclude the womb or tender years, for they know where there is no sin, there can be no death. Children are conceived in iniquity or hereditary sin, and

with conception comes the sentence of death (**Psalms 51:5; II Corinthians 1:9**). Then too, they know the womb is not off limits to the quickening grace of God, and no death manifests a heavenly destination more than that of an infant, but so as God's redemptive grace will not suffer the least decimation in our thinking, let us remember that infants are saved in the same way the vilest sinner is saved, and that is by the vicarious death and atoning blood of Christ (**Hebrews 9:22**).

Alienation Does Not Abrogate Responsibility

“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.” (Matthew 12:36)
“So then every one of us shall give account of himself unto God” (Romans 14:12).

The antinomian retorts: “But we are not under the law, but grace.” I fear the person who makes this statement is under the law apart from reconciling grace, and is yet a spiritual anarchist, doing despite to the economy of God. He needs to learn that God's law is not graceless, and that God's grace is not lawless. Grace and law are not antithetical, but complementary in their particular design and accomplishment. The purpose of the law was to reveal man's responsibility unto God and his total inability to respond, even infinitesimally unto God's law, and to point him to Christ in Whom dwells all sufficiency (**Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24; II Corinthians 12:9**).

The incumbency of preaching the law is not less today than when it was first given to Israel. Nay, on the contrary, it is superimposed; for the church now has the plenary revelation of God, and is thereby made aware that it is the preaching of the law that brings conviction to the hearts of God's elect, without which, there is no salvation from sin. It is in the light of the law that sin becomes exceeding sinful (**Romans 7:13**). The law of the Lord is perfect as far as it goes (**Psalms 19:7**), but the law in and of itself never made any thing perfect (**Hebrews 7:19**). The preaching of the holiness, goodness, and justice of the law (**Romans 7:12**), apart from the gospel of Christ cannot in the least prosper those who hear it, for men are justified by faith in the Christ of the gospel without the deeds of the law (**Romans 1:16, 3:28**).

God's elect are as sure to go to heaven, as Christ Himself is in heaven (**John 6:37, 17:24**), but I hear the Antinomian say: "A-men, and seeing we are forever saved, it does not matter how we live in this world." But Paul rebukes the Antinomian, saying: "**What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid**" (**Romans 6:15**). The Arminian goes to the other extreme, and says: "Man is saved by the work or exercise of his freewill, and that destiny determining decision is the basis or root of his incessant good works." It was in Adam that human freewill brought alienation to the family of mankind, and robbed man of all his power of spiritual discernment (**I Corinthians 2:14; Colossians 1:21**).

It is true, fallen man has a free-will, but it is in its every exercise restricted to the carnal, and is utterly impotent to will the first thing pleasing unto God. The natural man can will to do the greater or lesser evil, but never to do good; "...**There is none that doeth good, no, not one**" (**Romans 3:12**). The person who claims human free-will is essential to salvation, bluntly asserts that his will has a creative power greater than that of God, for salvation is referred to as a new creation (**II Corinthians 5:17**), and this new creation is the glorious product of the infinite agony which Christ suffered for his people under the curse of the law (**Isaiah 53:6; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13**).

Whereas, the first creation was without cost or resistance spoken into existence (**Genesis 1**), but let us remember; there can be no creation except it come from nothing, and thus it was with both creations. To say, the will of fallen man was contributing factor in his creation in Christ is to fly in the face of logic, but worse, it is to call God a liar; and cannot but aggravate man's merited alienation.

Reconciliation

An Awesome Audit

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled." (**Colossians 1:21**)

Man owes to God a life of perfect righteousness, but at his best state, he is altogether worthless (**Psalms 39:5**), his debt is infinite, and he has not the least farthing to pay toward his account. However, this does not disturb him in the least, for his foolish heart is blinded, and he soothes his frayed conscience by telling himself, “**there is no God**” (**Psalms 14:1; Romans 1:21; Ephesians 4:18**). Yet, his Divine Creditor **MUST**, and will be satisfied, for He hath appointed a day wherein all accounts of the irreconciled will be infallibly audited, and every deficit duly recompensed (**Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:12**).

Set in juxtaposition to the judgment of those who die in their alienation from God, is the substitutionary death and judgment of Christ upon the cross, whereby His elect people were reconciled to God (**Romans 5:10**). Christ in His vicarious suffering satisfied the just demand of the law against His people, freeing them from its retribution, and made peace with God for them (**Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14**). God, the Father seeing the travail of His Son in death on the accursed tree was satisfied, for by it many were reconciled, and His justice so fully appeased, their sins were put beyond Divine remembrance (**Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 10:17; Colossians 2:22**).

Reconciliation Reflected

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” (Romans 6:17, 18)

Being made free from the condemnation of the law does not make the holiness of God less exacting, nor does the reconciling grace of God allow any room for licentiousness, for liberty without rule is anarchy. While the regenerate is no longer under a killing letter, he is subject to the authority, and law of Christ (**Galatians. 6:2**). Paul said, He was dead to the law of sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord (**Romans 6:11**), and Peter says obedience unto Christ purifies the soul (**I Peter 1:22**).

Knowing that Christ paid the full penalty of the law for all whom the Father gave Him in the covenant of reconciliation, and knowing that God will not demand payment at the hand of Christ, and then again at the hand of those for whom He died; does not give the redeemed person any ground for complacency or lukewarmness toward sin, but should cause him to have an insatiable hatred of sin and never any satisfaction with it.

In the reconciling experience the old nature remains unchanged, and vehemently asserts itself against all that is holy and good. That is why Paul said: **“O wretched man that I am! ...” (Romans 7:24)**, and it is why the Publican said: **“God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13)**. Both Paul and the Publican knew, being made free from the condemnation of the law does not make the holiness and justice of God less exacting. However, both men knew, while they were not beyond the reach of sins contamination, that Christ on their behalf had eternally nullified sins power of damnation.

The law is a spiritual mirror reflecting the corruption of human nature. It has no life giving element in it, and is referred to by Paul, as the **“Ministration of death and condemnation” (II Corinthians 3:7, 9)**. However, the good news is, there is a ministration that is antithetical to the ministration of death. It is a new and living way, wherein the reconciled sinner reflects the glory of Christ (**II Corinthians 5:18; Hebrews 10:20**). God’s reconciling grace never stops with regeneration, for if regeneration was the sum of God’s reconciling work, then the Antinomian would have the truth, and we the lie; but Paul unveils the heresy of antinomianism by saying: **“Christ liveth in me,”** and by praying Christ would be formed in the Galatians (**Galatians 2:20, 4:19**). No mortal man reflected the life of Christ more than Paul, but he knew he had not attained unto the perfect image of Christ, so he pressed on toward that glorious and consummate end (**Philippians 3:14**).

However, this does not mean the saint will not become burdened with his discipleship, and stagger in the strait and narrow way. The severity of his trials, and the contradictions of his heart causes his faith to decline and his efforts to please God lose their distinctness, but he does not despair, for he knows while he cannot live above sin, he cannot live in it. He knows he must

wait until he gets to heaven to have the same hatred of sin that God has, but this does not lessen his solemn obligation to see sin in its devastative influence, and in due season, the fires of reconciliation which was often imperceptible are rekindled and his reflection of Christ shines all the brighter, for he has patiently waited upon the Lord (**John 16:33; Isaiah 40:31**).

Conclusion

Reconciliation is an inclusive term, wherein is found propitiation, and the terminus of sins condemnation. But let us not read into this divine superlative, the irresponsibility of God's elect, for both angels and men are forever answerable unto God's decree of holiness. While God has never been at enmity with His elect, His reconciling of them did not in any sense diminish His anger against sin. Notwithstanding, God's anger against their sins committed in violation of His holy law was judicially atoned for in the person of Christ, and in so doing, the throne of His advocacy was established; whereby the post regenerative sins of His people may be mediated (**I Timothy 2:5; I John 2:1**).

Howbeit, let it be clearly understood, forgiveness of sins cannot be merited by the elect before nor after their regeneration, for all remission of sin has a singular ground, and that is the shed blood of Christ (**Hebrews 9:22**). The atoning power of the blood of Christ did not stop at Calvary with the redemption of God's elect, but perpetually and effectually runs in it cleansing stream to the heart of every penitent saint (**I John 1:7**), and causes him to more perfectly manifest his heavenly sonship (**Romans 12:1, 2; Hebrews 4:16**).

An awesome truth which every redeemed person needs to learn very early in their sainthood is that God is no less angry with their sins than He is with the sins of the non-elect. Any less view of God would be foolhardy, and unworthy of His character. God's chastisement of His children is not the evidence of decreased love, but of a love that is perfectly holy and angry with sin. God's displeasure with sin is sovereign and steadfast, and is often manifested in anger against His rebellious children, for His wrath is settled

upon their old nature, holding it in check, so as His reconciling grace may have its perfect work. God's chastisement of His people is not incompatible with His love for them (**Hebrews 12:6**).

(The Baptist Herald - March, 1992)

Genesis 6:1-4: Angels Or Men?

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, [2] That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. [3] And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. [4] There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.” (Genesis 6:1-4)

In this text, to whom or what does the term “**sons of God**” refer? This question has perplexed the minds of Bible scholars for the last fifteen hundred years, and at this time there is considerable difference of opinion among Bible commentators as to the identity of the “**sons of God**” referred to in the above text.

I am confident that my interpretation of the text will not bring the readers of this article to a consensus of opinion, or for that matter settle the issue for all those who are halted between two opinions regarding the identity of the “**sons of God**” of **Genesis 6**.

However, being on the theological fence calls for a balancing act I find beyond my ability to perform, and straddling the fence is painfully difficult for me. So, in order to alleviate the irritation of my mind concerning the matter and question before us, I began a prayerful study and investigation into the subject. The following comments are the results of that study. If the reader disagrees with my comments, let him remember that his interpretation of the text is like mine, the interpretation of a fallible man, and that his disagreement does not necessarily mean I need his yardstick by which to measure the text. I do not claim to have all the information available on the question, but do believe what I have to offer is correct as far as it goes.

THE TWO MAIN SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

There are two main schools of thought as to the interpretation of the text, and as to the answer to the question, “Who are the sons of God?” The most popular view with contemporary Bible students is that, the “**sons of God**” are sons of Seth, the third son of Adam. Necessity is laid upon those who hold this view to make the “**daughters of men,**” the off springs of ungodly Cain, and that these two spiritually diverse lines developed affinity one for the other, which resulted in God defying marriages and obliteration of the distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil.

The second most popular view is, the term “**sons of God**” refers to the fallen angels who were in collusion with Lucifer in his original insurrection against the government of God. Both of these views have a number of things in common:

1. They both allow that whoever or whatever the “**sons of God**” are, they were used of the devil in his effort to corrupt all of mankind.

2. Both views further claim that the deluge was God’s countermeasure against the devil’s diabolic effort to corrupt the human race.

3. One other thing which both views have in common is, they both have leveled against them very weighty objections. Some of these objections we will mention in further addressing the question.

My firm conviction is, the “**sons of God**” are the angels who left their own habitation, and came down to earth, where they cohabited with the daughters of men. This cohabitation produced a race of beings, that was neither man nor angel, but demigods. The objector retorts: “That view is too weird!” Not really, one of the cleverest ruses of the devil is to get people to believe he does not exist, and second to that is, to get those who do believe he exists to deny his power. “**And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**” (II Corinthians 11:14). Does that sound strange?

I believe the serpent which Satan used in tempting Eve was a beautiful, shining, flying serpent, which actually talked with Eve. Does that sound weird? It is against the nature of serpents to talk, but the serpent of **Genesis 3**

talked, and that most convincingly. The supernatural powers of Satan are displayed in the overthrow of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, which by comparison to his use of fallen angels to cohabit with the depraved and fallen daughters of men is seen to be no great feat.

In adhering to the view that the “**sons of God**” are fallen angels, I do not mean to imply that I fully understand all that relates to the subject, or that my dogmatism has deaf ears.

Following are a number of reasons which I believe support the contention that the “**sons of God**” are fallen angels who had illicit intercourse with the daughters of men.

1. First, Ancient Israel, And Israel Contemporary With Christ, Held That “**The Sons Of God**” were Fallen Angels.

The book of Enoch, dated 200 years before Christ has in **Genesis 6:2 & 4**, “Angels of God,” rather than “Sons of God.”

Josephus, the great Jewish historian, wrote, “Many angels accompanied with women, and begat Sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good” (*Antiquities of the Jews - 3:1*, pg. 28). William Whiston, translator of Josephus, says, “This notion, that the fallen angels, were in some sense, the fathers of the old giants, was the constant opinion of antiquity.” Two hundred years of archeological excavation has proven the reliability of the historical account of Josephus.

Philo, who was contemporary with the apostles held that it was angels who cohabited with the daughters of men, rather than sons of Seth. It was the view of the great majority of Rabbinic writers, and it is the prevailing view of present day Orthodox Judaism.

2. Secondly, The Common Bible Of The Days In Which Peter, Jude, And The Other Writers Of The New Testament Lived, Was The Septuagint.

The Septuagint is a pre-Christian Greek version of the original Hebrew Scriptures. Several passages of the Old Testament which are quoted in the

New Testament are taken verbatim from the Septuagint. “Several passages of the Old Testament, which are quoted in the New, are taken thence; and, being thus noticed by the writers of the New Testament, from their mode of using it, we may infer that it was in general circulation among the apostolic churches” (*History of the Bible*, By John Kitto DD. - Pg. 45). The Septuagint was the version in circulation among the New Testament churches, and was read publicly among them. So, when Christ says, “**Search the Scriptures**” (**John 5:39**), it is very likely that He referred immediately to the Septuagint, and indirectly to the original Old Testament. It is agreed by reputable scholarship that Jesus quoted more than once from the Septuagint. Now, I want you to note, while the K.J.V. and most modern versions read in **Genesis 6:2 & 4** “**Sons of God**” the Septuagint reads, “Angels of God.”

When **Jude** in verse **6** speaks of the angels “**which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,**” he then adds, “**Even as Sodom and Gormorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire,**” (**Jude 7**). The language of **Jude 7** demands adherence to the Septuagint, and the ancient view of **Genesis 6:1-4**. It is said by the inspired writer, that the people of Sodom and Gormorrah went after “**strange flesh even as,**” or in like manner as the fallen angels “**which kept not their first estate**” (**Jude 6**). It is said of the angels of **Jude 6** and **7**, that they are “**reserved in everlasting chains under darkness ... suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**” All fallen angels (**Revelation 12:7- 9**) are not at this time locked up in Tartarus, some are still on the earth working with their nefarious head, Satan.

Alford, commenting on **Jude 6 & 7** in his Greek New Testament, says, “In like manner to these ... the angels above mentioned. The manner was similar, because the angels committed fornication with another race than themselves.”

The Twentieth Century New Testament (1898), taken from the Greek of Wescott and Hort, of which Philip Schaff said, it is “The purest Greek” reads in verses **6 & 7** of **Jude**, “And that even those angels that failed to keep their own station and left their proper home have been kept by Him for black

darkness. They are like Sodom and Gormorrah and the towns near them, which, as the angels did, gave themselves up to fornication, and went in search of beings of a different nature, and now stand out as a warning, undergoing as they are, punishment by enduring fire.”

3. The Early Church Believed That “**The Sons of God**” Of **Genesis 6:1-4**, Were Fallen Angels.

Justian Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Lactantius, and the great majority of the early church fathers believed that “**the Sons of God**” of **Genesis 6:1-4**, was a reference to reprobate angels. One of the reasons that unanimity prevailed among the early churches as regards this issue was that no other viewpoint was heard of until the latter part of the fourth century.

The Sethite theory, the view that the “**Sons of God**” were the godly line of Seth was first introduced in the latter part of the fourth century by Juihus Afracanius, a contemporary of Origen. He wrote, “What is meant ... in my opinion, is that the descendants of Seth are called the sons of God” (*Ante Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 6, Pg. 131). The Sethite theory spread rapidly and widely, and became the prevailing view of the dark ages.

Eusebius, the great church Historian took exception to the Sethite theory, and declared his position in the dispute by saying, “The original position of the church is correct” (*Jude - The Acts of the Apostates*, Pg. 38 - S.M. Coder). The popularity of the Sethite theory has perpetuated itself, and is today the most common view among Bible students. However, many of these students are having doubts as to the correctness of their conclusions in this matter, and a re-study of the problem has led a large number to adopt the position which the early church held.

There is nothing in the context which suggests, or infers that the Sethites were distinguished for piety. Neither is there anything in the context which implies that the “**daughters of men**” were more ungodly than the daughters of Seth. In fact, the term “**Daughters of men**” is general, and includes the daughters of Seth as well as the daughters of Cain.

The Sethites were not exempted from the charge of general wickedness which precipitated the flood.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of his heart was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5) The terms “man” and “his” in this text are used in the generic sense, and includes both Sethites and Cainites.

“And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Genesis 6:12). This text does not say “All flesh has corrupted his way upon the earth, except the Sethites.” No, it is “**all flesh,**” and the family of Seth comes under that heading.

Josephus, says of the Sethites, “In process of time they were perverted, and foresook the practices of their fathers, and did neither pay those honors to God which were appointed them nor had any concern to do justice towards men. But for what degree of zeal they had formerly shown for virtue, they now showed by their actions a double degree of wickedness” (*Antiquities Of The Jews*, Pg. 28). All the Sethites, with the exception of one family perished in the flood.

It is not denied that the Sethite apostasy was fueled by the unlawful marriages of the godly line with the children of Cain, but what is denied is, that these marriages is what is referred to in **Genesis 6:1-4**. The Sethite apostasy did not originate during the days of Noah, but had been long in process, and in league with the children of Cain, corrupted the whole earth. But it was the illicit marriages and intercourse of the aliens of the air, the denizens of devil, with the “**daughters of men**” that is referred to in **Genesis 6:1-4**, and it is this marital action which opened up the judgmental skies of God and immersed the earth in water.

4. The Term “**Sons Of God**” Is Used Exclusively In The Old Testament Of Angels.

“Now there was a day when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.” (Job

1:6)

“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord ...” (Job 2:1) The Septuagint renders the term “Sons of God” found in Job 1:6 and 2:1, “angels of God.”

“Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.” (Psalms 29:1) The Hebrew word for “mighty” in this text is “ben, bane” and means “sons of God” or sons of the Mighty One.”

Many, in an effort to avoid the force of this argument have equated texts from the New Testament which refer to regenerate persons as “Sons of God” with the Old Testament expression. In order to do this sound rules of exegesis are violated, and men must be introduced into Job 38:7, where “all the sons of God shouted for joy” at the primordial creation of the earth, when as yet, men did not exist. The “Sons of God” of Job 38:7 is clearly a reference to angels.

5. The Hebrew Words For “Giants” In Genesis 6:4 Is “Nephilim”, Which Means “Fallen Ones.”

Genesis 6:4 could have been correctly translated, “There were fallen ones in the earth in those days.” The term “fallen ones” must be distinguished from mankind, for all of mankind was in a fallen state, and exceedingly wicked at this time. The term “fallen ones” has no significance unless it refers to something else other than the fallen ones of Adam, for they were present, not only in “those days,” but had been present since the expulsion from Eden.

The distinguishing feature in the text (“There were fallen ones in the earth in those days”) is they were in the earth at this time, rather than in heaven. The words constitute an indirect reference to the angelic apostasy in heaven, but is a direct reference to fallen angels on earth.

The Hebrew word “Nephilim” translated “giants” in the King James version and “giantes” in the Septuagint occurs only one other time in Scripture (Numbers 13:33), and has to do with the great size and stature of

the sons of Anak. “... **And all the people we saw in it *are* men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants (nephilim - same as **Genesis 6:4**), the Sons of Anak” (**Numbers 13:32 & 33**). This is, as no one can honestly deny a reference to the gigantic size of the Sons of Anak, and in no sense speaks of their fame or exploits. As it is here, so it is in **Genesis 6:4**.**

It is without doubt that these “fallen ones” did great exploits which made them renown, but from all of these great feats they became exhausted and needed a super king size bed to rest in, thus it is, we read of one of their bedsteads being thirteen feet long (**Deuteronomy 3:11**).

“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead *was* a bedstead of iron; *is* it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.” (**Deuteronomy 3:11**) The conservative cubit of eighteen inches would have king Og’s bed to be thirteen and one half feet long, and six feet wide. It is plain that these dimensions are given to draw attention to the physical size of Og, and unmistakably identifies him as a descendent of the “fallen ones” of **Genesis 6:4**.

At the first appearance of this race of monstrosities, God sent a flood and destroyed them. At their second appearance God orders His people to utterly destroy them, and the prophet Amos in retrospect, quoting God, says, **“Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was* strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath”** (**Amos 2:9**).

“There were giants in the earth in those days.” The “giants” spoken of here are literal, not mere men of renown, but men of exceedingly large stature. The question which logically follows, is, seeing that marriages of believers with unbelievers in our day do not produce actual giants, why should such a union beget them in the days of Noah?

The Sethite theory does not facilitate Satan’s purpose to prevent the entrance of the promised Seed of the woman, which was to bruise his head. Cain was of that wicked one, and was used of his spiritual father to slay

Abel, for he knew or thought it was through Abel that Christ would come into the world. In the same way, Pharaoh and Herod were used of Satan in an effort to destroy the seed through whom the promised head bruiser would come. All of Satan's efforts to prevent the coming of Christ into the world, miserably failed, and **“when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman ...” (Galatians 4:4)**. Christ was born of a woman who had a depraved nature, a godly woman, and certainly not as steeped in sin as the antediluvian Sethites, but nevertheless, depraved. Human depravity, even in its most intensified state, is never presented in Scripture as something in itself, per se, that Satan would ever think could be a deterrent to the fulfillment **Genesis 3:15**, for it was to depraved people the promise of a Redeemer was made. Satan knew that it would take something more than the total and ultimately intensified depravity of the human race to prevent the incarnation of Christ. Satan knew, the cohabitation of fallen angels with the daughters of men could eventually abort the human race, and leave no entrance for the Son of Man. What Satan did not know, was, that God would send an earth wide flood and drown all of his monstrous half brothers and sisters, and that God would make an example of their fallen angelic daddies, by shutting them up to the vengeance of eternal fire (**Jude 7**). Yet, Satan will try anything to avert his own destruction as spelled out in **Genesis 3:15**.

All that the Sethite theory of **Genesis 6:14** does, is teach the doctrine of the intensification of human depravity. The depraved state of the Sethites at the time of the flood was every bit and grain as terrible as that of the Cainites, and only one man among them found grace in the eyes of the Lord (**Genesis 6:8**).

6. The Apostle Peter Connects The Sin Of Angels With The Flood.

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; [5] And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;” (II Peter 2:4-5)

In this text, Peter connects the sin of the angels with the flood therefore it is not the angelic apostasy in heaven which Peter sets before us in this text, but the soul damning work of the “fallen ones” on earth. Peter makes the sin of the angels and the flood to be cause and effect, otherwise the close frame of reference in which they are used is meaningless.

Some reputable scholars believe **Isaiah’s** reference to Lucifer in chapter **14**, verses **16 & 17** is also an indirect reference to the sin of the fallen angels. The text reads, “... ***Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; [17] That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?***”

That this is a reference to the flood is seen in the two clauses, the world made a wilderness, and the cities thereof destroyed. It was the flood that made the earth a veritable waste, it was the flood that destroyed the cities of the earth, not the Adamic curse; for at the time of Adam’s fall there were no cities to be destroyed. Satan, the deposed archangel is head of the fallen angels, and is by God held responsible for the cohabitation of the “fallen ones” with the “**daughters of men**”. The illicit sexual relationship of the fallen angels with the “**daughters of men**” resulted in the flood, and it is in this sense, that God holds Satan responsible for the destruction of the earth and the cities thereof.

7. The Objection, That Angels Are Neuter, And Cannot Reproduce, Is Answerable.

The text most often cited by those who object to the view that the “**sons of God**” of **Genesis 6:1-4** are fallen angels is, **Matthew 22:30**, which reads; “**For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.**”

A. The term “**angels of God**” in this text, serves as a clear distinction between angels who remained faithful to God, and the angels who in collusion with Lucifer rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven.

B. The text uses a clause which is locative, which clause specifies the place where angels do not marry, i.e. **“in heaven”**. If the text read, **“In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God”** and had left off the last two words (**“in heaven”**), much the objection sued for could be allowed. But the text includes the qualifying clause, **“in heaven”** and the object goes pitifully wanting.

The last two words of the text makes what at first seems to be an insuperable objection, to be utterly groundless, for it is **“in heaven”** that angels neither marry nor or given in marriage. The angels of **Genesis 6:1-4**, referred to as **“sons of God”** were no longer in heaven, but in the earth, and in the earth, they by marrying the daughters of men gave the conjugal relationship its most infernal nature.

C. **Matthew 22:30** speaks of the post resurrection state of believers, wherein they become unmarriageables, and the place of this state is **“in heaven”**. Then too, the text speaks of unmarriageable angels, who reside **“in heaven”**. In this text we see God, His angels, and all the elect of God, and their abode is **“in heaven”**. On the other hand we have a text of Scripture in which we see the devil, his angels, reprobate mankind and the place of their eternal residence: **“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”** (**Matthew 25:41**). But there are ages of time between the creation and resurrection of the saints and their translation to a heaven where marriage vows are never spoken. It is in this interim of time on earth saints marry and are given in marriage. It is in the same earth and time that the angels which kept not their first estate marry the daughters of men, and are soon thereafter cast into a marriage-less hell.

The remonstrant may say: “It is contrary to the nature of angels to marry.” What we mere mortals know about the nature of angels is practically nil. We know they have at different times assumed physical bodies, and were referred to as men. Angels in their corporeal form on earth have spoke as men speak, ate the food of men, handled men and were handled by men (**Genesis 18:8, 19:3 & 16**). What the nature and power of fallen angels consist of, is known only to God. The little we know about them tells us, that

sinful angels left their proper habitat, and were granted access to the earth, wherein they had illicit intercourse with the daughters of men, including both, Sethites and Cainites.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - February, 1983)

Baptism: Preacher Or Church Ordinance?

Introduction

Having been asked by the author to write an introduction to the following treatise, I do now humbly and prayerfully undertake this great task. May God be gracious to me.

There is some degree of heaviness of heart now felt, for many dear brethren who are well loved by the author, and by myself are either directly or indirectly involved in what I believe is a grave error concerning the matter of the authority to baptize. And it seems to me that the fearful times in which we live are accelerating many of God's dear children into error upon error.

The author has dealt with the subject matter in a manner that I have perceived as being in the highest human expression of love and compassion for brethren, while at the same time showing an earnestness for holding God's precious provisions for the well-being of His blood bought saints before us. He seems to me to be seeking to magnify God and to maintain before us all His blessed and unchanging order of things.

Being enabled to see my own inabilities to some feeble degree, I readily concede there is always the tendency for saved sinners to plunge into the deep distresses of error. This is not admitted easily, nor will it take anyone by surprise. I am sure that those of you who know me will confess that I fail often, and many times very grievously. May God forgive me, and all of you who have this propensity to err.

My purpose, therefore, is not to take anyone to task, nor to chastise. Rather, it is to exhort, and to lift up those who may be beset with this particular evil. My purpose is to ask all brethren everywhere to consider carefully what the author has presented, and in light of Scripture, judge the work accordingly. Having thus judged, may we be given grace to ask for grace to come back to the Old Landmarks, and walk therein.

I concur that Scripture clearly and unmistakably declares that authority has been assigned to the Lord's New Testament churches, and that it is only assumed to have been given to the ordained among the ministry of those churches. The authority to baptize cannot be delegated, nor can the responsibility to do so be abdicated. The commission that the Head of the churches gave requires that this ordinance be kept and practiced in all its purity. Neither can this authority be usurped.

Please consider the Scriptural teaching on this awesome responsibility, and come back dear brethren. I beg you, heed this plea and come back. Come back!

“Christ built His church, committed to it the ordinances, and since that day the authority to baptize and to administer the Lord's Supper resides in the church that Jesus built, not in any priest or preacher on the face of the earth, but in the church.” William Manlius Nevins, *Alien Baptism and the Baptists*, page 33.

Pastor Wm. Doyal Thomas

BAPTISM: PREACHER OR CHURCH ORDINANCE?

By: Pastor Oscar Brian Mink

“And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

BAPTISM: APOSTOLIC OR CHURCH COMMISSION?

It is the consensus of New Testament Baptists, and they have declared with one voice that the mission to baptize referred to in the above text was given to the church. This truth is made noon day clear from the fact that not

one of the apostles ever claimed to have authority to baptize independently of the church. It is not denied that the commission was given to the apostles, but it is denied that the commission was given to them as individuals. The apostles were the first members of the New Testament church (**I Corinthians 12:28**), and it was to the first Baptist church Christ spoke, saying, “**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them ...**”

The apostolic office and commission was for the duration of the life of those ordained to the office, and the apostolic office reached its terminus and cessation with the death of the apostle John around the year 96 A.D. John was the last of the apostles to die, and the doctrine of apostolic succession propagated by Romanism and given acquiescence by some pope-eyed Baptists (?), is utterly alien to the holy Scriptures. Conversely, it is incontrovertibly taught in Scripture and particularly in the last three verses of **Matthew** chapter **28** that the commission to baptize is age long. Thus, it is seen that the commission to baptize is perpetual, “*even unto the end of the age,*” and necessitates the age long existence of the church, which is the exclusive means of conveying the ordinance of baptism.

The commission to baptize is an additional charge, a charge given to an authority above or superior to that of the apostolic office, and the only authority excelling that of the apostles was that of the church. Ecclesiastically speaking there is not anything on earth superior to the local church. The church has no power whatsoever to legislate a single law or ordinance, but the church was appointed by the sovereign and eternal Testator to be the executor of His will concerning all that is ecclesiastical in this present age. It was to the church, Christ said, “Teach and keep all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (**Matthew 28:20**). The apostles recognized the authority vested in the church by its Head, Jesus Christ, and never once questioned that authority.

Christ said of the church, “**The gates of hell shall not prevail against it**” (**Matthew 16:18**). Herein is the irrevocable guarantee of age long perpetuity of the church and the exercise of its baptismal authority, for church perpetuity cannot be realized apart from the proper administration of the baptismal ordinance. The apostolic office had no such guarantee of baptismal

authority, and in due season the need for official apostleship expired and the office became extinct in the earth. Not only was the church guaranteed age long existence, but it was promised age long success. Christ said to His church, “**Ye shall be witnesses unto Me ... unto the uttermost part of the earth**” (Acts 1:8). This prophecy has been brought to fruition, not by the continuity of the apostolic office, but it is owing to the everyday presence of the Lord with His church.

BAPTISM: STRICTLY A LOCAL CHURCH ORDINANCE

The chief purpose of this writing is to irrefutably prove from Scripture and church history that the authority to baptize does not merely reside in the local New Testament Baptist church, but that the authority to baptize is unalterably restricted to the local church. If Baptists surrender this principle, they surrender all. The acceptance as valid baptism which has been performed beyond the immediate authority of a local New Testament Baptist church, or by a supposed admixture of plural church authority is to open the door to many absurdities and hurtful errors.

No ecclesiastical authority higher than that of the local church is recognized in the New Testament. But even this authority has its limits; it is restricted to the confines of the immediate church. And since the church has NO authority outside of its own body, the church must receive the candidate for baptism by its own independent authority. The doctrine of absolute church independence is to be guardedly cherished, and the least infringement thereon is to be considered a crime of great magnitude.

It is accepted as an axiom by all true Baptists that the church which Jesus organized during the time of His incarnation on earth was vested with the power and authority to administer the ordinances, and there is no record in the New Testament where any of the Lord’s churches ever lost the ability or authority to administer the ordinances. It is revealed in holy writ that some of the churches which were properly organized imbibed many grievous errors, of which the church at Corinth seems to have surpassed them all. Yet, it was to the weak and unstable church at Corinth, Paul said; “**Keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you**” (I Corinthians 11:2).

Seeing then that the commission was given to the original church, that is to a particular and individual church, and seeing that this church is the model for all others and that it did not go outside of its own membership for assistance in carrying out the ordinances; it would be, to say the least, a demeaning deviation for a church in the succeeding line of the original model to solicit the aid of another church in administering the ordinance of baptism.

When a Baptist church is organized it assumes responsibility for carrying out the commission, and the baptizing of disciples is a paramount part of that commission. John the Baptist had a special and direct commission from God to baptize, and John's commission was not transferable or delegable. John zealously assumed his divinely bestowed mission to baptize, and never once asked any other person to take any part of his ministry or to become a substitute for him in his work of baptizing. Like John, the church received a special and direct commission to baptize from no less of an authority than that from which John received his. Jesus appointed a mountain where He would meet with His church, and being clothed with all the authority of heaven and earth, He met with and gave the geographically unlimited commission to baptize to His church (**Matthew 28:17-20**). And like John, not once did any of the New Testament churches deny or claim impairment of ability to discharge their obligation to baptize, and it is highly unreasonable to suppose that two or more of the New Testament churches held a union meeting to which the churches involved brought their baptismal candidates, and had one of the more famous preachers of their time to do the baptizing for them. Yet, this is precisely the biblical precedent that is needed and goes wanting in what is being practiced by some contemporary New Testament Baptist churches.

There is not, never was, nor can there ever be such a thing as bilateral independence or autonomy. Whatever the enterprise may be, bilateralism demands a measure of compromise of the independence of the parties involved in it. The government of the Lord's churches is independently democratic, and allows for no official inroads or out-roads. As to polity, the church never needs to consult but one party, and that is the voting majority of its membership. All the governmental actions of a Baptist church are unilateral. Official bilateralism is not only incongruous to the nature of the

Lord's churches, but is a big step toward the undoing of the churches who suppose it to be effected.

No assignment was given to the church by its Head, which the local church cannot discharge in and by its own strength. Each and every New Testament church has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (**John 14:17**), and to seek help as though necessary to perform that which has been peculiarly and exclusively committed to the local church would be to question the wisdom of God, and would border on a denial of the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit. Such action, to say the least, is extremely dangerous, and calls for a rebuke from the Head of the church. A church set up by Jesus Christ and honored with His unfailing presence will without a single hiatus have ability to baptize all who apply to it for baptism.

When two churches take official parts in administering the ordinance of baptism to one candidate, whether intended or not, the two churches become an ecclesiastical association. If two churches can Biblically function in this manner, what is wrong in three, five, ten, etc. etc. churches doing the same? If two churches can do it, so can two hundred churches, all having voted in their respective capacitance to have a member of another church act for them in administering the ordinance of baptism.

Pluralistic church authority in administering baptism could greatly reduce the need of foreign missionaries, for one missionary with the approval of his home church coupled with that of all his supporting churches, could baptize for and organize churches for his home church and all supporting churches. If the practice of pluralistic church authority in administering the ordinance of baptism has Scriptural support, it does not seem fair that all the churches which the foreign missionary organizes be out of his home church, when as a rule ninety percent of his financial support comes from outside his home church. If pluralistic authority is valid, why not make all the supporting churches more directly involved in the missionary's work by baptizing for them all, and if possible organize at least one church for each of the supporting churches?

Is baptism a picture or symbol of the redeeming work of Christ? True Baptists everywhere answer with a resounding affirmative. Then I ask, “Did Christ have a co-sponsor in His work of redemption?” The answer of Baptists to this question is a vociferous and unequivocal, “No.” Then I ask, “Why should the local Baptist church to whom is committed the keeping of the ordinance of baptism go outside of its own membership to seek an agent to act for it in administering the ordinance, which is divinely given to its jurisdiction?” The baptismal symbol being thusly forced portrays more than what is necessary, and spawns an unintended, but nevertheless a degrading inference as to the perfect and unassisted redemption of Christ.

They who advocate pluralistic authority in administering the ordinance of baptism, and the necessity of a formally ordained Baptist minister to act as agent in the immersion of the baptismal candidate; must show or give evidence from Scripture that the authority to baptize is transferable from a church to its ordained ministry and hence unto another church. Any effort to provide the scriptural evidence for such an action would be an exercise in futility, for the necessary proof which would give authentication to the practice is not even hinted at in Scripture.

The nature of the Lord’s churches is such that they never need to borrow officiality from any sister church. The church who attempts to do so openly admits that it is not at the time an autonomous entity, and for the time they are without an officially ordained ministry are deprived of the authority to disciple and to baptize, for discipling and baptism are inseparably connected in the commission given the church by its omniscient Head.

Baptists believe that a New Testament church is a body of baptized believers, ecclesiastically independent of all other religious bodies, and fully able to administer its own affairs under the Headship of Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 1:22**). J. M. Pendleton says, “That the power of a church cannot be transferred or alienated, and that church action is final. The power of a church cannot be delegated. There may be messengers of a church, but there can be no delegates in the ordinary sense of the term.. No church can empower any man, or body of men, to do anything which will impair its independency” (Pendleton’s Church Manual, Page 102 - Item 3). The

contention for pluralistic authority in administering baptism is to contend for and promulgate a doctrine that is close akin to the repulsive doctrine of universal churchism. The pluralistic authority doctrine teaches that the authority to baptize was given to the institutional church; that is to the aggregate bodies of Christ. Such a teaching may not be intended by those who baptize outside of their immediate church, but there is a sense wherein the erroneous doctrine is commended by the practice of pluralistic authority.

“Baptism is an ordinance of, and in, each local church; not of the kingdom” (J. R. Graves, *Old Landmarkism* - Page 28). The term “kingdom” in this statement by Graves is meant the institutional church, and is thusly stated in the context from which the quote is taken. So it is in this particular, all who believe that baptism is strictly a local church ordinance can identify with this great champion of the faith, the illustrious, J. R. Graves.

I have with the upmost diligence searched the Scriptures, and nowhere in them have I found where the local church needed or asked for any help outside of its immediate membership in administering the ordinance of baptism. All the ability necessary to Scripturally baptize comes with the organization of each New Testament church, and this ability inherently resides with all of the Lord’s churches. It is agreed by true Baptists, even unto the uttermost peripheral that the church has the power and authority to ordain its own officers, and that official church existence is an absolute prerequisite to the call of a pastor. With this premise I know of no variance among Baptists, and acknowledging that it is Scripturally supported, I ask; seeing then that a church must need exist before it can call a pastor, “Is the church at the time of its organization to assume full responsibility for carrying out the commission given it by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ (**Matthew 28:18-20**)?” To ask the question is to answer it in the positive.

The day a true church is conceived is the day it becomes responsible to preach all the counsel of God; and baptism is an emphatic part of the divine counsel which every New Testament church is to preach. The responsibility to baptize comes with day one of the existence of every Holy Spirit wrought church, and this God given responsibility is not to be held in abeyance until the church is given a formally ordained pastor. The interim as a rule between

church inception and that of an ordained pastor in place is brief, but regretfully there are many exceptions to this rule, and to further compound the problem of rule exceptions, many of the Lord's pastorless churches are hundreds of miles removed from all sister churches. To contend in such cases as the exception stated above that the pastorless church has not the authority to baptize those whom it has effectually disciplined would be to stultify or be repressive of the evangelistic spirit of the church. Not only would the delay in baptizing those who have applied to the church for baptism be fearfully detrimental to the spiritual health of the church, but it would be an unwarranted setting aside of an inflexible Scriptural rule and example, the rule and example where of I speak being, all New Testament believers upon profession of their faith were immediately baptized.

However, there is no need for the above mentioned delay in administering the ordinance of baptism, for the authority lies with the church, and not in its ordained ministry. This does not mean, even by the farthest stretch of the imagination that it is not important who the agent is that baptizes for the church. It is readily and correctly conceded that the pastor is the MOST proper person to baptize for the church, and when the pastor is willing, able, and available to function in immersing the baptismal candidates for the church, he should NEVER be by-passed in this high honor. It is first the pastor's privilege and obligation to act as the agent of the church in administering the ordinance of baptism, and this particular agency does not pass from the pastor's province except he becomes physically unable or spiritually disqualified. But when such liability deprives the church of its pastor, then and during the pastorless interim the church may exercise its heaven bestowed authority, and select a godly male member to immerse its baptismal candidates. Again, let me say for emphasis sake, all honor accorded the pastoral office by the Scriptures should be gladly and at once granted the pastor whom the Lord has given the church. The superior distinction conferred on the pastoral office by the Head of the church would be immeasurably negated by a church who passes over their pastor for another man to stand in his place in the baptistery, that is, when the pastor is qualified and able to perform this duty. Such action by the church, even though the pastoral substitute be highly esteemed in the church, would be an affront to God, infinitely humiliating to the pastor, and would reduce the

pastoral office of said church to a mere figurehead. God forbid that any of His churches would act so unwisely.

BAPTISM: A CHURCH ORDINANCE, NOT A PREACHER ORDINANCE

In matters of discipline, the Lord said, “**Tell *it* unto the church**” (**Matthew 18:17**). This immutable mandate is applicable to all the Lord’s churches, and is to be adhered to by them during their earthly existence. The question which logically follows is, does the disciplinary responsibility of the church cease at the time it becomes pastorless? To be consistent, all who insist that baptism performed by a Baptist church without the benefit of an ordained minister is invalid, would have to answer the question with an explicit, “Yes.” For to say that the commission was given to the church, and that the church which is devoid of an ordained pastor cannot of itself add to its membership by baptism, is in essence to say, being without the benefit of an ordained pastor the church cannot practice excisive discipline. Which would in effect, soon bring the church to ruin. In order to preserve the purity of His church, and to guarantee its perpetuity unto the end of the age, the Lord endowed it with the power to attract all who will be a part of His blemishless bride and power to repel or purge from the bride every spot or person that would bedim her glory. The exercise of the aforementioned powers is not conditioned upon the church having an ordained pastor, but upon the faithfulness of the church to Him who purchased her with His own blood. Offending members of the church who snub the law of reconciliation as delineated in **Matthew 18:15-17**, must answer to the church, and they who would become members of the Lord’s church can only realize their desire by making petition to the church. All Baptists agree it would be better for the church to have a pastor to baptize for it, and to lead the church when invoking its disciplinary authority, but an ordained minister is not absolutely essential to the receiving of members by baptism, or the exclusion of offending and irreconcilable members.

The church which wittingly or unwittingly restricts its baptismal agency to formally ordained ministers forfeits its own authority in determining who

shall or shall not be baptized into its membership. If a church cannot baptize without an ordained minister, it unavoidably follows that the church cannot baptize with an ordained minister unless he agrees to do so. Thus, in strict and final analysis it is clearly seen that the ordinance of baptism is taken out of the hands of the church, and given to the pastor. The church is to see that it does not usurp the authority of the pastor, on the other hand and vitally more important, the pastor is to exercise the upmost care in seeing that he does not usurp the authority of the church. The viability of the church depends on keeping the authority of the pastor and church in proper balance, and the pastor who acknowledges that his authority is subordinate to that of the church and submits thereto greatly enhances his leadership calling.

The ordinance of baptism was not given to the eleven (**Matthew 28:19**), as ordained elders, but as baptized disciples in official church capacity. This is no hypothesis, but a maxim accepted everywhere by Landmark Baptists. Therefore, it can be said without fear of contradiction, all Scriptural baptism administered in New Testament times was by a regularly baptized church member. But it cannot be said without depending greatly upon assumption that all Scriptural baptism administered in New Testament times was performed by an ordained minister. And let us remember, a thousand assumptions do not equal one truth.

The contention that Ananias who baptized Paul (**Acts 9**) was an ordained minister has for its ultimate defense, assumption only. It is pure assumption to say the twelve apostles baptized the three thousand that was added to the church on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:41**), but it is perfectly safe to say they were baptized by authorized members of the church. To say that Peter baptized Cornelius and his household is to read something into the Scripture that is not there. It is not clear from the record (**Acts 10**) whether Peter or the six brethren who accompanied him did the baptizing. But it is within Scriptural bounds to say, Cornelius and his household was baptized by church authority whether or not it was Peter that immersed them.

Who baptized the twelve disciples referred to in **Acts 19**? Was it Paul, or Apollos, or some other brother? The Scriptures do not say who it was that administered Scriptural baptism to them, but in light of **I Corinthians 1:13-**

17 the strong probability is that Paul did not baptize them. We are left to assumption as to who the person or persons was that actually baptized them, but no assumption is needed to affirm that church authority was in place, and whether or not Paul baptized them or some un-ordained brother, their baptism was Biblically administered.

There are other cases in the New Testament where people were Scripturally baptized without a positive declaration that the administrator was an ordained minister. But further multiplying of doubtful cases where assumption must be depended upon for baptismal validity would be vain if the foregoing mentioned is not sufficient to gender doubt as to the imperative need of an ordained administrator to effect proper baptism. The plea or argument made in this treatise is not that the church can justly or deliberately shun its willing, able, and available pastor and habitually opt for another male member, be he ordained or not, to administer the ordinance of baptism for the church. While there is, indeed, no explicit divine precept which disallows the church in unusual circumstances to select a male member in good standing to administer the ordinance for it, the New Testament example, while not complete and invariable, is of such magnitude as to leave the church without an alternative in the matter while it has a qualified pastor.

It is true that some early American Landmark Baptists contended that the validity of baptism necessitated an ordained administrator; but this was the time of Baptist associational beginnings in this country, and in the main it was the Associations and their ministerial hierarchies that resolved disputes in the churches, and handed down to the churches official answers to all their theological questions.

These associations made up primarily of ordained ministers, lorded it over God's heritage by dictating much of the policy of the churches comprising their Associations. Ecclesiastical mission boards, conventions, and associations are not merely extra-Scriptural or un-Scriptural, but are anti-Scriptural. There is no basis in Scripture for their existence, and in the exercise of their power over the churches they assume much of the Headship that belongs exclusively to Jesus Christ. A church cannot belong to an association and be autonomous at the same time. An associational edict

cannot be handed down to the local church without contravening the law of God, and any legislation in violation of God's law is perilously illegal and should be consistently opposed.

Ecclesiastical associationalism is the product of a departure from the plain, simple, independent, self-governing polity of the local church. This departure has found near full expression in the Roman and Anglican churches, and Baptist Associationalism is close akin to the episcopacy of these heretical churches. A brief and honest study of the history of Baptist Associationalism in America will bring the student to the conclusion that it was and is a government of preachers or bishops, and rest assured no ruling party is going to legislate laws or hand down decisions contrary to their own ambition, or exalted status.

So it was, when the early American Baptist Associations were asked the question of Scriptural authority in baptism, many of them said it was necessary that the administrator be a formally ordained Baptist minister. The Concord Association of Louisiana says in Article 4 of their Confession of Faith: "We believe that believers are the only proper subjects; and immersion the only Scriptural action of baptism; and the only legal administrators of the ordinance are the regularly ordained ministers of the gospel in full fellowship in and with the United Baptists." This they said in 1832, *History Louisiana Baptists*, Page 246. In this article the power of the Association over its churches is clearly demonstrated. Not only does the Association hinge the validity of baptism upon the extra-Scriptural requirement of an ordained administrator, but the article demands that the administrator be in FULL fellowship with the Association. It is this kind of Associationalism that spawned the Southern Baptist Convention and its despotic rule over member churches. But in the beginning it was not so, as is seen from the following quote:

"During the rise and growth of these corruptions, the churches for three centuries remained as originally formed, independent of each other, and were united by no tie but that of charity: while they were so constituted, corrupt practices did not prevail in some to the same extent as in others, particularly in those communities situated in the country, where objects stimulating

ministers to rivalship, seldom presented themselves” (A Concise History of Baptists, Page 31 - G. H. Orchard).

Associationalism being anti-Scriptural is in the spiritual sense a Pandora’s Box out of which comes all kinds of church ills. This is not to say all that the associations did was evil, but it is to say, all that any organization does to circumscribe the independence of the local church is an attempt to rob God of the glory which belongs to Him in His blood bought churches (**Acts 20:28; Ephesians 3:21**). The local church is “**the pillar and ground of the truth,**” not the Association, (**I Timothy 3:15**).

Independent Baptists endeavor to discourage pomp and ceremony within their churches. They are exceedingly careful in keeping their dogmatism out of shaded areas. Over and against these safeguards is the imperativeness placed on formal ordination of the administrator of baptism. The absoluteness of the formal ordination position places on the shoulders of Baptists a historical burden they cannot bear. It makes the claim of Baptist church succession or perpetuity to carry the back breaking proof, not only of an unbroken line of baptisms, but also link by link connection in the chain of formal ordination of administrators of baptism. Baptist history has never shackled itself with this unnecessary burden, and the Baptist wide, age long, and consistent disclaimer of Baptist history, is: “All that Baptists mean by church ‘succession,’ or church perpetuity, is: There has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth.” (Baptist Church Perpetuity, Page 3, Chapter 1 - W. A. Jarrel)

“Every minister is equal in point of privilege with every other member of the church; but as minister in his official capacity, he is subject to, and inferior to the church. His individual acts or decisions have no more binding force than those of any other member” (D. B. Ray - Baptist Succession, page 234).

As to the administrator of baptism, A. C. Dayton says: “We have, on our part, taken it for granted that the Church may appoint any member she pleases

to administer the rite. We only contend that she shall not go outside the Church ...” (Alien Baptism - page 1 66).

Speaking of baptism and the Lord’s supper, J. R. Graves comments, “They can be administered only by the organization as such, and when duly assembled, and by its own officers or those she may appoint, pro tempore” (Old Landmarkism, page 39). In the same volume, he further says, “A church is alone authorized to receive, to discipline, and to exclude her own members. This power with all her other prerogatives, is delegated to her, and it is her bounden duty to exercise it; she cannot delegate her prerogatives... What is delegated cannot be delegated ... A minister, therefore, has no right, because ordained, to decide who are qualified to receive baptism and to administer it ... A distinguished scholar in the South, in order to find a ground upon which to unite the advocates of ministerial authority to baptize whom they will, and the advocates of church authority alone, proposes that the pastor be allowed the veto power; i.e., the right to reject whom he pleases. This would virtually place the keys of the church door, and all the ordinances of the church in the hands of the pastor, and put the whole church at his feet. He would be a petty pope indeed, and no pope ever had more control of the ordinances than he would have. Nor would he be long in making his power felt; his arrogance and self-sufficiency as well.” (Pages 37 & 38)

Hezekiah Harvey (1821-1983), a Baptist of great repute, says: ‘There is no express command, nor absolutely decisive example, restricting the administration of the ordinances to the ministry’ (The Church, Page 71).

It behooves Baptist churches to lay aside every weight and shackle that doth so easily beset them, and to go on with the business of making and baptizing disciples. This is the responsibility of every New Testament church. The local church is to keep the ordinances as they were delivered, and the least modification is disallowed. It is more especially the duty of every God called minister to see to it that he does not become the vitiator of the ordinances, for to pervert that which he is, above all other people called to protect, would border on treasonable conduct.

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER - LOCAL CHURCH ORDINANCES

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the local church, and are in their every aspect restricted to the sacred enclosure of the administering church. Concerning the Supper the Bible demands strict or closed communion. Members of other churches are not permitted to take the least part in the communion service of another church. There is neither Scriptural precept nor example which allows a member from another church to partake of the elements of the communion table of a sister church, or to officiate at the table of a sister church. With this assertion, as far as my knowledge goes, complete unanimity prevails among contemporary Baptists, for I have not read nor heard where any present day New Testament church went beyond their own immediate membership for help so as to give validity to their observance of the Supper. I ask then, should there be less strictness in administering the ordinance of baptism, which ordinance is a compulsory prerequisite for admission to the Lord's table? Certainly not.

Once again I quote J. R. Graves, who is one of Landmark Baptists greatest and forcible writers. Brother Graves says: "To each local church is committed the sole administration and guardianship of the ordinances. This will not be questioned, save by a few who hold that baptism, at least, was committed to the ministry as such; that they alone are responsible for its proper administration ... All the instructions and directions, both as respects the doctrine and the ordinances, Paul delivered, not to the ministry, but to the churches.

It would be useless to reason with those who could deny, with these Scriptures before their eyes, that the ordinances were not delivered in sacred trust to the churches, as such, and not to their officers; and that they are held responsible for their right observance" (The Lord's Supper a Church Ordinance, pages 11-13). On page fifteen of this same book, Elder Graves says, "My privileges are limited to my church." Every Landmark Baptist should have a copy of this book in their possession.

It is nowhere revealed in the New Testament who administered the Lord's Supper in the apostolic churches, but it is clearly stated therein that the authority to administer the ordinance belonged exclusively to the local church. The primary ordinance Paul had in mind when he spoke to the Corinthian church, saying, "**Keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you,**" was the Lord's Supper (**I Corinthians 11:2**).

Near the close of the first century ministers had already begun to lord it over God's heritage (**3 John 9-11**). By the third century many of the churches had gone into apostasy, and one of the early errors of those who departed the faith was that the administration of the ordinances required ordained officiants. As to the Lord's Supper, their cry was, "No ordination, no validity." This view gradually became popular, and those who presided at the Lord's Supper were called "priests" who had special powers. This eventually led to church hierarchies, popedom, and transubstantiation.

Concurrent with this development there were the Lord's churches who kept the faith once delivered to them, and protested against the arrogant assumption of a special priesthood. Baptist churches ordain their ministers, but the laying on of hands by the church does not give him monopolistic authority over the ordinances of the church.

The ministry in its official exercise is a function which belongs to the church of its membership. Administering the ordinances is certainly a part of the ministerial function, but not in the absolute sense. As in all situations it is the consent of the majority that determines the course of action to be taken by the church, and when the services of the pastor cannot be obtained, the church may without sacrificing any measure of validity or efficacy connected with the ordinances, select a ministrant from its membership to act pro-tem in administering the ordinances.

Let us adhere with an undeviating tenacity to all Scriptural requirements in observing the ordinances, but let us not go beyond the inspired record, and unduly overload the ordinances, or become so preoccupied with outward forms that the real significance of the Lord's Supper as proclamation of the Gospel is lost.

In saying “the ministry in its official exercise is a function which belongs to the church of its membership” is not to say the pastor cannot preach for and fellowship with other churches of like faith and order, nor is it to say he cannot act as an advisor to other churches. Such conduct by churches and pastors is common to the New Testament. But it is to say, a pastor of one church has not the right to cross the demarcation lines of another church, which God has set in each of His churches to keep the ordinances pure.

The husband is the divinely appointed head of the family of which he is a member (**I Corinthians 11:3**), and unless he is a bigamist, he realizes that his headship is restricted to his immediate family. Being mentally sane, he would not think for a moment of going over to the family next door, who through some means or another has been deprived of husband and father, and try to tell the family it has no right or ability to officially appoint one of its members to act for the whole family in civil or legal matters. In our crumbling society the family unit has lost much of its cohesiveness, and has been governmentally inhibited in the practice of many of its God given rights, but it is yet legal for the family to choose from its membership one to act as its executor. It is also the intrinsic right of a New Testament church while pastorless to appoint a moderator, and endow him with temporary authority to administer the ordinances of the church. In so doing the church would prevent a floundering period, and it can act thusly without unscriptural anomaly.

The Lord’s Supper and Baptism was given by Christ to the local independent Baptist church, and made observingly immune to the interdependence of churches. “The local church is the only body known to the Scriptures which has any competency or jurisdiction in the government of her two ordinances” (George W. Truett- The Supper of Our Lord, pages 20 and 21). Official interdependence of churches is alien to the Scriptures. Interdependency of churches is an expediency which must stop short of interfering with the office work of the local church, and when it exceeds that limit, it not only becomes excessive, but is potentially disastrous to the affected church. Interdependence can be complimentary to or healthy for the

Lord's churches, but if left unchecked, it could lead to not only inter-church baptism, but also inter-church communion.

Baptism is the door into the church, and when the Lord gave the commission to baptize to the local church, He gave it infrangible authority over its own door. Baptism being a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, and being thusly connected, the church which seeks external help in opening its own door, declares a weakness in and of itself to provide Supper participants.

That true churches have no disciplinary power beyond the bounds of their own membership is a fact readily acknowledged by Baptists, and with harmony and undeviating strictness these bounds are honored by the Lord's churches. Nevertheless, pastors who baptize for churches other than their own and the churches for whom they baptize are faced with a dilemma as respects discipline. THE DILEMMA: whose discipline is the minister under when baptizing for a church other than the one of his membership? If he is under the disciplinary authority of his home church, then the other church(es) for whom he baptizes has a man officially acting for them in their church body over whom they have no disciplinary authority. If it is said, the minister who baptizes for a church other than his own is under the discipline of each respective church for whom he baptizes, then the church for whom he baptizes and is not a member of, may exercise discipline over a person who is not a member of their immediate church. To avoid this dilemma, let each local church keep the ordinances as they were delivered by the Head of the church, and that is in the particular jurisdiction of each church.

THE BAPTISMAL PICTURE

Baptism is a symbol or picture of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a picture of the Lord in His sacrificial death, and triumphant resurrection, whereby His people are redeemed and justified. He gave this picture to His bride, that is, the local church. He charged His bride to keep it as He delivered it to her, unspotted and un-mutilated. The bridal charge is age long, and He has given His bride the power to keep His picture clean and to prominently display it when the occasion calls for it.

A husband and wife whose conjugal state is permeated with true love, is very rare in this day of immorality, but thank God there are enough of these kind of marriages, sufficient in number to keep the marriage institution intact. Suppose the husband of one of these marriages had a special picture made of himself for his wife, gave it to her for a personal and lifetime possession, would she not treasure it with all of her heart? Of course she would.

The true and loving wife would not think of altering the picture in any way whatsoever, for she knows in so doing the picture would no longer be a true image of her beloved husband. Would not a wife be less than honest, who on the occasion of her husband's departure for an extended and time consuming destination, and having at the time received from his loving hand a special portrait of himself which he had purchased at a great cost, if she gave it to her sister to take care of?

While this analogy may not bring into sharp focus the relationship between Christ and His church, I believe it is yet potent enough to cause some who as yet have not questioned the practice of a church farming out its baptismal ordinance to an ordained preacher of another church, to be suspicious of it, and see it as an unscriptural innovation.

In the natural realm, two women cannot give birth to the same child, and in the spiritual realm, two churches cannot merge or combine their officiality and by that spurious officiality organize a New Testament church. The vanity of such an effort would be further compounded when one church baptizes for the other. The best they can get out of their efforts is surrogate motherhood for the new church, but in the divine economy there is no need for spiritual surrogation.

Conclusion

False notions of religion are often advocated by sincere and distinguished people. People worthy of emulation in the greater part of their lives do err in some things, and even Paul did not ask any man to credulously follow him (**I Corinthians 11:1**). When men of unimpeachable character

propagate an error, and while no subterfuge is intended by them, their support of the error gives it a much wider acceptance.

The brethren of my acquaintance who contend that the validity of baptism necessitates “an ordained Baptist minister,” are men of unquestionable integrity. I know that artificiality in matters of church polity and practice are repulsive to their minds, but when error is imbibed, these commendable characteristics, rather than impeding the error give impetus to it. It is my heart’s desire and my prayer to God that these beloved brethren may see their erroneous course in this matter, and turn from it.

“The pastor of a church, as its official agent, is the proper person to baptize, and thus administer its initiatory rite. But a church is not necessarily restricted to this functionary. In his absence, it can, for the time being, authorize one of its deacons or private members to act for it. But whoever may be the administrator, he must be one who has been duly authorized by the church, that is, by the party receiving or initiating the candidate.” (The Berea Baptist Banner, Vol. 4, No. 10, Page 10, First Paragraph - October 15, 1983. J. M. C. Breaker, Author - Elder Milburn Cockrell, Editor).

All that we contend for in this writing is articulated by J. M. C. Breaker in the above quote, but from reading the entire article by Elder Breaker as recorded in The Christian Review, Volume 24, April 18, 1959; it is easily seen that he did not mean for the paragraph to come out the way it did, for while being correct, it is a glaring contradiction of much of what he says in the article.

In fact, the article is so replete with contradictions I am surprised that any part of it was printed in the Berea Baptist Banner. A few of the contradictions contained in the article are quoted below, so as to prove my allegation.

“As in the case of the Eunuch for example, the person baptized could not and did not immediately attach himself to a church; for that was the best he could do; and that he could not immediately enter the house, was no reason why he should not enter the porch, and thus be ready for full admission

whenever the opportunity might offer.” (Page 251, second paragraph, J. M. C. Breaker, taken from the same article quoted above). Such contention is ridiculous, promotes free-lance baptism, and it would, if let stand, destroy the ecclesiology of Baptists.

“The commission, then, authorizes none but regularly baptized preachers of the Gospel to administer the ordinance of baptism.” (J .M .C. Breaker, taken from the same article). Consider this statement in the light of the first quote of Elder Breaker’s, as used in this present writing, and it is very likely you will conclude without a second thought, Elder Breaker is certainly not an authority on the ordinance of baptism. As to contradictions in Elder Breaker’s article, ad infinitum, but the above will be ad hoc for now.

“Unto Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (The Apostle Paul, **Ephesians 3:21**)

“If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” (The Head of the Church, **Matthew 18:17**)

In the writing of this article, I have tried to avoid churlishness, and there is neither malice nor rancor in my heart against brethren of the contrary part. But being burdened for the Lord’s churches, and considering extra-church baptism to be an error which diminishes the God given independence of New Testament churches, these lines are prayerfully sent forth. May He who is the only lawgiver and Head of the church be pleased to bless everyone who may read this article, is my sincere prayer.

Boldness

“In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.” (Ephesians 3:12)

The saint needs to take note from the text that his **“boldness”** is in Christ, and not in himself. Christ is the saint’s true object of faith, and as his faith in Christ grows, so does his boldness toward the denunciation of evil grow. We read of Christ’s disciples at the time of His arrest in Gethsemane, **“They all forsook Him, and fled,” (Mark 14:50)**. After the resurrection of Christ the faith of the disciples soared to new heights. They were delivered from their base fears, and stood undaunted before the High Priest, Elders and Rulers of Israel, declaring boldly, **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)** In the next verse we are given one of the conclusions of this Jewish high court, **“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus,” (Acts 4:13)**. Some may see in these words an admission of Christ’s resurrection by the Jews, but whether or not this is the case, the poor struggling saint knows that time spent with his risen Lord works wonders for his faltering faith.

The Term “boldness” Used In A Bad Sense

Of recent date, there have been some men who are considered by thousands to be leaders in theological scholarship, casting this superlative term in a bad light. Commenting on **Hebrews 4:16**, John R. Rice, quoting Bob Jones, Sr. approvingly, states, “I am not a stranger. I am at home in my heavenly family. I just pull my chair up to the table and say, ‘Pappy, please pass the biscuits,’” *STEPS FOR NEW CONVERTS*, By John R. Rice, page 23.

When Paul says in **Hebrews 4:16**, **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace”** he does not mean we are to equate God with earthly fathers, who not only often look the other way when their little darlings sin, but who, also many times due to sentiment and ignorance, place approbation

on the sinful actions of their children. Such a postulate as Jones and Rice puts forth impugns the holy character of God, and serves to diminish the respect children should have for their earthly parents. No true parent can be a tyrant in the home. Neither will the true parent allow his affection for his children to be abused by them. Rashness and irreverence are incongruous to the nature of filial love; and this being true in the natural realm it is all the more true regarding the believer's relationship to his heavenly Father.

“Boldness” as used by Paul in **Ephesians 3:12**, **Hebrews 4:16** and **Hebrews 10:19**, does not mean children of God can barge into His presence irreverently or unconscious of the great price that has been paid for their access to His awesome presence. Paul has in view a noble boldness, a boldness that does not forget with Whom he has to do, a boldness which is reverential and not presumptuous and daring. Mr. Jones and Mr. Rice could have learned a lesson from the Psalmist as to the correct approach unto God, he said, **“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker,”** (**Psalms 95:6**). Or by observing Daniel, who, **“kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before His God”** (**Daniel 6:10**). We read of the beloved Son of God, in approaching the Father, **“kneeled down, and prayed”** (**Luke 22:41**). And Paul, the boldest of the bold, said, **“I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (**Ephesians 3:14**).

There are great liberties and privileges connected with the believer's sonship in Christ, but they do not include the right to address God haughtily, and say, “Pappy, please pass the biscuits.”

The Term “boldness” Viewed In Its Proper Light

The word **“boldness”** translates a Greek word which denotes freedom of speech. True liberty of speech is not to say what we please, but what we ought to say. **“For so is the will of God that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God”** (**I Peter 2:15-16**). Christ is the one Mediator and official Spokesman in the presence of God for all believers. Therefore, their every acceptable utterance unto God

is channeled through Him, (**Hebrews 9: 24, John 14:6, I Timothy 2:5**). Thus, it is, the term **“boldness”** as used by Paul in our text, and in **Hebrews 4:16**, and **Hebrews 10:19** bespeaks the liberty which believers have to approach God directly through their Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous. The term as used by Paul in the above references indicates more than liberty of approach, it also evidences the absence of restraint in the believer’s approach. The one thing that hindered the Israelite’s entrance unto God under the Mosaic economy was fear, fear that his sacrifice would be rejected by God, **“They shall therefore keep mine ordinance, lest they bear sin for it, and die” (Leviticus 22:9)**. The difference between the entrance of an Old Testament Israelite and that of a New Testament believer is, the Israelite’s sacrifice was typical, and could not eternally stay the condemnation of sin (**Hebrews 10:4**). Christ is the anti-type of Israel’s sacrifice, the eternally perfect and all sufficient sacrifice, and by the virtue of His shed blood the believer has liberty void of fear to enter the presence of God. Under Judaism the Israelites were debarred or precluded from the presence of God, even the Levites which ministered in the tabernacle were strenuously shut out from the holy of holies. Only the high priest was permitted behind the veil, and that only once a year, (**Exodus 30:10, Leviticus 16:34, Hebrews 9:7**). The High Priest entered the holy of holies with the utmost caution, and with ultimate religious awe. Being acutely aware of his own unworthiness and knowing his sacrifice may be rejected by God gave birth to tormenting fear that held his whole essence and being under arrest. If the sacrifice was rejected it meant there was sin in the camp which was un-repentant of, the consequence being, divine chastisement. The fear of rejection and divine rebuke held the people in bondage year in and year out for fifteen hundred years. But today, the believer’s High Priest is the sinless Son of God, Who has consecrated for us a **“new and living way”** and delivered **“them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15, 10:20)**. In view of the foregoing, Paul says, **“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:22)**.

The believer by virtue of the sacrificial blood of Christ has perpetual access to the throne of God apart from any earthly intermediaries, and for the believing heart the craven fear of being rejected has been vanquished. The New Testament grants the believer a measure of boldness toward God, yet

nowhere in the Bible are believers encouraged to approach God without that high and holy fear which is the ground of true worship and wisdom, **“Fear God, and give glory to Him ... and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea and the fountains of water” (Revelation 14:7)**. **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10)**. So while boldness toward God is inculcated in the New Testament; it is a boldness that excludes lower and baser fears, but it is also a boldness which is ever conscious of the infinite holiness of God. It is not a reckless boldness, but one that is careful in speech and conduct. It is a boldness that joyously owns its limitations. It is a boldness which has abolished the fear of being rejected at the judgment (**I John 4:10**), and it is a boldness which gives confidence that we will not be ashamed at His coming (**I John 2:28**). Yet, this glorious boldness does not now, nor shall ever afford us the right to approach God apart from holy and reverential fear. Even the Christian home should have more respect for its dining table, that to allow one of the children to barge in at its leisure, and say to the father at the head of the table, “Pappy, please pass the biscuits.” All things are to be done decently and in order in both the church and the home, and surely, decency and order will be the decorum in glory.

“Let all the earth fear the Lord: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.” (Psalms 33:8)

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - February, 1978)

Church Purity Preserved By Discipline

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump ...”
I Corinthians 5:7

The Lord knowing that His churches would be made up of impure people, a people who would all too often give vent to their old nature, gave His churches a disciplinary formula and authority to effectively deal with every infraction of the moral and doctrinal standards He had delineated and committed to their keeping. Love for God and reverence for His word is the root from which purity grows, and every deviation from the disciplinary criteria which the Lord gave His churches, no matter how insignificant it may seem, is done at the cost of purity and respect for the Lord’s church.

Every Baptist church should experience a consistent maturation process. However, we must remember and clearly understand that this imperative growth or progress is inextricably bonded to the exercise of church discipline. Churches that fail to exercise discipline, will retrogress in its every relationship to God, and will be chastened of the Lord. It is through the medium of discipline that decency and order is maintained in the church.

The God of the Bible is the perfect disciplinarian: **“For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, but He (does it) for *our* profit that *we* might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”** (Hebrews 12:6, 10, 11). The words “Chastise” and “Discipline” are perfect synonyms, and when applied by the church, it is for the sake and development of both, the church and the erring member.

Every New Testament church is an entity with divinely vouchsafed autonomy, whereby the church is enabled to deal with and alleviate their problems. Notwithstanding, no church can ever arrive in its earthly tenure where discipline is no longer needed, but every church can by being consistent in the practice of discipline mitigate its heartaches. Obedience to Scripture is the ground of resourcefulness, and a church that is faithful in its

practice of discipline will minimize its impediments. Discipline purifies the church, and the offspring of spiritual purity is church unity.

Conversely, “**A child left to himself will bring his mother to shame,**” and an undisciplined church offender will bring an obvious nature to the church (**Proverbs 29:15; I Corinthians 5:6**).

Church discipline often runs counter to the emotions and sentiment of some members of the church, but a church seeking the honor of God, the preservation of church purity, and the good of the subject, should not be deterred by the unwarranted feelings of some members in so vital a matter. When the church has exhausted all of its options, and is left without any further recourse, it must for the favor of God and the welfare of the church, invoke the biblically prescribed discipline, lest the church be found guilty of harboring iniquity (**I Corinthians 13:6**).

The purpose of discipline is not to un-church, but to in-church the erring member; and this lofty end should be diligently sought by the church. Whether or not the desired climax is realized, the church will be strengthened by its endeavor to keep itself pure. If the disciplined person is caused to see his error, and comes to the realization that the church was not unfair toward him in its handling of the matter, he will then know that the church was all the while seeking his good. He will own his mistake, approve the action of the church, and will seek realignment with the church. But if the offensive member is left undisciplined, he will by his evil example entice others to disrespect church authority.

God has authorized and qualified His churches to administer discipline (**II Thessalonians 3:6, 14**) and the church which fails to practice this divine injunction will suffer spiritual suffocation, which will, if not corrected, culminate in fearful rejection of the disobedient church by the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the first things the military gives a new recruit is a book of rules, for the military knows it cannot function effectively without discipline. No government can long endure without discipline, and neither can a family. The

Benjamin Spock philosophy which advises parents to turn their kids loose, and they will discover by themselves how to cope with the world, has wrought havoc in a great number of families. It is the parents' responsibilities to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (**Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6**). What is true with governments and families in the matter of discipline is super imposed on the church, for it is in the church that the glory of God is to be seen throughout all ages (**Ephesians 3:21**).

Excisive discipline can be the means of relieving the church of many ills and difficulties; but the church needs to ever keep in mind that no form or measure of discipline absolves guilt, and it is for this reason the church should guard against making the excluded person feel comfortable with his exclusion. It is not that the love of the church for the debarred person has diminished, but for the discipline to achieve the desired end, which is restoration of the excluded person to church membership. There is of necessity a circumscription of all spiritual relationship with the excludee. Bounds must be set by the church which tends toward making the excluded person acutely aware of what he has forfeited by his exclusion. These forfeitures are of such a nature, that the excluded person cannot be productive in any phase of his spiritual stewardship, and this spiritual disability of the excluded person leaves no room for church fellowship with him (**Ephesians 5:11**).

The purpose of ecclesiastical ostracism should invariably be instructive, and free of undue castigation. The church has no punitive power that allows for physical infliction. It is in this divinely disallowed area of discipline that Romanism and Protestantism have shamefully and brutally erred, resulting in multiplied millions of Baptist martyrs. There is no room in church discipline for one carnal stripe, much less forty. How much more then is the guilt of blood-letting Romanism and Protestantism!

God has committed the keeping of the spiritual sword to His church (**Ephesians 6:17**), and has thereby given His churches power to judge those within their membership. Conversely, God has placed the carnal sword in the

hands of divinely ordained governments (**Romans 13:1-4**), and there can never in this world be a God pleasing merger of the two.

Paul instructed the church at Corinth to exclude the incestuous man, and keep no company with him (**I Corinthians 5:11**). All spiritual intercourse with the excluded person should be in the main, if not altogether, restricted to rebuke and admonition; for anything more could cause the church offender to have a toned down conception of his exclusion. Patronizing of the excluded person in his contention against the church will cause confusion in the church, and confusion is the ground from which discord grows and discord is the mother of excessive criticism and this undue criticism is the begetter of alienation.

The common and hateful result of alienation within the membership of the church is spiritual deterioration and a further detraction of members. But this catastrophic situation can be avoided by realizing that hostility is an emotion of the carnal heart, and is never more wrong than when directed toward a sister or brother within the church family.

“For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” (James 3:16-18). The cause of the spiritual decline of a church is from within the church, and never from without. This is why Paul warned the Galatian churches, saying: **“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Galatians 5:15).** Notwithstanding, some usurpers of peace from without may try and exert an evil influence upon the church, but they can do nothing to hurt the church unless the church allows it.

Accord and affinity are God bestowed blessings, and are to be promoted by the church, and protected by the church, with just and merited discipline. Offenses will come (**Luke 17:1**), but the church that owns the rule of God in its government is more than equal to the offense, and will

when the need arises use its disciplinary authority to preserve the peace and nobility of the church.

The church should never lose sight of its coveted objective in the exercise of excisive discipline, which is to correct and reclaim the excluded person. Therefore, it is the obligation of the entire membership of the church to be exceedingly careful in its relationship to the excluded person, so as to do nothing that would impair the effectiveness of the discipline, and thereby cause the church to come short of its cherished goal (**Romans 16:17; James 5:20**).

Excisive discipline may seem at first to some to be unduly rigid or severe, but it is not so, for there is no element of cruelty in it, and it is not without pardoning flexibility. When the U.S. Marines drums one out of the Corp, he is stripped of all identification with the Corp, his buttons and insignias are torn from his uniform, and he is sent on his way; never to be restored to the Corp. Sister branches of the military would not for the briefest moment consider receiving the dishonorably discharged Corpsman into their branch of the military. But the excisive discipline of the church is not that absolute, but has an amazing remedial power in it, whereby the discharged person may be joyfully restored to membership in the church.

However, there is a growing and prevailing tendency toward disrespect among the Lord's churches for the disciplinary authority of sister churches. The autonomy and independence of the local church should never be infringed upon by any external power, and we need to remember that church independence does not include the right for a church to ignore the disciplinary authority of churches of like faith and order. Nevertheless, some churches and pastors in defense of receiving excluded people say: "No church or preacher can tell our church whom we may receive or not receive into our membership." This haughty attitude and conduct has been the means of sundering long standing friendships, and has gone far in negating the authority of local churches over their membership.

No two New Testament churches are totally free of practical or doctrinal variance, and in some cases the nature of the variance is such, that

so as to avoid rivalry, fellowship between the varying churches must be and will be accordingly circumscribed. But New Testament churches should never be competitors one with another, and should rejoice at the betterment of conditions in every sister church. Howbeit, and to our shame, this is not always the case.

It is possible for a church to err in its practice of excisive discipline, but it is not likely. Moreover, no sister church is better qualified to judge in the matter than the church that administered the discipline. When a child is disciplined by its Mother, it does not run to the house of its Aunt, and say: "My Mother gave me a whipping, and I want to live at your house." If such an instance occurred the Aunt would tell the child, "You go straight home, and apologize to your Mother." The Aunt's motive in rebuking the child is deep concern for the welfare of the child, and love and respect for her sister. However, it appears in our time that this kind of honor between sister churches is disgracefully on the wane.

After the offending brother has become obdurate and disregards the twice repeated effort toward reconciliation by the offended brother, Christ said: **"Tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"** (Matthew 18:15-17). In these words Christ was speaking by way of anticipation to all of His churches, and while the words "**heathen**" and "**publican**" are not synonymous with reprobation, they do mean one with whom there can be no church fellowship (**Romans 16:17, II Thessalonians 3:14**).

Ethics has never reached a higher plain than that which is found in the government of New Testament Baptist churches, and never more so than in the matter of church discipline. This is why excisive discipline is the last measure to be used by the church in its effort to reconcile an erring member. When a member is scripturally excluded from a New Testament Baptist church, it is divinely incumbent upon all sister churches to honor the action of the disciplining church, for Christ speaking to His churches, said:

"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew

18:18). This is an awesome truth, but it does not say, there is absolutely no way an excluded person can be taken into the membership of a church of like faith and order. But it does emphatically teach that ALL New Testament churches should be exceedingly careful so as not to receive people into their membership whose exclusion is “bound” in heaven. GOD FORBID!

No man can ever extricate himself from his responsibility to God, and no bona fide church member can ever bring his responsibility to the Lord’s church to a conclusion. Exclusion of a person from the membership of a New Testament Baptist church does not terminate the excluded person’s responsibility to the excluding church. On the contrary, exclusion draws attention to his shortcomings, and highlights his responsibility and duty toward the amendment of his error and his need of reconciliation to the church.

While the excluded person is not, during the time of his exclusion, under any further disciplinary authority of the church, he is yet subject of the authority of the Head of the church, Jesus Christ, and will be dealt with by the unerring government of God. Adam’s exclusion from the garden of paradise did not absolve or free him of his responsibility to God. The excluded person is yet a subject of Divine authority, and his primary duty is to repent of his offense against the church and seek restoration of membership in the church.

Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (**Ephesians 5:25**), and the highest honor this side of a person’s experiential adoption into the family of God, is to be a member of one of the Lord’s precious churches. It is the unabating responsibility of every member to keep the glory of God in the church untarnished, for it is a blemish less Bride that enters the marriage chambers in glory (**Ephesians 5:27**).

(The Baptist Herald - October, 1992)

Contending For The Faith With The Right Motive

“... Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (I Corinthians 10:31).

This text leaves no question as to what the motive of every saved person should be. All of our actions should emanate from a desire to magnify the Lord. The text is all-comprehensive, and leaves no thought, word, or deed to be executed without God’s glory being its design and premeditated end. A mock or superficial motive can stimulate the flesh, but such a motive will never produce or effect a change for the good of man or the glory of God. The right motive is the foundation of all honest contemplation, and a right motive is absolutely necessary in producing the good works which influence men to glorify the Father which is in heaven (**Matthew 5:16**).

Act and Attitude

The law of Moses dealt with sin as an act, but He that is infinitely more glorious than Moses, taught that a wrong attitude or motive is sin (**Matthew 5:27, 28**). The Mount Sinai code of law had no power nor penalty beyond an overt or manifest transgression. Its judicative arm was too short to reach the motive or attitude of those with whom it had to do, but Christ rendered a guilty verdict against the dormant evil in the heart (**Matthew 5:28**). Man judges from outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart (**I Samuel 16:7**), and so it was Christ said to the Pharisees: **“Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:28)**. The law of Moses dealt with the motions of sin, but He that is absolutely holy, judges the motives of men. **“I the LORD, search the heart ...” (Jeremiah 17:10)**. If the motive is wrong, no matter how correct the external action may be, it is unacceptable with God. The most eloquent, articulate, and doctrinally correct preaching is but so many misspent words when the attitude or motive is wrong. It does man no good to honor Christ with his lips, when his heart is far from Him (**Mark 7:6**). What may appear as a good and commendable action is not in truth a good deed, unless the doer is willing for Christ to get all the glory for His effort. For acceptance with God, all of our labors are hinged on the purity of our

motives, and if not prompted by a desire to glorify God, will be reduced to ashes at the judgment seat of Christ (**I Corinthians 3:11-15**).

Contending for the Faith

We are commanded in Scripture to “**Contend for the Faith**” (**Jude 3**), but when “**the Faith**” is contended for with a malicious spirit, doubt is cast on the motive of the contender. When such an ill spirit is manifested, it gives rise to the question: “Is the contender for the faith seeking to glorify God in his defense of the truth, or is it his motive to make his remonstrant look bad, and himself superior?” The Apostle Paul said: Some men “**glory in appearance, and not in heart**” (**II Corinthians 5:12**). The saint is never to seek the approbation of his peers at the expense of God’s glory. Again, I refer to Paul on this point as he said, “... **Do I seek to please men? ... I should not be the servant of Christ**” (**Galatians 1:10**). But Paul, the great defender of the faith, was exceedingly careful so as not to unduly offend his weaker brethren. Paul taught that an unwarranted offense was a “**sin against Christ**” (**I Corinthians 8:12**).

Error is to be undauntedly withstood and sometimes the obviating of error demands plain speech. The words of rebuke may be sharper than a two-edged sword, and oft-times need be, but this does not mean he who gives the reprimand should be tactless and unconcerned about how it will affect the erring brother. The “like it or lump it” attitude manifests a haughty spirit and is antagonistic to the spirit of conciliation. “**Let us not be desirous of vain glory ...**” (**Galatians 5:26**).

It was in a fellowship meeting at Antioch, that Paul rebuked Peter for his dissimulation. Paul said: “**But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed**” (**Galatians 2:11**). Paul’s purpose in rebuking Peter was not to embarrass him, but to embolden him in his stand against circumcising Judaism. Paul’s rebuke of Peter was not harsh or hostile and Paul’s desired end in the matter was realized; this particular error of Peter was utterly mitigated, or at least it never again made the inspired record.

Paul's rebuke of Peter was not intended to alienate him, but to meliorate him, and Paul's motive, being pure in this matter, God honored his efforts. Later we read where Peter spoke of Paul as "**our beloved brother, Paul**" (**II Peter 3:15**). In our spiritual swordsmanship, we are to contend for the faith without fear or favor, and as strange as it might seem, this can be done while being as "**harmless as doves**". The wise pastor knows how to sternly rebuke his people without scolding them, and he knows how to use pulpit vinegar without causing his people to sour on him.

Offenses Are Inevitable

"... It is impossible but that offenses will come ..." (**Luke 17:1**).

It is good for a saint to be offended by the world, for the world is anti-God, and everything that is against God should offend the Christian. The offenses of the world against the Lord's churches, contrary to its nefarious motives and designs, have served to stabilize them, rather than causing them to stagger. However, the breach created by the trespass of a church member against member or a church against church, retards brotherly edification and bedims the glory of God in His churches.

Sadly, in our day, the attitude or mind-set that gives vent to division and schism in New Testament churches and between churches is not as loathsome and strange as it was a few brief years ago. That which turns brotherly converse into verbal conflict and sets church against church, should be hated with an insatiable passion and utterly avoided, even at the cost of humiliation. Nothing is more destructive to church unity than contending for the faith with a contentious spirit. Baptists all through their history have been obedient to the faith and that without being obdurate. However, it seems that the contemporary church atmosphere is permeated with an acute sensitiveness, and the least variance is sufficient grounds for dis-fellowship. Could it be we are like microwaves and heat up real quick? "**He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly ...**" (**Proverbs 14:17**).

The rebuke of error is vital to the church and necessary for its well-being. Then, too, a sure way to grow in grace and knowledge of the truth is

correction of error, and when the reproof is made with a heart-felt concern for the erring brother, the brotherly relationship will, as a rule, be enriched and the error purged. On the other hand, if the rebuke is actuated or motivated by any carnal desire, or for any reason other than to gain the erring brother (**Matthew 18:15**), it will most likely confirm the brother in his error.

An honest rebuke is not a verbal thrashing, but it is a zealous effort to mitigate an offense or nullify error, and this godly end can only be realized if “**the spirit of meekness**” is manifested by all parties involved, for “**an angry man stirreth up strife**” (**Galatians 6:1; Proverbs 29:22**).

Purity of Motive Precludes Compromise with Error

“Do not err, my beloved brethren” (James 1:16).

Truth is far too precious to sacrifice upon the altar of expediency or compromise, and error is to be exposed at all times and expunged whenever and wherever possible. However, Paul says that the “**reproving**” and “**rebuking**” of error is to be done, “**with all longsuffering and doctrine**” (**II Timothy 4:2**).

An earnest and honest contention for the faith, even though permeated with and manifested by love, will yet gender adversity, and alienate some beloved brethren. This sad truth is evidenced by the heavy heart of Paul, being motivated by his great love for the erring churches of Galatia, as he said unto them: “**Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?**” (**Galatians 4:16**). Paul’s disdain for the Galatian error was graphically stated, yet it was presented in such a way that the purity of his motive in so doing, was left beyond question.

There was never an ill motive in the heart of the Saviour, and the caption under the picture of His sacrificial life, reads: “He glorified God on the earth” (**John 17:4**). His every thought, word, and deed was motivated by His unflinching determination to glorify His heavenly Father, and Paul says: “**... He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord**” (**II Corinthians 10:17**).

All saved people, in or out of the Lord's churches, as to nature, are composite beings; they are given a new nature in regeneration, but their old nature is still with them and is as vicious as ever. Owing to a lack of suppression of the old nature, Baptist church members will err, and that most grievously at times. While the Lord's churches are to never patronize error, they are to follow every step delineated in Scripture in their effort to recover the erring member, before excursive discipline is invoked against him.

After the scriptural admonitions have been followed in spirit and in the letter, and the result is yet negative, there is no recourse left to the church, but exclusion of the offending person from membership of the church. The church is to make no concessions to error, for there is no fellowship so sweet that it merits the least compromise of the word of God, and any such compromise is a dangerous compounding of the error.

Nevertheless, the motive in discipline should never be fleshly gratification, but for the glorification of the Head of the church, which glorification is, in some cases, manifested by the gain of the erring person.

God in wisdom endowed His churches with power to attract and with power to repel, with power to enlist and with power to exclude. The power to repel and exclude is a last resort measure, however, once the necessity has arisen whereby a member must be excluded; the church should not approach the problem with either a tepid or vindictive spirit, but with a spirit of meekness and resolve and concern for the spiritual welfare of the offending brother.

Notwithstanding, there are offenses so atrocious in nature, that the church is left without an option, and must, without delay or deliberation, exclude the guilty person from the membership of the church (**I Corinthians 5:1, 2**). But, thank God, His churches are not often afflicted with such overwhelming revulsion, but are in its absence given ample time to deal with other forms of leavening and seeds of discord.

There is no offense committed by a Christian brother against his church which is insuperable, and there are no barriers between the Lord's churches

which are incapable of being overturned. So as to not vitiate church discipline, all church interaction with the disciplined person must be avoided; no public part of the church service is open to him, and nothing should be done by the immediate church members, nor by any sister church, to desensitize or lessen the effect of the discipline invoked by the membership church.

The censoring of dialogue and the circumscribing of social intercourse with the disciplined person, may, in some instances, be deemed wise, but there is no scriptural mandate which prohibits all social or family communion with the excluded person. The church is never to placate the deposed offender, and if he remains or becomes recalcitrant, the position of the church in his regard should remain intact. However, it is not a compromise on the part of the church to recognize and encourage any conciliatory gesture made by the subject of discipline. Otherwise, no fallen brother would ever be lifted up and restored to fellowship in the disciplining church.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; AND AVOID THEM (emphasis OBM) (Romans 16:17).

This Divine injunction is all too often distorted or twisted and made to comprehend each and every variance that may surface, but this is not the force or meaning of it; otherwise, it would spell oblivion for all of the Lord’s churches. In the next verse (18), Paul identifies for us the persons whom the church is to “avoid”. **“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”.**

These deceivers are in the church, but they were not “**added**” to it by the Lord Jesus Christ, and their every motive is self-interest and pride. They are to be undeviatingly withstood, and one way to withstand them is to avoid all spiritual fellowship with them. If this avoidance is tenaciously adhered to, their evil designs will be defeated, and in due season it will be manifested that they were never of the Lord (**I John 2:19**).

The least contravention of the word of God is to be taken seriously, but we know that good men, men who steadfastly hold to the gospel of grace and biblical ecclesiology, err in other points of doctrine. The above cited injunction of avoidance (**Romans 16:17**), does not apply to these men, for they love the Lord's churches, and their general motivation comes from a strong desire to be obedient to the will of God in everything.

It is not the aim of these "good men" to create division in the Lord's church(es), and they are just as sure their convictions on these lesser points of doctrine are Holy Spirit wrought, as are those who take variance with them. Thus, there is no scriptural basis for breaking fellowship with them, for if it was so, every New Testament church would be in utter disarray, and fellowship between churches would be out of the question.

All Bible doctrine is essential for spiritual growth and maturity, and doctrinal affinity enhances fellowship. So, there is some room for fellowship among all of the Lord's churches, for they all believe every Christian and church is prone to err, and that we all must wait until we get to heaven to find the perfect Christian and the perfect church.

However, it seems in this evil day, that anything less than perfect agreement between brethren, makes one of them a heretic of the rankest sort. While fellowship between brethren and churches is based on doctrinal accord, it does not mean that every detail of every doctrine must be in place before there can be fellowship. This is a vital truth and needs to be addressed and emphasized, for in so doing, the prospect is that some of the unnecessary divisions which prevail in and among the Lord's churches would be eliminated; there can be condemnation of error without castigation of the errant brother.

Conclusion

“And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (II Peter 1:7).

The graces which Peter refers to in this text, are not in every case easy to add, but we should not be quick to give up in our effort to add them. In the spiritual sense, the terms “brother” and “sister” denote a relationship that is eternal, and to enhance that relationship on earth, the perpetual forgiveness of offenses is necessary (**Matthew 18:21, 22**). To preserve and promote peace in the church, Paul said: “... **Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you**” (**Ephesians 4:32**).

The spiritual and discerning church will, upon self-examination, discover that all of its theological jots and tittles are not in place, and that some of its doctrinal walls do not perfectly hew or conform to the sacred plumb-line. Baptist churches are the most glorious institutions on earth; they are the pillar and ground of all divine truth, but there is not one among us who has fully apprehended that for which it has been apprehended, or that needs no further maturity or growth in grace and truth. Let us esteem our membership church most highly, but let us not look down our critical noses and deny an equal greatness to any of the Lord’s precious churches. It has not seemed good in the sight of the Lord to bless all of His churches in the same way, but this does not mean He loves one less and another more. In purchasing His churches, the omniscient Christ paid the same price for each of them (**Acts 20:28**), and there is not one among them all which is loved and preferred by Him above another (**Ephesians 5:25**).

The spiritual Christian will readily admit there is much wrong in his discipleship (**I Corinthians 10:12**), and that he comes miserably short in his service to God and his church brothers and sisters. Being aware of these unsavory facts should make us reluctant to adversely criticize those who are walking with us in the troubled path of faith. The least scrutiny of our fellow church members will reveal much in them which we consider to run counter to the honor of God and the best interest of His church. Conversely, the censorship being honest, we will in almost every case, discover that the supposed weak brother is strong in some areas where we are weak, and we could be profited by emulating his strong points.

We are not saying withhold all criticism; on the contrary, a word of rebuke in due season is good (**Proverbs 15:23**), but destructive criticism has no place in social relationships, much less in the Lord's churches. The flesh takes a certain satisfaction from "telling him off", but it often follows that we look back on our temper venting with regret and shame, and conclude: "I wish I had not said that. I surely could have handled that situation in a far better way." "***He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly***" (**Proverbs 14:29**).

The egotism of the old nature is not eradicated by regeneration, but it hangs on with an unrelenting tenacity, and all too often trips up the saint and causes him to unduly assert himself. Thus it was with Peter when he said to his cross-bound Saviour, "**Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee ...**" (**Matthew 26:35**). Knowing the oft deficiency of my faith, I find it difficult to criticize Peter for his haughtiness, or to ask Elijah why he ran from Jezebel, or say to Moses: "Why did you not speak unto the rock instead of smiting it?" (**I Kings 19:1-3; Numbers 20:8-11**).

The devil hates church harmony, peace, and unity. It is his aim to bring discord and confusion in the Lord's churches, and he delights in bitterness and rivalry among church members. However, the devil cannot create this ill condition in the church, apart from help within the church. Sadly, it seems there is always a Sister Eve or a Brother Diotrephes to ally themselves with the devil in his church wrecking scheme. Christ said, "**... Offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come**" (**Luke 17:1**).

The devil is the arch rival of the saint and he infinitely hates the blood bought church of Jesus Christ. He knows that God is glorified in His churches, but he also knows that sin diminishes fellowship with God, and he knows the greater the church is permeated with and persists in sin, the less is God glorified in the ill affected church.

Therefore, it behooves every member to pray fervently for one another, to respect one another, and to spiritually promote one another. A kind word of appreciation goes a long way in quieting the spirit that is caught in the gall of bitterness. After all, it is the meek who inherit the earth, and our Supreme

Example said, **“I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29)**. Beloved, God has already given His best to us and it surely becomes us to give our best to His church (**Ephesians 5:2**).

“Let brotherly love continue” (Hebrews 13:1).

Double Destruction

“Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.” (Jeremiah 17:18)

Jeremiah prays to God concerning his persecutors, saying, **“Destroy them with double destruction.”** In contemporary time, with its emphasis on the philosophy that the sum and substance of God is love, that mankind is basically good, that it is the environment that makes the criminal, and not the criminal who makes the environment; Jeremiah’s prayer would be considered incongruous to the nature of God. The “God loves everyone” crowd, in order to be consistent, would have to say, “Jeremiah was overwrought from the great stress he was under and did not realize what he was asking God to do.” Well, they are the ones who suffer from mental deficiency, not Jeremiah, for we read in the 39th chapter of Jeremiah’s prophecy where God answered his prayer. Jerusalem was burned. The son’s of Judah’s king were killed before his eyes. The king’s eyes were plucked out, and all the nobles of Judah were killed, and all but the extremely poor were carried away captive to Babylon. God thought more of Jeremiah’s prayer than did the late Bishop Oxnam of the Methodist Church. He said, “The God of the Old Testament was nothing but a dirty bully.” By this time, I am sure he has a different opinion of God. Many people applaud when they hear of infinite grace, mercy and love, and many recoil when they hear of infinite sin, guilt, and punishment. God’s infinite grace, love and mercy can only be appreciated by those who realize they are guilty of infinite sin, and deserving of infinite punishment.

IMPRECATORY PRAYERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

David often prayed unto God for the destruction of his enemies. Once he prayed, saying, **“Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongues ...” (Psalm 55:9)**. When the sense of justice dies, anarchy prevails, and innocent blood flows freely. Motivated by a legitimate feeling against evil, the Old Testament prophets prayed for some manifestation of Divine righteousness by way of retribution against the carnage of reprobate men. They prayed not

from a desire for personal revenge, but from a love of God and righteousness.

In the Mosaic dispensation God dealt differently with His people than He does today. Under the Mosaic economy, they were not only custodians and propagators of the true religion, but they were, at the same time, a civil state, or theocracy. Their civil well being was inseparably connected to, and dependent on their spiritual obedience. As long as they were obedient, God protected them by destroying their enemies. Thus it is we read many imprecative entreaties of God's people in the Old Testament.

As a civil body God provided them with carnal means of protection, and guided them in the use of these weapons. David's expertise with a sling shot resulted in Goliath's death, and Israel's victory over the Philistines. Samson, with supernatural strength and a jawbone of an ass, slew a thousand Philistines, and Gideon with his brave 300 fell thousands of the Midianites with Holy-Spirit-guided swords. Israel was God's visible kingdom on earth, and they were to recognize that it was God Who gave them victory against their enemies, **"For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but *as for* you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, He *it is* that fighteth for you, as He hath promised"** (Joshua 23:9-10). "But (says someone), it is different today. We are living under grace." So very right they are. Yet, we need to keep in the forefront of our minds this fact: God is not less angry with the wicked today than He was 4,000 years ago.

David said, **"God is angry *with the wicked every day*"** (Psalm 7:11), and the word for this age is, **"... He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him"** (John 3:36). The church in contrast to Israel is not a civil body, but a spiritual body. The Lord's churches, indwelt and directed by the Holy Spirit are not ministers of God's wrath, but messengers of His grace. We are to love our enemies, and bless them that curse us (Matthew 5:44). Yet, God is under no such obligation. He can either curse or bless His enemies, and no man can say unto Him, **"What doest Thou?"**

The church is now in its betrothal period in its relationship with Christ. Speaking to the church at Corinth, Paul says, “... **I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as a chaste virgin to Christ***” (**II Corinthians 11:2**). In Israel the man who was betrothed was exempted from military duty, but not so with the married Israelite man (**Deuteronomy 20:7**). So it is with the church and her Groom during the betrothal period, militancy is checked. But soon the wedding march will be played in glory; then heaven’s militia with Christ at its head will march on Armageddon (**Revelation 19:7-19**). Israel’s rejection of Jesus as their Messiah (**John 1:11**) resulted in their being set aside as God’s representative people on earth and Christ says, “**My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence**” (**John 18:36**). At the climax of “**the times of the Gentiles**”, which is realized at the battle of Armageddon, the nail scarred Lord steps from Heaven’s stage with His sword of vengeance unsheathed (**II Thessalonians 2:7-8**), and once again fights for His beleaguered people. The Lord’s vengeance fills the valley with blood for the space of 200 miles at the height of a horse’s bridle (**Revelation 14:20**). The earth at this time becomes the monarchy of Jesus Christ (**Revelation 11:15**), and every infraction of His equitable rule will be met with impartial justice. While it is for the present age, “**the weapons of our warfare *are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds***” (**II Corinthians 10:4**), let the believer remember he serves the Lord Who has determined to slay all His enemies which would not that He should reign over them, and that in due season He will answer the prayer of the martyred souls under His altar, who “... **Cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, Holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? ... It was said unto them, that they should rest yet a little season ...**” (**Luke 19:27; Revelation 6:9-11**).

DEPRAVITY AND DESTRUCTION

“**Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood, their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity, wasting and destruction are in**

their paths.” Isaiah 59:7

Nations now measure destructive force by the number of megatons built into a hydrogen bomb. Many people live in constant fear, for they know, never before in the history of the world, have men had the ability to destroy that they now possess. Man fears nuclear war, plane crashes, car wrecks, and cancer. He fears earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural phenomenon, but due to his depraved nature, **“There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:18).**

Man’s heart and mind in his fallen state are so utterly depraved that he is continually thinking of, and studying ways and means of destroying his fellowman. Solomon says, **“Their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief” (Proverbs 24:2).** And Paul says, **“Destruction and misery are in their ways” (Romans 3:16).**

The United States Air Force Academy, Naval Academy, and Army’s West Point are schools dedicated to the idea of creating the best brains in the field of military science, which science has to do with destruction by warfare. I believe these schools are necessary. I do not complain about my tax dollar supporting them, but the fact remains: they exist because man apart from Christ is a totally depraved creature. From the depraved counsels of men have come some of the most diabolical devices, and ingenious schemes for the destruction of their fellow man. A brief view of history, and the Italian and Spanish inquisition, fostered and supported by the Roman Catholic Church, is sufficient evidence, proving the veracity of the above statement. Hitler is a classic example. He believed the war devices and schemes of Nazi Germany were superior to any other nations of the world. Germany became militarily strong; claimed for themselves the status of a super-race, and became exceedingly proud. They forgot that God long ago said, **“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”.** (Proverbs 16:18).

Man, with his depraved mind, not only unjustly destroys his fellowman, but he does it calculatively and systematically. After WW I, in 1919 there was discovered in Germany a resume containing the Communist Manifesto,

which delineated a plan for the destruction of the United States of America. The plan called for:

Dividing the United States by races and classes, the creation of as much internal unrest as possible, Dividing the United States and her allies, Engaging the United States in diversified wars with communistic puppet states, whereby the United States would spend herself broke. Then the major forces of communism would step in, and add the finishing touches of destruction.

The rift or division now existing between Russia and Red China is, in part, due to their varying opinions as to what is the best and most expeditious way to destroy the United States Russia wants to do it systematically, through cold war tactics. Red China with her crowded and expendable populous wanted to destroy the United States with an all out war. Russia and China do not trust one another, and Russia was fearful of what United States defeat by war would cost her militarily. Supposing the cost might reduce her to the point where she would be easy prey for the Mao Se Tung regime brought them to a heated impasse. Carter's cowardly compromise wherein Taiwan's potential destruction became imminent has not diminished Red China's hatred of the United States one iota, and if Russia and China solve their problems, the United States will know from experience how Taiwan feels today, December, 1978.

GOD AND SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION

Man is not the originator of systematic destruction, neither is the devil. God originated systematic destruction. The God of the Bible is the God of order and system. He executes His designs with absolute precision, and the devil with all his cohorts cannot frustrate God's plan for the sparrow, much less His plan for man. The wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and God said to the devil a long time ago, **"I will destroy thee"** (Psalms 76:10; Ezekiel 28:16).

A. God's Curse on Sin is Systematically Exercised.

Adam sinned and the threatened curse took hold on him. Of Adam's physical being we read, **"And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died"** (Genesis 5:5). The curse brought forth the bitter fruit of death, destroying the body of Adam progressively and systematically. Job, speaking of man's body under the curse said, **"They are destroyed from morning to evening"** (Job 4:20).

Man's body suffers under the curse. In due process of time, it loses its ability to walk, run and becomes immobile. Then comes to pass the saying, **"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"** (Genesis 3:19). A great many lost people seem to be able to laugh at the thought of death. When faced with the fact of death, many say, "O well, so what?" The devil has them blinded as to what all is involved in death. They think the grave brings an absolute cessation of existence. They are totally unaware that physical death and hell are simultaneously realized for the lost, and that they shall suffer everlasting or perpetual destruction (II Thessalonians 1:9).

B. The Enemies of Israel in the Conquest of Canaan Were Systematically Destroyed by God.

"And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee little by little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed." (Deuteronomy 7:22-23) God wanted to protect Israel from the beasts of the field by keeping a balance between them. To preserve this balance the nations of Caanan were systematically ("little by little") destroyed.

C. The Formation and Destruction of the Ecumenical Church Will Be Systematically Wrought.

"Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time I will say to the reapers gather ye together first the tares and bind them into bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into My barn." (Matthew

13:30) The “tare” is a darnel, a weed that in appearance looks like wheat. The tare represents the lost religionist. In the end of the age, or harvest time, the reapers gather them into denominational bundles, then into various national councils, and finally into one big bundle, known as the Ecumenical Church. The binding of the tares is systematically wrought so as not to uproot any of the wheat, or true churches of the Lord. Now, let us view history in advance, and see what happens to this great big religious super bundle. **“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore (Ecumenical Church) and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire” (Revelation 17:16).** Do you know why the anti-Christ and his league of nations destroy the harlot church? The scripture gives us the answer, **“For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will ...” (Revelation 17:17).**

DOUBLE DESTRUCTION - DOUBLE DELIVERANCE

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who healeth all thy diseases: Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.” (Psalms 103:2-4)

It is God who saves from destruction, not man. Man’s bomb shelters, health programs, reformation, nor his religion can save him from eternal destruction. But bless God, all is not hopeless. While He is the Sovereign destroyer, He is also gracious and everyone who trusts His power to save is delivered from destruction.

Let us note some things that avert eternal destruction.

The sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ averts destruction. **“For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel and on the side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite *you*.” (Exodus 12:23)** The safety zone for the Israelite was under the shed blood of the typical lamb. Of the Anti-type of Israel’s lamb, Jesus Christ, we read,

“Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Romans 5:9).

Faith in God averts destruction. **“Through faith he (Moses) kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the first born should touch them.” (Hebrews 11:28) “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” (Hebrews 11:7)**

Obedience to God’s word averts destruction. **“Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.”(Proverbs 13:13) “He sent His word and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions.” (Psalm 107:20) “... By the word of Thy lips I have kept *me* from the paths of the destroyer.” (Psalm 17:4)** Believe the Bible to be safe. Practice it to be holy. Defend it to be rewarded, and use it to proclaim deliverance from destruction.

In this present evil world the saint may be persecuted, but he can never say, “I am forsaken.” He may be cast down, but he can ever say, “I am not destroyed” (**II Corinthians 4:9**). It is not so with the wicked for they are **“reserved to the day of destruction ... and shall be punished with everlasting destruction” (Job 21:30, II Thessalonians 1:9)**. Not annihilation, but eternal destruction, or everlasting damnation.

Christ has mercifully warned man of forthcoming **“double destruction”** saying, **“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28)**. Double destruction, in the full sense of the word, is both soul and body suffering eternal destruction in hell.

Although all men deserve to suffer **“double destruction”** God has in infinite grace, granted some double deliverance having obtained eternal redemption for their souls and bodies through Jesus Christ (**Hebrews 9:12; Romans 8:23**).

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - January, 1979)

Essentials Of Church Unity

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and in you all.*” (Ephesians 4:3-6)

In verse three Paul admonishes the Ephesians to **“keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”** Therefore, it is incumbent upon every member to strive for the continuity of this unity, or oneness which the Holy Spirit has generated in the church.

In verses four through six Paul lists the seven essentials which constitute the foundation of true church unity. They are: “One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God.” The spiritual numerical value of the number seven (7) is perfection or completion. So it is, nothing needs to be added nor deleted from the foundation of church unity which the Head of the church has laid.

ONE BODY

Verse four, **“There is one body ...”** There is unity of mind among students of ecclesiology regarding the metaphorical term **“body”** used in this text. All agree it is a reference to the Lord’s church. The parting of the way comes when the question is posed, “What kind of a church does the term refer to?” The universal invisible church theorist answers immediately saying, “It refers to the true church, the universal invisible church.” To be consistent with this answer the proponent must deny the existence of the local church, for whatever Paul refers to with the term **“body”** we know it is **“one.”**

Adherents of the universal invisible church theory have two churches, one which he calls the true church, which in his notion includes all believers, and a local visible church which is constituted of a fragment of the whole body of believers. When one of two things is referred to as the true, by inference the other is denied genuineness. Thus it is, the universal invisible

church theorist, by his doctrine, which calls for two kinds of churches, places himself outside the Lord's church. The Lord's body, in the ecclesiastical sense is not anything more or less than a local visible true church. The Lord's churches are chaste and virtuous (**II Corinthians 11:2**), and shall enter glory in "**fine linen, clean and white**" (**Revelation 19:8**).

If the "**one body**" of the text can be dualized, then the other six elements which constitute the foundation of church unity may also be dualized. The impossibility of which is seen when one considers such an interpretation has Paul saying, there are "two bodies, two Spirits, two hopes, two Lords, two faiths, two baptisms, and two Gods." Such an interpretation would be ludicrous if it was not so ridiculous. The "**one body**" in the text does not mean one in number, but one in kind, the same as "**one baptism**" in the text means one in kind. Paul, in writing to the church at Corinth, says, "**Now ye are the body of Christ ...**" (**I Corinthians 12:27**). Now, we know every saved person on the earth at the time was not in the church at Corinth. Yet, Paul says to the Corinthian church, "**Ye are the body of Christ.**" In admonishing the church at Corinth, Paul says, "There should be no schism in the body ..." (**I Corinthians 12:25**). There are not only an infinite number of schisms and divisions in the so-called universal invisible church, but many of their differences are of such nature that they are irreconcilable apart from the abandonment of all reasoning. It is the devil's delight to take those who are wise in their own conceit, having turned their ears from the truth and are feasting on fables, and use them in building his ecumenical church. They are victims of that vain philosophy, which says, "Nothing is either black or white, everything is a beautiful shade of gray." So they conclude that their dissimilarities are only imaginary, and the ecumenical architect realizes his diabolical designs. The last word, or the bottom line concerning the ecumenical harlot is in **Revelation 17**, "**And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will ...**" (verses 16 and 17).

ONE SPIRIT - ONE HOPE

Verse four, “**There is ... one Spirit ...**” There is but one Holy Spirit, but there are many evil spirits (**I John 4:1**). It is the Holy Spirit that gives oneness and unity to the Lord’s churches. “**There is ... one hope ...**” (vs. 4). The Holy Spirit gives life and unity to the church, and instills the same supreme hope in all the body. Which hope is, to eternally share in the glory of the Head of the church as His bride. Paul, in the Colossian epistle identifies the church as the body of Christ (**1:24**) and then says to the Colossian church, “... **Christ in you (institutionally) the hope of glory**” (**1:27**).

ONE LORD

Verse five, “**One Lord ...**” Baptists have been martyred by the thousands because of their unshakable faith in the “**one Lord**” of the Bible. In the early history of the church the Roman Empire was in ascendancy, and the known world was subjugated to Rome. The Roman emperors set themselves up as deities, and commanded worship of all their subjects. Baptists, being mindful of the word of their sovereign Lord, wherein He said, “**Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them ...**” (**Exodus 20:5**) went joyfully to the stake. They were willing to render unto Caesar the things that belonged unto him, but they preferred to die rather than deny their one Lord. Polytheism did not die with the Roman emperors, but is present in the papalism and paganism of religious Rome. The gods of Romanism are legion, the Pope, Mary, angels, canonized saints, etc. are all objects of worship. Baptists being biblicists, adhering to the letter of their one Lord, knowing they have no option as regards worship, and rather than say, political or spiritual Caesar is Lord, they stand “**ready to be offered.**”

ONE FAITH

Verse five, “... **One faith ...**” This is a reference, in the primary sense, to an experiential faith in the “**one Lord.**” Yet, it is readily understood one cannot be a true worshipper of God without assimilating and propagating His doctrine.

ONE BAPTISM

Verse five, “... **One baptism** ...” This is a reference to water baptism. In the New Testament where the term “**baptism**” is used, it is a reference to water baptism, unless there is in the context given a description which expressly identifies it as something other than water baptism. **I Corinthians 12:13** will not support the Scofield idea of Holy Spirit baptism. While the Greek preposition “**en**” is translated “**by**” in **I Corinthians 12:13**, it is by the same (KJV) translators, translated by the word “**among**” 114 times. “**With**” was their choice 139 times, “**by**” 142 times, and they chose the word “**in**” 1,863 times. To be consistent with the rest of the New Testament regarding baptism, (for nowhere is it said that the Holy Spirit ever baptized any person or thing), the translators should have used the word “**in**” instead of “**by**” in **I Corinthians 12:13**. Yet, the deceptive power of the devil is such that he has caused a whole doctrine to be built upon this erroneous translation of one Greek proposition. The incongruity of the word “**by**” in **I Corinthians 12:13** is made apparent when the subject of baptism is studied in the light of the whole New Testament.

ONE GOD AND FATHER

Verse six, “**One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**” Every religion except Christianity has a plurality of Gods. And under the canopy of Christianity there are mock denominations which by their practice and doctrines reveal that they believe in the existence of more than one God. God alone has the power to forgive sins, and any person or thing which takes this power unto themselves assumes God-ship.

If baptism saves or helps to save, then baptism should be deified and worshipped. If freewill saves or helps to save, the wrong God is on the throne. But we know “**it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy**” (**Romans 9:16**).

“**One God and Father of All** ...” God is the creator of all, but He is not the spiritual Father of all mankind (**John 8:44**). The context bears out that the reference is to God being the Father of all who are Christians, and more particularly of those who are in His body, the church. The word “**all**” is a reference to Jews and Gentiles, and within the frame of reference it has to do

with both Jews and Gentiles within the same body. God is not “through all, and in all,” men without exception, but He is in and through all men without distinction. God indwells every believer by the “one Spirit” and is ever ready to intensify the intimacy of His relationship with the believer. The word is, “**Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you**” (James 4:8).

Thus we see, at the top of the list of the seven things which are necessary for church unity, the “**one God**”. God is always at the top shining in His own glory, and sending down on His church every gift necessary for spiritual unity and growth (James 1:17).

The “**one God**” indwells every New Testament Baptist church by the “**one Spirit**” thereby empowering each church to preach the “**one hope**”, “**one Lord**”, “**one faith**”, and “**one baptism**” whereby unity is realized and perpetuated in each respective body.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - April, 1978)

Eternal Election

“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” (Ephesians 1:4)

Note the term, “**according as**” in the text. It looks back to verse three (3) of this chapter, and the words, “hath blessed”. This past tense phrase has inherent in it the blessing of being chosen in Christ before the world began. Plainly, Paul says: The salvation of the elect of God has for its foundation the eternal and gracious choice of the Sovereign Lord of heaven. The Greek word from which our English, “**hath chosen**” comes, literally means, “to mark off”, or “to select out” for one’s self. Owing to and according with the Father’s good pleasure, wherein He elected an infinite number of mankind, their blessings accrue. (**Colossians 3:12**)

The words, “**chosen**”, or “choose” are used many times and in various ways in the New Testament, but in our text, (**Ephesians 1:4**) it relates specifically to the salvation of sinners. The Greek word “ekiego” means to pick out, or choose for one’s self, and it is from this very Greek term that we get our word “elect”. Seeing then that the picking out of some of Adam’s posterity was done before Adam was ever created, it is correct to refer to the objects of God’s merciful choice as “the elect of God.”

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

From the foregoing, it is plainly seen that the doctrine commonly known as “unconditional election” is a Bible doctrine. There is no doctrine in the Bible which magnifies the glory and sovereignty of God more than this great truth. While this doctrine exalts God, it at the same time glaringly highlights the fact that man is utterly helpless to save himself. Man’s impotence in spiritual matters is due to his totally depraved nature, and his depravity being absolute, he cannot do the first thing pleasing unto God, much less choosing God to be his Saviour. So it unavoidably follows, if any of Adam’s defiant children are to be saved, God **MUST** do the saving. Seeing God does save some, we are forced to conclude He intended to save them before the world

began, and this great truth is irrefutably stated in our text (**Ephesians 1:4**), which truth has correctly brought into vogue the term, “eternal unconditional election.”

Election is not salvation, but it is a Divine guarantee of the salvation of all whom Jesus represented in His vicarious suffering on the cross. Conversely, election does not send any person to hell, but if it were not for God’s election of grace, all men would justly go to hell. The doctrine of unconditional election is hated by the vast majority of professing Christendom, but the root of all opposition to this God honoring doctrine is found to be in fallen man’s conceit or inflated self importance.

ELECTION, A HUMBLING DOCTRINE

When the truth of Divine election is correctly understood, it will become the means of humbling pride, and eliciting praise and gratitude unto God. It serves to strip a person of all supposed ability in spiritual matters, and lays him in the dust at the feet of Him Who said, “**You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you ...**” (**John 15:16**) It was God’s elective grace that made the proud Saul of Tarsus, the ultimate Pharisee, to declare himself the “chief of sinners” (**I Timothy 1:15**), and to say: “**He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.**” (**II Corinthians 10:17**)

The doctrine of election was precious to Paul, and this fact is made apparent by the great emphasis he put on it in his writings. However, keep in mind that the teaching of this great doctrine is not peculiar to Paul, but it is uniformly taught throughout the whole of Scripture. To oppose the doctrine of eternal election is to go against the plainest revelation of Scripture, and is thereby a denial of the authority of God’s word. Speaking of the usurpers of God’s word, Paul said: “**Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.**” (**II Timothy 3:5**)

WHOSOEVER WILL

The Arminian counters with: “Well, how about the ‘**God so loved the world**’ of **John 3:16**? All Scripture must be rightly divided, otherwise a

benighted counsel will ensue, and darkness will be taken for light. One thing we know, if God ever loved the whole world of mankind, He still loves them; for God is immutable and changeth not. (**Malachi 3:6; James 1:17**) Divine love (agape) is ever reaching forth to bless all upon whom it abides, and seeing God's love is sovereign, it follows that there can be no spurning or rejection of His love.

In **John 3:16**, our Lord is telling Nicodemus that His love extended beyond Jewish nationality, and that His love was not inextricably bound to the seed of Abraham, but under the infinite canopy of His elective love was an innumerable host of Gentiles (**Romans 9:24**). God's love is exactly that; His love. And He says: “. . . **it is not of him (man) that willeth . . . but of God that showeth mercy.**” (**Romans 9:16**). There is not a heresy more damnable than that which teaches God cannot accomplish His redemptive purpose except fallen man join his will to that of God's, or cooperate with God in His efforts to save.

What is true of “Whosoever will may come,” it is equally true, that permission without desire or ability profits nothing. And so it is Christ says to the Jews: “**And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life.**” (**John 5:40**) In the exercise of their will they crucified Christ, and the Gentile heart is as desperately wicked as that of the Jews, for in nature, there is no difference. The elective decree of God needs NO human adjuncts, nay, not the will nor the work of man. And so it is, volitional salvation of the creature is not merely a stranger to the Bible record, but it is a gross usurpation of the God honoring doctrine of election.

John 5:40 and **6:44** teach that man, as he is in nature, has neither the power nor the will to come to Christ, and every man left to his native strength is as sure to be in hell as Lucifer himself. But thanks be unto God, for He has chosen some of Adam's helpless posterity unto salvation, and those Whom He has chosen are identical with the believers of **John 3:16**. The Holy Spirit brings conviction, contrition, and conversion to the heart of all God's elect. Commensurate with these blessings, they learn that they have been enabled by the power of God to come to Christ without any effort on their own, and their heart is filled with gratitude toward God for His electing LOVE.

Eternal Security Of The Believer

An Old Testament Truth

“As the mountains *are* round about Jerusalem, so the Lord *is* round about His people from henceforth even forever” (Psalms 125:2).

The Old Testament informs the believer that God is his Fortress, Refuge, Strong Tower, Strength, Rock, Salvation, etc. (**II Samuel 22:2, Psalms 18:2, Psalms 28:1, Psalms 19:2**). It is in the Old Testament that the believer sees his abiding place to be under the shadow of God’s wing (**Psalms 63:7**). It is in the Old Testament the believer learns that God has him hidden in His pavilion: **“For in the time of trouble He shall hide me ... He shall set me upon a rock” (Psalms 27:5).**

The field of Old Testament theology was thoroughly sown down with the truth of the security of the individual believer, and God’s people in this age are blessed with the inexhaustible harvest. Yet, in the face of this infinite and irrevocable evidence, there are some who tell us, the Old Testament promises are exclusively restricted to the nation of Israel, and cannot be rightly referred to for support when contending for the eternal security of the individual believer. Nothing could be more illogical; for God to preserve His chosen nation Israel, is to preserve the chosen individuals which constitute the true nation of Israel.

Harmony Of The Two Testaments Regarding

The Eternal Security Of The Believer

“For the LORD loveth judgement, and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved forever ...” (Psalms 37:28).

“The Lord ...will preserve *me* unto His heavenly kingdom ...” (II Timothy 4:18).

“For He *is* our God; and we *are* the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand ...” (Psalms 95:7).

“My sheep hear My voice ... and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of My hand” (John 10:27-28).

“For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken” (Proverbs 3:26).

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).

“... I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Joshua 1:5).

“... He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5).

We could go on indefinitely comparing Scripture with Scripture, showing the perfect harmony existing between the Old and New Testaments as relates to the God honoring doctrine of the eternal preservation of the saints, but will conclude this point by saying, any interpretation of Scripture that contradicts the final preservation of the believer, is a wrong interpretation, and is injurious to faith.

A Dramatic Illustration Of The Security Of The Believer In The Old Testament

One of the most vivid illustrations portraying the eternal security of the believer in the Old Testament is found in the bitter experiences and faithful life of Job. Satan plying his trade and office of Devil, that is, slanderer and accuser of the children of God, presents himself before the Lord (**Job 1:6**). On this particular occasion, the Lord said unto Satan, **“Hast thou considered**

My servant Job; that *there is none like him in the earth?*” (Job 1:8). Satan knowing God has abundantly blessed Job, counters with an accusation against Job: **“Doth Job fear God for nought?” (Job 1:9).** He charges Job with a wrong motive, that Job loves God, because God has made him rich, or that he serves God for what he can get in return. And to augment his charge against Job, says to God, **“But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face” (Job 1:11).**

Satan tells God the reason Job is not a traitor and rebel against Him is because **“Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side ...” (Job 1:10).** Satan in essence says, “Your wall of benevolent providence around Job is too high. I cannot cross over. You lower your wall and let me have him for a little while; then he will curse you to your face.” God accepts what Satan believes is a challenge, saying, **“All that he hath is in thy power”** that is, **“only upon himself put forth not thine hand”**, spare his life (Job 1:12). Job’s faith is to be tested by the arch adversary. He is made a ready target for the fiery darts of Satan. Can Job’s faith endure the awful pressure? Can his faith absorb the shock of disaster upon disaster, or will his great loss destroy his trust in God?

Satan speaks to Job through his friends, and says, “Where is the goodness of God toward you, if God loves you, why has He taken your substance, and made you the poorest of the poor? He has taken your precious children in death, and has consigned you to a disease that is more repulsive than death. Why don’t you take the easy way out? Curse God and die.” But the answer of a God given faith comes through clear and plain; **“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15).** Job’s faith was in the omnipotent God Who doeth everything His soul desireth (Job 23:13). So, Job’s faith is of such nature that it transcends his present and painful circumstances, and enables him to see that God has a gracious purpose in all that has befallen him. And with absolute assurance he exclaims, **“When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).** Job knew that his reserves would magnify God by having a sanctifying effect on his own heart and life.

God may allow Satan a lot of liberty in persecuting the saint, but He will never permit Satan to touch the redeemed soul. The final security of the

believer is off limits to Satan, and he will never be able to nullify God's saving grace. God raised up Pharaoh that He might cast him down, and thereby manifest the utter impotence of Pharaoh's resistance against His sovereign power. And God raised up Job, and permitted Satan to cast him down, yet not without a wise and gracious design; for we in retrospect see that God gives to His saints a faith which ultimately triumphs over the Devil.

How About David?

Some will say, "How about David? You know he was a backslider." To this assertion I say, "A-men." Then ask, how about that "just and perfect" man Noah, who got so drunk he passed out? How about faithful Abraham, who lied two times about his wife Sarah, saying that she was his sister? How about the wise man Solomon, who tried everything to erase God from his mind? How about Samson who consorted with the evil Delilah? How about conniving Jacob?, etc.

Then, how about Hebrews, the eleventh chapter? Is it not in this chapter we learn that God's erring Old Testament saints enter Heaven as more than conquerors? David was a backslider, but not an apostatizer. David never renounced his faith in God, but was repentant toward God. David prayed, "**LORD be merciful unto me; heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee**" (Psalms 41:4). David's sin was shameful beyond mortal description, but not beyond Divine forgiveness. David's sin merited and received a severe rebuke from the Lord. We read from David's pen: "**The LORD hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death**" (Psalms 118:18). David's sin cost him much. He lost the joy and comfort of his salvation, but not his salvation. God's gift of salvation has been exempted from recall, and the cup of Divine chastening is filled with the grace of recovery (Romans 11:29; Hebrews 12:11). David's fellowship with his heavenly Father was broken, but not his relationship as a son of God. For his sin to have deprived him of his son ship in the family of God is to have consigned him to ever lasting destruction, for there is NO repetition of the spiritual birth. "**I know that, whatsoever, God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it ...**" (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

Sin does not weaken the believer's security, nor does faithfulness strengthen it, for the believer's security is of such nature that it CANNOT be affected. But the saint needs to be consistently and acutely aware of David's prayer, prayed with infinite pathos, **"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Psalms 51:12)**. **"I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears" (Psalms 6:6)**. When backsliding Israel is corrected and restored to her land, the Scripture says, **"They shall serve the LORD their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them" (Jeremiah 30:9)**.

Old Testament Saints Protected By Holy Angels

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psalms 34:7). It should humble the believer to realize God has set in motion an innumerable, invincible, and invisible host of angels to care for His elect. Squadrons, upon squadrons of angels have been dispatched from the throne of God's sovereign mercy to minister to His elect. **"God ... hath sent His angel and delivered His servants that trusted in Him" (Daniel 3:28)**. The thought of angelic care should cause us to be awe stricken. To think that beings with knowledge and power infinitely greater than the strongest saint should gladly perform these unnoticed services for us should fill our hearts with gratitude toward God. It should strengthen our faith in the providential care which God exercises in behalf of His saints. The knowledge that spirits of such high rank are ordained of God to minister to the feeble saints should encourage them in their struggle against sin.

The elect angels cast Satan and the reprobate angels out of Heaven, and will in due season cast the evil hordes of this earth into the winepress of the wrath of God (**Revelation 14:19**). It was angels that put the torch to Sodom and Gomorrah, and it was an angel that laid gentle hands upon lingering Lot and led him out of the city of destruction (**Genesis 19:16**).

In **Psalm 68:17** we learn that 20,000 chariots with thousands of angels accompanied God to meet with Moses at Mt. Sinai. Later, we learn that one of these angelic chariot drivers is dispatched by God to bring the prophet

Elijah to Heaven. While Elijah and Elisha were conversing, “**Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven**” (II Kings 2:11). With great astonishment, and adoration Elisha cries out, “**My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof**” (II Kings 2:12).

This scene was deeply engraved in the mind of Elisha, and caused his faith in God’s providential care to know no bounds; the evidence of which is found in another remarkable and striking experience in the life of Elisha. The details of this account are found in **II Kings 6:8-24**. Elisha, at the time, is number one on Satan’s list of most hated men, and Satan employs the king of Syria and his mighty army to destroy Israel and Elisha. The king’s military strategy was no sooner planned than it became public property of Israel, and the king was greatly disturbed by this. He fears there is a conspiracy in his own ranks, and asks, “**Which of us is for the king of Israel?**” (II Kings 6:11). And one of his servants said, “**None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speaketh in thy bed chamber**” (II Kings 6:12).

God had “bugged” the Syrian king’s palace, and put Elisha on the listening end. The king of Syria sends his armies out after Elisha and during the night they encompass the city where the prophet lived. Elisha’s servant, a young man, rises up early in the morning, and as he goes forth, he beholds a sight that strikes terror to his heart. He sees the mighty Syrian host everywhere he looks. In fear and desperation he says, “**Alas, my master! how shall we do?**” (II Kings 6:15).

The old prophet does not get excited. He is exceedingly rich in the experience of God’s providential protection, and his love for and faith in God have purged fear from every nook and cranny of his being. As far as human power is concerned, there is no escape from the invading Syrians, and Elisha’s young servant is arrested by dread and fear and despairs of hope. But Elisha is a believer in the final preservation of the saints and implicitly trusts in God’s all powerful ability to deliver His children from the cruelest of enemies. So, Elisha prays not to be spared, for he knows he is “**kept by the power of God**” but that his young servant may know this great truth also:

“LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see” (II Kings 6:16). “And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and behold, and the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (II Kings 6:16). Thus, it was then, thus it is today, “Fear not: for they (the angels of God) that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them” (II Kings 6:16; Hebrews 1:14). Elisha’s young servant did not feel secure, but he soon learned that feelings have nothing to do with security. Fears and doubts may come to the believer and try his faith, but they do not make the least indentation in the wall of security God has built around His blood bought children.

Eternal Preservation

In the infinite counsel of God the redemption of His people antedates the creation of the universe. Time is but a minute speck floating in the boundless expanses of eternity, and God speaks of the redemption of His people as being an eternal accomplishment (**Hebrews 9:12**). Thus, it is, Paul speaks of the glorification of the elect of God in the past tense (**Romans 8:30**). When the Holy Spirit speaks of the Lamb’s Book of life written from the foundation of the world (**Revelation 13:8**), He has in view the names of the Old Testament saints as well as those of any other age. Moses and Elijah were Old Testament saints and being born fallen sons of fallen parentage, they were men of like passion the same as all the children of Adam. Yet, in the mind of God their sins were atoned for by the eternal efficacy of Christ’s shed blood.

The New Testament provides us with a scene where Moses and Elijah are standing with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (**Matthew 7:14**). Moses and Elijah being members of the alienated family of man during their sojourn on earth were, in this scene, standing on the ground of perfect reconciliation, and, apart from the shed blood of Christ, there is no reconciliation (**Romans 5:10**). Yet, while Christ spoke with Moses and Elijah on the Mount, His blood was running warm and pure in His veins. He had not yet in time suffered in the room and stead of His people.

Nevertheless, Moses and Elijah were already enjoying the benefits of Christ's vicarious atonement.

The security of the Old Testament saint is not any more sure this side of Calvary than it was thousands of years the other side. David said, "**He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation ...**" (II Samuel 23:5). And David's present place in glory has not enhanced his security one scintilla.

Jesus is the "Great Shepherd" of the Old Testament sheep as well as those of the New Testament, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of all His sheep, and this was done on the merits of the "**blood of the everlasting covenant**" (Isaiah 53:6, Hebrews 13:20).

Conclusion

The practical effects produced by this doctrine in the life of the believer are not as the objector claims. It is often suggested by the contrary school that belief in the doctrine of eternal security is equal to having a license to live in sin. Nothing could be more opposed to Scripture, and the experience of a regenerate heart. The Scriptures provide the sincere seeker of truth with many an answer to this Arminian absurdity, but in this treatise we note only one, and this one should serve to shut the mouth of every would-be gainsayer, "**What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?**" (Romans 6:1, 2). The blood of Christ shed for the elect has eternally nullified the condemning power of sin against them, and God ever stands ready to forgive the sins of His regenerate children (I John 1:9), but shall we that are bought with so great a price take advantage of God's long-suffering and continue in sin? The Scriptural answer is an emphatic, NO, "**My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not ...**" (I John 2:1).

Remember, it is God's ability that keeps the saint, and not his own will or strength. And it is trust in God's almighty ability that makes the victory experientially sure for the saint in his present spiritual warfare. He that has

tasted and learned that the Lord is gracious (**I Peter 2:3**) has embarked upon the road of continuous sanctification, and the effect produced is abhorrence of sin and an ever increasing spiritual maturity (**Romans 12:1, 2; Philipians 1:6**). They which correctly understand this God exalting doctrine never contend for the preservation of those who consistently cultivate evil, and those which use this doctrine to support themselves in a low standard of Christian conduct are, I fear, damnably deceived.

“Moment by moment, I’m kept in His love.

Moment by moment, I’ve life from above.”

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - March, 1981)

God Forbid !!!

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue to sin, that grace may abound?” (Romans 6:1)

Paul’s second question of this text is answered with an emphatic, “**God forbid...**” Baptists have been accused by individuals, and by entire denominations of teaching a doctrine extremely dangerous to Christian living. The doctrine referred to and which they detest, is commonly entitled, “Eternal Security” or “Once in grace always in grace.” We make no apologies for teaching that every person born of the Spirit of grace, will in that grace persevere in spite of all counter forces, and ultimately awake in the likeness of his Lord. This is not a fragmented teaching of the word of God, but is prominent throughout the inspired record. We, with joy plead guilty to the charge of teaching the eternal security of the believer, but we take clear exception to the contention, that the doctrine is dangerous to Christian living. The doctrine of the preservation and perseverance of the saints magnifies the atonement of Christ, strengthens the faith of God’s elect, and creates in the heart of the believer unceasing praise for the watch care of God’s kind and tender providence. They which accuse Baptists of taking undue liberty with Christian stewardship, are in truth the people which teach a doctrine that not only diminishes the comfort and assurance of the saint, but also destroys Christian incentive. The despicable doctrine is theologically

termed “Apostasy,” and is ludicrously described as, “Saved today and lost tomorrow.” Regretfully, they which preach this God dishonoring doctrine, usually get around to practicing what they preach.

True Baptists have been sticklers for Biblical morality and decency all through their long and bitter history. The antinomian spirit has never successfully infiltrated their ranks, and the great majority of twentieth century puritans are to be found in that company, called Baptists. **“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”** We answer in the negative, and from every Baptist church that is blessed with the residence of the Spirit of truth, a resounding NO reaches God’s sin avenging throne in answer to Paul’s question. New Testament Baptists do not believe because they are saved by grace they can live as they please, but out of a heart filled with gratitude toward God for His unspeakable gift, they strive to live as pleases Him Who died to give them eternal life.

All that the Father gave to the Son in the covenant of redemption shall come to Him, and Christ says, **“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37)**. Paul says, **“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6)**. There is no power that can delay the work of God in His blood bought children, much less cause it to cease. At the day of Jesus Christ the elect shall realize perfect conformity to the image of Christ, and all powers running counter to this Divine determination will be seen in the end to be nothing more by comparison than the light of a candle to that of the sun. Yea, in truth God’s power is not subject to resistance (**Job 23:13; Psalms 115:3**). While we rejoice in God’s sure promises of eternal security and glorification, let us not forget the briefest moment that God has forbid us to sin. **“What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under the grace? God forbid” (Romans 6:15)**.

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (I John 2:1). Shall we sin because we have an Almighty Advocate? God forbid. Shall we sin because God’s love for His children is unchangeable? God forbid. Let us remember, while our heavenly destiny is

absolute, that we are in time objects of God's loving chastisement, and that "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous..." (Hebrews 12:11).

God justifies His people through the grace that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24), and He keeps them for the end whereof they were justified, that is, "Whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Romans 8:30).

"What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid" (Romans 9:14)

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - August, 1981)

God's Resereve

“In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and *there shall be* none: and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve” (Jeremiah 50:20).

“In those days, and in that time ... I will pardon them whom I reserve.” This text is a prophetic reference to the nation of Israel, and the Divine pardon Israel receives when the Lord establishes His millennial kingdom in the earth. The significant factor I want to point out is; the Lord is holding in reserve Israel's pardon. Israel's blindness concerning God's eternal purpose for them will be taken away **“in that time,”** the decree will bring forth, and that faithful remnant in Israel whom God has reserved will look upon Him whom they pierced, and know **“in that time”** they have been justified freely by His grace.

Israel does not enter the millennium because a Papal decree has been issued wherein is stated, that the Pope has forgiven Israel for crucifying Christ. Nor is it because they have been given favored nation status by the United States' government. Israel enters the millennium because God's merciful decree of eternal and unconditional election included them. **“For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins ... as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes” (Romans 11:27-28).**

Now, let us note some things that man reserves and then show that God has more of the same in reserve.

Man has his federal reserve bank and insurance companies are required by law to publish their reserve dollar statement. To guarantee the negotiability of his dollar, man must have in reserve a measure of gold. In 1870 the United States banks adopted the gold standard. Simply, this meant that any United States citizen could bring his paper currency to any bank and exchange it for gold. However, this policy did not long endure and found its terminus with the stock market crash of 1929 and the great depression which

followed in the wake of the crash. President Roosevelt asked congress to pass legislation which required the American people to turn in all of their gold to the banks. The law was passed and the American people surrendered their gold, receiving in exchange for it \$20.67 per ounce in paper money. No sooner had the American public given up their hard earned gold than the government raised the price to \$35.00 an ounce, which netted Uncle Sam a handsome profit of three billion dollars. This is just one of many socialistic programs which the popular FDR administration pawned off on the misery stricken people of the early 1930's. This action was nothing less than political pick pocketing of the unsuspecting citizenry and the ill gotten gain has steadily diminished until there is not enough gold in U. S. reserve to guarantee one fourth of the paper money issued by the U. S. Treasury Department.

While men and nations steal and kill for gold, they need to learn they can never own it nor long possess it, for Almighty God said a long time ago, **“the silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2:8)**. The gold God has permitted man to play around with in this earth is but an infinitesimal part of the whole, for God has in reserve enough gold to pave every street of the New Jerusalem, **“... and the street of the city was pure gold ... , (Revelation 21:21)**. That which men fight and kill for in this life is predestined to accommodate the feet of the redeemed in glory.

MAN HAS HIS RESERVE ARMIES

“... Pharaoh with his mighty army ...” (Ezekiel 17:17). The world has become one big arsenal. The biggest piece of every nation's tax pie goes to their defense department. They all cry, “Peace, Peace.” And are at the same time preparing for war. Christ prophesied of this perilous era in which we live when He said, **“Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars ...” (Matthew 24:6)**.

The United States has her mighty seventh fleet in the Mediterranean area, held there in reserve, to deter communist advances in that part of the world. The United States has a 49,000 man army in Western Europe committed to the N.A.T.O. alliance, and to maintain a balance of power in

Europe. I recently read where Russia has a two million man army, the largest army of any nation in the world.

When I see on television that great Russian army parading in the red square of Moscow displaying their nuclear missiles and other instruments of war, I am caused to wonder at their great deception. Khrushchev said, with a smirk on his face and a belligerent fist raised in the air, "If there be a god in the skies our mutniks and sputniks will knock him out of the sky." Well, Khrushchev has learned better, for he has been knocked down to hell by the God of the skies and all of the great atheistic armies of communism are in for a rude awakening.

Be it large or small, every nation has their armies in reserve, standing ready, and waiting for the battle cry. The mighty armies of both the United States and the U. S. S. R. by comparison with the army yet to be mustered by the Anti-Christ at the end of this age, would look like a couple of boy scout troops. The Anti-Christ will amass the largest army this world has ever known. Many Bible scholars believe it will consist of 200,000,000 men. This figure is taken from **Revelation 9:16** where it reads, "**The number of the army ... were two hundred thousand thousand.**" If a person does not take this number to be literal, he must then take it to represent a number beyond human computation. Either way the truth remains, it will be the world's largest human army.

THE LORD GOD HAS HIS ARMY IN RESERVE

"The Lord shall utter His voice before His army ..." (Joel 2:11).

The King of Kings also has His armies in reserve. Because we do not see His army on T.V., nor hear their marching feet in our streets, nor the rumble of their cannons does not mean they do not exist. In WW 2 General Rommel's army in North Africa was hard to see or to find, but the allies never doubted for a single moment that the Desert Fox was out there with his mighty army. **Joel 2:11** is not a reference to General William Booth, and the thousands of people on the street corners of the cities or the world with tambourines and cups in their hands. No, it is not a reference to the so-called

Salvation Army. But it is a reference to those celestial troops held in reserve by the Generalissimo of the skies. The world does not believe they are up there, but don't you doubt it. They are there awaiting a call from their Commander and Chief, and soon they will hear the trumpet of the Archangel, and "**at that time**" the world will no longer doubt their existence.

Elisha the prophet of God knew the Lord had this great army in reserve. The King of Syria wanted to get rid of Elisha, for to the King, Elisha had become a pestilent itch and he wanted to scratch him. The Lord had bugged the Syrian king's council chambers, and had given Elisha a direct line. All the secrets of the King were revealed to Elisha, and he in turn brought the King of Israel up to date on the latest Syrian troop movements. The King of Syria heard that Elisha was in the city of Dothan, and he sent a great army and compassed the city where Elisha was. Elisha's servant rose up early in the morning and saw that the city was surrounded by a mighty host and he said to Elisha, "**How shall we do?**" Now, I want you to read and remember Elisha's answer, "**Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them.**" Can you imagine what ran through the mind of Elisha's servant? Maybe not, but I know what I would have thought, "This old man has blown his mind. There is no one with he and I, and he says don't get shook up, for there is more with us than all those Syrian soldiers and chariots." Elisha saw the fear and doubt in his servant's countenance, and he prayed, saying, "**Lord, I pray thee open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses, and chariots of fire round about Elisha**" (II Kings 6:14-17). Christ says to the battle weary, and fatigued saint of this contemporary period, "... **Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world**" (I John 4:4).

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

At the battle of Armageddon, when that massive army of the Anti-Christ goes against Jerusalem (Luke 21:20), and it appears as if the Lord's remnant in Israel is about to be annihilated, then will that reserve army in heaven be called into action. In viewing this battle, John in the book of Revelation,

says, “**And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Revelation 19:11-14). The Anti-Christ armies are unaware that they are scheduled for a rendezvous with the Lord and His army in Armageddon. The Lord’s victory in this battle is absolute, not suffering a single causality, while the armies of the Anti-Christ are reduced to bird bait (Revelation 19:17-(21).**

“**For the indignation of the Lord *is* upon all nations, and *His* fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter” (Isaiah 34:2).**

I cannot see that invincible army which the Lord holds in reserve, except by an eye of faith. But I know it is there, and one day after awhile, not only will I actually see it, but I will ride with it back to earth, for Christ is the Supreme leader of this army, and he has said to the believer, “... **Where I am, *there* ye may be also” (John 14:3).** And concerning the battle of Armageddon Jude writes, “... **The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints” (Jude 1:14).** By the grace of God, I will be somewhere in that heavenly throng.

MAN’S WEAPONRY RESERVE

In spite of the S.A.L.T. talks, and so-called detente with Russia, the arms race goes on unabated. The nuclear powers now gauge their enemy’s strength according to the number of megatons they are able to put into a hydrogen bomb. By this standard Russia has a five to one superiority over the United States. Russia has 25% more ICBM’s than the United States. But we do not want to overlook China. She, too, is in the Intercontinental Ballistic

Missiles business. It is believed by many in the United States Defense Department that China has an ICBM that can reach the United States.

Russia's number of Surface-to-air Missiles far exceeds that of the United States. The USSR is ahead of the United States in nuclear missile submarines, interceptor aircraft and has 64 antiballistic missile systems while the United States has none (U.S. News And World Report - April, 1973).

Nations will go on stockpiling their weapons right up to the second advent of Christ to this earth, one nation racing against the other to see which one can have the most in reserve. These things should cause the saint to realize the futility of man's quest for peace apart from Christ, and alert them to the fact that their **"redemption draweth nigh"**.

THE LORD'S WEAPONRY RESERVE

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" (Job 38:22-23).

God says to Job, "Have you seen My arsenal? Have you seen Me us hail stones as guided missiles in battle? I am holding in reserve hail stones for the battle of Armageddon." (obm Translation)

Most people would laugh if you told them God is going to throw hail stones at the Anti-Christ army in the battle of Armageddon. Well, let them laugh. That is exactly what God is going to do. And I do not believe it is going to be like I heard one preacher say. He said, "The sky is going to freeze over and God is going to nonchalantly walk across the sky, breaking up the ice so as it will fall." No, it is not going to be like that. God never does anything in a nonchalant manner. Every piece of ice that God sends down in that battle lands on target, for it is directed by His vengeful and omniscient eye.

I imagine Noah's peers laughed at him also when he told them there is enough water up there in the sky to flood the whole world, and God is going to pour it out on this sin ravaged earth. They did not believe Noah. It had not rained on the earth before, and anyhow, they probably thought, how could there be that much water up there in the sky? When God created the earth He held water in reserve above the earth, "**And God made the firmament and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament**" (Genesis 1:7) We have a sad commentary written in few words telling about the infamous end of the antediluvians, "**For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the Ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be**" (Matthew 24:38-39).

The hailstones with which God bombards the Anti-Christ armies weighs as much as a talent. "**And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent**" (Revelation 16:21). "**And blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses bridles ...**" (Revelation 14:20). Bible scholarship concurs that the weight of a talent is somewhere between 80 and 130 pounds, and the Anti-Christ armies are the inescapable targets of these divine ice missiles. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that under such an outpouring of God's wrath that the enemy's blood runs down the valley at the height of a horses bridle for a distance of 200 miles. It is also seen from **Revelation 16:8** God has fire in reserve, and is going to use it to scorch men. This fire of God will be of such devastating force that it will make man's most powerful bomb to appear as a fourth of July firecracker. After the millennium, God uses this reserve fire to purge, and reclaim this earth from the curse of sin, (**II Peter 3:10-13**). No, the Lord will not reserve His anger forever, (**Jeremiah 3:5**).

WICKED ANGELS AND MEN HELD IN RESERVE

Lucifer masterminded the first insurrection against the government of God. He, in collusion with a third part of the angelic host, led an

unsuccessful coup against God. Lucifer had his angels waiting in reserve for the **“I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:14)**. He no sooner spoke those words and we hear God say to Lucifer, **“Thou shalt be brought down to hell” (Isaiah 14:15)**. Lucifer was cast out of heaven and is progressively descending into the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:10**). God charged the angels that allied themselves with Lucifer in their rebellion against Him with folly (**Job 4:18**), and Michael and his angels cast them out of heaven (**Revelation 12:7-9**). And we learn from the Holy Spirit inspired writing of Peter that God NOW has the angels that sinned in tormentious reserve. **“For God spared not the angels that sinned but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* unto chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (II Peter 2:4)**. Soon, their reserve period will be over and they will be cast into the lake of fire.

Wicked men are reserved for eternal judgment. **“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (II Peter 2:9)**. **“... The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath” (Job 21:30)**.

The rich man of **Luke 16** is in hell, held in reserve waiting to be brought forth to the White Throne judgment of God (**Revelations 20:11-15**). All that die in their sins go to this place of excruciating reserve to await their sentencing to the lake of fire which is infinitely more terrible. All that die in their sins will go to the eternal lake of fire, but all do not suffer the same measure of torment. The wicked will suffer according to the degree of their sins. And it appears from Scripture that false preachers are the ultimate sinners of all of mankind, being more vile than Cain, Pharaoh, Esau, Hitler, Stalin, Mao and other destroyers of men’s bodies. Paul says the false preacher is under a double curse (**Galatians 1:8-9**) and Jude likens them to **“raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (Jude 1:13)**, not mere darkness, but the blackness of darkness, the very lowest hell.

On the other hand, we see God has a righteous reserve for whom He has reserved an eternal inheritance. During Israel’s bitter days under their most

wicked king and queen, Ahab and Jezebel, God says, “**I have reserved unto Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal***” (Romans 11:4). We need to remember, “**Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound**” (Romans 5:20). This earth is the only hell that God’s innumerable reserve people shall know, and after our earthly pilgrimage we have, “**An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for**” us (I Peter 1:4).

God has eternally reserved His people for glory, and He preserves them in time. God would not lay up in heavenly store an inheritance for His people and then let them fail to realize it. This would be failure on God’s part, but we learn from Scripture that “**He faileth not**” (Zephaniah 3:5).

God’s people are reserved and preserved in His omnipotent right hand and He says, “**No *man* is able to pluck *them* out of My hand**” (John 10:29).

“**And he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies**” (Nahum 1:2).

(*The Sovereign Grace Advocate - 1977*)

Heaven's Entrance Gained By Faith Alone

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” (I Corinthians 15:58)

There are no greater or more consistent exponents of the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty and His unmerited grace than New Testament (Landmark) Baptists. However, their preaching and teaching endeavors are not shut up to the doctrines of sovereign grace, but they fervently strive to preach **“all the counsel of God”**, and try not to omit a single **“thus saith the Lord.”** They have been to a great extent blessed with the exceeding greatness of God's power, but this has humbled them, rather than making them proud, for they know they are what they are by the grace of God (**I Corinthians 15:10**), and therefore; claim no merit before God.

Good works are vitally important to all who claim salvation in Christ, for good works are necessary for the validation of their profession. Our Lord said: **“Ye shall know them by their fruits ...” (Matthew 7:16)**. However, the believer in Christ needs to be fully aware at all times, that even though his good works are according to **“what saith the scripture”**, they have nothing whatsoever to do with his salvation, nor with his entrance into heaven **“by grace ye are saved” (Ephesians 2:5)**. Nevertheless, I fear there is an off color thread running through the theological fabric of some preachers who claim to be advocates of salvation by grace alone, whereby the good works of the believer is made essential for entrance into heaven.

To de-emphasize good works, BE IT FAR FROM ME, but to over-emphasize good works is far more dangerous. Arminians are guilty of giving prominence to good works at the expense of grace, and the Hardshells, Antinomians and some lax Landmarkers are fearfully guilty of the disparagement of good works. The problem in the main stems from a neglect of, or inability to see or maintain the distinction

between salvational faith, which is based solely on the redemptive work of Christ, and sanctifying faith which is wrought by the Holy Spirit in

the hearts of the far greater part of God's redeemed, who were never brought along the God honoring path of progressive sanctification. Nevertheless, heaven is as sure for these people as it is to faithful Abraham.

Some years ago (4) I heard a preacher announce his sermon topic from the pulpit, which was:

“HEAVEN IS NOT GAINED BY FAITH ALONE; NO ONE GOES TO HEAVEN WITHOUT WORKS.”

This is a most dangerous statement, and my deprecation of it is compounded, because it came from a man who claims to be a consistent advocate of the sovereign and ill merited grace of God. His entire sermon was a belaboring and compounding of his erroneous sermon title, and after his message, I asked him about infants who die in the womb, or die at birth. He conceded that these infants are saved, and go to heaven without any works on their part. This concession by the preacher, was in and of itself sufficient in contradicting his whole message, and demands a radical modification of it. However, I want to pursue our subject further, and see if the Bible teaches whether or not there are others who go to heaven without any sanctifying works on their part.

“There may be the principle of faith implanted, where there is not an opportunity of showing it by a series of good works, or a course of godly living, as in elect infants dying in infancy, and in those who are converted in their last moments” (John Gill, Commentary On The Book Of James - Page 789).

A preacher friend of mine gave me a church paper, a recent issue, and pointed out to me the words of a sovereign grace preacher, wherein he said: “I do not believe that anyone can ever be saved by the grace of God, and not do some good works.” My preacher friend, asked: “Is he not preaching babies in hell?” I think this statement was an oversight on the part of the writer, for I know him personally, and he would not knowingly preach an admixture of works and grace as being essential for entrance into heaven, and after reading this preacher's whole message, it is made glaringly apparent

that the above mentioned statement by him is alien to the context of his message. Now, I will mention some, other than infants, who have died and gone to heaven without any good works to their credit.

But let us first, keep first things first, and one of the truths which every believer in Christ should give precedence and keep uppermost in his mind is, that salvation of the soul is the exclusive and solitary work of God, and that our external obedience and internal maturity does not in any way contribute to our entry into heaven. It is not the believer's obedience that gets him into heaven, but it is the perfect compliance of his Redeemer to the will of His Father (**John 8:29**), that opens the portals of glory unto him. The saint should be exceedingly glad and utterly thankful that God does not enter into a destiny determining judgment with him on the basis of his good works, for the righteousness of the very best of God's elect are as filthy rags in His sight (**Isaiah 64:6**).

Beloved, who among us is not afraid for God to judge what we may consider to be our very best work? There is none, no not one, who will step forward in response to that question; for it is the undiminishing consensus of Sovereign Grace Baptists, that they do not have any fruit which is perfectly free of all spots, and that some measure of defilement clings hard and fast to our very best of works. This is one of the reasons why Scriptural Baptist churches, have with unvarying consistency preached the doctrine of salvation by the free and unmerited favor of God, and have a holy abhorrence of the Arminian doctrine which teaches that man's eternal destiny is determined by his own work, that is, by augmenting God's efforts to save His people with their so-called freewill.

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” (II John 8) It is rewards the saint can and may lose, but the salvation of his soul is irreversible and absolute, and even though many born again people regress and withdraw from the path of loving servitude, they yet shall be saved. However, if the saved person persists in his lapse of faith, and dies in his shameful and backslidden state, he will stand empty handed at the mercy seat of Christ (**I Corinthians 3:15**). It was this danger that prompted Paul to say: **“Let no**

man beguile you of your reward.” (Colossians 2:18). It is with this very same thought in mind that the Apostle John, admonishes a sister church, saying: **“Look to yourselves, (plural) that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (II John 8).**

The religiously unsaved cannot retrogress or backslide from truth, but they may, and will in due season backslide from their false profession of faith. Peter refers to these counterfeit professors, saying: **“The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (mud hole)” (II Peter 2:22).** A lost person, no matter how religious he may be, can do nothing but add sin to sin, and he will at God’s appointed time receive a just and fearful recompense for his superficial pretension. It is also an awesome truth that a Christian can desist in his pursuit of holiness, and thereby reproach Christ and bring shame on His church, but his aberration and disgraceful retrogression has not nullified God’s saving power and he will surely enter heaven’s gate, but he will be destitute of good works and unrewardable.

All of God’s elect, and more especially His blood bought church, should strive with the utmost fervency to emulate Christ. But the most faithful saint should never esteem himself to be any greater than the chief of sinners, for if it were not for the abounding grace of God, heaven’s gate would have been justly and eternally padlocked with Adam’s transgression of the Edenic covenant.

TRIED BY FIRE

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, for it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” (I Corinthians 3:13)

The **“fire”** referred to in this text is not the imaginary fire of purgatory as the Romanists teach, for purgatory has no existence except in the fantasies of the Papal church. Neither is it the fires of hell, for Christ as the substitute for His people, under the righteous judgment of God; suffered their eternal hell, and never a spark of hell shall ever touch them. The **“fire”** referred to in

the above text (**I Corinthians 3:13**), is a figurative term which refers to the Divinely inspired, infallible, holy, and eternal Scriptures. All men, the saved and the unsaved shall be judged by the word of God, and it is by the word of God that degrees of torment in hell are fixed, and it is by the same holy word that rewards, or the lack of them in heaven is determined.

Christ said, speaking of the non elect: **“He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48)**. The word of God, that is, the Bible, is one of the books that will be at the white throne judgment (**Revelation 20:12**). Christ said to His redeemed people: **“If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7)**. For prayer to be a good work, it must be according to God’s word. All Pharisaical prayers run counter to the word God, and are motivated by the carnal nature of man. Therefore, they are rejected by God. Every heart rendered plea for mercy is according to God’s word, and will be honored by Him. (**Luke 18:10-14**).

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” (I Corinthians 3:15). Even though all of his works are of the flesh, and have “self” written all over them; yet he shall be saved, and that for the supreme reason that God’s regenerative grace never loses any of its preserving efficacy. **“... The fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (I Corinthians 3:13)**. In the light of God’s word every man’s work shall be made manifest, and there will be no effort by the probationer to gainsay the judicial wisdom of God. The soul edifying and perfect word of God is the exclusive criteria by which every word and work of the redeemed shall be measured, and there will not be one person in that massive throng; who will say: “I have kept all of Thy word perfectly.” But all will at some point in the errorless manifestation of their earthly life, say: “I wish I had not done that.” At some other point, they will lament, saying: “I wish I had never said that.” So it behooves every saint to redouble his efforts to bring forth good works, and to crucify all the “wood, hay, and stubble” in his life.

The primary work referred to in **I Corinthians 3** is doctrine, and particularly the doctrine espoused by pastors and teachers, be they so great of men as Paul and Apollos (Vss. 4-6). Simply, the plenary word of God blazing forth in its uncompromising and infinite glory will in that great day, reveal the true nature of all that the saint has wrought and taught, as to their motive, veracity, or falsity. All the Christian's works, whatever they may be, will appear in their actuality; for they all are weighed in the infallible scales of God's word. All works which have Christ as their foundation will be rewarded, all else will be as kindling for the fire, but owing to the eternal and glorious truth of Christ's substitutionary atonement; under which all of God's elect are covered, they shall yet be recognized as ornaments of God's mercy, and justified by the faith of Christ (**Romans 3:24-26**). The depths of God's grace is unfathomable, and His ways past finding out (**Romans 11:33**).

No doubt, there will be some heretofore unknown preachers standing before the mercy seat of Christ, who had spent their earthly ministry with little to no acclaim in this world, but whose doctrine and practice accorded with the word of God; and having passed the fiery test, will hear their beloved Lord, as He addresses them, saying: "**Well done *thou* good and faithful servant**" (**Matthew 25:21**). However, on the other hand, there will be a host of preachers standing there, who, while on earth, were highly esteemed by their parishioners, but having misappropriated this esteem, whereby the flesh was elevated; and their preaching being infected with pride, even though permeated with much truth, will be rejected, for it was ill motivated. All preaching, be it ever so forceful and fluent, which is done for the applause and approval of men, is according to God's reckoning: "**wood, hay, and stubble**", and shall be consumed by fires of God's unalterable word, but owing to the faithfulness of God, they shall be saved (**I Corinthians 3:15**).

As to how many will be standing before the merciful and omniscient Throne of Christ is not revealed at this time, but no doubt their number will be multiplied legions, and it appears from the contemporary neglect and perversion of Bible doctrine, that a great majority of them who have all their works marked VOID, will be representatives of our own time. However, while they have entered heaven without any good works, they shall enjoy the

everlasting bliss and beauty of heaven; for God's saving and irreversible grace has kept their heavenly citizenship intact.

GRACE, FAITH, AND GOOD WORKS

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,*” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Good works which accord with the Scriptures are evidences of saving faith, and there is always, as we thus judge, a critical need for the manifestation of good works. Grace, faith, and good works wrought by the Holy Spirit, can never clash, but all works manufactured by the flesh are diametrically opposed to every overture of the Spirit. Notwithstanding, the work of the Holy Spirit CANNOT be in any degree deterred, but He will not honor any work that is not in perfect accord with the record that God gave of His Son (**I John 5:11**). A sermon or a Bible lesson may be spell binding, emotionally uplifting, and challenging, but if it does not magnify the truth of God's salvational grace, it is not a good work, and will be found at the mercy seat of Christ; as having no light in it (**Isaiah 8:20**).

The primary heresy in which all religious lies are grounded, is the most ancient, the most successful in deceit, and the greatest devourer of lost souls. The heresy of which I speak, is that devious artifice of the devil, whereby he dupes the unsuspecting, and causes them to believe that salvation of the soul is the product of faith AND good works. This clever ruse of the devil whereby he attempts to destroy the distinction between saving faith and sanctifying faith, merging them, and making them both essential to salvation, is a most dangerous one! The only antidote to this soul damning doctrine is the preaching of the sovereign and all sufficient grace of God. There is NO deficiency in any of God's works. All of His works are absolutely perfect, and cannot be deprived nor plused with the works of His holy angels, much less that of totally corrupt man.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6) Jesus is the initiator and consummator of every believer’s good work.

“Not by works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us ...” (Titus 3:5). “Who (GOD) hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” (II Timothy 1:9)

Regenerative faith is instantaneous, and is experienced by all of God’s elect (Titus 1:1). But sanctifying faith is progressive, and is the instrument whereby the Holy Spirit conforms the believer unto the image of Christ (Romans 12:1-2; I Corinthians 6:19-20). Generally speaking, where there is saving faith, there is some measure of good works, as with the thief dying by crucifixion on the right hand of Christ. He was saved, and rebuked the thief on the left hand of Christ for his unbelief (Luke 23:39-43). This “thief” will be at the mercy seat of Christ, and will be recognized for his good work. While the good work of the thief is single, it will be rewarded, but there will be multitudes standing there who anticipate great rewards, yet owing to the faulty foundation of all their works none could pass the censorship of God’s infallible word and they will walk away crownless. So it is, some people will go to heaven over and against their utter lack of good works, and their presence in heaven will eternally magnify the sovereign and free grace of God.

MAKE YOUR ELECTION SURE

“And beside this (saving faith, Vs. 4), 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 purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and

election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 1:5-11)

Good works is not the foundation of election, but there can be no good works without God’s sovereign choice of His people. Election opens the door unto heaven, but it is good works that gives God’s elect an abundant entrance into His presence.

There is no doctrine in the Bible more prominently or repetitiously stated than the cardinal truth that salvation is by grace, plus nothing. Good works do not save, nor help to save God’s elect, but election has no way of expressing itself, other than by good works. But sadly, there are some of God’s elect who are caught in the snare of antinomianism, and decry the doctrine of good works, saying: “**Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3)**. While this (**Romans 4:3**) is the truth, it is by far, not the whole truth on the matter, for while God’s elect are justified by faith without the deeds of the law (**Romans 3:28**), it is equally true; that God’s elect are “**created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Ephesians 2:10)**. Both Scriptures quoted in this paragraph, came from the inspired pen of the Apostle Paul, and we may rest assured, the Holy Spirit did not lead Paul to contradict Paul.

The disobedience of God’s elect has to do with the past, present, and future. The elect person’s disobedience of the past is forgiven, and shall never be remembered against him anymore (**Hebrews 8:12; 10:17**). The disobedience of the believer in the present is not condemnatory, but will be visited with Divine and loving chastisement (**Hebrews 12:6-7**), and if not repented of in this life will be a means of diminishing his rewards at mercy seat of Christ, or the utter forfeiture of all his rewards.

Salvation is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but rewards are meted out or withheld in accordance to the post regenerate life of the redeemed person. All who stand before the Bema, or Judgment Seat of Christ, will find their election sure, but many will be rewardless, for all of their works were done in the flesh, so as to be held in high regard by men,

and in the receiving of this earthly and temporal reward, they find themselves devoid of any fruit that will pass the fiery test of God's perfect and inextricable word. Even so, they shall be saved, for they were given to Christ in the covenant of unconditional election (**John 6:37**).

(The Baptist Herald - January, 1994)

How To Be A Soul Winner

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.” (Proverbs 11:30)

This text is a great favorite with Arminian pastors. It appears as if many among them think it was written especially for them and they use it as a verbal goad to prod their dilatory people into action. We do not question action. Per se, action is commendable when motivated by proper ends, and directed by wisdom. But action, generated by ill motives, and regulated by ignorance is to be condemned and deplored. Arminianism is guilty on both counts, for they “do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” The text, as with the whole of Scripture, has been committed to Baptists for preservation and propagation, and the monopoly which Arminians think they have on this text, is but a figment of their warped imagination.

Knowledge Of The Scriptures Is Essential To The Wining Of Souls

The saints are shut up to the word of God for direction in all things pertaining to the exercise of their Christian profession, including their witness to lost mankind. The Scriptures were given **“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:17)**. However, we should take advantage of every opportunity to cultivate our powers of reasoning and logic, but be it understood, the ultimate intellect can never supersede or countermand a single jot or tittle of the word of God. Yet, it is a sad fact the more progress the world makes in intellectualism the more is the word of God pushed back into the Dark Ages. Modern, religious intellectuals mock the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, saying, “That doctrine might have been acceptable in the Dark Ages, but this is the 20th century, the age of enlightenment, and the doctrine is plausible only to the illiterate.” Thus it is, King Reasoning has been enthroned in this age and sits in judgment on the word of God, and professing christendom is woefully critical of the Scriptures. It should be the other way around. Man should test his reasoning at the feet of Divine Truth, subjecting himself thereto, and be

thankful for the Biblical criticism against his life. But alas, it is not so, and Paul prophetically points toward our present day blind leaders of the blind, saying, they are **“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (II Timothy 3:7)**. Paul warns, **“From such turn away” (II Timothy 3:5)**.

Paul was an intellectual, an educated man, a man with grounds for boasting according to human standards. Paul said, **“... if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more” (Philippians 3:4)**. Paul was at the head of his seminary class, and was very near the day when he would receive his Doctorate of Mosiac Law, from the hand of the learned Gamaliel. But Paul’s education in the school of the Pharisee’s was abruptly interrupted by an encounter with Jesus of Nazareth, and Paul became the schools most famous dropout. Paul did not quit going to school. He just started all over in another school, the Holy Spirit’s school of grace. It took Paul almost thirty years to graduate from this school. The graduation ceremony was held in Rome, at the end of the Appian Way on Nero’s execution (chopping) block. Nero’s executioner swung the axe, severing Paul’s head from his body, but before his head rolled to the dirt his soul was already in angelic escorted flight to heaven. Whereupon arrival, Paul was immediately enrolled in the Holy Spirit’s Institution of Higher Learning, from which school he will never graduate, but will be learning about Jesus throughout the ceaseless ages to come. On the earth Paul studied at the feet of Gamaliel, in heaven he is studying at the feet of Christ, Who never studied at the feet of any man. Paul thought at one time he was God’s instrument whereby Christianity would be stamped out, but instead of Paul stamping out Christianity, Christianity put its eternal stamp on Paul.

“Search the Scriptures ... they testify of Me.” (John 5:39) Our evangelistic responsibility is to point lost sheep to the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ. We cannot measure to this responsibility without becoming intimately acquainted with the Shepherd, and we cannot know Jesus as we ought to know Him apart from a diligent study of His word. But the Hardshell Baptist with missionary church membership, objects, saying, “I do not know who the lost sheep are, how can I witness to them?” Well, neither did Paul know who they were, but this lack of identity did not deter him for a moment in his

determination to publicly proclaim the whole counsel of God. “**And when the Gentiles heard this** (Paul’s witness of the word of God, vs. 44) **they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.**” (Acts 13:48) Paul did not know who in this company of Gentiles was foreordained of God to eternal life, but he did know, that God’s word would not return unto Him void. Our responsibility is to proclaim the gospel indiscriminately. It is God’s responsibility to quicken those for whom Jesus died.

To win souls one must know what the Scriptures teach. Mere ability to quote Scripture is not the only qualification a person needs to be a fisher of men. I once knew an Arminian who could quote chapters of the Bible, but knew absolutely nothing of what they taught. But worse yet is the Arminian who can quote a few verses of Scripture, and has a malformed notion of what they teach. It is in this last category most Arminians fit. Most are shut up to **John 3:16, 5:24** and a few verses from **Romans 3** and **10**. Their exegesis of these texts would do more to cause John Wesley (if he were alive) to revamp his theology than all the efforts George Whitefield put forth to recover his friend from his God debasing Arminianism.

Arminianism makes truth secondary to the Sunday School head count, and laboring under the perverted notion that the end justifies the means have filled their churches with those who are yet strangers to God’s grace.

Following is a poem that goes far in describing:

THE ARMINIAN APPROACH TO SOUL WINNING

“Learn to memorize a verse or two of Scripture, and for impression’s sake, a few more.

But beyond, and above all, be sure you can quote John five twenty four.

Then go out and hit the street,

telling everyone you meet,

“I have a message that is true;

Jesus loves and died for you.

Be unrelenting in your persuasion,

do not allow your subject a single evasion.

Bring up the flames of hell to his vision,

this is the proven way of getting a decision.

Then make no mistake,

be sure and put the icing on the cake.

Tell your convert, ‘God appreciates the favor;

that he has let Jesus be his Saviour’.

On Sunday morning in the church, which your winning ways have helped to fill,

as your convert goes forward, your thought is; O’ glorious freewill.

But when all is said and done, and there are no more souls to be won,

and you expect your reward to be double, you will hear the sad verdict, Wood, hay and stubble.”

The soul winner is to know Bible doctrine, and be able to teach the same. The first thing the greatest soul winner this side of Jesus Christ (and I do not mean Billy Graham or Jack Hyles) told his young prodigy, Timothy, that the Scriptures were profitable for, was doctrine (**II Timothy 3:16**). Every God-honoring effort to win souls is sure to meet with Satanic opposition, and the only weapon with which the enemy can be defeated is, “... **The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**” (**Ephesians 6:17**). To be a soul winner, skillful swordsmanship is a MUST. Thus it is, Paul says

to Titus that he should “**be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers**” (Titus 1:9). Going out to win souls without being adorned with doctrine (Titus 2:10) is equal to sending a soldier into battle without a weapon or any protective equipment, and with bull’s eye targets painted on his chest and back. He is sure to get cut down. So, let him who would win souls for Christ “**study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth**” (II Timothy 2:15).

They Who Would Win Souls Must Be Morally Honest

A soul winner is not only to be wise and orthodox in the Scriptures, his integrity and morals are also to be beyond reproach. Purity of life and separation from the world are essential to an effective witness. Thus it is, Paul says, “**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service*. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*” (Romans 12:1-2).**

Baptists were the original puritans of this age, and have all through their history maintained a rigid stance both in morals and doctrine. The antinomian spirit which has plagued Hardshellism since its beginning, has raised its slimy serpentine head in the ranks of New Testament Baptists, and sunk its fangs into a few. A few within this motley few having been injected with a lethal dose of antinomianism, and determined to outstrip the Hardshells, are now teaching there are no moral sins, and that doctrinal transgressions are the only sins displeasing to God. Arminianism and antinomianism are both lies, sired by the “father of lies”, the devil, and they who are deceived thereby cannot be true witness of Christ. The greatest prerequisite to soul winning is a dedicated and consecrated life to Christ, and the would-be soul winner who cannot honestly say, “**For to me to live *is Christ*”** would be blessed if he was struck dumb.

The Soul Winner Is To Have A Consistent Prayer Life

“... Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” (Luke 18:1) “Watch ye therefore, and pray always ...” (Luke 21:36). “Pray without ceasing ...” (I Thessalonians 5:17). “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

Going out to win souls without first asking and receiving God’s direction for your efforts is to lean to one’s own understanding. It is to be like a cloud without water, whose subordination to the wind leaves it no certain course. Or like a ship without rudder, which the waves toss to and fro. Paul started his redeemed life out by asking God for direction. His very first petition was, **“... Lord, what will Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).** The first three years of Paul’s soul winning career was spent in the desert of Arabia talking with God, and receiving direction for the greatest soul winning campaign this earth has ever known (**Galatians 1:12, 16, 17**). Paul was pre-eminently a man of prayer. He prayed in streets, homes, churches, river banks, sea shores, jails, courtrooms, etc. And Christ pacified Annias’ fears of Paul by saying, **“Behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11).** Paul’s ministry of soul winning attests to the fact of James’ words, **“The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).**

The Soul Winner Needs Divine Authority For His Witnessing

John the Baptist was vested with soul winning authority from God, **“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe” (John 1:6-7).** Christ’s mission to this earth had Heaven’s official stamp on it, for He says no less than thirty times in John’s Gospel that He was sent by the Father. Prior to His crucifixion, Christ organized His church, and after His resurrection He came to His church, and said, **“... All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe**

all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. A-men” (Matthew 28:18-20). John the Baptist was the last individual with direct authority from heaven to win souls. That responsibility and authority now rests with the church. It was to the church Christ said, “... **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).** It was to the church Christ said, “**Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit ...” (John 15:16).** Christ spoke from the mount of ascension and said to the church, “**But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).** It was to the church that Christ said, “**I am the vine, ye are the branches ...” (John 15:5).** The vine brings forth the branches, and the branches bring forth the fruit.

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall” (Genesis 49:22). Joseph was a fruitful bough whose branches ran over the wall, yea, they ran all the way to Canaan, and unto the 20th century. Israel is with us today, and will be with us in eternity.

Jesus, the Anti-type of Joseph, is a fruitful bough, or vine, whose branches (churches) have gone over the walls of Judaism, and have turned millions to righteousness in all parts of the earth.

Israel was God’s executive body in the world for 1500 years, and when Naaman, the Syrian’s time of salvation came around on God’s calendar of decrees, a little Israelitish maiden initiated the witness, a mere household servant whom God’s kind providence had placed in the great estate of Naaman (**II Kings 5**).

When the time came around for God to save an impoverished Sidonian widow who was also a Gentile, He sent the great prophet Elijah to witness to her (**I Kings 17**).

God used Israel as His official witness for 1500 years, and since Israel’s blindness, the church has been God’s “**pillar and ground of the**

truth.”

When the Ethiopian Eunich’s day of grace came around, God sent Philip, a Deacon, from the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem to preach Jesus to him.

Peter was a charter member in the church at Jerusalem, and when Cornelius needed spiritual help God told him to send for Peter (**Acts 10:5**).

When God gets ready to save the suicide bent Phillipian jailer, he sends two missionaries from the First Baptist Church of Antioch to witness to him (**Acts 13:1-4, 16:27-32**).

And when God’s time comes to open the heart of a Lydia, a Priscilla, a Lois, or an Eunice, the witness of the church will be brought to bear.

In the Divine economy there has never been room for free lance witnessing, and there shall never be. All authority for every Christian enterprise is vested in the Lord’s church.

It is my firm conviction that every saved person of this age will, in glory, be able to trace their salvation to a direct or indirect work of one of the Lord’s churches. Before the reader starts leading my name with epithets for making that last statement, I want him to first consider, that every writer of the New Testament was a member of one of the Lord’s churches, that God uses His word in calling out the elect, and that **“Unto God *be* glory in the church, by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen”** (**Ephesians 3:21**).

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - September, 1977)

Infinite Sovereignty

“My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Isaiah 46:10).

God’s sovereignty is not a relative sovereignty such as that of the king and monarchs of this earth. Earth’s sovereigns are temporal, and their power circumscribed by limitless contingencies, but not so with God. He is the absolute Sovereign of the universe. The God of the Bible cannot be denied, disappointed, defeated, and neither is He disturbed by the vehement diatribe of disgruntled man. **“Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to Him that formed *it*, why hast Thou made me thus?” (Romans 9:20).** The God of the Bible knows no limitations, and infallibly accomplishes all of His designs. His sovereignty is absolute, **“And *what* His soul desireth, even *that* He doeth” (Job 23:13).**

Christendom so-called is permeated with false ideas about the God of the Bible. The great majority who call themselves Christian allow that God is wise and powerful, but in their theology and practice they deny that He is all powerful and all wise. In paying lip service to God they allow that the natural universe is the product of an Infinite Creator, but in spiritual regeneration their will is mightier than God’s, and by their stubborn will God’s redemptive purpose is made ineffective. Their false notion of God not only makes Him a Redeemer subject to risk and a Saviour Who is subservient to the will of man, but in the final analysis makes Him less than human. They consistently teach that their Savior is so puny He is going to lose the great majority of those for whom He died. Infinite inconsistency, God is sovereign in creation but powerless to redeem.

What is your thought dear Reader, did God slip-up in His creation of man? Was Adam’s sin an oversight on God’s part? Is there weakness in God, or is He worthy to be worshipped? The Bible affirms and reaffirms over and over that God is omniscient in wisdom and omnipotent in power, and that His will runs unrestrained through every atom and action in the whole universe. **“The Lord hath made all *things* for Himself ...” (Proverbs 16:4)** and He asks, **“Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with mine own?” (Matthew**

20:15). The heart humbled by infinite grace in adoration submissively replies, “Thou art the Potter, I am the clay” (**Isaiah 64:8**).

FROM THE SUN, TO THE SINNER, TO THE WORM, GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY RUNS

Behold that mightiest of stars, the sun, indisputable King of created lights, 109 times the diameter of the earth, and multiplied thousands of times greater in energy and power than all of earth’s dynamos, including every nuclear device. At the rising of the sun all other lights in the solar system hurry to their hiding places. Is it any wonder, with all the sun’s grandeur that it is the prime object of heathen worship? Yet, not once in its existence has the sun transgressed the laws which its infinite Creator has fixed to regulate it. God “... **Commandeth the sun, and it riseth not**” (**Job 9:7**). What might have seemed to be an uncontrolled digression to the astronomers in Joshua’s day was but the sun acting in perfect obedience to the command of its Creator spoken through the mouth of His servant Joshua. “**Sun, stand thou still ... and the sun stood still**” (**Joshua 10:12, 13**). In this sovereign act, Joshua’s Jehovah is virtually proclaimed in the face of assembled heathendom, to be the God of their supposed god, the sun.

The infinite power that directs the course of the sun is the same power that marks out the path of the lowly earthworm in its subterranean journeys. And the sun with its vastness and glory is NOT LESS dependent on God than the earthworm. The Psalmist considered the stellar system with its billions of stars, and with an awe stricken heart, asks his Creator, “**What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?**” (**Psalms 8:4**). All trivia, and triumphs are determined of God; and nothing is left to caprice or chance, and certainly not to the vagaries of depraved reasoning. All things are brought to pass by Him Who said, “**I have purposed it, I will also do it**” (**Isaiah 46:11**).

The Psalmist speaks of the Divine Monopolist saying, “**Power belongeth unto God**” (**Psalms 62:11**). All existence has for its origin, the power of God. All that is now in existence, or that shall ever come into existence, cannot act in any way, be it ever so infinitesimal, contrary to God’s omniscient designs. While all events of time and eternity come to pass

by the exercise of God's sovereign power, and in perfect harmony with His will of purpose: He **"worketh all things after the counsel of His own will"** (Ephesians 1:11), yet, there is no diminution of, or taxation of, His power.

INFINITE SOVEREIGNTY AND THE MIGHTY SEA

"... there arose a great tempest in the sea ..." (Matthew 8:24). To be in a storm at sea is one of the most fearful experiences a person can have. It is like being in a hurricane and an earthquake at the same time, the ocean floor is ever shifting, sinking and rising, and the fierce winds blowing as hurricane force brings shattering wave after wave against the helpless ship. This was very much the experience of Paul in his voyage from Myra to Rome, whereof he speaks saying, **"And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest ... And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away"** (Acts 27:18-20). But God is the sovereign of the seas, and He says to Paul, **"Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo God hath given thee all them that sail with thee"** (Acts 27:24).

Natural men, especially those who are seafaring men, acknowledge the sovereignty of the sea. They make their ships sea worthy, and reinforce their sea walls against the devastating power of the sea, but take no thought of the sovereignty of Him Who made the sea. **"The sea is His, and He made it ..."** (Psalms 95:5). The tidal wave that swept across East Pakistan in November of 1970, killing over 200,000 people was written in the human records as "one of the world's worst natural disorders." However, the subscriber to God's unerring word knows that the tidal wave does not exceed by one inch the bounds which God's sovereign power has fixed for it. **"... He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment"** (Proverbs 8:29). **"Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?"** (Jeremiah 5:22).

The unregenerate man with his satanically blinded mind (**II Corinthians 4:4**) refers to earth shaking cataclysms as “natural disasters,” but he who owns God’s all encompassing and all pervading providence knows they are supernaturally wrought and controlled. He not only knows that God created the universe, but he also knows God wrote the laws of nature to regulate His universe. He further knows there is a Divine and foreordained purpose, which precedes and activates the dormant powers of nature, and which brings to pass the so-called “natural disaster.” It was God Who sent the earth submerging flood in Noah’s day (**Genesis 6:17**), it was God Who brought the sea upon Pharaoh and his host (**Exodus 14:27**), and it is God Who causes the sea to extend its shorelines in our day, but the sea has never, nor shall ever overflow the decreed bounds which God has set for it. God says to the raging sea, **“Peace, be still,”** and there is invariably, **“a great calm.”** **“He commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey Him” (Luke 8:25).** **“Thou rulest the raging of the sea: When the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them” (Psalms 89:9).**

“The Lord works in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the deep,
and rides upon the storm” (Cowper)

Man loves to hear of God stilling the storm, but when the doctrine of God’s infinite sovereignty is proclaimed, in that God started the storm, man gnashes his teeth, and manifests his one sided and ignorant notion of God. It logically follows that first there must be the storm, before there is a calming of the storm. Thus we read, **“For He (God) commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof ... He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still” (Psalms 107:25 & 29).** **“The LORD hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm” (Nahum 1:3).** Surely He that calms the raging sea can calm the tempestuous soul, and neither is a problem for God. To show the absurdity of mans’ presumed veto power in negating God’s redemptive grace, He asks: **“Is my hand shortened**

at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness” (Isaiah 50:2)

The science of oceanography teaches that waves from the ocean come to shore at the rate of eighteen per minute, never varying, always eighteen per minute. No matter if they are five feet or fifty feet high, there will only be eighteen per minute. Oceanography further teaches that waves are always three hundred feet apart. This is why large ships are constructed on a scale of 300 to 400 feet, 600 to 700 feet, 900 to 1100 feet, etc. The 300 to 400 foot ship can ride two waves at once, the 600 to 700 foot ship three waves at once, and the 900 to 1100 foot ship four waves at once. The waves coming in on every shore around the world at eighteen per minute would lead one to believe there are fixed dividing lines in the ocean, but no such dividing line has ever been found. Waves from the Atlantic thrash the shores of England and the eastern shores of United States at the same rate and time, and waves from the Pacific sweep the shores of Japan and California at the same time and rate per minute. It is the wind which makes the waves of the ocean, and now let us note something God has told us about the wind. **“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).** The wind is going about over the whole face of the earth in great whirlpools; **“it whirleth”** about continually.” The wind may be blowing north where I live, and at the same time it may be blowing south where the reader lives, but always, and without failure, the wind blows in an orderly fashion. **“The wind returneth again according to its circuits.”** The science of meteorology has been able to discover and map some of the usual courses of the wind, which discovery has led to the setting up of weather stations all over the world to chart the wind courses. But on occasions the winds make an uncalculated circuit or unexpected turn, which brings confusion to the ranks of weather prognosticators, and causes them to modify their weather report. The wind did not veer from the course which God had set for it, but from the course which man had determined for it.

God is in charge of the winds, He may let man discover many things about the wind, but in the main the wind shall ever remain an enigma to the best meteorologist among men. The infinite God of heaven has His sovereign

hand on earth's oscillating fan, and like the rivers of water **"He turneth it whithersoever He will"** (Proverbs 21:1). The Lord's disciples marveled and said of Christ, **"What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!"** (Matthew 8:27). Christ said to Nicodemus, **"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit"** (John 3:8). The infinite and omnipresent Spirit perfectly controls and directs the winds of the earth, and He sovereignly subdues the sin ravaged hearts of His people, **"Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven"** (Psalms 107:30).

INFINITE SOVEREIGNTY AND THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM

One of the smallest forms of life in the vegetable kingdom is the lowly blade of grass. One of the highest forms, if not the highest, is the regal redwood trees of California. Astrologers waste a lot of time talking about the stars, while as yet there are many things to be learned about trees and blades of grass. Biological science has listed and classified over a hundred thousand different forms of plant life in the vegetable kingdom, and without exception they all infallibly honor the laws which their Creator has fixed to determine their nature and duration on earth. **"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so"** (Genesis 1:11). When the Lord wanted some shade for His dejected prophet, Jonah, **"The Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow for his head"** (Jonah 4:6). And in the millennium He shall transform the desert and cause It to **"blossom as the rose"** (Isaiah 35:1).

The rich farmer of **Luke 12** thought it was his agricultural skill that caused his ground to bring forth plentifully. The narrative reveals that he had "I" trouble, and when a person has "I" trouble, they are prone to play the fool, and thereby forfeit all that God has blessed them with. The farmer who is truly wise knows when to sow his fields and how to cultivate his crops,

but he also knows it is God that gives the increase. **“God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein ... left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness”** (Acts 14:15, 17).

Another man who played the fool and died as a fool was Egypt’s obstinate monarch, Pharaoh. He said, **“Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice ... I know not the Lord”** (Exodus 5:2). Pharaoh’s defiance of God reduced the plant life in Egypt to zero, and filled the land with eyesores. **“The Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there were none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field”** (Exodus 9:23-25). Man needs to remember, **“Out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree,”** and that it is God **“Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains”** (Genesis 2:9; Psalms 147:8). The Lord sends the sunshine, gentle rains, and pollinating winds, whereby the fields flourish with fruit. But the Lord can as He did with Pharaoh, change the sunshine into fire, the gentle rains into devastating hail, and cause the wind to bring blighting locusts (Exodus 10:13), whereby the land is made desolate. Egypt became one big eyesore, uprooted trees filled the landscape, the lush green grass was turned black by the fire which ran along the ground (Exodus 9:23), and every blade of corn was beaten down to the earth by the hail which God sent upon Egypt. The Lord asked Job, **“Hath thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble?”** (Job 38:22- 23). The earth is the Lord’s, He makes it fertile or infertile at His pleasure, and when the Lord’s **“hand is stretched out, who shall turn it back?”** (Isaiah 14:27).

GOD SOVEREIGNLY RULES IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

“For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: the wild beasts of the field *are* mine” (Psalms 50:10, 11). As in the vegetable kingdom, God also rules in the animal kingdom, including not only the beasts of the field, but also fish and fowl. Of all the millions of sparrows not one of them would complete a single flight without the sustaining power of God, and not one sparrow falls to the ground without the Father (**Matthew 10:29**). The Lord took the ravens with their greedy and insatiable appetites; and ruled against their nature, causing them to feed His prophet Elijah at the brook Cherith. God spoke unto Elijah, saying, **“I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there ... and the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and the bread and flesh in the evening” (I Kings 17:4, 6).** O the wonder, the marvel of God’s illimitable resources stored away in all the kingdoms of nature, for the care of His people. God’s use of the voracious ravens to feed Elijah was not only to sustain him physically, but He was in this miracle also teaching Elijah a spiritual lesson. The lesson for Elijah to learn was, that Ahab and Jezebel were in the sovereign hands of the Lord, even as the ravens, and He would do with them as He pleased. The Lord brought the vacillating monarch, Ahab, and his nagging wife, Jezebel, to their just and infamously appointed end (**I Kings 21:23**).

The mighty lion, carnivorous and cantankerously starved is reduced to the meekness of a mouse, and God’s prophet, Daniel, is delivered from the lion’s den without a scratch. Daniel said, **“My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me” (Daniel 6:22).** The Lord spoke unto the whale, **“and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land” (Jonah 2:10).** God stopped the pestilent house fly at the borders of Goshen (**Exodus 8:21, 22**), and He caused two, male and female, of every animal specie to enter the ark (**Genesis 7:9**). The Lord tells ancient Israel, **“If ye walk contrary unto Me ... I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number” (Leviticus 26:21, 22),** and of millennial Israel the Lord says, **“And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground ... and will make them to lie down safely” (Hosea 2:18).**

GOD INFINITELY RULES ALL REALMS OF NATURE

From mineral to man, from the smallest atom to the mightiest Adamite, from the most minute form of life discoverable under the most powerful microscope, to the highest form of creation, God sovereignly rules. Every star in the firmament has by Divine omniscience been numbered and charted (**Psalms 147:4**), and by infinite sovereignty they infallibly adhere to their prescribed courses (**Judges 5:20**). God is the Architect of the universe, and His sovereign and all wise purpose pervades its every atom. **“For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”** (**Isaiah 14:27**).

“Lo, the scarlet thread of purpose,
through the warp of being runs,
and the thought of God unfoldeth,
with the sequence of the suns.”

Let the atheist and the agnostic, the ambiguous and the antagonist, the infidel and the idolater, **“stand in awe and sin not”** (**Psalms 4:4**). Yea, **“Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him”** (**Psalms 33:8**). The spiritually tutored mind has a profound appreciation for the physical world, for he knows it is the handiwork of God (**Psalms 19:1**), and that the imprint of the eternal mind is written all through it. The born again person who does not believe that God reigns absolutely and supremely in every sphere of nature, is terribly deficient in his knowledge of God. **“Who (God) hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance”** (**Isaiah 40:12**). One day, either here or hereafter every person will have a conception of God that agrees with Isaiah’s, and shall know that **“the Lord God omnipotent”** has never ceased to reign, or shall ever be less than the Infinite God of glory.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN THE REALM OF MANKIND

This is a polemic point, but it is an unsolved question only to those who allow depraved reasoning to blind them to this divinely revealed truth. It is at this point the wisdom of this world sets itself in array against God, and boldly says, “**We will not have this *man* (Christ) to reign over us**” (Luke 19:14). But it is from ignorance they speak, and not wisdom. Paul, the heavenly schooled apostle, says, “**The world by wisdom knew not God**” (I Corinthians 1:21). God asks, the rebel, “**wise in his own conceit,**” “**Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?**” (Romans 9:20).

Many rationalists do not deny that the Scriptures teach the absolute sovereignty of God. They freely admit the conjunct view of Scripture allows for no impotency in God. But in so allowing they concede nothing, for they vehemently contend that the Bible is a mere human product, and that the God of the Bible is nothing more than a ludicrous caricature of pagan deities. Therefore, they take no delight in the law of the Lord, but have great pleasure in ridiculing the person who believes in divine inspiration of the Scriptures. What the worldly wise Bible mocker does not realize is, that he has cultivated his mind at the expense of his soul, and that the Bible which he tramples under foot is the infallible rule by which he will be judged in the last day (John 12:48). The rationalist at his very best has but the genius which corrupted nature has endowed to guide him, and though he obtains the ultimate in human learning, he is yet utterly destitute of power to comprehend the first spiritual truth. “**The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them* because they are spiritually discerned**” (I Corinthians 2:14). The devil cannot make a man more depraved than he already is by nature, but in his aiding and abetting the spiritually blinded adversaries of God, he makes it easier for them to manifest their hatred of God and His word.

The natural man cannot understand the first spiritual truth, nor generate one thought pleasing unto God, but in the things of this world, the Lord says; they are “**wiser than the children of light**” (Luke 16:8; Romans 8:8; Genesis 6:5). Yet, many a child of God has by the subtlety of the devil been

drawn into the apologetical arena to defend the veracity of God's Word. The testimony of Scripture is sufficient for those who hold God as the object of their faith, and they are under no obligation to explain any point of Scripture to the unsaved, and it would be utterly vain to try, seeing they have no capacity whatsoever to receive it. God has called His people to proclaim His Word unto the world, but it rests with the Holy Spirit to explain it.

The absolute sovereignty of God is a truth of such profundity that it will never be fully unveiled even to the spiritually enlightened mind. So, let not the Bible believer be discouraged when the worldly-wise scoff at this God honoring truth, for the world of the non elect are destined to bow the knee before Christ, and learn that God has made it a capital crime for mere clay to reply against Him (**Philippians 2:10**).

Pharaoh, the Egyptian autocrat, said, **"I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go"** (**Exodus 5:2**). What this haughty ruler did not know was, the throne of Egypt was not his, but that it belonged to Almighty God, **"The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men"** (**Daniel 4:17**). The consummate powers of all the kings of this earth **"is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will"** (**Proverbs 21:1**). God tells Pharaoh why He let him have his temporary and tyrannical reign on the throne of Egypt. **"Even for this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth"** (**Romans 9:17**). The birth, life, kingship, drowning in the Red Sea, and Pharaoh's waking up in hell were all designed of God to exalt His infinite sovereignty and to magnify His matchless name among the men of earth.

Let us hear the conclusions of one of the ancient world's greatest monarch's on the matter of God's sovereignty, Nebuchadnezzar, king of mighty Babylon. After God had driven him into the fields to eat grass like the oxen for seven years, he said of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, His **"dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom is from generation to generation: And 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? ... And those that walk in pride He is able to abase” (Daniel 4:34, 35, 37).

About twenty years prior the date of this writing (date of this writing - 1983) the ex-Premier of communist Russia Nikita Khrushchev was pictured in one of our newspapers with a smirk on his face, and a belligerent fist raised in the air. The caption under the picture read, “If there be a God in the heavens, our sputniks and mutniks will knock Him out.” Well, the infinite God is still in the heavens, and is still doing whatsoever He pleases (**Psalms 115:3**). And the needless Nikita has been knocked off of the earth and into hell by the hand of Him that “**Hatest all workers of iniquity” (Psalms 5:5).**

GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN REDEMPTION

God’s sovereignty applies in the salvation of His people as well as in all other realms, “**So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Romans 9:16).** Man has rejected the gospel of free grace, and has from the day he was ejected from the Garden of Eden gone deeper and deeper into sin. Upright, Job asked, “**How many are mine iniquities and sins?” (Job 13:23),** and seeing that one sin (**Romans 5:17, 18**) is far greater in its condemning power than all the strength of religion combined, it necessarily follows, He that puts away sin must be untainted by it and sovereign over It. On this score, there is but one Who qualifies, and that one is the Sovereign God of all grace. “**For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).**

Arminianism owns the truth that God sovereignly rules in the vegetable kingdom, and in the lower animal kingdom, but when it comes to man and his mighty kingdom that is where Arminianism draws the line. It is at this point in their notion, God’s power is shifted into reverse; God becomes the suppliant, and man the Sovereign. Especially is this true as regards salvation, the power to beg is the only power God may exercise in redemption, according to Arminian theology.

It is the consensus of modern religious opinion that God's power is circumscribed when dealing with man in the matter of redemption from sin, and that God must first solicit and secure the consent of His creature, man, before He can realize any of His determinations for him. In essence, this contention, if allowed, would destroy the Godship of God, and make Him at best a disadvantaged contestant for equality with fallen man. Of all the errors which humanistic theology has spawned none is more alien to Scripture or more insulting to God than Arminianism. The heresy of Arminianism stands out against the emblazoned sky of Scriptural truth like a rabid dog with foaming mouth standing in the center of the road, but the Scripture states God was able to deliver His "Darling from the power of the dog" (**Psalms 22:20**), and God is able to deliver His people from Arminianism in its most violent form. Job, speaking of the God of the Bible, says, "**But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth**" (**Job 23:13**).

Sundry and readily are the Scriptures which unequivocally declare the hereditary and utter depravity of human nature, and which lay bare the awful wickedness of fallen man's implacable heart. The Psalmist says, "**Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity**" (**Psalms 39:5**). The Apostle Paul says, there is not one good thing which dwells in human nature (**Romans 7:18**). But in spite of the irrevocable deluge of Scripture affirming the spiritually bankrupt state of Adams's posterity, they confidently affirm, "I have something to contribute to the work of redemption which is absolutely essential." The truth is to the contrary, for every motion of the flesh is spent in an effort to stay the hand of God in its redemptive work. Man in his native state loves sin and hates God (**Romans 1:30; John 3:19**), and it is most illogical to assume a man will support the actions of a person whom he hates, especially when he reasons the actions will deprive him of that which he dearly loves, i.e. sin.

The work of redemption begins with God's eternal purpose to save His people from their sins, it is brought to fruition in time by the atoning and vicarious work of Jesus Christ, it is perpetuated by the Holy Spirit, and everyone whom the Father gave unto the Son in the eternal covenant of

redemption (**Hebrews 13:20; John 6:37**) shall ultimately stand glorified in the presence of their sovereign Redeemer (**Romans 8:30**).

So-called Christendom is intoxicated on the soul damning wine of Arminianism. Every Sunday they are served this most favorite beverage, aged and flavored by Satan, and they have become more tipsy than the feasting friends of Belshazzar (**Daniel 5:1**). Arminianism is not merely spiritually short sighted, but suffers from a spiritual glaucoma that is absolute. The Arminian theory is destitute of any sense of dependence upon God. The theory is generous in letting God be the guide, but this is only allowed as long as man holds the steering wheel. The adamant Arminian, having his mind attired in the best robes of religious scholarship, offers a thousand and one objections to the doctrine of Divine sovereignty in redemption, but his every objection goes fearfully wanting for Scriptural support. Mere inferences and human opinion is his full armor, and while he stands ten feet tall in the eyes of religion blinded by the god of this world (**II Corinthians 4:4**), he is unwittingly fighting against God and every Arminian Goliath shall fall, for the elect and precious Stone is sent against him.

But, the Arminian remonstrant replies, “In the doctrine of Divine sovereignty in all things, the advocate has not taken into consideration that man possesses a free will, and by the power of his will his eternal destiny is determined.” The Arminian doctrine that the will of man has power to make void the will of God is the fundamental error of the ages. The theory contends that every person in heaven, or that will be in heaven, is and shall be there as a result of their own volition, and that every person who is or shall be in hell, will be there contrary to the will or purpose of God. No heresy is more glaring and foolish, yet the god of this world, appearing as an angel of light, has deceived the vast multitudes with this flesh exalting lie.

The advocates of the absolute sovereignty of God in all things have fairly considered the lofty position Arminians have given to the faculty of human will, and have perpetually and irrevocably refuted their every argument. But the truth of God’s sovereignty is everywhere spelled out in Scripture, and depends not upon the defensive ability of its adherents to make it effectual. **“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the**

glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all” (I Chronicles 29:11). So it is, man is shut up to the infallible word of God for all of his religious conclusions, and the Word of God not only teaches that mans natural will is utterly impotent in spiritual matters (**I Corinthians 2:14; John 6:44**), but that it is perfectly content in its native state (**John 3:19, 5:40**). Religious psychology, while fraught with many errors, does teach correctly that the natural will and motives are products of the human mind, and are without variance subservient thereto. Seeing then, that **“the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7)**, we ask, How can the mind which holds an infinite abhorrence of God, willfully submit to Him? Fallen man is inextricably and willfully bound to his old nature, but this poses no problem for God, and of Him we read, **“Of His own will begat He us ...” (James 1:18)**.

It is not denied that man has free-will. It is asserted in Scripture that he does, and it is acknowledged that he can choose between competing ends, that is, as long as the ends are within the realm of his nature. The scope wherein the will of man may be exercised seems boundless to the natural mind, but the Scriptures have made graphically clear the inability of man to choose that which is contrary to his nature. Choosing God over evil would certainly be a good thing, but this is as impossible for the native will as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots (**Jeremiah 13:23**). So it is, Christ says to His disciples, **“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you” (John 15:16)**. In the passion week of Christ’s life on earth, we have the account of man’s depraved will in hot pursuit of the sinless Son of God. We see it stalking its meek and lowly quarry in His Gethsemane rendezvous, where he is arrested and led away unto the High Priest, and there **“all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death” (Matthew 26:57, 27:1)**. And with an inflexible determination to realize their satanic scheme, they delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the Governor. **“The Governor answered and said unto them, whether of the twain (Barabbas, or Jesus) will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas ... he delivered Jesus to their will” (Matthew 27:21; Luke 23:25)**. From that moment on until we read the

words of the dying Saviour, “**Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,**” the will of depraved man finds vent for the most vile, diabolical, and sadistic actions imaginable against its innocent victim. Mans’ evil potential is known only to God, but the crucifixion of Christ and Christian martyrology attests to the fact if there was no exerciser of Divine restraint (**Psalms 76:10**) against the natural free-will of man, the remotest and darkest recesses of the earth could not hide the saint from the unregenerate will of man.

The natural man may be as religious as a Pharisee, yet there is total discord between his ways and thoughts, and God’s ways and thoughts (**Isaiah 55:8**). The work of redemption is not dependent upon the favorable exercise of mans free-will, salvation is not realized by the human will making up for a supposed deficiency in God’s will, nay, it is not “**of the will of man, but of God**” (**John 1:13**). God’s will is infinitely superior to the combined forces of nature, including the corrupted nature of man. The universe found its origin in His sovereign fiat, He rebuked the death state of Lazarus with His word, “**Lazarus, come forth, and he that was dead came forth**” (**John 11:43, 44**). It is today in the spiritual realm as it was with Lazarus in the physical, “**The Son quickeneth whom He will**” (**John 5:21**).

May every reader be granted the blessing to see, that it is in the all sovereign God that man lives, moves, and has his being (**Acts 17:28**).

(he Sovereign Grace Advocate - May, 1983)

John The Baptist, And The Fulfilling Of All Righteousness

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me. And Jesus answering, said unto him, suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered Him.” (Matthew 3:13-15)

1. FIRST, WE WILL CONSIDER THE PRONOUN “US” AS USED IN THE TEXT.

Christ says to John, **“It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.”** John in all humility of heart, said unto Christ: **“I need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”** (verse 14). John’s momentary confusion was utterly erased by the Lord’s reply unto him stated in our text. Then without any further delay or word, John baptized Jesus.

The pronoun, **“us”**, as found in our text may be somewhat confusing to “grace plus nothing people,” but it need not be, for John in the immediate context, in reference to Christ, says: **“... He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: ... Whose fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire”** (Matthew 3:11-12). All the metaphors and all the action referred to by John in this Scripture leaves no room for a plurality of persons in the regeneration of God’s elect people, and without any further retort, John owns Jesus to be the solitary Saviour of His people.

John’s use of the metaphors **“fan, wheat, garner, and chaff”** would be readily understood by John’s hearers, for wheat farming in Israel dates back to Jacob, their founder (**Genesis 30:14**). A winnowing **“fan”** or fork was used in those days to separate the chaff from the wheat, and is an unmistakable reference to the gospel of Christ. The term **“wheat”** is a figurative reference denoting God’s elect people. A **“garner”** is a grain bin,

the analogy of which is a reference to the Kingdom of God. The word “**chaff**” as used by John is a figure of speech, and refers to all who die in their sins, whose awful and eternal destiny is “**unquenchable fire**” (**Matthew 3:12**).

John the Baptist was “**a voice crying in the wilderness**” who was sent to “**prepare the way of the Lord**” (**Matthew 3:3**). While John was “**a voice crying in the wilderness**,” Jesus is the personification and living Word of God, and of Whom John said: “**He it is, Who coming after me is preferred before me, Whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose**” (**John 1:27**). John knew that in the redemption of God’s people there was room for only one person, and this is why he pointed away from himself, and unto Christ, saying: He is “**Mightier than I**” (**Matthew 3:11**). John was a great man, but Jesus is THE great man, and THE all sufficient and exclusive Saviour of His people (**Matthew 1:21**).

John’s part, wherein Christ said: “**It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness**” was not without vital significance. But we must remember John’s part in fulfilling all righteousness was TYPICAL, and John knew his ministry was a pictorial foretelling of the actual, or literal, which Christ would singularly accomplish by His death, burial, and resurrection, wherein and whereby the term “**us**” is absolutely alien, and the supposed creature assistance held by many going by the name “Baptist” is an abomination to God.

John, in baptizing Jesus, typically fulfilled all righteousness, but in actuality Jesus is the Author and Finisher of His people’s eternal salvation (**Hebrews 5:9**). Jesus, by His crucifixion on the cross, and His resurrection from the grave perfected the salvation of His covenant people, and for their pilgrimage or

course of life on earth, they are to look “**unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith**” (**Hebrews 12:2**).

John was a herald crying in the wilderness (**Matthew 3:3**), and the object or person of his message was the living Christ, and when John saw his

Messiah, his emotions were aroused, wherein he cried out saying: “**Behold the Lamb of God**” (John 1:29). John knew he was looking upon the promised and personified Word of God, and he knew that his own ministry would soon reach its terminus, for he said, in reference to Jesus: “**He must increase, but I *must* decrease**” (John 3:30).

Peter said, speaking of Christ: “**Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved**” (Acts 4:12). Sovereign grace, in the atonement of God’s people leaves no room for plus or “US”. God said, long ere John the Baptist came on the scene, “... *There is no Saviour beside me*” (Hosea 13:4). So, the term “us”, as used in our original text (Matthew 3:15) does not mean US-ABILITY, in the sense of redemption, but in the sense of a pictorial declaration of the gospel.

2. THE GREATNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

“**Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women** (that is, by natural or ordinary generation) **there is none greater than John the Baptist**” (Matthew 11:11). With this ascription by the Lord, John is accorded a particular greatness; a greatness that included the high honor of baptizing the Christ of God. No greater honor has ever been accorded man, yet John said unto Jesus: “**I have need to be baptized of thee**” (Matthew 3:14).

This high tribute paid John by the Lord is limited and subordinated by Christ in the words: “**He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he**” (Matthew 11:11). John was at the time imperfect, and being yet in his old nature, depraved. The seeds of doubt often arise in the heart of the most dedicated saint, and so it was with the first Baptist, John. Because of John’s faithfulness in preaching against adultery, he was arrested and locked up in Herod’s prison. John knew that his martyrdom was imminent, and so as to have full assurance of the Messiahship of Jesus, and to erase all doubt from his heart and mind, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus, asking: “**Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?**” (Matthew 11:3).

This petition of John unto Jesus may appear as a momentary lapse of faith on his part, but John's Messiah did not rebuke him, but said to John's inquisitors: **"Go and show John again those things which you do hear and see. All manner of sickness is healed, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached unto them. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in Me"** (Matthew 11:4-6).

Beginning with John the Baptist, Christ has, all through the church age used human instrumentality in the declaration of the gospel. In this restricted aspect of the gospel, man is utterly impotent, and though he be exceedingly religious, his every overture is altogether vanity and profiteth him nothing (John 6:63). Paul says, speaking of Christ: **"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"** (Ephesians 1:7). The Psalmist knew God had a sovereign and eternal monopoly on the redemption of souls, thus it is he says: **"Salvation *belongeth* unto the Lord"** (Psalms 3:8). So, there is never, ever a need for creature input. Nay, not even of so great a man as John the Baptist.

Salvation is not by blood, and a sacramental wafer. It is not by blood and man's supposed free-will. Neither is it by blood and baptism, even though the baptism be administered by John the Baptist, or John the Apostle, or by a New Testament church. Scriptural baptism is vitally important, for while it is ***NOT*** essential to salvation, it is the door into the blood bought and glorious church of Jesus Christ, and it is from His virgin church Christ receives the greatest glory (Ephesians 3:21). Baptist martyrs untold have given their lives in defense of scriptural baptism, but nowhere in the ecclesiastical history of Baptists can one find where the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was ever taught, practiced, or approved of.

May God enable us to be sticklers for scriptural baptism, but let us ever keep it firmly planted in our mind that baptism is the symbolic testimony of a fact, and is not, nor can ever be the fact. Baptism is an action whereby the gospel of Christ is proclaimed, and the salvation of the penitent subject is declared. However, let us ***NEVER BEDIM THE GLORY OF GOD*** by making a sacrament out of baptism. ***GOD FORBID!***

The working of faith is from within to that which is external. It is from the spiritual life within to the expression of it without. To reverse this order is to take the work of regeneration from the Holy Spirit, and give to a church or a preacher, whereby vain man becomes the author of his salvation. Such a teaching and practice is despicable in the eyes of God, and is soul damaging to all deceived thereby.

3. THE COMMISSION TO “FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS” WAS GIVEN TO THE CHURCH, BY HER HEAD, JESUS CHRIST

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

In these words the Lord gives His church the age long commission of fulfilling all righteousness, and this great and glorious commission is accomplished by preaching the gospel and baptizing believers. It is the baptism of those whom God has been pleased to give faith, and it is never administered in order to make believers. In the Book of Acts, chapter eight, Philip preached Jesus unto the Eunuch, and the Eunuch implored Philip, saying: **“... What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And they both went down into the water, and he baptized him” (Acts 8:37-38).**

Regeneration is realized by the planting of eternal life within by the Holy Spirit, and is manifested without by scriptural baptism. In the exercise of faith it is always from the spiritual to the material. The emblems of the Lord’s Supper (bread and wine) are a material manifestation of a spiritual and glorious truth. That is, an emblematic showing of the Lord’s death till He comes (**I Corinthians 11:26**).

Romanism and Protestantism have reversed this order by starting with the outward or external, and by it, claim to create the internal; that is, salvation or regeneration. In their supposed reversal of the Divine order, they make man to be the author and finisher of his salvation, and the fulfiller of the righteousness demanded by the Lord. Simply, they rob God of His glory in this awesome, eternal, and indispensable matter. Our hearts should ever be filled with gratitude toward God for the glorious ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, but let us ever remember, as glorious as these ordinances are, they are ***EMBLEMATIC, NOT CLIMACTIC!***

The commission to evangelize the world was given to the local church(es), and not to an official Convention, Association, or Mission Board. Baptismal authority was irrevocably given to each and every New Testament Baptist church, and any usurpation of that authority negates the officiality of the guilty church, and robs that particular church of its autonomy, and ability to fulfill all righteousness.

Baptist need to ever remember that John's commission to baptize was no more from heaven than the commission which Christ gave to all of His churches (**Matthew 28:18-20**). Therefore, it is incumbent upon the local church to make disciples in every nation, kindred, and tongue, thereby declaring the fulfilling of all righteousness by Christ the Lord. The purpose of the ordinance of baptism is to pictorially manifest the atonement which Christ made in behalf of His people, wherein He fulfilled all righteousness, and whereby Divine satisfaction was fully and forever realized.

Jesus, speaking of John the Baptist, said unto the multitudes, **“What went ye out to see? A reed shaken in the wind? But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings houses. But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet”** (**Matthew 11:7-9**). Of all the great men we read of in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, none but John was more than a Prophet.

John the Baptist was more than a Prophet in the sense he was a living fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy referring directly to him (**Isaiah**

40:3; Mark 1:1-5). He was more than a Prophet in the sense he was used of the Lord to introduce the Christian dispensation (**John 1:29-33**). He was more than a Prophet owing to the fact he was appointed of God to baptize Jesus (**Matthew 3:14-15**). He is more than a Prophet in that his baptism of Jesus was irrevocably passed on to the church, for Jesus is the Head of the church, of which every member had the baptism of John. The church that Jesus started recognized the authority of John's baptism, and owned it's essentialness for the apostolic office (**Act 1:21-22**). John was more than a Prophet in that he was the first to preach the gospel of Christ, and make faith and repentance qualifying predicates for baptism (**Mark 1:1-4**).

The Old Testament Prophets of the Lord were great, and many suffered martyrdom for the cause of God (**I Kings 18:4; Nehemiah 9:26**), but none had the particular honor of meeting their Messiah in His corporeality, nor did any of them have the privilege of baptizing their all glorious Lord. The honor of initially preaching the gospel of Christ, and introducing Him as The Lamb of God was reserved for John. It was the sum of all these honors that made John more than a Prophet, and his responsibility and privilege was in some degree more than his esteemed and prophetic predecessors.

The angel of the Lord, speaking of Jesus, said: "**He shall save His people from their sins**" (**Matthew 1:21**), and it has pleased the Lord to use His church(es) to accomplish this all glorious end by preaching the gospel of Christ by word, and faithful observance of the ordinances, both of which are vivid declarations of the gospel.

Church decorum and worship is to be based on the doctrine, practice, and principles of the original and primitive churches, and that without deviation, for there are not approximations with God. Thus it is He says: "**A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump**" (**I Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9**). Simply, God is not pleased with anything that is not in accord with His inspired word. "... **If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them**" (**Isaiah 8:20**). Clearly, God is not pleased with teaching or practice that is not perfect in righteousness.

The sum of their ecclesiastical exercise consisted in preaching, teaching, praying, and singing. The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper were and are integral parts of the teaching ministry of the local church, for both ordinances are candid photographs of the fulfilling of all righteousness by Jesus Christ, their governmental Head, Redeemer, and Perpetuator (**Ephesians 1:7, 22; Matthew 28:20**). The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper were restricted to the administration of the local church, and thus it is with contemporary New Testament Baptist churches. Each and every baptism performed with the intent of bestowing salvation to the person upon whom it is administered is a fearful and damnable denial of the fulfilling of all righteousness by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There is no greater or more damning heresy than the doctrine of baptismal salvation, for it blacks out the redeeming glory of God by substituting water for the blood of Christ, and provides false comfort to all that are deceived thereby. Salvation is by grace **PLUS NOTHING**, and every effort at creature input is a nefarious negation of the unmerited favor of God in salvation. This dangerous and God defying doctrine has for its author none other than the believer's arch adversary, the devil. **BEWARE!**

The autonomy of the local church is underwritten by the supreme and irrefutable court of heaven, and is never to be compromised, regardless of the circumstances. Baptist ecclesiology acknowledges and practices the four (4) prerequisites which are essential to scriptural baptism, and they are exceedingly diligent in ascertaining that the aforementioned prerequisites are in place before the ordinance is administered. So as not to be derelict in duty, I will at this appropriate juncture mention the four prerequisites which constitute valid baptism.

THEY ARE:

1. **FIRST**, there **MUST** be a proper candidate. That is, a born again person, and not in order to be saved, but to declare his / her faith in the finished work of Christ, whereby He fulfilled all righteousness.

2. **SECONDLY**, there **MUST** be the exercise of proper authority; that is, a New Testament Baptist church. The pastor or preacher does not in their own authority baptize, for they know the baptismal ordinance belongs to the local church, and not to **ANY MAN** since John the Baptist.

3. **THIRDLY**, there **MUST** be a proper mode; that is complete immersion of the candidate's body in water. **THERE IS NOT** the least degree or parallel between immersion and sprinkling; they are antithetical terms wherein one excludes the other, and sprinkling can **NEVER** satisfy the need for baptism.

4. **FOURTHLY**, there **MUST** be proper motive. The motive being to declare the faith of the baptizee in the finished work of Christ, whereby He redeemed His people. It should be the quench less motive of every saved person to declare the glorious gospel of Christ, and the initial realization of this God honoring desire is scriptural baptism, whereby the gospel is gloriously declared by a picture reproduction of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Immersion which omits either of the four prerequisites delineated above in **NOT** scriptural baptism, and sprinkling which is in every case utterly void of at least three of the four essentials which constitute scriptural baptism cannot be but a glaring and pathetic fallacy.

John the Baptist was a man sent from God to baptize all who came to him in true faith, and from the demise of John until the climax of the age it has been **A BAPTIST CHURCH SENT FROM GOD** to declare the fulfilling of all righteousness by Jesus Christ, and to baptize all who come to them with faith in the Lordship and Saviourhood of Jesus Christ.

4. JOHN'S BAPTISM WAS A BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE

“ In those days came John the Baptist, preaching ..., and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:1-2). John made much of baptism, but he never made it essential to salvation, but

incessantly connected it to discipleship (**John 1:36-37**). Baptism is the door into the Lord's church, and to be a faithful disciple of Christ, one *MUST* be in the glorious church purchased by the sacrificial blood of Christ (**Acts 20:28**).

“And John came ... preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:3). This Scripture has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misapplied. Some have reversed the meaning, and have thereby made the remission of sins the product of baptism. This is a dangerous distortion of the truth, and is a damnable heresy that should be steadfastly opposed and refuted. Let us not make an idol of baptism, and worship the ordinance instead of the Person Whom it pictures.

Baptism is of great significance. It is the outward and graphic sign of an inward action wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the soul, whereby repentance and faith are freely given. It is the indispensable gifts of repentance and faith that qualifies the recipient for baptism and this order can *NEVER* be successfully reversed. As glorious and wonderful as baptism is, it can never in truth be substituted for, or be put on a par with the sacrificial and atoning blood of Christ, for **“Without shedding of blood in NO remission” (Hebrews 9:22)**. The thief on the cross at the right hand of Christ was never baptized, but he shall ever be a resident of heaven, for he was granted repentance and faith (**Luke 23:43**).

The sacrifice of Christ upon the cross of Calvary effectually atoned for the sins of God's elect people, and their election is made manifest by the gifts of repentance and faith which their Benefactor purchased for them as their Substitute under the curse and wages of sin. Repentance and faith are essential to salvation, and this truth is clearly set forth in the word of God. Christ said: **“I tell ye nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5)**. As with repentance, so it is with faith; for the Scripture declares: **“Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6)**. The irrevocable conclusion being, without repentance and faith there is *NO* salvation from the curse and condemnation God has placed upon sin.

However, we must ever remember that repentance and faith are the unmerited, unconditional, and irrevocable gifts of God. Paul admonished his young prodigy, Timothy, by saying: “**Be gentle unto all men ... instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance**” (II Timothy 2:24-25). Paul, being steadfast in his preaching and teaching, unequivocally tells the Ephesian saints, that “**faith is the gift of God**” (Ephesians 2:8). It is the gifts of repentance and faith that qualifies the recipient for baptism. The gifts of repentance and faith are inseparably linked together, and are without chronology in the experience of the recipient, for they are simultaneously realized, and are eternally intact.

Repentance does not precede faith, nor faith repentance; for otherwise there would be a time lapse wherein the subject would be as yet unsaved. The contention for such a hiatus, infinitesimal though it be, is the very rankest non-sense. God is not bound by time and sequence as His creatures are. The first and the last are one with Him, for He is the beginning and the end. He is the eternal *NOW*.

Repentance and faith are not the fruits of regeneration, but are the implanted fruits of the Sovereign Holy Spirit, whereby regeneration is gloriously effected in the hearts of God’s ill deserving people. It is owing to this unmerited favor of God, Paul cries out, saying: “**Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (I Corinthians 15:57). Repentance and faith are the gifts of God, and He implants them in His people according to His own good will and pleasure (Philippians 2:13). God is the beginning and the end; there are no pre or post events with God. Let us never think that God is such a one as ourselves. (Psalms 50:21).

5. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS AN EXCEEDING GREAT MAN

Let us not forget that John the Baptist was one of the greatest of men, and for a brief time had no equal. Yet, we need to remember, while John was undeniably great, Jesus Christ is greater than all the greatness of all great men. The Old Testament is permeated with the names of great and excellent

men, which were no doubt in a class with John. But John and all the great men of the Old Testament were not while as yet on earth as great as the **“least in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 11:11)**. The disciple of Christ is not to be overly concerned with the greatness of men, but is to give his undivided attention to his all Sovereign Lord and merciful Saviour, Jesus Christ, whose greatness has no degree of comparison.

When the greatness of John the Baptist or any other of the great men of the Bible is considered in the light of the incomparable greatness and supernal glory of Christ, their glory and greatness fades into oblivion, and they would have it ***NO OTHER WAY***. John, without a moment’s hesitation, owned this great truth, and expressed it by saying in reference to Christ: His **“shoes I am not worthy to bear” (Matthew 3:11)**.

God’s love for His elect people is immutably perfect, and shall never diminish, nor fade in its glory. However, this is not true with their love and devotion to Christ. The believer’s faith often wanes, and doubts find lodgment in his heart. John exhibited this sad truth when he sent two of his disciples to inquire of Jesus: **“Art thou he that should come: Or look we for another?” (Luke 7:19)**. This ***IS NOT*** a criticism of John, for I am not worthy to claim him as a brother in Christ, but it is used to show that the faith of the greatness of men is yet fallible, and all too often, unstable.

Jesus is ***THE GREAT “I AM”***, and when His greatness is seen in its least measure, the beholder fades into nothingness, and cries out, saying: **“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24)**. The same man who asked this awesome question said on two separate occasions: **“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:31; II Corinthians 10:17)**, and this man was the Apostle Paul, a man whose greatness is not unparalleled, but he was a man used mightily of the Lord (**Colossians 1:29**).

It is recorded of Christ, **“... having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end” (John 13:1)**, and thereby fulfilled all righteousness, bringing a glory to Himself that He will not share with the greatest of His faithful among men, nor with the archangels.

(The Baptist Herald - December, 1995)

Let Brotherly Love Continue

(Hebrews 13:1)

The spiritual Christian will readily admit there is much wrong in his discipleship, and that he comes miserably short in his service to God and his brothers and sisters in the church. Being aware of these unsavory facts should serve to make us reluctant to severely criticize those who are walking with us in the troubled path of faith. The least scrutiny of our brothers and sisters will reveal much which we consider to run counter to the honor of God, and the best interest of the church. On the other hand, the scrutiny being honest, we will discover much in our dear brothers and sisters that is honest, and worthy of compliment. We are not saying, withhold all criticism. No, loving and constructive criticism can be the means of enriching love, correcting error, and contribute to the welfare of the church. Destructive criticism of a brother or sister is grievously wrong, and severe criticism must come only after the effect has been wisely and prayerfully calculated. The flesh takes a certain satisfaction from “Telling him off”, but it often follows that we look back on our time of temper venting, and conclude, I wish I hadn’t said that; or, I could have handled that in a far better way. More good has been accomplished by a pat on the back, than by a finger in the face. We may not relish humble pie, but the inner man thrives on it, and to deny our self this spiritual delicacy is to lower the flammability point of the depraved, harsh and unkind passions. The devil hates church harmony, peace, and unity. He loves to see discord among the brethren, gossip, and negative attitudes. Yet, the devil cannot create in the church these ill conditions apart from help within the church. Christ said, **“it is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come” (Luke 17:1)**. The devil is the arch rival of God, infinitely hates the blood bought church of Jesus Christ, and is determined to undo every member of the church. So, it behooves the members to promote one another, to pray fervently for one another, and to pay respect to one another. A kind word of appreciation can go a long way in disarming the spirit that is caught in the gall of bitterness. After all, it is the meek who inherit the earth, and our Lord said, **“I am meek and lowly in heart.”**

Let us give the church our best, and God will give the best to us.

Made To Differ

“For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* ...” (I Corinthians 4:7)

All too often, the Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist pastor hears negative criticism of his ministry on the basis of belief that he is too occupied with the success of his own church, at the expense of Christianity in general. He has been charged with being uncharitable toward those of a different denomination, and that he is unduly opposed to many of the valued and cherished traditions of the invisible church. His critics say, “He is stuck in the quagmire of outdated practices, such as closed communion, immersion, and restriction of the pulpit to the male gender only.”

It is readily admitted by the Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist preacher that he is not very innovative, and that he believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and that any and everything not approved by the Bible is of the flesh, and is detrimental to the well being of the church. But to indict him on the ground that he is inhospitable toward Christians of other denominations, and that he has “churchianity rather than Christianity” is grossly unfair. It is not a lack of respect for his fellow Christians that has made him to differ with them, but it is his love for the word of God, for he knows nothing of value can be gained by compromising a single jot or tittle of God’s precious word.

The Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist preacher believes that Christ loves His church, and that He purchased it with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**; **Ephesians 5:25**). He also believes that there is no ecclesiastical institution bigger than a local New Testament church, and he believes that the Holy Spirit has called him to the pastoral ministry. Therefore, he knows that his calling is to edify the church over which God has made him the overseer, and he fearfully knows that any preaching short of the whole counsel of God cannot magnify the Lord, nor edify His church.

Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist preachers love the people of other persuasions, and this love has been undeniably manifested throughout the two

thousand year history of their churches. But owing to the irreconcilable variances in what the respective parties believe the Bible teaches on many subjects, including the cardinal doctrines of soteriology and ecclesiology, leaves NO room for church level fellowship.

Sovereign Grace Baptist churches are not different from other churches just for the sake of being different, but their strictness and separatism are the fruits of divinely guided study, and they joyfully suffer any stigma resulting from the difference God has put between them and those of a contrary judgment.

(The Baptist Herald - September, 1994)

Man Or Worm

I recently heard a Baptist preacher say: “When I was lost, I wanted to be saved. I thought; if I could just get saved!”

I ask: “Do you think somewhere in the world there is worm that wants to be a man, and is sincerely trying to be a man?” The lettered and unlettered man bluntly replies; “Of course not, the question is utterly absurd.” I fully concur with the reply, such a thought is rank foolishness, but I can as easy believe there is somewhere in the world a worm who wants to be a man, as there is somewhere in the world an unsaved person who in truth wants to be saved from his or her sins.

For the sake of honesty, I present an impossible hypothesis, and ask: Which account would you believe if it were left to your discretion, the lost man who said he wanted to be saved, or the supposition that there is a worm somewhere that wants to be a man? To allow there is in this world a worm who wants to be a man is no more ridiculous that to say, there is a lost person who in truth wants to be saved. To opt for the man or the worm would be equally foolish, but if there was any weight in the matter it would be on the part of the worm, for I have never read nor heard of a worm that hated God. Conversely, there is not ONE person whose heart is not filled with enmity against God. It is the epitome of ignorance to say a person wants to become that which he hates with a perfect hatred. (**John 15:18, 25, Romans 1:30, 8:7**; etc.).

(The Baptist Herald April, 1991)

Plain Speech

“... We use great plainness of speech” (II Corinthians 3:12).

At the risk of seeming to be inconsistent with the text, I am going to give a subtitle to this article; namely, Hyper-Allegoricalism. This is a high-sounding phrase, but it simply means the over spiritualizing of Scripture. Already a great gulf exists between the Holy Spirit taught Bible expositor, and the average hearer. To spiritualize Scriptures that do not lend themselves to the allegorical method of interpretation, is to broaden this gulf.

Over spiritualizing Scripture causes the true meaning to grow thin, nullifies the force, creates confusion, and ascertains nothing. Spiritualizing calls for an imaginary description. Being aware of this, the Gospel minister needs to exercise extreme caution so as not to be-cloud with mystery the truth he is attempting to convey. But, alas, it appears as if there always will be those around who think they are capable of a higher conception of God's Word, and laboring under this false premise, they take the plainest narratives of Scripture and turn them into vague abstractions. Spiritualizers are often guilty of trying to improve upon the Scriptures. In this hour of apostasy I would not be surprised to learn that some of them which claim great ability in this method of interpretation, have corrected, enlarged and improved upon the Sermon on the Mount. It might be to their dismay, but they need to learn, God is never going to quote them for verification of His Word.

Interpreting Scripture by Scripture

There are many Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament which are to be allegorically interpreted, but we are to get our interpretation from the interpretations found in the Bible itself. That is what Paul meant when he said, “Rightly dividing the Word of truth.” So it goes with all Bible allegories. The Divine explanation is all that is necessary to understand the exact truth conveyed. We should ever be aware that when we are interpreting any verse of Scripture, we are dealing with the very words of the Holy Spirit. The explanation is not left to the powers of finite intellect, but must be totally the work of the Holy Spirit, unalloyed with the wisdom of man. This

does not rule out the fact that God works mediately. He does, through His church, the written Word, Holy Spirit called ministers and by any means He pleases to work through. He has given to His churches, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry (**Ephesians 4:11-12**). Yet the hearer is responsible to prove all things, holding fast only to that which is good (**II Thessalonians 5:21**). That is, make sure what you receive as good comes from the crucible of the Holy Spirit.

Various Forms of Language Used in Scripture

Many forms of language are used in the Scriptures. Such as, similes, parables, riddles, fables, types, symbols, metaphors, allegories, proverbs and other forms of human expression. All of these are used in Scripture to clarify rather than confuse. These are given so the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work (**II Timothy 3:16**). But irreparable damage has resulted from the abuse and misuse of these various forms of language. Every text of Scripture being interpreted is to be subjected to the whole of Divine revelation, conclusions that are not perfectly consistent with the whole are at their best erroneous conclusions. The wise student will exercise double censorship where figurative language is being interpreted.

Definitions

ALLEGORICAL - "Having hidden spiritual meaning transcending the literal sense of a sacred text." (Webster)

HYPHER - "Above, beyond, super, excessive." (Webster)

HYPHER-ALLEGORICAL - By combining the above definitions, we get, imaginary meaning which transcends, is beyond, and excessive of the literal and spiritual sense of a sacred text.

What is a Hyper-allegorist?

a. It is a person that takes undue liberty in assigning allegorical meanings to passages of Scripture that are to be taken literally.

b. It is a person that takes an allegorical passage, and distorts the true meaning to fit his heretical notion.

Hyper-Allegorical Rampage

To the hyper-allegorist there are no difficult passages in the Scriptures. All he need do is lay his patented rule upon any passage, and he will get the desired dimension. The allegorical method of interpreting Scripture is a real comfort to the reckless exegete. To him it is like a safety valve whereby anything that does not suit his mood, he just drains into the gutter and the truth disappears under his feet. Great pain is taken by them to find a hidden meaning when, in fact, there is none, (but the hyper-allegorist will not be denied,) so he invents one. To the honest and sincere student of the Word the hyper-allegorist appears as a mad bull in a china shop, by him everything in Scripture is reduced to shambles. I do not want to be unduly critical of the allegorical method of interpretation, but it is the height of theological irresponsibility to adopt the allegorical method as an overall technique of interpreting the Bible. To take a text of Scripture which is to be received literally, and immerse it in the unfathomable waters of allegoricalism is PLAIN subverting the Word of God.

Hermeneutics Helpful

The fundamental hermeneutical principle in Bible interpretation is: NEVER AVOID THE CONTEXT. **“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” (II Peter 1:20).**

Secondly, whoever takes it upon himself to give other than a literal meaning to a text is under obligation to prove from the balance of Scripture that his interpretation is correct.

Third, ascertain who is talking, unto whom he is speaking, and the subject of discourse. (Try this rule on the parables spoken by Christ, and

much confusion will be eliminated as to the distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Church of God).

Fourth, a passage of Scripture which appears to be general in its application, but has been limited in another passage, the passage then must be interpreted in the light of the passage that restricts the application, and the interpretation made to conform thereto. (It is by ignoring this rule that the Arminian is given to wild excess in interpreting Scripture. He takes the words; World, All, and Every and preaches universal redemption from them. They do this with a flagrant disregard for the many other passages of Scripture limiting the application of these words).

Fifth, in the word of God the expression of one thing excludes all else unless otherwise indicated by the Scriptures. By way of illustration, consider Noah's commission to build the Ark. "Make **thee an ark of gopher wood ...**" (**Genesis 6:14**). Noah was a literalist. God had specified "Gopher wood" and Noah knew God meant what He said. Therefore, oak, pine, hickory and all other trees were disallowed. God instructed Noah to put "**a window**" in the ark (**Genesis 6:16**). If Noah had been a super-spiritualizer he would have said, "You know God must have meant more than one window for an ark so large." Noah obeyed the literal command of God and his family was saved from perishing in the flood.

To further illustrate let us note God's commission to King Saul to destroy the Amalekites. "**Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass**" (**1 Samuel 15:3**). God gave Saul a literal command with specified action, but Saul was a spiritualizer. He spared King Agag and the best of the sheep and the oxen. What could be wrong with this? He said he was doing it for a sacrifice unto the Lord. Was there anything in the command given him which forbid this action? If not, then God would be pleased with Saul, but God had told him in detail what to do regarding the Amalekites. God's command excluded every other action that would spare a single Amalekite. But old spiritualizing Saul had to exalt his wisdom above that of God's. Charges of idolatry and

witchcraft (Hyper-allegoricalism borders on witchcraft) were brought against Saul, and he was rejected from being King (**1 Samuel 15:23**).

Hyper-allegoricalists have gone in the way of Cain (**Jude 11**). They are following the evil example of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron in offering strange fire before the Lord (**Leviticus 10:1**). In every single instance in Scripture where the literal was disregarded or spiritualized, the guilty incurred the disfavor of God and in this age end time men have taken unto themselves license to do what they will with the Word of God, disparaging the literal, substituting pure assumption for the old established principles of Bible doctrine. God holds these charlatans in holy contempt, and will cause them to know of His displeasure with them.

“... without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). The word **“blood”** in this text excludes all other would be ways of receiving forgiveness of sins. It is by the merit of Christ’s shed blood, and that ALONE one is cleansed from sin. Romanism and Protestantism have spiritualized away the power of the blood, making ineffectual the meritorious sacrifice of Christ. Protestantism destroys the efficacy of the blood by teaching baptismal regeneration. While it is incumbent upon Baptists to speak out against this damnable heresy, Baptists are not allowed to go to the other extreme and spiritualize away the Divine prerequisites which God has set to insure the proper administration of this glorious ordinance. True Baptists have for over nineteen centuries labored fervently to keep salvation detached from the ordinances. However, they have never minimized nor spiritualized away the facts, blood before water, and water before church membership, neither have they agreed with the spiritualizers which say that immersion constitutes baptism no matter who administers it. True Baptists have never spiritualized away wine in the Lord’s Supper. Some so-called fundamental Baptists have denied Christ the title of “Perfect Saviour” by substituting grape juice for wine in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper.

Read the following paragraph copied from *Baptize-Dip-Only*, by W.A. Jarrel, and note the progress from allegorical interpretation to hyper-allegoricalism. “When Ralph Waldo Emerson was pastor of a Unitarian church in Boston, he told his church that wine was not necessary to the

observance of the Lord's Supper; that water could be used as well. So they used water instead of wine. After a while Mr. Emerson told the church that it was not necessary to partake of the water and the bread; that they could get the same spiritual benefit by sitting in their seats and contemplating the water and the bread. So they sat in their seats and looked at the water and the bread. After a while Mr. Emerson told the church that it was not necessary to put the water and the bread on the table; that they could get the same spiritual benefit from sitting in their seats and thinking about Christ; so the Lord's Supper was eliminated in his church. After he once departed from the Scriptural example substituting water for wine, Mr. Emerson's course was strictly logical."

Rome mocks the efficacy of the blood by the invention of a super-duper (duper = literal) church and teaching inherited church membership. With equal daring and influenced by a strong spirit of competitiveness, some Sovereign Grace Baptists have, by their teaching, gone far down the road toward church membership salvation. The superior quality of the Lord's true churches over the false does not depend upon the over-spiritualization of Scripture. The Lord's churches can do without self appointed interpreters who think they have been singled out by the Lord to keep His churches from going in to apostasy. The Lord's promise (**Matthew 16:18**) is all the guarantee we need that our Heavenly destination will be realized. Special blessings have been promised to the church by her prospective Groom and we need not steal the blessings promised to the Kingdom of God by spiritualizing Scriptures that pertain to the Kingdom. The church at its beginning was richly endowed with spiritual graces, and it has never seen the need of borrowing support from any organization, though it be the Kingdom of God. God has put an eternal distinction between His church and His kingdom and what God has eternally separated let no man bring together. Eternal distinction is promised to His churches (**Ephesians 3:21**).

Far from untangling the meshes of religious error, allegoricalism and spiritualization (Hastings Bible Dictionary uses the terms allegory and spiritualize synonymously) have been the source of infinite error, and is the handmaiden of the devil in furthering heresy. Baptist spiritualizers need be careful, for an act often repeated becomes habit, and habit is often

unconsciously practiced. One may start out limiting his allegory to allegorical passages, but the history of allegoricalism proves to the contrary, this method of interpreting the Scriptures has often degenerated into magic. For instance, look at Rome's hocus-pocus, transubstantiation, purgatory and the supposed ascent of Mary into Heaven, etc. The cult and the occult are the fearful harvests being reaped from the seed of spiritualizers and the ecumenical movement could not possibly succeed without the ability to spiritualize away the difference between the "**mother of harlots**" and her daughters.

Historically, Baptists have been literalists in regards to Bible interpretation. They have written their confessions of faith in plain and literal language. Though they knew the words they were writing would condemn them to the stake to be burned, yet, they did not hide their convictions under a blanket of spiritualization, or ambiguous language. Plain and literal language is yet sufficient to proclaim the Baptist message. We need not resort to deceitful handling of the Word of God. Our self conceit and ego may need it, but the Holy Spirit will allow nothing to negate the literal meaning of the Divine precepts. I repeat, there are Scriptures which may be allegorically interpreted without doing any violence to the Word of God, but let us bear constantly in mind this rule, the literal interpretation is to be given the primary place. No matter how attractive a spiritualized interpretation may be, it should never be allowed to overthrow the literal meaning.

(*The Sovereign Grace Advocate* - November, 1983)

Powerful Points For Profitable Bible Study

People take three views of the Bible:

1. Above it,
2. Equal to it,
3. Beneath it.

People who consider themselves above the Bible, bring it into suspect. Those who consider themselves equal to it, ignore it, after all, it cannot teach them anything. Those who consider themselves beneath the Bible take it as their final authority, and practice subjection to it. It is subscription to this last point that makes Baptists different from all other denominations. Most denominations believe the Bible contains the Word of God, but Baptists believe the Bible, as originally given, to be the Word of God. Neo-orthodoxy continues to make the statement, "All scriptures which are inspired." This is more than an implication that some scriptures are not inspired of the Lord. It is a bold assertion which denies plenary verbal inspiration of the scriptures. The Law, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the New Testament are all inspired of the Lord, and the Lord has magnified his Word above that of His own name (**Psalms 138:2**). Therefore, it is utterly impossible to have too much confidence in God's Word. God's Word is perfect (**Psalms 19:7**), and that which is perfect cannot be graded too high, or over-rated. However, while the Bible is the world's only infallible book, the Christian is liable to neglect the study of it, or approach it in hap-hazard manner. It is for this reason, and to help in countering this practice that the following points for Bible study are offered.

1. STUDY THE BIBLE WITH AN OPEN MIND

Subject your pre-conceived opinions to the Word of God and not the Word of God to your opinions. Remembering, it is the gospel of Christ which God uses in calling out His elect, and not human opinions. "**Whereunto He**

called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

2. STUDY THE BIBLE SYSTEMATICALLY

Secular education demands a systematic approach to its every subject. A medical student could never become a doctor if he divided his study time between a dozen other courses unrelated to medicine. The same principle holds true with Bible study. The Christian will never be a skillful witness for His Lord if he takes the time allocated for Bible study, and uses it to study secular subjects. Moreover, the Bible student should not move with randomness from subject to subject in his study of God's Word, else his study will profit him little.

3. STUDY CONTEXTUALLY

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20). Many people think they can learn everything they need to know from a single text of scripture. I have heard people say, **“John 3:16** is the Bible in a nutshell.” Certainly **John 3:16** has much to say to the Bible student, but to study it independent of the context is to break God's stipulated rule (**2 Peter 1:20**) for Bible study. The student needs to be careful lest he go too far in his effort to show how much there is in a single text. The verses surrounding the text under consideration should, without variance, be studied before forming a conclusion. The time of writing, the conditions under which the text was written, and to whom it is written should be given much serious thought. If a student could learn everything he needs to know in a single verse, chapter, or even an entire book, there would be no purpose for the rest of scripture. Interpret scripture by scripture. **“All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).**

4. STUDY, ALLOWING THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION TO TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE SPIRITUAL

“For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little” (Isaiah 28:10). No matter how many ways scripture may be interpreted, and that without doing violence to the meaning, yet the literal interpretation is to be given the primary place. There are scriptures which allow for a spiritual interpretation only, and the student is not to try and force those scriptures to accommodate a literal interpretation. We know when Christ said to His church, **“Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13)**, that He did not mean they would enhance the flavor of watermelon, but that they would be used to preserve a measure of decency in the earth.

The habit of spiritualizing scripture makes the student the potter, and the Bible the clay. By this method the scripture may be twisted and turned to suit the most fanciful imagination. Spiritualizing scripture may be interesting and attractive, but there is also a great danger lurking in this practice. That is to make the scripture bear more than God intended it to bear. The spiritualizing method, instead of helping in untangling the meshes of error has served as the hand maiden of the devil in spawning such malignant children as the cults, who spend their time in doing nothing but making a mockery of the deity of Jesus Christ. If the literal sense makes good, and it usually does, why seek any other sense?

5. STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY AND PRAYERFULLY

Of the righteous man, we read, **“His delight *is* in the law of the Lord, and in His law doeth he meditate day and night” (Psalms 1:2).** Those converted under the apostle’s preaching studied their doctrine daily and prayerfully (Acts 2:42). And it is said of the Bereans, **“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).** The Bereans were hungry for the word of God, but

they studied daily to make sure it was the truth they were receiving. We should follow the “Berean” example. **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).** The student who studies daily and prayerfully will be blessed with ability to walk in the light of His Lord, for the entrance of His **“words giveth light” (Psalms 119:130).**

6. STUDY, BELIEVING THE WORD OF GOD

“... So worship I the God of my fathers, believing all the things which are written in the law and in the prophets” (Acts 24:14). The Bible is God’s own word, and has never been found to be in error. The skeptic and the ambiguous say, “You can prove anything by the Bible.” Critical remarks about the Bible are usually made by people totally devoid of spiritual understanding. Therefore, the Bible will never by anything more than rank foolishness unto them (**I Corinthians 2:14**). To counter such remarks all that need be done is to lay an open Bible before the critic, and ask him to show one place where the Bible supports a lie, or once where the Bible contradicts itself. Often knowledge of what the Bible is supposed to contain, and what it actually contains are two different things. Many who have tried to break the word of God, have learned that the **“Scriptures cannot be broken”** and have submitted to the authority of the Bible. Truth cannot oppose truth, but is ever complimentary. **“...Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).** **“He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son” (I John 5:10).**

“I have known 95 great men of the world in my time, and of these, 87 were followers of the Bible.” (W. E. Gladstone, one of the most famous of England’s Prime Ministers).

7. STUDY THE BIBLE WITH A VIEW TOWARD APPLYING ITS TEACHINGS TO YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Psalms 119:105). A person is to study God’s word to know how to die. More

importantly, he is to study it to know how to live in this present evil world. The person who lives right, dies right. It is not the knowledge of soap that helps the appearance, but the application of soap to the body. So it is with the Bible. Although it can be quoted, and many of its doctrines correctly understood, it is all to no avail until put into practice. “... **The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life**” (II Corinthians 3:6). Study the scriptures not only to be wise, but also to be holy. It is wisdom coupled with obedience that makes the believer holy. “**Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth**” (II Timothy 2:15).

8. STUDY THE BIBLE WITH A VIEW TOWARD SHARING ITS TRUTHS WITH OTHERS

“**The Lord gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it***” (Psalms 68:11).

The best means of spreading Bible truth is by personal testimony, and those who have been raised up to sit in the lofty heights with Christ recognize their responsibility to bear witness to the truth of the gospel whenever and wherever possible.

The Bible student who has dug from the spiritual mine the treasures of wisdom, spreads the news of his discovery to others whom he desires to enrich. Thus it is, the truth of God’s word is consistently circulated, and is prospering in the thing where to God sends it (Isaiah 55:11). Paul said, “**I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house**” (Acts 20:20). May God give us the strength to say with this great apostle, “**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, far it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ...**” (Romans 1:16).

9. STUDY WITH A DESIRE TO GLORIFY GOD

**“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”
(John 8:32).**

**“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ...”
(Colossians 3:16).**

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - December, 1978)

Prophecies Concerning The Gentile Nations

“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: [32] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: [33] And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. [34] Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: [35] For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: [36] Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. [37] Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? [38] When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? [39] Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? [40] And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. [41] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: [42] For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: [43] I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. [44] Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? [45] Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. [46] And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:31-46).

Verse 31 establishes the time of the judgment of the nations. The nations of the earth will be judged by Christ at His second advent to earth. This judgment follows, or immediately succeeds, the battle of Armageddon, wherein Christ and His armies are the indisputable victors. It is the time

when Christ shall set on the throne of “**His glory.**” He is now sitting as the intercessor for His people on the throne of His Father’s glory (**Romans 8:34; I Timothy 2:5**).

Verse 32 reveals that “**all nations**” of the earth shall be judged at this time. Every individual on earth will not at this time stand before the throne of Christ’s glory, but all people of the earth will be represented by their governmental heads of state, and their ruling bodies. This is a judgment of nations, and has to do primarily with the favor or ill favor Israel has received at their hands, and especially in the seven year tribulation period which has just ended. The judgment of all unsaved individuals post-dates the judgment of nations by one thousand years (**Revelation 20:6-12**). The purpose of this judgment is clearly stated. It is to divide the sheep nations from the goat nations.

Verse 33 discovers the sheep on the right hand of Christ which is the place of favor. The goat nations are seen standing on His left hand, the place of rejection (verse 41).

Verses 34-40, the sheep nations enter the millennial kingdom which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They are astonished by this great favor. Christ relates to them the ground of their reward was the kindness He received at their hands during the tribulation period. This puzzles them, and they ask, how could they have shown Him kindness in that they had not actually seen Him before this time. We have Christ’s answer in vs. 40, “**And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.**” The expression, “**My brethren**” is a reference to the kinsman of Christ according to the flesh, and Christ “**was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.**” It was of the “**Israelites ... whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came***” (**Romans 1:3; 9:4-5**).

Christ said to Paul on the Dasmascus road, at the time of Paul’s conversion, “**... Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?**” (**Acts 9:4**). The pronoun “**Me**” is emphatic. Paul was persecuting Christ. The question served

to arouse curiosity in Saul, for he had not heretofore met Jesus, and he asks, **“Who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest” (Acts 9:5).**The point is, Jesus was in heaven, already glorified at the time of Saul’s persecution, so the question is; “How is it then that Saul was persecuting Jesus?” We have the answer in Paul’s own words, he says, **“... I persecuted the church of God” (I Corinthians 15:9).** To persecute the church is to persecute Christ. For the anti-Christ nations to persecute the faithful Jewish remnant which God has reserved unto Himself according to the election of grace is to persecute Christ. When we read of Christ that, **“He came unto His own and His own received Him not”** it is to be understood He came unto the nation of Israel collectively. He was not recognized by the nation of Israel as their long awaited for Messiah. And when we read in the immediate context, **“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:11-12),** it is to be understood that He came to some in Israel electively. These elect ones became the Sons of God experimentally, and spiritual brethren of the Lord. Not by their own will, but of God **(John 1:13).**

In verses 41-45 the verdict concerning the reprobate nations is given. In their depraved hearts they found no room for the persecuted Jews of the tribulation period, and the Judge- King hands down His ruling against them in these heart rending words, **“... Depart from Me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”**

The last verse (46) is the benediction of this tribunal. It reads, “And these (the goat nations on His left hand) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous (the sheep nations on His right hand) into life eternal.”

Matthew 25:31-46 vividly pictures the predicament of the nations of the earth at the conclusion of the seven year tribulation period. This tribulation will affect all nations, but it will peculiarly relate to Israel. Jeremiah prophesied of it, saying, **“... That day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7).** God is not through with Israel, nor shall He ever be.

God speaking to Abraham, and of his seed, Israel, said, **“I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee ... And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee ...” (Genesis 12:2-3)**. We need to view the nations of the world regarding this promise of God to Abraham, and see what their current predicament is, for Israel is fast taking on the nature of **“a burdensome stone for all people” (Zechariah 12:3)**.

THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL

The term “predicament” means, a condition or state, wherein difficulty abounds. The U. S. Government is ever in a constant state of perplexity, and this state is being compounded daily by new and trying situations. The U. S. continues to flex her arm, and throw punches all around the world’s political ring, but the muscle power is no longer in that once great arm. Korea, Cuba and Viet Nam all attest to the veracity of the above statement. So, the dilemmas continue to mount, and Washington’s inability to handle them becomes more and more pronounced. If we cultivate diplomatic relations with Red China, we offend our faithful ally, the Taiwan government. If we act favorable toward Israel, we offend the Arab block nations which are united in a common front of none recognition of Israel. And it appears from recent U. S. policy toward Israel that the oil of the Arabs is more important to us than the long and faithful friendship of Israel. The policy which the United States has been practicing for the last four or five years regarding Israel is a “Sideline Policy.” That is, let Israel go it alone. The vital question facing our beloved nation is not détente with Russia, and what concessions to make in placating Russia, but what to do about Jerusalem is our major problem. The United States when drawing up foreign policy needs to remember the ultimatum of the Almighty, wherein He said, “Bless Israel, and I will bless you, curse Israel, and I will curse you” (ibid.). The passiveness of the United States toward Israel is not tantamount to forgetting God, but goes a long way in that direction, and God levies a heavy tax on those nations that forget Him (**Psalms 9:17**). So, it behooves every Christian in America to pray for the United States regarding this matter, and to let their representatives in Washington know how they feel. God will not forget His covenant with Israel

(Leviticus 26:42), and the United States needs to remember this covenant so as to stay Ichabod from over her national door.

PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE GENTILE NATIONS

They are to be awakened, **“Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about”** (Joel 3:12).

RUSSIA

The Prophet Joel says, **“Let the heathen be awakened.”** So, we know they were asleep. Russia, half western and half eastern slept for centuries. One historian said of Russia, “They were content to vegetate in indolence and obscurity.” But Russia was destined to be widely awakened, and her apathy set aside. The first man to disturb Russia’s slumber was one of the most energetic rulers known to history: Peter the Great. Then Mr. Lenin came along with his philosophy of communism, and Russia shook off all desire to sleep. Russia is not only wide awake, but is the leading military nation of the world, and has an unrelenting ambition to cover the earth with the communistic ideology as waters cover the sea.

Communism is the antithesis of Bible Christianity, and the nations deceived thereby manifest their goat hood. Russia is under the curse of God for her Christ hating doctrine of communism, and her ill treatment of the Jews within her boundaries. Russia and her satellite states shall stand on the left hand of Christ at the judgment of nations spoken of in our text.

The blood of the Jewish remnant within Russia is not sufficient to satisfy her insatiable hatred of the Jew, and the Prophet Ezekiel speaks of Russia’s determination to destroy Israel, saying, **“Thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts** (Moscow lies directly north of Jerusalem) **and thou shalt come up against my people Israel ... And I will turn thee back and leave but the sixth part of thee”** (Ezekiel 38:15-16; 39:2). Russia will grow weary with the bungling of her satellite states in the middle east and decide to go down and take care of Israel herself, but it would have been

better for Russia had she never been awakened, then to have been awakened against Israel.

ETHIOPIA

I am surprised, that the Free World was surprised when Ethiopia adopted communism, and allied herself with Russia. Over 2,500 years ago the Holy Spirit inspired Prophet Ezekiel said that Ethiopia would be one of Russia's allies in the invasion of Palestine (**Ezekiel 38:5**). The United States over a long period of time gave Ethiopia millions of dollars in foreign aid. This waste of the taxpayers hard earned dollars could have been prevented had our Heads of government believed God rather than man.

IRAN OR OLD PERSIA

Modern Iran, which is ancient Persia, is supposed to be one of the strongest allies of the United States in the Middle East. Recently, the Shah of Iran made a State visit to Washington and Mr. Carter, and he was given the red carpet treatment. But alas it is true, like Ethiopia, when Iran can no longer get what it wants from the United States, she too will turn to Russia and communism. The free world will be shocked and bewildered at Iran's change in policy, but again, this very event is foretold by the Prophet Ezekiel (**Ezekiel 38:5**). The best foreign policy guideline for the United States is Bible eschatology but unregenerate legislators would mock such a proposition. Ethiopia and Iran will stand on the left hand of Christ at the judgment of nations.

CHINA AND THE FAR EAST

We will now turn our prophetic periscope toward the Far East, “**And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared**” (**Revelation 16:12**).

There are three major powers in the Far East: China, Japan and India. Of these three, we will deal mainly with China, for it is China that has of recent come awake.

The word “east” in **Revelation 16:12** comes from a word which means “Sun Rising,” or more literally, “The land of the rising sun.” It is not by mere chance that Japan is known as the Kingdom of the Rising Sun. The major religion of the Japanese people is Shintoism and under the canopy of Shintoism reside a large number of deities ranging from the sun goddess, through their deified emperor, to national heroes, trees, rivers, guardian family spirits, etc.

The same is essentially true regarding India. India is known as the land of a thousand religions. The predominant contemporary thought pervading the minds of India’s intellectuals is communism. India, with her membership in the Atomic Club, and Japan with her great industrial machine will both stand on the left hand of Christ in the judgment of nations.

China was the Rip Van Winkle of the Far East. China slept for hundreds of years. China was content with her great walls, her old ways, and laborious people. But **Joel’s** prophecy (**3:12**) says, “**Let the heathen be awakened.**” Up until about 1840 China sent out no ambassadors, and received none. For a long time, Canton was the only port open on the entire China coast to foreign trade. China was in deep slumber. The U.S. took the lead in arousing China, and in 1844 sent Caleb Cushing as U.S. representative to China. Belgium, France, Holland and other nations soon had representatives in China. The sleepy giant was waking up, and coming out of her long night. Soon there were more than 40 ports open on the China coast to foreign trade. China was, for the most part of the intervening years, (1844-1946) a good friend of the United States. All along the devil has had his plan to sunder the United States - China relationship, and he executes his plan through the medium of one Mao-Se Tung. Through Mao, China becomes wide awake, stands up on her own two feet and tells the rest of the nations of the earth, “If you do not like it, you know what you can do about it.” This awakened and now belligerent China played a major role in the defeat of the United States in both Korea and Viet Nam.

Revelation 9:16 reveals that the anti-Christ armies who invade Palestine, and come to Armageddon shall be 200,000,000 million strong. These armies shall be from every God defying nation on earth. China's communism is irrevocable, and it is certain that a major part of that infamous army which goes against Israel in the battle of Armageddon will be wearing the insignia of communist China. The evidence against China places her on the left hand of Christ in the judgment of nations, and China with her teeming millions will be consigned to the everlasting burnings. Judging from the life that they lived and died, Marx, Lenin, Engels, Stalin, Mao Se Tung, Jo En Li, and Ho Chi Minh, are already in hell, and will not stand in the judgment of nations, but the nations duped by them will be there, and will be sentenced to the same hell. The nations which constitute the revived Roman empire, which will be headed up by the ultimate human anti-Christ, will stand on the left hand of Christ in the judgment of nations. The communist leaders of Africa, South America, East Europe, and every other place will stand at the left hand of Christ in the judgment of nations.

I do not mean to imply there are no saved persons in these nations now. If there is, and I believe there are a great number, this number of saved people in these nations will, along with all other saints, be taken out of the world in the rapture (**I Thessalonians 4:16-17**).

WHEN WILL THE JUDGMENT OF NATIONS TAKE PLACE?

“For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and *for* My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land” (Joel 3:1-2, Matthew 25:31).

It will be after **“the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem.”** It will be after Israel has been judged in the tribulation, and completely regathered, and vindicated openly before the nations of the world gathered in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The Israel regathered to Palestine at this time is the Israel

which has acknowledged Jesus to be their promised Messiah. It is this Israel Jesus refers to when he says in **Matthew 25:40**, “**These My brethren.**”

Actually the judgment of the goat nations starts with the first day of the great tribulation: or the first day of the last three and one half years of the seven year tribulation period. It commences at the same time that sin reaches its greatest pinnacle this side of the crucifixion of the Son of God. That is, it begins with the abomination of desolation spoken of by the Prophet Daniel, and reiterated by our Lord while on earth (**Matthew 24:15**).

“Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in the sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped” (Revelation 14:15-16). The second advent of Christ means eternal woe to all up to that time who have not trusted in the work He accomplished at His first advent. There will be some saved during the millennium but bear in mind, all that initially go into the millennium are saved (**Matthew 25:34**) .

THERE ARE MANY JUDGMENTS SPOKEN OF IN SCRIPTURE

1. The elect were judged in Christ, their substitute. “**For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21).** “**For Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (I Peter 3:18).**

2. The judgment seat of Christ, the Bema seat, or mercy seat where the faithful saints are rewarded (**II Corinthians 5:8-10**).

3. Israel is judged in the great tribulation (ibid.).

4. The Gentile nations are judged at the climax of the great tribulation (**Matthew 25:31-46**).

5. The final judgment at the white throne. This is not a judgment in the usual sense of the word. It is the time when all who have not bowed the knee to Christ in time will receive their sentencing in the eternal lake of fire (**Revelation 20:11-15**).

WHICH JUDGMENT DO YOU BELONG TO?

Remember, “**The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all nations that forget God**” (**Psalms 9:17**).

While the communist nations are avowed atheists, and at their hands the blood of millions shall be required, many of the western democracies need to examine themselves, for their religious veneer is not sufficient to cover their God defying immorality.

While we (United States) with one hand point at the evil of communism, let us take the other hand, and set our own house in order. While communism blames everything on the Jews, and Israel will be their whipping boy right down to the end, let us not compound our sin by blaming communism for it. Communism is not a qualified scapegoat on which the free world may place all their guilt. A person cannot get rid of their sin by blaming someone else for it. Neither can a nation. At His name (JESUS) every knee shall bow. I hope it is in this life, Dear Reader, that you bend the knee to Him.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - September, 1978)

Reply To A Charismatic Campbellite

Dear Mr. H----;

Thank you for your letter of 1/12/71. Your letter consisted mainly of caustic questions; nevertheless, while I resent the abrasive nature of your letter, I will endeavor to satisfy the interrogative aspect of it. Your letter provides me with the unsolicited opportunity to express my views on certain points of doctrine, for this much, I am thankful to you.

By Divine enablement I shall answer your questions, and at the same time show kindness toward you in doing so. Let me say at the very outset, I am painfully aware that there is some of the old beam in my eye, and I am far removed from perfect understanding of the holy oracles of God (**Romans 11:33; 8:2**). Christ reserved His most scathing rebukes for the self righteous Pharisees who discerned the mote in their brother's eye, while utterly ignoring the beam in their own eyes (**Matthew 7:3-5**). From your letter it is apparent that you claim for yourself a high degree of spiritual learning and maturity. Could it be that you have become in some measure afflicted with the spirit of Phariseeism? I ask this question, not to be harsh, but with the hope you will re-examine your doctrinal conclusions, for they are clearly impugned by the Scriptures.

To add to or delete from God's word is a crime of the baser sort, and the penalty affixed for such unholy conduct is awesome and irreversible (**Revelations 22:18, 19**). Nevertheless, there are legions of men who claim a Divine call to the ministry of God's inspired record, who have never experienced the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit. With their intellectual pen knife they cut out much of the counsel of God, and with their desperately wicked heart they add to it whatever suits their emotional fancy. They are referred to as "**Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever**" (**Jude 13**). Paul warns of these self-styled preachers, saying: "**From such turn away**" (**II Timothy 3:5**).

A man who is saved by the free grace of God, and called to preach the gospel of Christ, knows there is a “woe” pronounced on him if he in any wise alters the message which has been committed to him by the Saviour of sinners (**I Corinthians 9:16**). The God called man has the unfailing and heresy defeating promise that the Holy Spirit shall guide him into all truth (**John 16:7-14**). This promise is the antidote to preacher pride, and the preacher thusly blessed will not use his theological ability as a steamroller to run over people who take a variance with him, but being saved by the free and unmerited grace of God; will be gracious toward the would-be detractor. Ergo, the two thousand year history of Baptists is one of charity and long-suffering toward their brutal persecutors.

Both sacred and secular history attests to the fact that Baptists have suffered more at the hands of the great harlot church than any other people. However, God in His gracious providence has kept Baptists free from the curse of a vindictive spirit, and has taught them that vengeance is His and that He will repay His adversaries (**Romans 12:10**). Therefore, Baptists will not resort to carnal means in order to force their convictions on others, but neither will they compromise with their enemies in order to appease their wrath.

The Lord’s preachers are called to propagate His word, and the Holy Spirit is the Overseer of God’s callings and gifts, and has placed them beyond the need of repentance (**Romans 11:29**). To say a God called preacher can be perpetually inconsistent with Divine truth, is in essence to say: the Holy Spirit is ineffectual in His ministry. This blasphemous assertion Baptists carefully refrain from making, but they know the devil is a counterfeiter, and has meticulously copied every element of the Divine scheme of redemption, including the calling of preachers. So it is, his innumerable host of preachers are running to and fro over the whole earth with the beguiling message of self salvation, which is perfectly compatible with the depraved intellect of fallen mankind.

The Biblical charge given to Baptist churches is: “**Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; ...**” (**II Timothy 4:2**). That is, preach the word when your hearers approve, and preach it when they disapprove.

Baptists know better than any people that the pseudo world of Christendom is filled with malice against the Holy Spirit inspired word of God, but Baptists have incessantly and with vigor preached the whole counsel of God for two thousand years, and have suffered the vehement attitude of the world against them; counting it as a means of greater reward at the mercy seat of Christ (**I Corinthians 3:14**).

Mr. Alexander Campbell said of the Baptists: “From the apostolic age to the present time the sentiments of Baptists and their practice of baptism have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced” (The Campbell - McCalla Debate on Baptism, pages 378, 379).

Church historians have documented many statements of high ranking Catholics and Protestants wherein they declare that the antiquity of Baptists pre-dates the origin of all other churches, and in their statements have noted the willingness of Baptists to suffer for the faith once delivered to the saints. For verification of the claim made in this paragraph, all one need do is to make a cursory and unbiased study of church history.

So-called Holy Days

I am glad to say that by the grace of God, I, my family, and the church which I represent reject pagan Rome’s so-called holy days. Then too, we reject the good old USA’s Thanksgiving Day, Labor Day, the Fourth of July, etc., as having any Biblical warrant for special observance. Baptist people are exceedingly patriotic, but they are careful so as not to let their national patriotism take on a religious nature (**Galatians 4:10**).

Our present day calendar (the Gregorian) was invented by the church of Rome, and named for Pope Gregory the 8th. That is the reason why we still have the days and the months of the calendar going by the name of pagan gods. We need a calendar tabulating the days and months of the year, and Israel with all of feast days, ceremonies and sabbaths needed a religious calendar, but God’s people are no longer under the Mosaic covenant and

neither are they to be religiously regulated by the calendar rituals of pagan Rome.

Concerning the crucifixion of Christ, I believe a kindergarten student in the Holy Spirit's school of free grace will readily detect the error in the Roman Catholic hoax connotated "Good Friday" and that the "Easter" lie is a flesh pleasing vehicle carrying all who are deceived by it further and further into the blackness of religious Egypt. To say the Lord was crucified on Friday as the day drew to a close, and that He arose from the grave early Sunday morning is to call Him a liar. It is emphatically stated three times in the books of **Matthew** and **Mark** that Christ would spend "**three days and three nights**" in the grave (**Matthew 12:40, 27:63; Mark 8:31**). The partial day theory concerning the entombment of Christ is a glaring imposture conjured up in an effort to support the "Good Friday" and "Easter" delusion.

The thrice stated "**three days**" (**Matthew 12:40, 27:63; Mark 8:31**), means three twenty-four (24) hour days, and not merely one full day and fragments of two other days. This God honoring truth is the death knell to the Romish "Good Friday" and "Easter" fraud, and it leaves Protestantism with no basis in Scripture for their beloved sunrise service. The devil has many soothsayers and would-be gainsayers, but none has, or will ever be able to make spiritually enlightened people believe there are seventy-two (72) hours between Friday 6 p.m. and Sunday 6 a.m. The Saviour was entombed by the gentle hands of Joseph of Arimathea (**Matthew 27:57-59**), as the day (Wednesday) drew to a close, and was resurrected on Saturday at the same hour. Simple math = 72 hours.

The "Good Friday" and "Easter" lies are among the most glaring and fallacious inedibles in the Romish pot of death, but the natural man; be he ever so religious, never once questions the doctrinal Bill O' Fare, for it looks good to his spiritually defunct vision; and thrills the taste buds of his intellectual palate. So it is, Christian (?) America is following in the footsteps of rebellious and idolatrous Israel when that once God fearing nation was deceived by ancient Babylonian insidiousness. I am afraid our beloved America has fallen for modern Babylon's God debasing ecumenism,

and is being led down the garden path to national oblivion. May God deliver our beloved U.S.A.

However, I am happy to say, true Baptists have never symbolized with either Romanism or Protestantism; nor are they in this late and critical hour soliciting the “God Church Keeping Seal of Approval” from the Ecumenical Movement. Every overture of the Ecumenical Movement toward scriptural Baptists has been met with the words: “Depart from us, ye that work iniquity.”

Antinomianism

Your statement: “We are responsible only when we hear the truth on a certain subject” (copied verbatim - obm). This assertion is as porous as a sieve, and will not hold the smallest gem of the precious word of truth. The most ardent advocates of this untenable theory are the Hardshell Baptists, but they were not the originators of this grievous error. Long before the Hardshells appeared on the religious horizon, the Antinomians of the early fifteenth century were unloading this wood, hay, and stubble wherever they could find a dumping place.

Jesus preached the gospel to many who rejected His Word, but their rejection of His gospel did not in the least relieve them of their responsibility to obey it (**Mark 7:9; Luke 7:30**). Nothing in Scripture is more clearly stated or more emphasized than man’s need to hear the gospel of salvation, and it is the God of all grace that opens the spiritually deaf ears of His elect people and causes them to hear and obey the gospel. David sang unto God, saying: “... **Mine ears hast Thou opened ...**” (**Psalms 40:6**).

The gospel is the double edged sword of the Spirit, and He uses it in the emancipation of God’s elect from the bonds of iniquity, and in conforming them to the image of Christ (**I Thessalonians 2:13, 14; Ephesians 6:17**). Man’s lack of spiritual knowledge does not alleviate his responsibility to know all that God has revealed in His word. Man’s inability does not do away with his responsibility. “**And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent**” (**Acts 17:30**).

May I ask, “When Christ died, did He die for His peoples past sins; or for only their immediate sins?” The Bible says He died for their past sins (**Romans 3:25**), and He surely did not die for sins they were not responsible for. Christ died for all the sins of His people, past, present, and future, and never remembers their sins against them (**Hebrews 10:17**).

Your statement: “We are responsible only when we hear the truth on a certain subject” is a glorification of ignorance, for according to this premise it behooves all people to abstain from the first hearing of the gospel of Christ, and to cling hard and fast to what they believe is blissful and liberty giving ignorance. However, the Bible teaches that such ignorance is the foundation of damnation, i.e. “... **The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (**II Thessalonians 1:7, 8**). Inability to hear or understand the gospel does not negate a person’s responsibility to both hear and obey the glorious and heavenly mandated gospel of Christ. Man’s inability is the fruit of his own doing.

There are multiplied millions of people in hell today who never heard the gospel while they were on earth, but they will never say, “We do not deserve to be here” for they know better than the most informed saint on earth, that without gospel repentance there is no remission of sins, and having sinned in Adam they know their damnation is just. “... **He that believeth not shall be damned**” (**Mark 16:16**), and that irrespective of opportunity to hear the gospel. That is one of the reasons why Baptists take their commission to evangelize the earth (**Matthew 28:18-20**) MOST SERIOUSLY. The commission mandate reads: “**Teach them all things whatsoever I have commanded you**” and is a commission of light, not of darkness, as you suggest.

Adam’s sin did not make void his covenant (Edenic) obligation, but brought on the threatened penalty (**Genesis 2:17**), whereby he became totally depraved, and utterly unable to please God. Adam lost his federal Headship, and all men being in him federally and genealogically, sinned in him, and

were equally guilty as Adam and merited and received the same penalty as Adam (**Romans 5:12**).

“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Let us note first: It is every person’s inextricable responsibility of all who are blessed with truth, to put that truth into practice in their lives (**James 1:21-25**). It inevitably follows, the greater amount of truth we hold regarding Christ’s redemptive work, the greater is our liberty from the power of sin. The word of God is like a double edged sword wielded by the Holy Spirit in the regeneration and sanctification of God’s elect people (**Ephesians 6:17**). Christ said: **“Therefore whosoever heareth these saying of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24)**. Note, Christ said: **“Heareth”** and **“doeth”**. It is still true, **“the tree is known by his fruit”**, and **“every good tree bringeth forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:17)**. The fruit may vary in measure, but it will ever be sufficient to put the lie to antinomianism.

The Christian is responsible to **“Grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18)**. The believer’s incumbency extends to a hearing and doing of the whole counsel of God. This is not to say he will ever achieve this glorious end in this life, but it is to say; he has NO excuse for not pressing toward that prize and high calling of God (**Philippians 3:14**). Whatever the quantity of talents the saint may have, he is responsible to invest them wisely, so as when he appears at the mercy seat of Christ, he may hear His Master’s **“Well done” (Matthew 25:20-23)**. I would have you to understand, I lay no claim to any great degree of scholarship or faithfulness in the things of God, but the fault of my spiritual inadequateness lies with me, and not with God. Then too, I know if I would do all that which is commanded of me, I would yet be an unprofitable servant, for I would have done no more than that which my Lord has commanded me to do, and that it is the Lord who hath wrought all His works in me (**Luke 17:10; Isaiah 26:12**).

Your statement, “We are responsible only when we hear the truth on a certain subject”, invalidates the commission which the Lord gave to His church, wherein He said: “**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations ... to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you**” (Matthew 28:19, 20). According to your premise, to declare the gospel of Christ to the heathen nations would be to do them the gravest disservice, for in your notion, ignorance of Scripture nullifies all obligation to it. However, Paul said that God “**commandeth all men everywhere to repent**” (Acts 17:30), and Christ said it is either repent or perish (Luke 13:3). To contend that there is God blessed irresponsibility is to make men think they are safe in their sins, which is a damnable heresy, bordering on blasphemy.

In an effort to prop up your claim that men are not responsible unto God’s word until they hear it preached, you ask: ‘How is it possible to receive something if you don’t know what it is?’ According to the natural intellect, logic, or reasoning a person cannot receive or approve of something before he / she knows in some degree what it is, but we need to remember the Scriptures are not addressed to the carnal intellect, for they can only be spiritually discerned, and all men have not the Spirit (**I Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:9**). To affirm that a person cannot receive something until he knows what it is is to rule out faith altogether, which is to leave all men under the curse of God’s displeasure (**Hebrews 11:6**). Until a person is born from above, that is, begotten by the Holy Spirit, they are not only destitute of spiritual knowledge, but their heart is desperately wicked, and is “**enmity against God**” (**Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 8:7**).

I have never read nor heard where any saved person said that he or she understood what transpired in their regeneration, and more especially so at the time of receiving the new birth. The wisest of Israel’s kings, said: “**As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all**” (Ecclesiastes 11:5). I respectfully ask: Did you know what you received at the time of your natural birth? How many years passed in your life before you understood the elementary or rudimentary facts concerning conception, gestation, liberation (birth), and lactation? All of these are indispensable to the physical birth and well being

of every infant, and biological science admits of many insuperable mysteries connected with this process. Yet, you claim the infant while as yet in the womb, must understand all the mysteries associated with physical birth before he can receive it. I TROW NOT.

I could go along with Billy Graham's decisionism if the Bible taught natural comprehension extended to the correct understanding of the first spiritual truth, but the Bible does not so teach. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that the world by wisdom cannot know God, and the Scriptures are termed "**foolishness**" by the natural man. The Arminians motivated by sentimentality and functioning under a perverted notion of God's grace, present salvation as an offer to the spiritually blinded intellect and enslaved will of the natural man. They make man's will despotic in attaining or rejecting salvation, which is utter and fearful foolishness, for man left to his native desire invariably says of Christ: "**We will not have this man to reign over us**" (Luke 19:14).

No matter how eloquent or persuasive a preacher may be, he can never by his own power dissuade the sin loving rebel. Every attempt to do so, even with the lowest form of human intelligence manifests a gross ignorance of the way of salvation, and intensifies the darkness of both preacher and prospect. Salvation is not a question of man accepting Christ; God NEVER presents Himself for man's approbation. Salvational prerogative belongs exclusively to God, and He exercises it as He pleases; and no man has a right to ask Him, "Why?" Let us ever keep the Biblical distinction between the Sovereign Potter, and the lifeless clay (Romans 9:20, 21).

The sovereign, eternal, and immutable order is, God accepts all of His elect people in Christ His Beloved (Ephesians 1:6), and this acceptance is based on Christ's atoning and substitutionary sacrifice, whereby He merited the salvation of all whom the Father had given Him in the covenant of redemption (John 17:2; Hebrews 13:20). "**It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth (worketh), but of God that sheweth mercy**" (Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5).

Sinlessness In The Old Nature

Your contention for sinless eradication of the flesh caused me to wonder if you played with copperheads, rattle snakes, and drank poison, for where there is no sin there is no death (**Romans 6:23**). When the Holy Rollers got rid of their snakes, they should have thrown out with them the deadly heresy of sinlessness in the flesh, for it is the rankest absurdity of all absurdities. I have personally known some men, and have read after other men who have attained great heights on the mountains of free grace, but I have never heard a one of them say, nor have I read in print where they claimed to have lived one hour free of sin. They are not proud to acknowledge this truth, but with sadness they confess it. Did not the great Apostle Paul say that he was “**The chief of sinners**”, “**Wretched**” and “**Less than the least of all saints**”? (**I Timothy 1:15; Romans 7:18, 24; Ephesians 3:8**).

Honestly, my Dear Sir, have you not often sinned since you first trusted Christ?

You said in your letter: “If we still commit sin it is an evident fact that we are not born again of the Spirit.” For support of this ill conceived supposition you refer to **I John 3:9**, which reads: “**Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**” It seems as if the practice of wresting a text from its context, and thereby trying to make it say something God never intended it to say will never cease. By this kind of exegetical liberty every good rule of Bible study and interpretation is violated, and the wildest and weirdest conclusions are drawn. By the hop, skip, and jump method the Bible says: “**Judas went out and hanged himself, Go, and do thou likewise**” (**Matthew 27:5; Luke 10:37**). This example may seem extreme to you, but we are not dealing with mere peccadilloes, but with destructive heresies conjured up by mishandling of the scriptures, and in such cases it is needful to be direct and graphic.

In the context of the epistle of First John we read: “**If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us**” (1:8). “**If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us**” (1:10). These words are addressed to Christians, and John admonishes them, saying: “**My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.**”

And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (I John 2:1). There shall never be the briefest time in the life of the saint on the cursed earth wherein he does not need to pray, saying: **“God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13), “For *there* is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20).**

I John 3:9 does not teach absolute sanctification of the flesh, for our sinful nature is still with us, and the greatest war ever fought on any battlefield is fought within the bosom of the saint, between his old and new natures. **“For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17).** Sin is condemned in the flesh, **(Romans 8:3)** is not dormant, but deceitful and dangerous **(Hebrews 3:13).**

One of the great doctrines of the Bible commonly referred to as “The eternal security of the believer,” finds great support in **I John 3:9.** Even the professors of sinlessness cannot honestly deny that the truth of eternal security is taught in this text, for as they say, they cannot sin, it unequivocally follows there can be no falling away, which amounts to eternal security. Christ, by suffering vicariously for His people redeemed them from all sin, past, present, and future. The redeemed person is saved from the penalty of sin **(Romans 8:1)**, and through the Holy Spirit’s application of sanctifying grace, he is being saved from the power of sin; but the best wine is yet to come, which is to be saved from the presence of sin. Then, (and not before that time,) the believer shall experience total eradication of sin, to wit, even from the body **(Romans 8:23).** Paul said: **“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Romans 6:12).** This statement cannot possibly have any meaning to those who claim sinlessness in the flesh, yet it is written to the saints at Rome **(Romans 1:7).** It is written to warn and alert the saints at Rome of the deceptive poser of sin, and its ruinous effects.

Let us hear from Paul again: **“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Corinthians 7:1).**

Note, in this text Paul includes himself as one needing perpetual cleansing from sin. The self styled sinless eradicationists are, as they suppose, far ahead of Paul, for this dear apostle died; a sinner saved by grace. What God determined for His people to see in **I John 3:9** was not sinless perfection in the old nature, but He is telling His people in this text that sin should no longer be the ruling principle in their lives, and every son of God, while not as yet perfect, is in a warfare against the tyranny of sin.

The “**seed**” of **I John 3:9** is the believer’s new nature which is wrought in him by the Holy Spirit in regeneration, and it is this “**seed**” or new nature which God in the resurrection brings from the grave, all dressed up in its bodily suit of immortality, never again to sin.

Campbellism Critiqued

Your contention for baptismal regeneration is certainly not a novel effort. This heresy is as old as Roman Catholicism, and Roman Catholicism has been around at least fifteen hundred years longer than Campbellism. Alexander Campbell’s water salvation doctrine is a counterfeit copied from a counterfeit, that was copied from a counterfeit, i.e., Protestantism and Romanism. All counterfeits are designed to deceive, and the more subtle they are, the more abominable they are in God’s sight. People of our time who fall victim to the Campbellite heresy of baptismal regeneration are historically speaking, four times removed from the truth of the all important matter: first by Romanism, secondly by Protestantism, thirdly, by Campbellism, and finally in themselves.

When people commend themselves to God on the basis of their good works, they are pathetically and dangerously deceived; for no amount of creature works, be they ever so great can atone for the least single sin. Baptism is a good work when scripturally administered. It is then a work of righteousness. But the Scripture says: “**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us**” (**Titus 3:5**). Catholic pouring, Protestant sprinkling, and Campbellite immersion have never saved one soul, for the motive is wrong, and when the motive is wrong the amount of water is insignificant. All the oceans of water combined

together cannot wash away one sin, but the blood of one man, the MAN Christ Jesus has washed away all the sins of His people, and He never remembers their sins and iniquities anymore (**Revelation 1:5; Hebrews 10:17**).

After reading your nine page letter, written on both sides, and seeing you did not use the words “**grace**” or “**blood**” once; a heaviness of spirit overwhelmed me. I became fearful and wondered if you were not attempting to enter heaven’s wedding hall with an ill prescribed garment. The grace of God provides the true penitent with the one and only covering acceptable unto God, and that is the robe of Christ’s righteousness and his acceptance is based wholly and solely on the merits of Christ’s shed blood.

Your treatment, or more correctly stated, your mistreatment of **Acts 2:38** is but the sewing of an old patch on the already threadbare garment system of Campbellism. In Acts chapter two, Peter is preaching to Jews (**Acts 2:5**). In Acts chapter ten, Peter is preaching to Gentiles. Peter, on both occasions was preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, and it is certain he preached the same gospel on both occasions, for the Holy Spirit has only one message of glad tidings (**I Corinthians 15:1-4**), and baptism is no more a part of that gospel than a shadow of a tree is a part of the tree. Baptism is a “likeness” and a “figure” of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (**Romans 6:4, 5; I Peter 3:21**), but this glorious ordinance has no power, and no part in the salvation of God’s elect people. The gospel which Peter preached to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, was the very same gospel which he preached to Cornelius and his household at Caesarea (**Acts 10**), and this Scripture makes it irrefutably plain that Cornelius and his household were saved before they were baptized (verses **44-48**).

Campbellism teaches that **Acts 2:38** literally translated reads: “Be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ in order to obtain the remission of sins.” I call your attention to the word “**for**” in **Acts 2:38** (KJV). It is this word the Campbellites have translated “in order to”. But this translation is a Campbellite expedient, and is utterly void of translative support from the Greek word “**eis**”, which is translated “**for**” in **Acts 2:38**. The word “**eis**” is used over sixteen hundred times in the Greek Scriptures,

and it would be embarrassing to the Campbellites to make an etymological study of the word “eis”, for they would discover that the greater part of their own lexicographers denying the “in order to” definition of the term. Philip did not baptize the eunuch (**Acts 8**) “in order” for him to be saved, but because he had already, with all of his heart savingly trusted in Christ. Ananias did not baptize Saul of Tarsus “in order” for him to be saved, but because he was already saved, for he was praying to God and preaching in Damascus before he was baptized (**Acts 9:11; 26:20**), and Ananias greeted this recently converted persecutor of the saints with the endearing term “**Brother Saul**” (**Acts 9:17**). These examples are multiplied many times over in Scripture, for it is seen in every instance of baptism of God’s elect, the prerequisite of saving faith was the experience of all those who were baptized. In salvation it is ALWAYS BLOOD, before water (**Hebrews 9:22**).

In the last paragraph of your letter, you say: “There are many more truths hidden in the gospel, are you willing to receive them?” From the tenor of your letter, I believe you mean to ask: “Are you ready to receive what I deem to be gospel truth?” If what you had to offer in your first letter as truth is an example of the balance of your suppositions, then I must answer with an emphatic, NO! I am not willing to receive error at any man’s hand. AD HOC.

Oscar B. Mink

A sinner saved by the meritorious BLOOD of Christ.

(The Baptist Herald - January & February, 1992)

Reply To An Arminian

Dear Brother:

Greetings in the name of our Sovereign Lord, and merciful Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I thank you for your letter of March 22, 1984, and for the literature you sent along with the letter. I am also grateful for the candid manner in which you presented your doctrinal postulates, nevertheless I take exception to them, and trust by Holy Spirit enablement to refute them in this epistle.

Let me say at the very outset, I am not as you assume a Calvinist. By the grace of God, I am a Baptist, and Baptists preached the gospel of free and Sovereign Grace fifteen hundred years before John Calvin was born (John Calvin: 1509- 1564). Baptists and Calvinists are poles apart on ecclesiology, i.e., the origin of the church, the ordinances of the church, the government of the church, etc. Then too, Baptists strenuously oppose the Calvinistic doctrine which teaches there is soteriological benefit in the sprinkling of infants. Calvinism's pedobaptism is a compounding of heresy, first: it teaches sacramental salvation, and secondly, it is an utter departure from the Scriptural mode of baptism.

Thus it is, your presupposition that Baptists are Calvinists, is groundless, and a stigma that Baptists have for over four hundred years carefully avoided. Calvin's Calvinism is more than the Scriptures can bear, and is therefore rejected by all knowledgeable Baptists.

Salvation Of Dying Infants

1. First you ask: "Could you imagine how a holy, perfect, just, righteous, sovereign God who is also (NOT A RESPECTER OF PERSONS) just let a poor helpless innocent baby be cast into hell and the lake of fire because God did not elect that one before the foundation of the world?" I do not want to be, and will not be uncharitable toward you, but must say, your query concerning the destiny of infants who die in infancy manifests one of two

things or both, and that is, you did not think the question through before you asked it, or you are grossly ignorant of the Sovereign grace missionary Baptists position as to the eternal destiny of all who die in infancy.

Sovereign grace missionary Baptists have never had the least room in their doctrinal structure for the infant damnation theory, and affinity with those who propagate this prevarication is on the part of true Baptists, non-existent. You ill assume because Sovereign grace Baptists teach that human volition or will has nothing to do in bringing about the salvation of the soul, that they must of necessity also teach all who die in infancy are forever damned.

I beseech you, and tell me please if you can, “In what Sovereign Grace Baptist periodical did you find the doctrine of infant damnation taught, or even implied?” Moreover and more importantly, I ask, “In what Missionary Baptist confession of faith is found the least inference which gives credence to the infant damnation doctrine?”

The oldest Baptist confession of faith in America (1742), the Philadelphia Baptist Confession explicitly states: “Infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; Who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth; so also all elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word” (Chapter 10 - Effectual Calling).

John Gill, a soteriological scholar of incomparable ability, said; “There may be the principle of faith implanted, where there is not the opportunity of showing it by a series of good works, or a course of godly living, as in elect infants dying in infancy, and in those who are converted in their last moments” (Commentary on James- Page 789).

You speak of a “poor helpless innocent baby.” In the spiritual sense, babies are “poor and helpless,” but innocence is not one of their characteristics. There was only one infant born on this earth Who was innocent, and that was the sinless Son of God; all others are born of corrupt stock and in the image of their fallen parents.

There is not a doctrine in all of Holy Writ that is more plainly taught or more irritating to human nature than the doctrine of absolute depravity of mankind. When Paul said: “**There is none righteous, no, not one**” (**Romans 3:10**), he did not append it with the words; “except babies,” but he spoke indiscriminately of age. There is no age stipulated in Scripture this side of the saints’ final glorification in Christ, where man by nature is anything less than a total sinner (**Romans chapters 1 & 3; Psalms 39:5, 58:3; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 8:7, 8**, etc.).

Sovereign grace Baptists do not believe that infant mortality is proof of reprobation, but of Divine election. In an attempt to get around the Bible doctrine of hereditary depravity, Romanism and Protestantism (including Calvinists) invented pedobaptism, and the Freewill so-called Baptists did them one better by coming up with the infant innocence and age of accountability theory. But God’s covenant of redemption needs no such props or human augmentation, for the God of the Bible is absolutely sovereign, and His gracious decree of election includes the dying infant the same as it does the believing octogenarian.

Infants do not die as a result of an ancestor’s sin who is some six thousand years, and untraceable generations removed. Adam’s federal headship, whereby he represented all of his posterity was mandated by God, and when Adam sinned, the whole family of man sinned in him (**Romans 5:12; I Corinthians 15:22**). Since the works covenant of Eden was voluntarily broken by all men, for all acted in Adam, sin has not been so much an overt act as it is a state in nature.

Yet, antedating the creation of Eden by an infinite duration, there was another Headship, immutable, and eternally well pleasing unto His Father (**Matthew 3:17; Hebrews 13:8; I Corinthians 11:3**). This glorious Head is none other than the sin conquering Son of God, Who in the dateless past became the Representative and Mediator of all whom the Father had given Him in the eternal covenant of redemption (**John 17:2, 9; Hebrews 13:20**). In His office as Mediator between His covenant people and God (**I Timothy 2:5**) He stood as the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world (**I Peter 1:20**). And in view of His vicarious suffering (**II Corinthians 5:21**), we can

say without reservation or hesitation, all whom He represented in the blessed covenant of grace shall without the loss of one be with Him in glory, for all were as yet unborn, much less having infancy of days.

Infants are the children of wrath the same as others, but God can and does effect regeneration in the hearts of all who die in infancy. The God of the Bible, Who is verily the God of sovereign grace Baptists, cannot know a problem; for He “**worketh all things after the counsel of His own will**” (**Ephesians 1:11**). So, He can and does communicate to His elect and dying infants all that is needful for their heavenly entrance.

From the womb to the tomb, God has never had but one way of saving His people, and that is by the atoning blood of Christ (**Hebrews 9:22**). We can most confidently say of all infants who have gone through the door of death, “Beloved, knowing your election of God, ye shall eternally enjoy all that was procured for you by the person of your substitute, in the suffering of your curse” (**I Peter 3:18**).

One of the horrible and hateful things of the Arminian heresy is that it consigns all who die in infancy to the everlasting burnings. The Arminian system teaches no person goes to heaven unless the person by his own freewill and volition chooses Jesus to be his personal Saviour, and then with the same stroke of the pen teach that infants do not have sufficient discernment to correctly distinguish between good and evil and cannot prefer the better over the inferior. So, it unavoidably follows according to their own theology, all infants who die in infancy; owing to the utter impotence of their will and intellect are eternally damned.

However, Arminianism has from its very beginning been double tongued, and with the duality of this organ can speak from both sides of their mouths at the same time. Seeing they were faced with an inextricable dilemma their genius was set in motion, and after much exertion of their extraordinary intellectual power, they came up with the religious invention of infant innocence and age of accountability.

This insidious invention did not in the least free them from their own self entrapment, but only served to aggravate and compound their insuperable dilemma, for if infants are innocent and unaccountable unto God, as the Arminian theory contends, then it may be irrefutably concluded that Christ did not die for them, for where there is no sin; there is no need of atonement.

Furthermore, the infant innocence theory is seen by the briefest Holy Spirit given reflection to be a glaring denial of the Divine inspiration of the scriptures, for it is plainly a disavowal of the Scriptural doctrine of hereditary depravity of mankind, and relieves an infinite number of Adam's fallen posterity of their responsibility to the holy, just and sin avenging God.

David, speaking of infants said: "... **They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies**" (**Psalms 58:3**). That is, as soon as they are born, they painfully manifest what they were in the womb, and that was a sinner by nature. Thank God for His sovereign grace, and for all who teach it. God's grace is never less than absolutely sovereign; it never leaves His August throne limping, and can never be enfeebled by the mock resistance of the puny and utterly depraved will of man. It is the sovereign grace of God that reaches the dying infant with quickening power, and translates its blood washed soul to its Christ merited place before God.

Foreknowledge Of God

2. Secondly, concerning the foreknowledge of God, you stand on a faulty and uncertain foundation, a foundation conjured up and laid by Arminianism, and made compatible with every false system of theology. God hates Arminianism, for He hates every "**false way**" (**Psalms 119:104**).

I ask: "Is the God of the Bible omniscient?" Surely, your answer to this question is in the affirmative. There is no room for ambiguity concerning the omniscience of God, for the inspired record unequivocally states: "**Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world**" (**Acts 15:18**). So, without reticence, I contend God possesses infallible knowledge of every creature, and of all events of time and eternity. You take variance

with my contention, by saying, “God does not know beforehand who will accept Jesus as their Saviour.”

Let us consider the term “**foreknow**” in **Romans 8:29**, and in reading the whole text we are confronted with the inviolable truth that the foreknown of **Romans 8:29** are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s Son. Having correctly conceded that the one eternal mind is perfect in the absolute sense, and all comprehensive; that is to say: “Adam and all of his posterity are forever and fully known of God.” However the term “**foreknow**” of **Romans 8:29** has an exclusive feature, for otherwise we are forced to conclude all men are predestinated of God to be conformed to the image of His Son. They who advocate the theory of the ultimate restoration of all mankind embrace this fallacious conclusion, but no Holy Spirit tutored mind is deceived by it.

The foreknowledge of God referred to in **Romans 8:29** is more than mere pre-science or pre-cognition. It is more than knowledge of people and events. It has a characteristic which does not infringe upon His omniscience, but teaches there are a people whom God foreknew in a peculiar sense, and only those whom He foreknew in this special or peculiar sense are predestinated unto the image of God’s Son.

While God knows all there is to know about all men, He only knows some of all men intimately, affectionately, and with preference. All men were not included in the covenant of election, and all whom the covenant decree passed over are strangers to the covenant, and aliens to the loving foreknowledge of God. To all whom God does not have any covenant knowledge of, to those whose names were never in the Lamb’s book of life, to those who are the spiritual children of the devil (**John 8:44**), He says: “... Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (**Matthew 7:23**).

God’s covenant love does not reach these “workers of iniquity,” and where His redemptive love is absent, His eternal wrath is everlastingly present, and brings to pass their merited and woeful judgment. God does not know the “workers of iniquity” as children of mercy, He does not know them

as penitents, nor as children of truth, but He knows them as unmerciful, impenitents, and children of soul damning error.

Christ, “... **Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end**” (John 13:1). Was there ever a time when Jesus did not love His own? Certainly not! So it is, Jesus not only knew them in the sense of perfect cognition, but He also foreknew them in the sense of forelove or covenant grace. Christ prayed for “**His own which were in the world,**” saying unto His Father: “... **Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou has loved me**” (John 17:23). How long has the Father lovingly foreknown His Son? There is only one true and honest answer, and that is, eternally. With the same love, and for the same beginningless and endless duration has the Father foreloved all who are covenantly in His Son.

The Lord said unto Jeremiah: “**Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations**” (Jeremiah 1:5). Later it is recorded that the Lord said unto Jeremiah: “... **Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee**” (Jeremiah 31:3). It is seen from these scriptures that God’s loving knowledge of Jeremiah antedated time, and that his being drawn to God is a direct result of God’s foreknowing love.

In **Romans 8:29** Paul tells us that God predestinated, called, and justified all the foreknown referred to in this verse, and seeing all men are not thusly blessed, the word “**foreknow**” in the text must mean something more than prehension or mere comprehension of the senses. In and by His infinite counsel, God has numbered every hair on every head, counted the steps of every man. He knows the down sitting and uprising of every person. He knows every man’s thoughts long ere they ever reach the human intellect. Divine omniscience applies equally to all men, for God knows all there is to know about all of His creation. Thus it is, we are driven by honor of God’s word to conclude that the “**foreknow**” of **Romans 8:29** is not restricted in its meaning to the infinite understanding of God, but has another and more important meaning which the effects of the term testify of, and that glorious meaning is, FORELOVE.

“... The Lord knoweth them that are His ...” (II Timothy 2:19). Surely, no man indwelt by the Holy Spirit would be so crass as to construe these words to mean the Lord does not know those who are not His covenant children. To say in one breath, God is omniscient, and then say with the second breath, God does not know all things, is not only a glaring contradiction, but it also reveals a critical and urgent need for a closer familiarity with God. Yet, this is precisely what Arminianism teaches concerning the counsel of God. According to Arminian theology the Lamb’s book of life is incomplete, and God does not know who will be the next person to exercise their freewill and elect Jesus to be his Saviour. Owing to this flaw in His wisdom, God must play the wait and see game before He can add another name to the Lamb’s blood bought book. O’ inconsistency, thou are a curse. The Scripture leaves no doubt as to the antiquity of the book of life (**Revelation 17:8**), and all the names written therein have Christ for their eternal Surety (**Hebrews 7:22, 13:20**).

God spoke to Israel, saying: **“You only have I known of all the families of the earth ...” (Amos 3:2).** God knew at that time and yet knows every family or nation that has or shall ever dwell on the earth. So, it must be a peculiar and restricted sense in which He knows numberless elect within Israel, and that sense is one of forelove. All whom God knows today, He has known eternally, and all whom God loves today, He has loved eternally. There is no way to separate God’s omniscience from His forelove.

God does not decree an event because He knows it will come to pass, but the event comes to pass because God decreed it. The **“whom” of Romans 8:29** are synonymous with the **“glorified” of Romans 8:30**, and their glorification is not realized because God foreknew it, but because God decreed it. Please note the past tense of the verbs in **Romans 8:30**; this declares more than omniscient fixation of events, for it is **“whom He did foreknow”** and not merely what He did foreknow.

Arminianism’s Volitional Salvation

I quote from your letter: “In order for one to acquire life an individual must believe God at His word and of his own self choose to have life.” A

casual scrutiny of your words in the above quote reveals that in your notion, God is utterly passive in the salvation of souls, and that man accomplishes his own redemption. However, the Scripture emphatically declares that Jesus is the Sovereign and unassisted Saviour of His people (**Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12**; etc.). Christ actually procured life for all whom He represented in His substitutionary death, and it borders on blasphemy to say His intercession on the cross needs to be underwritten by the volitional power of man. God never acts except sovereignly, and He needs not nor solicits the approbation of man upon any of His works.

In an effort to validate your notion of salvation by the freewill of man, you refer to the Old Testament account of the brazen serpent lifted upon a pole. In reference to this type you say: “To ‘look and live’ was a matter of a choice of their will to exercise.” The brazen serpent of **Numbers 21** is a vivid type of Christ lifted up on the cross, where He bore the penal judgment of His people. I do not agree with you that the type teaches salvation by human volition.

Did the snake bitten Israelites look at the serpent in order to believe, or because they already believed? Can a man by carnal intellect see the true Christ before He believes in Him, or is his looking to Christ the effect of a previous divinely imputed faith? Did not Christ, the Antitype of the brazen serpent, in dialogue with Nicodemus use this very type to remind him: “... **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**” (**John 3:3**)? The new birth is not wrought by man seeing Christ, but seeing Christ is the immediate and blessed effect of the new birth.

The Israelites (**Numbers 21**) were saved from physical death by a look of God given faith toward the brazen serpent, their looking and healing was the result of their faith, and not the cause of it. Saul of Tarsus saw the Lord when utterly destitute of physical sight (**Acts 9:9, 27**). It was by the eye of faith that he saw the Lord, for at the time he was both spiritually and physically blind (**I Corinthians 2:14**). It is God Who opens the hearts of His people, and plants saving faith therein, so as they may see Christ, their eternal and glorious redeemer (**Acts 16:41**).

Your love for the Arminian fable of self salvation has not only deceived you as to how God saves His people, but it has also made you careless in the handling of Scripture. You quote God as saying through the medium of Joshua: “I have set before you this day life and death, but why will you die, therefore choose life.” Would you please cite the text or immediate context where these words are recorded? You have, and I believe unintentionally, taken words from two different books of the Bible and from four different chapters and put them together as a singular text of Scripture. I will not at this time accuse you of deceitfully handling the word of God, but it is obvious that your exercise of undue liberty in bringing together the words of your quote was an attempt by you to defend your indefensible and beloved Arminianism.

In **Deuteronomy 30** Joshua is speaking to Israel as a theocratic body. His words had to do with civil matters, with temporal blessings or cursings, and not with eternal life or eternal death, i.e., heaven or hell. Israel’s stay in the Promised Land was conditioned on their obedience to the law of Moses, but their salvation typically wrought by the blood of the passover lamb was unconditional. When any person interprets the words “Why will you die?” which are addressed to Israel to mean, “Why will you go to hell,” they flaunt all exegetical propriety, and thereby show gross disrespect for the word of God.

Our variances on the doctrines of sovereign grace and human freewill has not gendered any malice in my heart toward you, for if it were not for the unmerited favor of God wherein He caused me to see myself as the suppliant, and Himself as the Sovereign, I would be found in the Arminian camp. Whatever knowledge of God we have is owing to the Spirit of truth, and not to our vain and puffed up wisdom, for “**no flesh shall glory in His presence**” (**I Corinthians 1:29**).

Brother Oscar B. Mink

“**To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved**” (**Ephesians 1:6**).

(The Baptist Herald - July, 1990)

Proper Respect Between The LORD'S Churches

“Salute you one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you (Romans 16:16).

The last sentence of this verse will be our text for this message, “... **The churches of Christ salute you.**” This salutation to the church at Rome was not merely Paul’s or restricted to him personally. It was also from the church he was presently with, and from those he was accustomed to visit. Yea, the salutation was from the churches of Christ. The salutation was not empty speech, but carried with it an affectionate and prayerful concern for the overall well being of their sister church at Rome. In each of Paul’s personal greetings to the churches of Christ, we find these words, “**Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**” All of Paul’s church epistles begin with this loving and God honoring salutation, i.e., **Romans 1:7.**

The church which I pastor, and represent as editor of this paper, salute the churches of Christ, and all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. We greet you with affection, and prayer for your continued health, that we all may be living exhibitions of divine love and grace.

Commonality of purpose and doctrine genders in us concern for our sister churches, this concern leads to communion with them, from which we derive many spiritual benefits. Where there is lack of respect between churches, communion suffers, sometimes to the point of abbreviation, and in some instances to the point of abrogation. We do not mean to imply that communion between churches should never be broken, but we do say without fear of contradiction, every church should do all in its power, this side of a compromise of truth, to maintain fellowship with every other New Testament church.

CONTROVERSY IS NO STRANGER TO BAPTIST CHURCHES

Controversy is bound to come up in each church, and often between churches, but controversy can be resolved without the sacrifice of respect. The first Baptist Church in Jerusalem was no stranger to controversy. It was controversy in this church that gave birth to the office of Deacon. The account is recorded for us in Acts 6. **“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians* against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve 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. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude ...”** (Acts 6:1-5). A solution was arrived at, and all involved were pleased with it. (*Hellenistic Jews, not Greeks by ancestry, but by language).

Controversy is healthy where the spirit of conciliation prevails, but controversy with an antagonistic spirit can reduce a great church to such a low that it can never regain its effectiveness and harmony. This is true with a particular church, and it is also true relating to churches in their sister relationship. Paul said to the churches of Galatia, churches plural mind you, **“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty only *use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another*”*** (Galatians 5:13-15). The devil is delighted when two saints in the same church are bitter toward one another, and he must be ecstatic when two of the Lord’s blood bought churches are trying to undo each other. Therefore, a double portion of humble pie should not be too much to eat in order to defeat the waster of churches.

THE GENTILE MEMBERSHIP CONTROVERSY

There arose controversy in the first church concerning the baptism of Gentiles into the church. Peter was led of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to the household of Cornelius. They repented of their sins, then Peter asks, **“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord ... And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning and expounded *it* by order unto them ... when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”** (Acts 10:47-48, 11:2-4, 18). Those who contended with Peter over this matter had only heard part of the account, but Peter rehearses the whole matter in their hearing, filling them in on the details, and refers to the six brethren who accompanied him to the Gentile household. Then the contenders held their peace and glorified God for what had been done.

The problem was solved by the church coming together in a proper attitude, with proper respect for one another. Most of the internal problems which confront the church could be settled by the church coming together in a worshipful attitude, airing the problem in the spirit of love, and keeping in mind that the chief purpose of assembly is to worship God. Wedding and funeral services in a New Testament church are under the authority of the church and not under the authority of the bride or bereaved, thus it is they should be designed so as to worship God. This being true of wedding and funeral services, how much more should the business meetings of the church be significant regarding the worship of God in them? One of the indispensable questions every applicant for membership should be asked is: Are you willing to be bound by the majority rule of this church? A clear affirmative should be the only acceptable answer. Recognizing the authority of the church, having respect for one another, and a heart determined to worship God is the effective formula in resolving problems in the local church. With this kind of attitude one can pray at the close of the business meeting, “Lord, bless those people I voted for, and those I voted against.”

THE JERUSALEM AND ANTIOCH CHURCH CONTROVERSY

“And certain men which came down from Judea (unto Antioch), taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them they (the Antioch church) determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question” (Acts 15:1-2).

The Jerusalem and the Antioch churches came together, and those who contended for circumcision had their say. Then Peter, who was a member of the host (Jerusalem) church spoke. At the conclusion of Peter’s comments, **“All the multitude kept silence (manifesting respect) and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul” (Acts 15:12)**. After that, James, who it is believed was the Pastor of the host church spoke saying, **“That we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God” (Acts 15:19)**. Having rooted out the circumcision error, concord was restored between the two churches, and the Jerusalem church decided to write letters unto the other churches stating their position as to circumcision. The conference is brought to a close and two brethren (Judas and Silas) hand carry a letter from the Jerusalem church to the Antioch church. **“So when they were dismissed they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation ... And so were the churches established in the faith ...” (Acts 15:30-31; 16:5).**

In **Acts 15** we are given a record where two Baptist churches settled a dispute between them in a God honoring way, and the New Testament churches of today are equally capable of settling disputes which may arise between them, seeing they are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit as the apostolic churches.

Respect for sister churches is imperative in resolving hurtful differences between them. The absence of respect gives way to dishonor, and dishonor

brings a hurried death to the once cherished sister relationship. Thus, it behooves the Lord's churches to do all in their power to preserve respect for sister churches.

A CHIEF CAUSE OF CONTROVERSY BETWEEN CHURCHES

Receiving into membership people who have been excluded by a sister church is one of the main causes of controversy among true churches today. Every controversy which arises in a local church is not going to be settled peaceably, and the exclusion of irreconcilable members is inevitable. And I want to add for emphasis sake, sentiment should never be a deterrent to this necessary action.

Immediately following our text wherein Paul says, "**The churches of Christ salute you**" he says, "**Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them**" (Romans 16:17). Verkuyl says the term "**avoid them**" used by Paul in this text means, "keep away from them." Which meaning would certainly bring a cessation of church intercourse for the excluded member.

The purpose of excisive discipline is to recover the erring so as he may be "**sound in the faith**" (Titus 1:13). Once a member has been justly excluded from the church he has but one honest recourse. That is, to own his error, repent of it, and seek the forgiveness of the church from which he was excluded. This action by the penitent results in a joyous welcome by the church with all rights and privileges of membership restored.

The law of courtesy, love, and respect for the sister church invoking excisive discipline should serve to deny membership to the excluded person in any of the Lord's churches prior to restoration to membership in the disciplining sister church. If the disciplining church has gone out of existence, the excluded person may be received into another church by confessing his error, and being sorrowful for it. To neglect these conditions in restoring the excluded is to make a farce out of church discipline.

Nevertheless, a sad and true commentary could be written regarding the deterioration of respect between churches regarding this matter. A church that takes into its membership a person justly excluded from a sister church shows disrespect for the sister church, and nullifies the discipline of the sister church. Moreover, the receiving church makes herself a candidate for stern rebuke from the Head of the church, Jesus Christ. In plain language, it is a dangerous practice, and should be avoided for the sake of the disciplined member, for the sake of one's own church, for the sake of the sister church, and above all for the honor of Him Who bought the church with His own precious blood. To be justly excluded from a true church is to be out of fellowship with that church, and to be out of fellowship with the church is to be out of fellowship with the Lord. To be out of fellowship with the Lord is to be out of fellowship with all the Lord's churches. Therefore, to receive the justly excluded person into membership would be an affront to God.

A child, being justly disciplined by its parents, may become angry, leave home, go to the home of its mother's sister, and ask to take residence in her home. A wise and concerned aunt would counsel the angry child, and send it home to her sister and its loving parents. We need to understand that spiritual relationships are vitally more important than temporal earthly relationships, and are to be handled with the utmost care, for they have eternal consequences connected to them.

Church independence and autonomy does not grant the right for one church to cancel the proper action of a sister church. Yet, some inconsiderate person will remonstrate by saying, "No church has the right to tell another church who or who not to take into its membership." That point is well taken, but there is another side to it. Every New Testament church has the same commission from the Lord. That commission is to observe all things whatsoever the Lord has commanded, and to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. It cannot be honestly denied that the receiving of a person into membership who has been excluded by a sister church nullifies the disciplining power of the sister church over that person, and greatly impedes the power of the sister church in carrying out the commission assigned her by the Head of the church. The Lord endowed His churches with power to attract, and power to repel. For a church to disregard the exercise of the

repelling power of a sister church is to incur the disfavor of God, for in so doing the receiving church diminishes the efficiency of the sister church. A church would have to be ultimately naive not to be grievously affected by some sister church taking into membership a person who has been excluded from her membership. For the excluding church not to be grieved would show a critical lack of informed judgment. Furthermore, for either of the churches involved to think fellowship can continue between them as before is to be self deceived and the most destructive lie is the one a person tells himself.

RECOMMENDATION

True churches should not receive people into their membership who are under the disciplinary action of a sister church. The question may be posed, “How about when a church errs in the discipline, and unjustly excludes a member, can we not receive them?” It is possible for a church to err in its discipline of a member, but not very probable. Then too, who is better qualified to judge in this matter, the church or the excluded person? When it is ascertained that a church erred in excluding a member, and is not willing to rectify the situation, then the excluded person may be, and ought to be received into one of the Lord’s churches. Yet, it remains where there is a question as to the propriety of the action of the sister church in excluding the applicant, the church whom the excluded person makes application for membership, should contact the excluding sister church about the circumstances leading up to the discipline. Such action is bound to serve the good of both churches, and tend to reconcile the disciplined person and the excluding church.

Where these steps are neglected and a sister church receives into her membership one who has been excluded by a church, gives the disciplining church a basis for a just grievance against the receiving church. The offended church would be within its rights to restrict fellowship with the receiving church. Yea, they would be just in formally breaking fellowship with the inconsiderate church.

May God grant us the grace to continue respect for our sister churches,
and to help them in bringing honor to our God.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - November, 1978)

Restricted Redemption

“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine” (John 17:9).

It is unequivocally clear from the words of Christ in the above text and context that there is a people for whom He did not and would not pray. John seventeen (17) is the priestly or mediatorial prayer of Jesus whereby He intercedes for the **“many”** whom the Father had given Him in the covenant of eternal redemption (verse 2).

In His sinless humanity or as the perfect man, Jesus prayed for His enemies, but all the functions of His mediatorial office were restricted to only those whom He substitutively represented on the cross. Speaking of His redemptive blood, Christ said: It **“... is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).**

Quantitatively, the **“many”** whose sins Jesus bore in His body on the tree is not the Adamic family, and only by forcing the term (**“many”**) and obliterating its restrictive significance can it be made to accommodate the general atonement theory.

Christ said, **“...The scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).** However, He did not say they could not be wrested, twisted, or distorted. Peter said, the **“unlearned and unstable wrest”** the scriptures to **“their own destruction” (II Peter 3:16).** The natural man, to whom all scripture is utter foolishness (**I Corinthians 2:14**), has not only perverted God’s word in making the sacrificial blood of Christ to be the indiscriminate offering for all mankind, but from his desperately wicked heart he has compounded his foolishness by teaching that mans’ eternal destiny is determined by his own volitional power.

The salvational efficacy theory of the will of fallen man is exceedingly pleasing to his intellectual palate, yea, it is his most relished doctrine, but in the end it will be more bitter than gall, and he will in vain try to spew it out

of his mouth. **“Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel” (Proverbs 20:17).**

The unrestricted redemptionists are long on believeism, but are fatally short on Bible. Their error is Satan’s dye by which he attempts to bedim the color of God’s plenary and inspired fabric of truth, and thereby keep his dupes confused and use them to confound others and compound their own guilt. Yet, the word of God remains untainted, and that inerrent and immutable word, says: **“... The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep” (John 10:11).**

Metaphorically speaking, Christ died for His sheep and for His wheat. Realistically speaking, Christ died for His **“many sons”**. Goats never become sheep, tares never become wheat, and the children of the devil never become the children of God (**John 8:44; 10:11; Hebrews 2:10**). Christ said to the self salvationists of His day: **“Ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep” (John 10:26)**. They were perfectly content with their supposed scheme of redemption, and Christ knowing the irreconcilable and absolute depravity of their hearts said unto them: **“Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life” (John 5:40).**

THE UNRESTRICTIONISTS CHARGE GOD WITH JUDICIAL DISPARITY

They who have cast off the restrictive character of Christ’s atonement teach that Christ died for all the sins of all men, and at the same time own the truth that some people are already in hell and that others are going there daily. This is not merely a glaring inconsistency on their part, but it is to charge the infinitely holy God with injustice. God does not exact payment for sin twice, once at the bleeding hand of His beloved Son, and then again at the hands of those for whom Christ paid the full ransom price.

God does not punish sin twice, once in Christ, and then again in the burning woes of hell: **“Payment God cannot twice demand, first at my bleeding Surety’s hand, and then again at mine” (Toplady).**

All for whom Christ vicariously suffered are no longer under the condemning power of sin or the curse of the law (**Romans 8:1**), and Christ stands as their sin scarred and eternal Surety in the perjureless court of the just and almighty God.

The infinite counsel of God in the salvation of His elect has never been less than absolutely sure, and it is gross ignorance for man to try and arraign Omniscience before the bar of human reason. God did not give His Son, in Whom He is eternally well pleased, to make salvation possible, nor even probable, nor did He give Him to put mankind in a redeemable state, but He gave Him to make salvation sure in the experience of all whom He had become Bondsman in the covenant of redemption (**Hebrews 7:22**). It would be the ultimate violation of justice for God to exact payment for sin from a person whom God Himself had made Christ that person's sin bearer. Perish the thought!

TWO DIVERSE COMPANIES OF PEOPLE

Regarding man's everlasting destiny it is declared in holy writ that there are two distinct classes of people, and two diverse destinies. From the very onset of time the redemptive and reprobative distinctions are clearly delineated and manifested in God's word. In **Genesis 3:15**, God, the sovereign pre-determiner of all beginnings and endings, not only sets the two companies within the family of man in juxtaposition, but emphasizes the distinction and alienation between them. Speaking to the serpent and indirectly to the devil, God says: "**And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (He) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**" In these words we see two distinct and variant seeds.

Speaking of the "**works of the devil**" the apostle John writes, "**In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil...**" (**I John 3:8-10**). Those to whom the righteousness of Christ has been imputed cry out: "**God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (**Galatians 6:14**). Contrariwise, those who hate the Divine nobleman's cross bearing Son, cry out: "**We will not have this *man* to reign**

over us” (Luke 19:14). From the early dawn of human history the world has had its Cains and its Ables, its Esaus and its Jacobs, its Pharaohs and its Moseses, its Judas Iscariots and its Pauls, its Popes and its God fearing martyrs. In this the children of light and the children of darkness are manifest. Notwithstanding, it is the glorious gospel of Christ that separates between the wheat and the tares, and shall succeed in making the distinction between them apparent in spite of the devil’s loathsome birds sent forth to pluck it up (Matthew 13:4, 8; Romans 1:16; 10:16, 17; II Thessalonians 2:13, 14).

It is incontrovertible, if Christ died, as the Arminians claim for all men unrestrictively, then all men would be reconciled to God, for their penal judgment was suffered by Christ, in their room and in their stead. Then too, Christ’s death being the cause in the removal of the sin of mankind, the effect following the cause would be universal salvation, for where there is no sin, there is no condemnation, and hell is left without a reason for existing. The general atonement argument is an impossible hypothesis, glaringly absurd, void of intellectual merit, and can never be a part of the faith of God’s elect. It is a satanic device to rob God of His glory in the salvation of His people, and to stir up the spiritual idiocy inherent in the natural heart. But thank God, His blood bought people are not ignorant of this God dishonoring and soul damning device (II Corinthians 2:11).

In the final and awesome separation of the vessels of mercy from the vessels of wrath, the elect stand on the right hand of Christ, the place of infinite mercy and favor, and He says to them: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). In the final and fearful assize, Christ will say to that “world which knew Him not” in the days of His humiliation: “... I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23). Christ never knew them as His elect, and consequently, He never knew them with covenant love.

The natural man sees no merit or value in the blood of Christ, and in his incessant rebellion against God, tramples that precious blood underfoot. Without the sovereign intervention of God in the life of the natural man he will go on and on in the way that seemeth right unto him, and will at last enter

the wide gates that leadeth to everlasting destruction. But the beneficiaries of atoning and restrictive grace are pilgrims on the straight and narrow way, from whence there is nothing to turn back to, and which leads through the shining and everlasting gates of Glory.

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished.” A merited damnation and a merciful deliverance (**II Peter 2:9**).

(The Baptist Herald - February, 1990)

Reverence In The Worship Service

“Let all things be done decently and in order”. (I Corinthians 14:40)

New Testament churches are to **“Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2:10)**. And the chief place and time for the adorning of the doctrine is during the worship service of the church. A church, correct to the letter, but slothful in propriety or decorum during the worship service is like unto a house half complete and decrepit. It has been the good pleasure of the God of all grace to open the understanding of His churches, and cause them to see Him high and lifted up. The Holy Spirit has taken the things of Christ, and has showed them to His churches, and they have become doctrinally strong. But they must also realize that orthodoxy in doctrine is worth little to nothing without due reverence for the presence of Christ during the worship service. Adult worshippers need to be fully aware at all times of the solemnity of the occasion, and parents should with utmost diligence train their children for this highest of all earth’s privileges. The greatest business in the world is that of the Lord’s blood bought church, and its worship service should never be approached with an insincere spirit or attitude of indifference.

PROFIT FROM OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

“Now all these things happened unto them (Israel) for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (I Corinthians 10:11). Moses received the Law from the mouth of the Supreme Lawgiver, and declared the same unto Israel. When the tabernacle and the ark of testimony were finished, he assembled the whole congregation of Israel before the tabernacle, gave them by tribe their stations in the camp, and the orders and service of the tabernacle. The tribe of Levi was given the responsibility of the tabernacle, and from the tribe of Levi twenty-two thousand priests were made and the order of service was dictated to them. The sentence of death was passed not only upon the pagans and heathen who would desecrate the tabernacle, but also upon every Israelite who assumed undue liberty toward the tabernacle. The Levites with

guarded reverence for their duty in and with the tabernacle showed their devotion to God, and to His order of service.

Seeing that with all due reverence the Levites drew near unto God (**Numbers**, chapters **1**, **2**, and **3**), should not New Testament churches regard with the greatest dedication those holy oracles and ordinances which have been committed to their charge? Where there is reverential fear of God there will be proper respect for the worship services of the church. When that fear is wanting, there will be disorder, indecency, and impropriety, which bespeaks contempt for God's church and His command to do all things "**decently and in order**".

COUNTERING CONFUSION

"For God is not *the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints*" (I Corinthians 14:33). Irreverence is a forerunner of confusion, and confusion begets dissension, and dissension is the mother of schism, and when schism is finished it brings forth the ruin of the church. Where irreverence consistently prevails in the church, it might be that God has taken His leave of the church, seeing that He will not abide where the honor and glory due His name is turned into confusion and shame. **"Give unto the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalms 29:2).**

There is nothing the devil hates more than he does true worship of the Son of God, and he knows there is nothing more conducive to good singing, teaching, and preaching than an attentive congregation. Therefore, he is determined to distract the worshippers, and thereby bedim the glory of Him Who bought the church with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**).

The success of the worship service of the church depends not only on what we put into it, but also on what we leave out of it. Let us put as much of heaven into the worship service as we can, and heaven's first law is order. Let us leave out of our worship service as much of the world as we possibly can, for the measure of the world that enters into the service is the exact measure of irreverence and slight shown unto God. Let us not ally ourselves

with the world, and contribute to the downgrading of the church worship services by inattention, whispering, writing notes, added comments, etc., etc. **“Know thou how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God ... “**
(I Timothy 3:15)

(The Baptist Herald)

Sentimentalism

SENTIMENTALISM, A VICIOUS ENEMY OF THE CHURCH AND PASTOR

Sentimental: “Marked or governed by feeling.” (Webster).

THE PASTOR:

1. CAN NOT PREACH Election because the daughter of Brother and Sister Elite, is in attendance with her family, and they belong to an Arminian church. And we do not want to offend them.

2. CAN NOT PREACH ON BAPTISM because some of the church members have loved ones who have been sprinkled, and they would surely believe the Pastor’s remarks were directed toward them.

3. CAN NOT PREACH ON CLOSED COMMUNION, for some will feel left out, and nobody likes that left out feeling.

4. CAN NOT PREACH ON MISSIONS, because we do not want to offend our members or visitors who have some Primitive Baptist kinfolks.

5. CAN NOT PREACH CHURCH TRUTH, for there are some good people in the invisible church, and many of them are fiends to some members of our church.

6. CAN NOT PREACH ON HOLY LIVING, for everyone sins. Therefore, we are not qualified to rebuke our brother or sister for sinning. **“Who is it that is so sin free that they can cast the first stone?”** (It was rank and God defying hypocrites to whom Christ put this question; it was not addressed to the church. The Lord’s church is not only qualified to officially rebuke sin, but is commanded of the Lord to do so (**John 8:1-10**; **I Corinthians 5:12-13, 6:2-3**; **Romans 6:14-15**; **I John 2:1**).

7. CAN NOT PREACH STEWARDSHIP, because Brother Hardship is in debt way over his head, and to preach tithing would be like rubbing salt in his wounds.

8. Etc.

**THE SHAMEFUL RESULT OF THE ABOVE
SENTIMENTAL RESTRICTIONS IS A CHURCH AND
PASTOR THAT SIMPLY, CAN NOT PREACH!**

Nevertheless, the word of God admonishes every New Testament church and Pastor, saying: **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” (II Timothy 4:2).**

And the first New Testament preachers said: **“... WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN” (Acts 5:29).**

Sincerity

“It does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere in what you believe.”

This is the prevailing and popular philosophy in contemporary Christendom. This philosophy is an outgrowth of the soul destroying error which teaches, “It does not matter what a person believes about religion, as long as he is sincere in his belief.” The person who believes a lie can be just as sincere about it as if it were the truth. The charge of insincerity cannot justly be made against the Muslims or Buddhists, yet their utter sincerity does not compensate for the soul damning error which they believe.

Thus it was with Eve in the garden of Eden, she believed the devil’s lie, and was most sincere in what she believed. Yet her sincerity in believing a lie did not win for her the least measure of favor in the court of divine justice. The threatened penalty was executed; Eve lost her exalted position in the Edenic economy, and became the first woman sufferer on earth.

In matters of religion the Pharisees of Jesus’ day have had none to excel them in sincerity. Christ speaking of their sincerity, said, “... **Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte** (Christ did not stop with that remark, but went on to state the effect of their ill directed sincerity), **and when he is made ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.**” (**Matthew 23:15**). There is no excuse for insincerity, and it is certainly not our aim to belittle sincerity, for there is so much sham, pretense, and hypocrisy in Christendom that it appears as if true sincerity has all but taken leave of the earth. So it is today a real blessing to find a person who is sincere in his moral practices. But in matters relating to the eternal destiny of the soul, sincerity apart from divine truth is a tool of the devil to further aggravate the already condemned state of fallen men. All men need to take sincere heed to the twice repeated warning of God, “**There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**” (**Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25**).

Let us be genuinely sincere, but let us make sure that our sincerity does not lead us to such a woeful end as is appointed unto all those who are sincere in what they believe, but have believed the devil's lie as to the way of salvation. Jonah was truly, and fearfully sincere when he said, "**Salvation is of the Lord**" (**Jonah 2:9**). And any gospel which calls for creature contribution to the redemptive work of Christ, be it ever so sincere, is another gospel, which in the true sense is not a gospel, but the sincere work of Satan to damn the souls of men. Often the pathetic, too late, and sincere lament is, "I did not know the gun was loaded." But the person's sincerity provides no comfort to the bereaved. Many have been the sincere intentions to start going to church, and begin a new life, but in spite of their sincere intentions many of these same people will stand before God eternally condemned.

Stewardship Of Time

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

We poor mortals are slaves of time; there is hardly a thing we do that is not governed by time. The clock sends us to bed, and the clock wakes us up. The clock sends us to work, and the work day is closed by the clock. So, in his earthly stay man is bound by time, time ushered in his birth, and time will carry him through the portals of death. There is **“a time to be born, and a time to die” (Ecclesiastes 3:2)**. However, there is a sense in which time is the servant of man, and of this particular aspect of time, man should ever be aware, for his state (not place) in eternity is determined by the way he utilizes the time granted him on earth. Time is sacred and the scriptures lay great stress upon the urgent and wise use of it. Never was there, nor shall there ever be any time to kill. There is from the Divine perspective no such thing as unused or neutral time. Man is, every moment of his existence either for or against God (**Matthew 12:30**). Knowing our days are few, and that we are as the grass which withereth, let us join our prayer to that of the Psalmist, **“Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”** In so doing, we shall redeem the time (**Job 14:1, Psalms 90:12, 1 Peter 1:24**).

Time in itself is not evil, but good. It is the negative use of time that is evil. The fruit Eve partook of was not evil, but good, her misuse of it was evil. When time is used to gratify the flesh, that time is ill spent and can never be redeemed. Knowing in some measure the power of selfishness, it behooves the disciple of Christ to marshal all the forces of good at his disposal, and deploy them so as to preserve the sanctity of his time. The natural man spends every waking moment fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind, and never stops to think that he shall give an account unto God for every idle word spoken and every misspent moment (**Matthew 12:36, Job 7:18**). Moses chose rather to redeem the time than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (**Hebrews 11:25**). And Job tells us that the sin season is short, **“The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment” (Job 20:5)**.

While the stewardship of time is an awe some responsibility, it should not serve to create in us a frenzied zeal. Such zeal is the mother of disorderliness, and would be a hindrance rather than a help in the proper use of our time. Redeeming the time does not mean that we are to forfeit all physical rest and recreation, but what it does mean is, whether we eat, drink, pray, or play, we are to do all to the glory of God (**I Corinthians 10:31**).

Thieves of Time

Someone has said, “Procrastination is the thief of time.” It is without doubt that a lot of time is lost due to procrastination, but procrastination is not the only culprit whereby time is lost. Laziness, carelessness, sensuousness are all thieves of time, and are more subtle and hurtful than procrastination. Sensuousness is not necessarily that which is manifestly sinful, surely those things are sensuous, but any and all things done in obedience to our fallen nature is sensual. It is a joy to get company, especially family whom you have not seen for awhile. On the other hand, considering the eternal perspective, it is readily seen that no company, be they ever so precious is worth getting who will take time from you which you owe to God. He Who purchased the church with His own blood, and grants man his every minute, has said to those baptized into His church, forsake not the assembly (**Hebrews 10:25**). Yet, the supposed excuse for absence, “I got company”, seems never to wear thin. One day, that seemingly genuine excuse will regretfully be seen under the heading, I WISH I HAD NEVER SAID THAT.

The time spent at an old fashion family picnic is evil if it keeps a person from discharging his duty to God. What shall we then say of television, theater, carnal literature, and the like? All of these are unmasked and announced thieves of time, and to allow these things to steal from us time which we owe God, is equal to leaving the burglars the key to our home while we are away. There are one hundred and sixty eight hours in a week, and if a person attended all the regular services of his church he would spend approximately five hours per week in the house of God. Apart from providential leave it is the Christian’s duty to be in every service of his church, and we need to keep in mind that God knows the difference between

His providence and our perfidy. It is the member who attends consistently that realizes, he is yet an unprofitable servant, for he knows he has done no more than that which was his duty to do (**Luke 17:10**). He also knows, if he fails in this part of his duty, he will be less likely to succeed in any other.

The Christian may become careless in punctuality, and form a habit of tardiness. Such a habit is never more malicious, nor the person more guilty of time stealing than when repeatedly late for church service. There are occasions when Divine providence hinders, resulting in late arrival, but let us not compound guilt by blaming God for human dilatoriness. It is the general rule that when a person is late for church services he adversely diverts the attention of at least a few people in the assembly for a few minutes. Ascertain the number of people distracted by the late-comer, multiply that number by the number of minutes their attention was interrupted, and the total will be the measure of time stolen from them by the unthinking and careless person. The aggravation is furthered, for the usual thing is, the speaker is momentarily distracted by the tardy person, which results in the whole assembly suffering an undue loss of time. The tardy person has unlawfully and permanently taken away part of the most important commodity God has given to man, time. The eternal law says, ‘Thou shall not steal.’ And this law applies to time as well as money. The habitual time thief knows there is no human court to which he is amenable for his theft, so all corrective admonitions fall on deaf ears, and he merrily continues his repulsive habit. However, there is a court to which he has been summoned, and in which appearance he will not be one second late. In that court he will be caused to see his abuse of time, and the harm he did to others by it. **“So then everyone of us shall give an account of himself unto God” (Romans 14:12).**

Now Is The Accepted Time

Serving God is not for spare time, when there is nothing else to do. With God there is no “Spare time”, and the faithful know God has not given them one minute to consume upon the flesh. They know that their King’s business is urgent, and that His program allows for no delays.

Man's economic philosophy is, "Time is money. But let us remember man's philosophy and God's determinations are often contrary the one to the other. The King of time and the Lord of life has not said "Time is money", neither has He said, "I will wait for your service until you become affluent." But the omniscient economist has said, **"Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"** (James 4:13, 14). God has not said, I will wait until you establish a career, or reach middle life, or retire, and then you may serve Me. But He has said, **"Remember the Lord Thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days (age and sickness) come not ..."** (Ecclesiastes 12:1). And He has said, **"Look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest"** (John 4:35). There is no time like the present, and "now" is all the time we can be sure of. Thus, the urgency is constant, for the time of our departure from this fleeting life is always at hand (John 7:6). God demands and deserves the preeminence in all things, and except He have it in our dispensing of time, then He has it in nothing else in our life. The sum of what a person is when they face God is the result of the way in which they spent their time in this life. Seeing then that our sojourn here is so very brief, let us not waste a minute of it, but utilize it in such a manner so as when our days reach their end we can say with Paul, that tireless and busy apostle, **"I am now ready to be offered"** (II Timothy 4:6). Christ said to His church, **"Ye shall by My witnesses"** (Acts 1:8). He did not say, I expect you to be My witnesses, nor did He say, I hope you will be My witnesses. He said, **"Ye shall be My witnesses."** Once a person is saved he mounts the witness stand where his life's testimony is judged by the world. He may be a good witness or a bad witness, but he is a witness all the time. When he squanders time, he steals from God, from others to whom he owes a better witness, and he robs himself of precious time and opportunities he can never redeem. How is it with your life's time card? When God asks you about this day, and He surely will, where will it appear, on the credit or debit side of the eternal page? May God grant us the strength to **"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time"** (Colossians 4:5), for **"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"** (I Corinthians 4:2). God's all

sufficient grace has supplied the believer with every means necessary to enhance his life, and all these means come to us in the vehicle called time. Let us pray for Divine enablement so as to guide our particular vehicle in being about our heavenly Father's business.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - June, 1981)

Table Talk On Election

“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” (Ephesians 1:4)

“**According as,**” looks back to verse 3, of Ephesians one, and the words “**hath blessed.**” These words speak of a past action on God’s part, in which He bestows the blessing of being chosen in Christ before the world began. Plainly, Paul says, “The salvation of the elect from their utter ruin has for its foundation the eternal and gracious choice of the Sovereign God.” The Greek word from which the English term “**hath chosen**” comes, literally means, “to mark off” or “select out” for one’s own self. “**According as,**” or in conformity with the Divine choice, the believer’s blessings issue forth.

The words “chosen” or “choose,” are used in various ways in the New Testament but in **Ephesians 1:4** the word “chosen” relates specifically to the salvation of sinners from the curse of God’s broken law. The Greek word for “chosen” is “eklego”, and is in various other places in the New Testament translated “elect.” Seeing then, the choice or picking out was the exclusive action of God, and that it was “before the foundation of the world,” it is correct to refer to the objects of this merciful choice as, God’s eternally blessed people.

Ephesians 1:4 unequivocally sets forth the doctrine commonly referred to as “Unconditional election,” and to argue against truth, while claiming to be a Bible believer would not only be enormously inconsistent, but would also manifest a deep rooted and dangerous deception. There is no doctrine in the Bible which magnifies God’s sovereign mercy more than the great truth of election. While the doctrine of election exalts God to His rightful place, it at the same time exhibits the attribute of mercy by declaring the helplessness of man to save himself. The doctrine of Sovereign election, and utter human depravity, are parallel truths which glaringly embellish the whole fabric of divine revelation. These doctrines are not found only in Ephesians one and the epistle to the Romans. Although one scriptural text or utterance would give them eternal validity, God has in mercy colored every scriptural thread

with these great truths. Seeing then, the scriptures are replete with these truths man is left without a cloak for his ignorance of these doctrines.

The spiritual ignorance and inability of man is due to his depraved nature, where in his every facet is totally corrupt, so much so, that he cannot do the first thing to please God. So, we are unavoidably driven to the conclusion, if any are to be saved, God must do the saving, and seeing God does save some, it cannot be successfully denied that He intended to save them before the world began. This fact is stated in the text, **Ephesians 1:4**, and various other scriptures, such as **Acts 13:48**, **Romans 8:29**, **II Timothy 1:9**, etc. And we are reminded; “**Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world**” (**Acts 15:18**).

While the decree of election is not salvation per se, it is a Divine guarantee that Jesus ‘... **shall save His people from their sins.**’ (**Matthew 1:21**) So it is, **Ephesians 1:4** says, election is of God, and merited by Christ. “**He (God) hath chosen us in Him (Christ).**” The doctrine of unconditional election is hated by the vast majority of professing Christendom with a rancor that excels their animosity toward the most loathsome reptile, and sadly, this God honoring doctrine is vigorously opposed by the so-called Fundamental Baptists. The Hardshell Baptists have from their beginning (1831-32) presented this glorious truth in a deformed posture, and have thereby driven many to the self- salvation camps of the Arminians.

When the truth of election is correctly understood, it will become the means of humbling pride, and purging human conceit. It will strip man of all his supposed godliness, and evoke praise to the Lord of Glory. The doctrine when correctly held lays man in the dust of humility at the feet of Him, Who said, “**Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you ...**” (**John 15:16**).

Until the saved person comes to see the truth of sovereign eternal unconditional election he cannot come near to appreciating the finished work of Christ in his behalf, nor can he be an effectual disciple of Christ. On the other hand, the person who sees this truth in its proper light will realize the enormity of his sin, he will detest his old nature and will be enabled by the Spirit to own his great debt to God’s free grace.

The standard Arminian remonstrance is, “How about ‘Whosoever Will’?” Our argument is not with the scriptural teaching of “Whosoever will,” but with the blasphemous doctrine which claims God cannot accomplish His purpose to save from sin, lest man join his will to that of God’s, or that God must first get the approbation of man before He can save him. The Bible does teach, whosoever will may come, but it teaches more along that line, Christ says, “**All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me ...**” (**John 6:37**). In the same chapter (**John 6:44**) Jesus says, “**No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him ...**” “May come,” speaks of permission. “Shall come,” speaks of ability. Election does not prevent a man from coming to Christ, he has the permission to come, and nothing prevents him from coming except his own inherent depravity. No man whoever came to Christ was ever turned away, and the coming of man to Christ is of God’s enabling grace. God’s elect may come to Christ, and SHALL come to Him, and when they do come to Him they will then, and only then realize it was all due to the drawing power of the Father. “**Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee,...**” (**Psalms 65:4**). God says His people shall be willing, but their willingness is not the result of their power, but of His power. “**Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power ...**” (**Psalms 110:3**). Mans will is not to come to Christ (**John 5:40**), and left to his own will is as sure to be in hell as Lucifer himself. But thanks be to God, some are caused to see the righteousness wrought by them is as filthy rags in the sight of Him Who said, “**Not of the will of man, but of God**” (**John 1:13**). They come to Christ willingly and joyfully, but this willingness and joyfulness has for its basis, whether they are conscious of it or not at the time, God’s merciful decree of election. One can search in vain, not only the writings of Paul, but the whole of Scripture to find one person who claims that his coming to Christ has for its initiative, his or her own decision, rather than God’s. We love Him because He first loved us, and we come to Him after He has first come in saving grace to us. The chosen of God are the ones who come to Christ, and those who come to Him are identical with “**whosoever believeth**” of **John 3: 16**.

“**Salvation is of the Lord**” (**Jonah 2:9**). To say man has a part in his salvation is equal to saying the clay had a part in directing the mind of the potter, and thereby determined what and where it would be. But you know,

and I know, and every sane person should know, there is no cooperation on the part of the clay with the potter. Yet, when it comes to spiritual matters, Arminianism divorces itself of all reasoning, and argues that the clay has power over the potter. The question of the Heavenly Potter is, “**Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?**” (Romans 9:21). To oppose the doctrine of Divine election is to go against the plainest revelation of Scripture, and is in essence to deny the authority of God’s word. BEWARE!

Christ says, “... **Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me**” (John 6:45). Man’s natural intellect is enmity against God (Romans 8:7), and cannot hear nor learn of the Father. Therefore, man must be given a new mind and hearing ears before he can come to Christ, these are gifts of God’s elective grace, and it is God’s prerogative to do what He will with His own.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - June, 1981)

The Balm Of Gilead And Baptist Churches

“Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?” (Jeremiah 8:22)

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” (I Corinthians 14:33)

“Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?” Israel had lapsed into sin, in rebuke God had sent judgment after judgment upon His chosen people. At the time Jeremiah posed this question, their sin had become so intense and hateful God was provoked to loosen the Chaldean armies against Israel.

Consternation and desolation prevailed throughout the land, yet, the nation, as a whole, continued to rebel against God. The nation was spiritually diseased, its remaining health waning, and God was sorely displeased. Jeremiah did not ask this question because he did not know the answer. But he was making entreaty of the people, earnestly imploring them to turn back to God. Israel would have no difficulty in understanding the question. They knew the prophet was addressing them in figurative language, and that he referred to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the nation's personal Physician. They knew he referred to the law of God, and its Passover lamb, whose blood was a sure stay against the judgments of God.

The land of Gilead on the other side of Jordon was a part of the country of Israel, where a peculiar plant grew which yielded a special and precious balm for physical healing. The plant, being pierced, issued a resin which because of its healing virtue became a valuable commodity. It was used to cleanse sores, heal deep wounds, as eye salve, as an antidote for the bite of poison serpents, it was commonly held by Israel to be beneficial in the healing of all manner of disease.

In the literal sense, Jeremiah asks, “Has God ceased to be God, is He not yet able to forgive our sins, and restore our strength?” Many of God's

dealings and dispensations with ancient Israel are of great typical value for this present age, and particularly for the New Testament Church.

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (I Corinthians 10:11). So it is Gilead’s balm may be held as a fit type of the shed blood of Christ which is all comprehensive in its curative powers. The lack of a cure for Israel’s disease was not owing to the want of balm, or of a Physician, but to their own unbelief and folly. The medicine was in ready and sufficient supply and their Physician able. Another thing adding to the peculiarity of the balm is, the plant was indigenous to Israel only. God vouchsafed this anti disease balm to Israel, and made other nations beholding to them for it.

God gave the Passover lamb to Israel, and to no other nation. Egypt, which is a vivid type of the world, had no atoning blood, or soul healing balm. The only way an Egyptian could be saved was to own Israel’s God, and appointed lamb. The typical blood was shed in Israel every day for 1,500 years, and with each sacrifice they were reminded that **“It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11).**

Institutional Glory

The lines and treks of God’s elective decree shall ever be a mystery to the unglorified saint, with hindsight he can see where it has run (**I Thessalonians 1:4**), but he cannot tell in a personal way whither it goeth. During the Mosiac economy some Gentiles were saved, including Rahab the harlot, Naaman the Syrian, the widow of Sidon, Ruth the Moabitess, etc. However, I have not read of any who were saved independent of the typical gospel of Israel, or her spiritual balm. I do not mean to imply that every person saved beyond the progeny of Israel became a devout proselyte. It would be illogical to assume this seeing that many native Israelites had problems keeping their own ordinances (**Acts 15:10**). Yet, in Israel only was God’s institutional glory vested. Only Israel had divine ordinances, and Israel was the only nation God promised to meet with in an institutional

sense. **“And I (God) will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.” (Exodus 29:45)**

As in ancient times when God restricted His institutional glory to Israel, He has in this age made the New Testament church the repository of that same glory, making the church the **“pillar and ground of the truth,”** committing to her His ordinances, and promising her His perpetual presence (**Matthew 28:18-20; I Timothy 3:15**). Of the Mosiac institution we read, **“In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion.” (Psalm 76:1-2)**. The seat of God’s institutional glory was in Israel, and manifested through the temple worship services in Jerusalem. God, in infinite wisdom has chosen the New Testament church to be the seat of His institutional glory for this age, and in view of this fact, Paul says, **“Unto Him (God) *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:21)**. There were other religious institutions in the days of Israel, but Israel was the only one instituted by God. There are today sundry churches in divers places, but only one (kind) has been divinely instituted, and all others are false churches. The churches to whom the Lord has committed the proclamation of the gospel, all missionary enterprise, and in whom His institutional glory resides are Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist churches. Baptists are not the only people making this claim, but it seems they are the only people labeled “bigoted” for doing so. Investigation will reveal that many denominations make this claim for themselves, and others which are not so dogmatic in asserting the same for their church, yet contend that their particular group is more perfect in degree than all others. Any church that is not built after the New Testament model is not merely a false church, but is the antithesis of the true, and whether conscious of it or not, every ecclesiastical exercise of an ill-founded church is an effort to bedim the glory of the true.

New Testament Baptists hold that the Lord baptized the church in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and that this baptism was of an institutional nature. This baptism not only attested to the fact that the church had superseded the Jewish institution with its typical gospel, but with this baptism came the indwelling, and empowering of the already existing church

by the Spirit. This glorious manifestation of the Divine presence in the church was prefigured by the Shechinah glory filling the tabernacle (**Exodus 40:34-38**), and later the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem (**I Kings 8:10-11**). By this baptism the church takes up the banner which Israel let fall through harlotry, by this baptism the church becomes the exclusive ecclesiastical institution with the favor of the self-revealing God. Through the church the Spirit will apply the healing balm of Gilead, rather, the blood of Christ to all for whom He was pierced. They are ever beholding to the church for the message of redemption, and apart from this message there is no healing of the soul. The devil knows it is through the Lord's churches that the Spirit calls out the elect of God. He knows that the church reflects the glory of God, and to obscure that glory he afflicts the church with many loathsome diseases.

Spiritual Afflictions of the Church - I Corinthians 14:33

(A.) Heresy and error are terrible diseases which spreads like cancer, and is a constant threat to every New Testament church. Too often the little church must go to the great Physician and plead for the healing balm of Gilead because of this agonizing sore. This disease, like cancer comes in many forms and gradations. One of the most deadly being Arminianism. Some of the symptoms of Arminian carcinoma are:

1. The lifting up of carnal reason above that of Divine revelation. This symptom manifests itself in the doctrine which leaves the eternal issues to be settled by the volitional power of the creature. It is eternally fatal to trust the destiny of the soul to human rationalization, rather than Scripture revelation.

“... Lean not unto thine own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5)

2. Calling attention to religious performances, rather than high lighting the work of Christ, and the power of imputed righteousness, is another sure sign of Arminian carcinoma.

Why is it churches have the one year, two year, five year and ten year Sunday school pen if it is not to impress their peers? In most cases the disease is fatal and its terminal nature is made apparent by the efforts of the

church to replace the work of the Holy Spirit with human enthusiasm. No means to inspire and excite the religious energies of the flesh are overlooked, and one of the highlights of the Sunday morning service is when the Pastor asks the “Soul Winner of the Week” to stand up!

Thus it is the redemption of souls is ascribed to the power of the corrupt reason rather than to the efficacious and free grace of God. Such practices are not merely unscriptural, but are anti scripture. The church which lets the Arminian error spread to such an extent described above has turned from the Great Physician and His healing balm to the great pretender, and his soul damning bane Like cancer, early detection of the Arminian heresy is absolutely essential. The first symptom should alarm the church, and cause her to employ the swiftest motion on fleeing to Him Who has the heavenly balm. For it is yet true, **“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”** (Galatians 5:9)

(B.) Schism and division among church members is a loathsome and hurtful disease. **“... It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!”** (Luke 17:1). **“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”** (Galatians 5:15)

While the disease which causes sheep to bite and devour one another is irregular, it is usually chaotic A hateful and dreadful disease it is which turns brotherly converse into vain janglings, and begets alienation of affection. The malady is all the more grievous when the sheep are in the blood bought sheepfold, with the Great Physician and Head present in their assembly. The spirit of strife and division can only exist where love for the Lord and His church have diminished, and when strife comes in, godly edifying goes out. What a strange distemper it is that makes church brothers and sisters renounce communion with one another in whom they once took the greatest delight. One sad aspect of this disease is that it usually originates with issues not vital to the welfare of the church. Such as; who should sing what parts in the church choir or groups, a plurality of organ and piano players can give birth to envy and jealousy apart from due restraint, an oversight in greeting, thermostat settings on heat and air conditioners, etc. We do not mean to imply

these things are not important. They are important but they are not of such magnitude as to cause the first element of bitterness in the church. The first schism in the body is the devil's floodgate through which every manner of evil pours into the church. **"For where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work."** (James 3:16)

"Opinions are like noses, everybody has one," but woe to the person or party that would so press their opinion as to expose the church to the scorn and derision of her enemies. Schism in the body tends to hinder prayer, demands time that could otherwise be used for the propagation of the gospel. It lowers eternal assets on the scale of values, spiritual interest declines, and in short time indifference will prevail. O, how the devil must rejoice over this calamitous state of the Lord's church. Jeremiah said to God's ancient people, **"Thy breach is great, like the sea, who can heal thee?"** (Lamentations 2:13). Surely none but He that hath the balm of Gilead. The Great Physician's prescription calls for preventive medicine. **"There should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another ... submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God ... And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another ... to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God..."** (I Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 5:21; I Thessalonians 3:12-13).

Adherence to this prescription will keep the church in such state of health that when offences do come they will be of brief duration, and handled in a manner that edifies the church and glorifies God. The balm works negatively in putting away from the church, **"All bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking,"** it works positively enabling the church to **"be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven"** the whole church (Ephesians 4:31-32).

(C.) Unsettledness in doctrine is a grievous disease with which contemporary Baptists are afflicted.

Many are filled with the wine of instability, and are “**reeling to and fro like drunken men,**” (Isaiah 24:20), first to one side of the doctrinal street, then to the other side. Paul said to the church at Ephesus, “... *Henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine ...*” (Ephesians 4:14). This certainly does not mean a person is unalterably bound to his original concepts, but it does mean that doctrinal vacillation is a mark of weakness, and that change in doctrinal position is to be made only after much prayer, meditation, and laborious study. Eschatology has become a labyrinth, and every doctrinal turn seems to demand another. Some have gone from pre-trib doctrine of the Lord’s return to a mid-trib view, then on to post-trib, and finally put their anchor down in the murky waters and shifting sands of A-millennialism. All this irresolution has caused so much confusion that some have given up altogether the study of prophecy and eschatology. There is constant traffic between the two schools of thought regarding the instrumentality of the gospel in regeneration. The result being, many have parked their doctrinal vehicle on the plausibility lot, and have left it in neutral so as no ill wind can blow against it. This is a worse state than being an erring zealot, for they which purge themselves of all dogmatism are in love with their disease and cannot see any need whatsoever of the healing balm. Like the alcoholic, he is sick, does not know it, and will listen to reproof until the first free drink comes along.

The balm which should be appropriated to cure the spiritual crippling brought on by doctrinal unsettledness is found in **Hebrews 12:12-13** , “**Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.**” The earlier a Christian can formulate doctrine the better, for he will not spend his spiritual life in a piecemeal way, constantly doing and redoing his doctrinal structure, He will become steadfast in his belief, and will be able to contend for his faith, (**Acts 2:42; Jude 3**). Paul not only knew Whom he believed, he also knew what he believed, and in the benediction of his life he said, “**I have kept the faith**” (**II Timothy 4:7**).

Conclusion

Heresy and error, schism and division in the church, unsettledness in doctrine are all devastating diseases, but we need to remember where these diseases abound the sovereign balm doth much more abound. It is said of our gracious Lord, He **“healeth all thy diseases” (Psalm 103:3)**. The church is never afflicted with a sickness which is beyond divine remedy, but no cure will be effected until the church owns the cause of the disease to be their own. The Great Physician cherishes the weakest grace in His beloved bride, and when she cries out from a penitent heart for healing, He makes a house call with healing in His wings. Our Lord advances the cure by weakening and restraining the power of sin. He breaks the bonds and loosens the fetters whereby His people are bound to self. He straightens them in duty, and they **“Walk before the Lord in the land of the living” (Psalm 116:9)**.

Many are stubborn, determined to have their own way, and will not honor Christ’s prescription for healing. They will not drink the liquid of self-denial, or of repentance, or of contrition. The pill of personal sacrifice and mortification in their notion costs too much, so they are left to languish in their disease, not knowing it is the mother of utter corruption, culminating in the extinguishing of all light.

A brief word to the unsaved in closing. The world in which you live is a spiritual leprosarium, and you are a spiritual leper. There is no cure for you apart from the heavenly balm, the shed blood of Christ. Prayer, baptism, good works, morality are all wonderful in their place, but they contribute absolutely nothing to the healing of the sin sick soul. It is the sacrificial blood of Christ, and nothing but His blood that heals the eternal soul of its damning disease, and the Great Physician will not be satisfied with anything less than full honour for the soul’s cure.

May God bless you to see in Christ Jesus all the balm you need for time and eternity.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - August, 1979)

The Baptist Name

The designation “Baptist” has, in the last century, lost much of its superlative nature, and in the contemporary period there are many denominations and thousands of churches going by the name “Baptist” who do not claim any ecclesiastical ancestry or perpetuity which antedates the sixteenth century reformation. It is most regretful that they have taken to themselves the appellation “Baptist”, for it is readily seen from their doctrine and history that there is no biblical kinship between them and the Lord’s churches which preceded the Protestant reformation.

The contention that there were no churches going by the name “Baptist” for the first fifteen hundred years of church history is, without the least hesitation admitted, but it is an admission of no great import, for it has to do with name only, and not with doctrine or practice. Pseudo ecclesiology has given the name “Baptist” a generality that is inclusive of all immersionists, irrespective of their origin, doctrine, or practice. While baptism is a vital part of the body of Divine ecclesiology, it is not in itself sufficient to merit the name “Baptist”, for baptism apart from the other biblically prescribed elements necessary to the constitution of a New Testament church is a debauchery of the ordinance and a grave disservice to the subject.

The glorious gospel of Christ has been enshrined in New Testament Baptist churches, and this gospel has been cherished, preached, and preserved pure by them for two thousand years. Baptist churches have not had the elaborate cathedrals, massive choirs, clerical collars, and polished crosses, but they have biblical Christianity with its simplicity, authority, and presence of God.

The name “Baptist” was given to the Lord’s little flocks by their enemies with an evil intent. However, we can by retrospect clearly see the hand of Divine providence taking their efforts to stigmatize the Lord’s churches, and causing it to redound to the glory of God, and the good of His churches. Even though the name “Baptist” is no longer a definitive, it is the name by which the Lord’s virgin and age climaxing churches will enter the

bridal chambers in glory. Thus it is, Baptists say to their would-be detractors: “**Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good**”.

While it is true, the Lord’s churches did not go by the name “Baptist” during the first fifteen hundred years of church history, it is equally true that there were churches during this entire period which espoused the same doctrines, and adhered to the same practices that contemporary New Testament Baptists propagate and practice. “A rose by any other name is still a rose”; and a Baptist church by any other name is still a Baptist church.

It is an incontestable fact that from New Testament times unto the fifteenth century there were churches that tenaciously followed the teachings of Christ, and these same teachings are found in present day New Testament Baptist churches. Therefore, it is within the realm of propriety to say those early churches were Baptists, even though they went by various names.

The following passage is taken from the “*History of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands*”, by Doctors Ypeig and Dermont, Ministers of the highest standing in that church: “We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and have long, in the history of the church received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles; and as a Christian society which has preserved pure doctrines of the gospel through all ages”.

One identifying mark of Baptists by whatever name they have been called in the past two millenniums has been their undeviating insistence upon a biblically prescribed morality. Owing to their strict adherence to heaven’s code of conduct, they were often called the “Cathari”, a word meaning, pure. There is in our present time ecclesiastical offsprings of the Cathari, going by the name “Baptist”, who fully realize the perpetuity of their respective churches is contingent on their practice of abstention from moral evil and doctrinal deviation from the biblical standard. (**I Thessalonians 5:2**).

The name “Baptist” was at one time a disparaging epithet in the reckoning of Catholicism and Protestantism. However, in the last fifty years much of their rancor toward the Baptist name has diminished, for the simple reason the name in the generic sense has become hardly more than an expletive. By far and large, churches wearing the “Baptist” name, beguiled by the spirit of ecumenism have denounced the claim of Baptist perpetuity from New Testament times, and have historically identified with Protestantism, which is the first and irreversible step toward spiritual Babylonianism.

The apostasy mentioned in the above paragraph should not in any way discourage Baptist churches who have been blessed with the glorious truth of their New Testament origin, and have been given the hell defying promise of age long perpetuity. Let us disdain every false way, even if it wears a “Baptist” name; for we know the people divinely honored with that name are easily distinguished from their God debasing counterfeits.

As to doctrine and practice, the “Baptist” name is as old as the church which Jesus started while He was on earth, for only in Baptist churches is the whole counsel of God preached, and the ordinances kept as they were delivered to the first church by Christ the Lord. Baptist hearts are filled with gratitude, precious memories, and admiration for the pioneer Baptist of America, and for the Baptists of England and Holland from whence they came; but our Baptist heritage antedates our European ancestry by fifteen hundred years.

However, there are today, especially in America, a great number of churches wearing the name “Baptist” for the simple reason they immerse their membership candidates. Scriptural baptism is the door whereby a person enters the membership of a Baptist church, but there is a lot more to a Baptist church than a door. Nowhere in Scripture is the church metaphorically referred to as a door, but the church is often alluded to as a house, and there is much more to a house than a door. (**I Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6**). There is more in the commission of the church than baptism, for there are numerous other doctrines delineated in Scripture, and everyone is profitable unto the church. (**Acts 20:20, 27; II Timothy 3:16**).

While it is true, the name “Baptist” is not absolutely essential to the constitution of a New Testament church, it is equally true that there is not, nor shall there ever be any sufficient reason for the Lord’s churches to deny that time honoring name. New Testament churches should not let people who feign and fictionalize the “Baptist” name diminish their love and respect for that name which God in His all wise providence has given to His blood bought churches. Let us not drop the name “Baptist”, but keep it, and add to it whatever prefixes and suffixes that are necessary to distinguish our churches from all false churches, by whatever name they may be called. “A good name is better than riches”, and there is no better name than “Baptist”.

(The Baptist Herald July, 1994)

The Campaign Of Armageddon

The Battle of Armageddon is more of a campaign than one single battle. The Greek word “polemon”, translated “battle” in **Revelation 16:14**, signifies a war or campaign, while “mache” signifies a battle. The Battle of Armageddon is a theological term. The Biblical term is “**the battle of that great day of God Almighty**” (**Revelation 16:14**).

The campaign starts in the last half of the tribulation and culminates when Christ returns to deliver Jerusalem.

I. THE TIME

1. The Day of the Lord (**Zechariah 14:1**) and the second coming (**Zechariah 14:5**).

2. When all nations are gathered in Armageddon (**Revelation 16:14-16**) and when Christ returns with the saints (**Revelation 19:11-21**).

II. THE PLACE OF THE BATTLEFIELD

1. Armageddon (**Revelation 16:16**). The Greek word means “hill and valley of Megiddo.” It is located west of Jordan in northern Palestine. Also called plains of Jezreel or Esdraelon. It is the famous battlefield of the Old Testament. It was the scene of two victories: Barak over the Canaanites (**Judges 4:15**) and Gideon over the Medianites (**Judges 7**). It was the scene of two disasters: the death of Saul (**I Samuel 31:8**) and the death of Josiah (**II Kings 23:29-30**). Judas Maccabaeus conquered the heathens there (**I Macabees 13:49**).

2. The valley of Jehoshaphat (**Joel 3:2, 12**). This is the name of a deep ravine outside Jerusalem, separating the holy city from the mount of Olives. It was not called such until the fourth century after Christ. It can read in the Hebrew “The Valley of Jehovah’s judgment.”

3. Valley of passengers (**Ezekiel 39:11**). Probably the same area now called the valley of Jehoshaphat.

4. Edom and Idumea (**Isaiah 34:1-6; 63:2-6**). This is south of Jerusalem.

5. The mountains of Israel (**Ezekiel 39:2-6**).

6. Jerusalem is to be the center of conflict (**Zechariah 14:2**).

7. It will take in the whole land of Palestine (**Ezekiel 38:9, 16; Revelation 14:20**).

III. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CAMPAIGN

1. The invaders of Palestine.

(1) The northern confederacy (**Ezekiel 38:1-12**). Gog is the ruler of Magog (Russia), Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobalski), Persia (changed to Iran in 1935), Ethiopia (Sudan), Libya, Gomer (Germany), Togarmah (Turkey), and many people (Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, etc.).

(2) The kings of the east (**Revelation 16:12**). This points to Japan, China, Korea, India, and surrounding countries.

(3) The king of the south (**Daniel 11:40**). This is Egypt and other Arab nations.

2. The allies of Palestine.

(1) The ten kingdom, of federated nations under the Beast (**Daniel 2:40-45; 7:23-27; Revelation 13:1-10; 17:13**). Antichrist will make a covenant to protect Israel (**Daniel 9:27**).

(2) Other nations will protest and maybe help (**Ezekiel 38:13**). Tarshish was the farthest limits of the western world as known to the

Hebrews. This is Great Britain, the old lion with the young lions such as the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, etc. which came out of the British Empire. Sheba and Dedan are Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

IV. THE ORDER OF THE CAMPAIGN

1. Egypt and the Arabs attack Palestine (**Daniel 11:40**).
2. The King of the revived Roman Empire comes to defend Israel, a province of his kingdom (**Daniel 11:40-44**).
3. The northern, eastern, and southern confederacies invade Palestine (**Ezekiel 38:14-16; Zechariah 12:2-3; 14:2**).
4. It appears all hope for Israel is lost (**Zechariah 14:2**), and then Christ comes with all the saints and the angels (**Zechariah 14:3-9; Revelation 19:11-16; Ezekiel 38:18-23**).
5. Antichrist is destroyed (**Daniel 7:11; II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:19-20**).
6. The great slaughter (**Revelation 14:20; Isaiah 63:1-6; Ezekiel 39:8-15; Revelation 19:15, 21**).
7. The fowls eat the fools (**Ezekiel 39:17-22; Revelation 19:17-18, 21**).

Conclusion

This is the last war of the “**times of the Gentiles**” and it ends with the smiting stone of **Daniel 2:35** ushering in the 1,000 year reign of Christ.

The Deceitfulness Of Pride

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

Pride in a man’s heart is a seed bed which produces many a foul fruit. I will mention a few: “Arrogance,” (Proverbs 8:13), “Contention,” (Proverbs 13:10), self-deception, “**The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee**” (Obadiah 1:3). These are but a few of the un-tasty fruits which grow on the ugly vine of pride.

From personal experience many preachers know something of the deceptive power of pride. Looking forward to Sunday, the pastor asks God in prayer for a message and for divine enablement in delivery of the message. God, in grace, grants his petition, and after the sermon someone is kind enough to speak complimentary of the message (there is nothing wrong with paying the preacher a compliment, if it comes from the heart, and you realize the preacher is but an instrument of God), due to the deceptive power of pride, the compliment is often taken wrongly and the preacher takes to himself the credit which belongs to God.

No saint has ever risen so high in his cultivation of humility that all of his pride was left behind or even suppressed to the point of absolute dormancy for a single minute. Neither has the skid row bum sunk so low that he cannot look down his nose at someone else and find a basis to be proud of himself.

As soon as a man be born in this world he embarks on an ego trip, “They go astray speaking lies,” (Psalm 58:3) and the most of his lies are spent in bragging about himself. Most of the auto-biographies which I have read amount to nothing more than brag books. The reason is; “**Every way of man *is* right in his own eyes**” (Proverbs 21:2).

Did you ever hear a person pray, saying, “Lord keep me humble?” There is an element of pride in such a prayer. The meekest saint needs to

pray, "Lord make me humble." I heard a person say one time, "I am proud that I am humble." O' the deceitfulness of pride.

Jesus used one statement on three different occasions in three different sermons. He was not afraid someone might say, "He repeats himself." Each time Jesus used the statement it fit perfectly with the lesson He was teaching, and the principle set forth in the statement pervaded all of His teaching. The thrice stated words of the Master, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted," (**Matthew 23:12; Luke 18:14**). On every occasion it was used to counter human pride, and it points up the fact that the seats of honor in glory are reserved for those who humble themselves and practice self-effacement.

Let us note some Scriptural accounts of destruction which resulted from the deceitfulness of pride.

Pride Brought Lucifer's Fall

Lucifer's declaration of independence is recorded in **Isaiah 14:12-15**. In this Scripture the second will is introduced to the universe, and every "will" that endeavors to act independent of God is in great measure motivated by pride. Lucifer says five times in quick succession, "I will," and in each instance a desire for self-exaltation is manifested. Lucifer says, "**I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.**" God says, "**Whosoever exalts himself shall be abased**" and He says to Lucifer, "**Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit**" (**Isaiah 12:15**). By this Scripture we are made aware of Satan's destruction and doom yet, we need to remember this prophecy is at this date unfulfilled. Satan has lost the honor of being the anointed cherub but he has not lost his earthly principedom. It would help us if we remembered Lucifer had a throne, and that he is still the "**Prince of the power of the air**" and "**the god of this world.**"

It was through pride that our first parents in the garden of Eden fell. Eve gave a hearing to Satan's challenge of God's word. (WARNING! Do not reason with the Devil. He is far more cunning than the wisest saint in the realm of the intellect.) The lies of Satan, "**Ye shall be as Gods,**" instilled

pride in Eve. She “**saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.**” (Genesis 3:6) Since it worked with Eve, Satan has tried it with all of her children, but the aged and sagacious apostle John warns, “**For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever**” (I John 2:16-17). Lucifer’s was the original God defying pride, and though he was the highest in the order of God’s creatures, pride plummeted him to the pit of eternal destruction (Revelation 19:20).

Pharoah’s Pride

God says to Pharoah, “**How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me?**” (Exodus 10:3). Pharaoh was the proud and haughty king of Egypt, and at the time the most powerful monarch on earth. But what he did not know was that God had attached a woe to every crown of pride (Isaiah 28:1). Egypt throughout Scripture is a type of the God debasing world, and Pharaoh is a clear type of proud man who goes on and on in his rebellion against God. God says, “**Man’s pride shall bring him low**” (Proverbs 29:23). Man’s pride will either bring him low in penitent humility, or bring him low in the regions of the damned. Pharaoh’s pride made him obstinate, and carried him onward in a course of definite destruction. His pride was as a millstone around his neck, or “**as a chain**” (Psalm 73:6), leading him onward and downward to a muddy grave at the bottom of the Red Sea.

“**... Blessed *be* the Lord, Who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh. The Lord *is* greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly *He was* above them.**” (Exodus 18:10-11)

Pharaoh said, “**I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.**” Pride always over estimates the power available to it. God, in asking

Pharaoh, “**How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me?**” asks it of every son of Adam. To the person whose eyes peer this page, and as yet have not bowed the knee unto Christ and acknowledged His Lordship, God says to you, “**How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me?**”

The Scriptures declare that all men, by nature, are proud (**Romans 1:30**), and that God knows the proud afar off (**Psalms 138:6**). So, it does no good for a man to try and hide his pride under a cloak of mock piety. “**For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart**” (I Samuel 16:7). And he sees the unregenerate heart deceived by pride, which deception prevents man from seeking after or having the first thought of God (**Psalms 10:4**). As pride kept Pharaoh on the path of destruction, so it is with all men who persist in their proud rebellion against God, and as Pharaoh was drowned in the depths of the sea, so shall they be plunged in the depths of the lake of eternal destruction.

Belshazzar’s Pride

“**And thou ... O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart ...**”
(**Daniel 5:22**)

Belshazzar lifted himself up in pride against the Lord of heaven by profaning the vessels of the Lord’s house (**Daniel 5:23**). Belshazzar’s pride is all the more abominable when viewed in the light of God’s rebuke of his father Nebuchadnezzar, for his pride. Of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel says, “**His heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him**” (**Daniel 5:20**). Nebuchadnezzar learned his lesson well, and we hear him say, of God, “**those that walk in pride He is able to abase**” (**Daniel 4:37**). And Daniel says to Belshazzar, “**And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knowest all this**” (**Daniel 5:22**). Belshazzar was weighed in the balances of God’s infallible justice, and was found wanting. He lacked humility and that very night Belshazzar was slain. He lived proudly and died in infamy. “**When pride cometh, then cometh shame ...**” (**Proverbs 11:2**).

Satan knows man is born with a heart filled with pride, and this pride makes man an easy prey for Satan. Pride is that element in fallen man's nature which causes him to keep his eyes on self. Satan, knowing of this terrible deficiency in man's nature, intensifies his deception by making man believe he has the power to determine his own eternal destiny. Pharaoh and Belshazzar have long ago learned otherwise, and while proud men go on in their pride, patting themselves on the back, they too, are going to learn the lesson that it is only 18 inches from a pat on the back to a kick in the seat of the pants. God speaks to the proud and says, "**Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord God of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee**" (Jeremiah 50:31). Yet, stubborn pride remonstrates, "**Have we not done many wonderful works?**" (Matthew 7:22). O' the deceitfulness of pride.

Russia's Pride

Nikita Kruschev, while premier of Russia, said, with a smirk on his face and a belligerent fist raised toward heaven, "If there be a God in the heavens, our sputniks and mutiniks will knock him out of the heavens." Such a statement is born of ignorance and pride, and strong words are mostly used by weak people. Hear proud Russia say, "**I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; (Israel) ... to take a spoil, and to take a prey**" (Ezekiel 38:11-12). Russia could try this any day now and when the armies of the USSR attempt to execute this proud desire, God enlists the forces of nature to defend His people Israel, (Ezekiel 38: 22-23). God says, "**I will call for a sword against him**" (Ezekiel 38:21). Peter and James both tell us, "**God resisteth the proud**" (James 4:6, I Peter 5:5). So great is Russia's defeat that five sixths of her army is destroyed (Ezekiel 39:2). Atheistic communism learns for sure the God of the Bible is the God of heaven, for in this battle Russia is forever knocked out of the earth's political sky. O' the deceitfulness of pride.

A Right View Of The Cross Humbles The Pride Of Man

“And being found in fashion as a man, He (Christ) humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:8) Saul of Tarsus was a proud, haughty, stubborn, stiff-necked and high-minded Pharisee. He boasted and gloried in his Phariseeism. He was the son of a Pharisee, and lived as a Pharisee (**Acts 23:6, 26:5**). In due season he met the meek and lowly Messiah on the road to Damascus, and there his Phariseeism was burned out by the radiance of Him whose remembrance Saul was endeavoring to erase from the earth. Afterward, we hear the voice of humility say, **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (I Timothy 1:15)**, and, **“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14)**. Humility is a wonderful virtue, and should be sought after by all people, but when humility is put on parade, it turns to pride of the worst kind. A preacher of my acquaintance said, “I have a bad fault. God has blessed me with a broad knowledge of the Scriptures, and when I get an opportunity I put this knowledge in a display case for everyone to view.” O’ the deceitfulness of pride.

A public school superintendent said he wanted to get saved, but he did not want to get saved in the Wednesday night prayer meeting. He wanted to get saved on Sunday morning when there would be a crowd of people present. Some people feel the same way about gifts to the church. They make sure everybody knows they contributed.

Man, in his fallen nature, is a proud creature, and spreads himself like **“a green bay tree.”** By his word and his works he calls attention to himself, and pride is never more hateful than when it detracts from the cross of Christ. Looking at the cross and counting the wounds in the blessed body of Christ, helps the saint to get his eyes off himself, and goes a long way in subduing pride.

An old country Baptist preacher met one of his neighbors on the road who was of a different kind of church. After the usual greetings the neighbor said to the old preacher, “Brother Baptist, you are not very humble are you?” The old brother replied quite seriously, “No, I am not half as humble as I ought to be, but I feel sure you are a humble man.” To which the neighbor

replied, “Yes, I am, and I show it by washing the saint’s feet.” O’ the deceitfulness of pride.

The things Paul was proud of before he was saved, he counted as dung after he was saved (**Philippians 3:8**). Lost friend, how many are the things you are proud of? Take all your assets, every penny; put them all together on one package with your supposed good deeds. The grand sum of which cannot purchase one square inch in heaven’s boundless acres. The supreme accomplishments of the flesh while they give great buoyancy to pride are but the means of driving the soul downward from God.

May God, in grace, grant every reader of these lines to see the deceitfulness of pride, and turn in humility from the soul damning pride with which we all are born. The greatest truths are the simplest, and the greatest men are the meekest.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - May, 1978)

The Ethiopian Eunuch - A Reply

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.” (Acts 8:26-40)

I prosecute this work with the knowledge that it is rarely possible to refute all that an opposing view may offer, and it is not my purpose to relegate all you have said on the subject to oblivion. Nay, it is my purpose to be constructive in dealing with your objections, hoping thereby to establish a basis for further consideration by you of what is said herein, whether they be

so or not. If this much is accomplished, my exposition will not be altogether vain.

I believe you have listed your objections according to the order of importance to you, and I will consider them as chronologically listed in your letter. Hence:

1.) Collective voting by a church as relates to water baptism, and the reception of members into the official church. You state, “If we believe that baptism is into the local church, we must do one of two things:

A. Postpone baptism until we can have a vote of the church (which I saw in the GARBC and rejected as unscriptural).

B. Baptize into the membership without a church vote (which is equally unscriptural and destructive of Bible polity).”

Your dilemma as stated above is unwarranted. It is not imperative in every case of baptism to have the collective membership present at the site and time of baptism. This being true, it necessitates that a duly appointed agent be vested with authority to represent the collective body of the church, and act for the church in administering the ordinance of baptism.

The church can only baptize through its appointed agent, usually the Pastor. Paul and Barnabas were sent out as missionaries from the church at Antioch (**Acts 13:1-4**), and it is evident from Scripture (**Acts 16:33; 19:5; 1 Corinthians 1:16**) that Paul was given authority to act for the church at Antioch in administering the baptismal ordinance whenever, wherever, and upon whomever he deemed a proper candidate. In (**Acts 14:26-27**), Paul and Barnabas give a detailed report to the church at Antioch of their missionary labors, wherein they “**rehearsed all that God had done with them.**” A constituent and essential part of the vote of a New Testament church in sending forth a missionary is the empowerment of him to baptize for his home church, and to organize churches whenever and wherever possible.

When the missionary acts, the church that officially sent him out acts in de-facto by, or in the missionary. By this divinely ordained method, the vote

or authority of the home church is ever present with the missionary, and there is no need to postpone baptism of a proper candidate. New Testament Baptist missionaries realize that baptism of a candidate into the home church is not an end in itself, but rather a necessary step in realizing their hope of a church being organized in their respective field of labor. This truth is attested to by the many churches organized by Paul and his missionary co-workers.

In taking exception to the Landmark Baptist contention that Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch into the church at Jerusalem, you say: “This strikes me as being contrary to other doctrine. **Hebrews 10:25** tells us that there is to be a constant gathering of the church. How could he attend the church of Jerusalem? And certainly there was no church in Ethiopia. He was under no discipline either (at least that was practical.) ”

Be it far from me to minimize the importance of church attendance. I consistently decry the dilatoriness of God’s people as respects this essential duty. However, there are exceptional cases where absence from the corporate worship services of the church cannot be prevented. Let me cite a few examples which I hope will not diminish your zeal for the Lord’s house, but which I believe will show there is no force in your argument against the contention that the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized into the church at Jerusalem. Following are some providential examples:

1.) Prolonged critical illness.

2.) Military duty. Two of our young men served in Viet Nam and did not attend a New Testament Baptist worship service for over a year. Thank God, they both are with us now, and seldom miss a service. I am persuaded that Cornelius the Centurion (**Acts 10 & 11**) was baptized into the church at Jerusalem, but I am caused to wonder where his military duty took him after his baptism.

3.) Incarceration. This was all too often the experience of Paul, as well as the other apostles. Our glorious history is replete with the bitter incarceration of our Baptist forebears.

4.) Exile or banishment. Does not the word “exile” bring to mind the isle of Patmos, and the aged, but faithful Apostle John, who for the preaching of Christ; was sent to that barren island in the Aegean sea. John was absent from the official worship services of his church during his banishment, but he never ceased to worship God during this time (**Revelation 1:10**).

5.) Many Bible scholars believe that Paul spent his first three post-regenerate years alone with God in the Arabian Desert. These same scholars believe that Paul, during these three years restudied the Old Testament Scriptures from a Christological view point which centered in Jesus of Nazareth. If these scholars are correct, then Paul was irregular in church attendance the first three years of his apostleship, but he was all the while preparing for a life of dedication to Christ, which as yet is unsurpassed by any man.

I am aware that the examples I have referred to are extraordinary cases, but I also realize the case of the Eunuch is amazingly unique. However, **Hebrews 10:25** is a law of Christ, and is to be tenaciously adhered to by all members of each respective church, apart from providential hindrance, and God knows the difference between His own providence, and that conjured up by a lazy church member.

Now, back to Philip and the eunuch. It is reasonable to presume that the eunuch was a Jew or a proselyte to the Jewish faith. This is borne out by the fact that he had been up to Jerusalem to worship. He was not only a worshipper, but he was also a devout religionist, making the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Temple as the law demanded (**Exodus 13:10**). His honesty and integrity is manifested by the eminent position he held in the court of Candice, Queen of Ethiopia. It is specifically stated that Philip preached Jesus unto the eunuch from **Isaiah 53**, and in the course of preaching, declared that baptism was a graphic picture of the gospel of Isaiah’s Lamb, whereupon the eunuch petitions Philip for baptism (**Acts 8:37-38**). It was from Philip the eunuch first learned of the baptism Jesus had ordained, and placed in His church unto the end of the age (**Matthew 28: 19-20**). Freelance baptism is spurious, and a mockery of the authority God has vested in his churches.

It is seen from Scripture that the eunuch was faithful to his Jewish religion, and that he was anxious to learn about the God of Israel. Being a eunuch or emasculated person he was debarred from entering the Jewish court, and deprived of the privilege of mingling with the Jewish congregation, yet we see his determination to worship God, even if he was limited to the court of the Gentiles. (**Deuteronomy 23:1**). The court of the Gentiles included men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, clean and unclean, but all were encouraged to worship God, and to send in sacrifices with the assurance that they would be accepted (**Isaiah 56:1-8**). Moreover, a man so intensely religious, vainly worshipping, cannot be expected to be less religious after he is gloriously saved, and brought to the truth of salvation by grace.

A Baptist of such character will no doubt be a great influence for God and truth. The eunuch's former religion and his secular vocation demanded that he be a self disciplinarian, and it would be a grievous error on our part to conclude that the truth of free grace, while nullifying law works, makes it easier on the flesh; whereby a believer may alter his lifestyle, so as to be less consistent in the faith of God's elect. This is precisely the damning heresy of antinomianism, but it is seen from Scripture that the eunuch was religiously zealous, rather than slothful.

It is not certain whether the Ethiopian eunuch was a Hellenistic or a foreign born Jew, or a proselyte from heathenism to the Jews religion, but we know for sure he is now (**Acts 8**) a rejoicing Christian whose eyes have been opened so as to understand the Christ of the Old Testament, and it is reasonable to conclude that a man of his character will discipline himself so as not to reproach his loving and gracious Lord.

While the eunuch knew nothing about **Hebrews 10:25**, he did know his beloved Mosaic institution had been set aside, that his deception regarding it had been removed, and that he had been saved and added to the Lord's church by baptism. Then too, we know the Holy Spirit, an angel, and the church were all directly involved in the salvation and baptism of the eunuch.

Philip was not only a Deacon (**Acts 6:5**) in the first Baptist church of Jerusalem, but he was also an Evangelist, and did much preaching, the fruition of which was the salvation of many and the baptizing of the same into the church at Jerusalem (**Acts 8:5, 12**). There is no record in the New Testament of a self authorized Evangelist, the simple reason being, the writers of the New Testament knew the office authoritatively belonged to and in the local church (**Ephesians 1:11**).

Then too, it is seen that the account of the baptizing of the eunuch was reported to the church at Jerusalem, from whom Luke got his account (**Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1**) of Philip's evangelistic labors, and it is from Luke's divinely inspired pen that we are blessed with the Christ exalting and church edifying report. So, let us be consistent and hold fast to the divinely decreed order (**Acts 2:41-42**) of preaching the gospel by the authority of one of the Lord's churches, and baptizing converts into the church, that they may grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (**II Peter 3:18**).

While the Scriptures reveal nothing of the post-redemptive life of the eunuch, it would not be unwise to conclude that all of the supernatural forces used of God in the conversion of the eunuch point to further providential direction of him. In any event, we have no basis whatsoever to assume he was unfaithful in his profession to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:4; 7:6**).

(The Baptist Herald - February, 1993)

The Importance Of Preaching

It is divinely incumbent upon every member of the church to contribute in every way they can to the well-being of the church, but the pastor has been called by the omniscient Head of the church to the awesome responsibility of taking care of the church of God (**I Timothy 3:5**). Much, and varied is the work which the scriptures have positively enjoined to or commanded of the church. Conversely, all parody is prohibited by the scriptures, and the pastor being the primary care-taker of the church should be able to discern between the helpful and hurtful influences brought to bear on the church.

First in order in pastoral care of the church is, **“to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28)**. If the pastor fails in this principal, he has failed in all, and the ill effect is spiritual retrogression. The pastor being faced with the ever present and vital need of feeding the church, must of necessity implement an activity mode that will assure him adequate study for sermon preparation, lest he find himself, not only unprepared to preach on Sunday, but ill prepared.

The importance of preaching is clearly and repeatedly stated in the scriptures. The pastor who builds his sermon on the word of God, comes to the pulpit with a medium through which the Holy Spirit blesses the church to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The maintenance of spiritual health in the church, depends largely on the pastor scheduling time for sermon preparation, and allowing as little infringement on that time as possible.

This is not to say, all pastoral time should be spent in sermon preparation, certainly not, for there are many other important and essential duties inherent in the pastoral office; duties such as, pastoral counseling, visitation, and not least is the duty of over-seeing all corporate functions of the church. However, if the pastor’s study time is unduly infringed upon, the power of his preaching will be diminished, and the whole church will suffer a lack of spiritual vitality, for the sermon is the chief instrument which the Lord uses to feed the church.

Intrusions into and infringements upon the pastor's study time are inevitable, but they should be of a serious nature, and not something minor, or which could be settled by self initiative. In the majority of cases, all that is needed to resolve the matter, is a little self incentive, reasoning, and meekness. But when there are intrusions into the time zone which the pastor has reserved for sermon preparation, it steals vital and significant time which belongs, not merely to the pastor, but to the whole church. And when the time of such an imposition is measured by the number in attendance on Sunday morning, it will be seen as a wholesale robbery of time, for every person in attendance suffers some measure of spiritual loss.

Generally, the pastor is a docile and patient person, and takes the problems of his parishioners very seriously, but there is nothing more important to the God called pastor than preaching Christ to a needful and hungry church. In scripture delineation of pastoral functions, preaching comes first. He is not to be a novice, but one who is **“able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).**

The pastor who does not reserve adequate study time for sermon preparation, will in due season find himself with a spiritually malnourished church, and a church thusly affected is not irreparable, but stands in critical need of pastoral attention which is wanting in most pastors. God has commanded His pastors to study (**II Timothy 2:15**), and it follows that He has given them time for study. It is through this time of study and prayer that God makes them equal to their calling, but when this all important time is abused, either by the pastor or church members, the church defeats itself and becomes weak and ineffectual. One sure way for the church and the pastor to **“redeem the time,”** is to allocate it according to scripture, and so doing, both pastor and church will be a mighty power for God on earth.

(The Baptist Herald - April, 1992)

The Lord's Day

**“... The first day of the week ... the disciples were assembled ...”
John 20:19**

“Upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together ...” Acts 20:7

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him ...” I Corinthians 16:2

1. All who devote it to sporting events and physical exercise reveal that they are primarily concerned with being amused animals with good physical health.

2. All who devote it to fishing and/or hunting, show the priority they have given to personal pleasure over the honor of God.

3. All who give it to visiting relatives and friends, reveal that they are satisfied with the associations of this vain earth.

4. All who consistently give it to secular labor, deny that **“Godliness with contentment is great gain” (I Timothy 6:6)**.

5. All who give it to sleep and leisure, manifest that they care nothing for the Master's business.

6. All who give it to worshipping God in His appointed way, reveal they are children of God, and love the presence of their heavenly Father; Who has promised to meet with them and Who has graciously given them every day of their lives (**Ecclesiastes 3:2; Matthew 18:20**).

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is ...” Hebrews 10:25

The Lord's Preacher

The Lord's preachers are human (believe it or not) just as much as any of us. They come from all areas and levels of society, but mostly from homes poor in material wealth. They come in all sizes - tall, short, fat, skinny, and in between. But they are all of the male sex.

Most people do not care whether they exist or not; that is, until they get in trouble. Then they ask, "Where is that preacher, what's his name?" Then the first question they ask the preacher is, "Why in the world did God let this happen to me?"

But, in fact, God's preachers are not hard to find, for they are constantly being told by a great many people, "You get in my hair, preacher", or, "You get under my skin", and that is about as close as you can get to a person.

The Lord's preachers are required to have the wisdom of Solomon; the disposition of a lamb; the swiftness of an eagle. But when he makes a mistake, he is called an ignoramus. If he unapologetically preaches the truth of God's word, he is accused of being hard-hearted, or inconsiderate. And if he is not promptly at the scene of every church related emergency, some of the members will say, "He is lazy".

In the eyes of a great many people, the Lord's preacher is a bogey-man who spends most of his time talking about the place "down there".

While the great majority of secular employees get paid vacations, holidays, and a host of other job benefits, and rightly so, the Lord's preacher is on call twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, and his job benefits, other than the meager salary, are few or none. He has no pastor, nor labor union to take his grievance to.

Each church member knows, or should know that God's preacher has but one mission in life, and that is to reprove sin, first in himself, and then in whomsoever it is seen. He is considered a dedicated man, but, he should keep quiet about the "little sins", "immodest dress", or "colored jesting", and, oh yes, why does he criticize other churches?

If God's preacher drives a big car, he is materially minded. If he drives a little car, he is not concerned in bringing people to church. He is expected to be the first and the last person at the church building, no matter what kind of car he drives.

He must be at all times ready to meet the public, and represent the church. If his old faithful suit begins to show wear from the many drops of pulpit sweat, he is undignified. Yet, some members keep telling him, "Don't you forget, we are giving you your living".

No matter how sour the grapes, he must ever be an extrovert, which is sometimes most difficult. But, faith in God has made an unceasing optimist of him and he knows the rain which comes into his life falls from the cloud of God's merciful and beneficent providence which abides upon him.

Soldiers get medals for bravery. Industry gives promotions and certificates of merit for jobs well done. Lodges bestow accolades upon their worthies. The entertainment world has their outstanding artists whom they award with trophies. But none can compare with the reward that the Lord's preacher will receive when he faces his God and hears Him say, "**Well done, thou good and faithful servant**".

The Lord's preacher knows that in order to become President of the United States, he would have to take a big demotion. The Lord's preacher may, in old age retire from the pastorate, but he will never cease to preach, for there is no discharge from that high and lofty calling.

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (I Timothy 3:1)

No matter the heartaches connected with a God given ministry, there is no better, or a more soul edifying work.

(The Baptist Herald - October, 1994)

The Need And Blessing Of Church Attendance

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” (Hebrews 10:24)

1.) You cannot have the proper consideration for your brothers and sisters in Christ, and be unfaithful to the church where they meet.

2.) You cannot provoke your brothers and sisters in Christ unto love, unless you are faithful to the church that Christ loved and died for.

3.) You cannot provoke good works unless your church work is good. When the super structure of your Christian life is flimsy, people will be suspicious of the foundation upon which it is built. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. **(I Timothy 3:15)**

“Love and good works” are the fruit of faithfulness to the Lord’s house, and apart from his path of obedience to Christ, love wanes and good works go wanting.

Every part of the body is given to complement every other part of the body, and to become a hindrance rather than a help is to impair the efficiency of the whole body. The Lord’s church is His executive body on earth, and careless disregard of duty thereto creates an additional burden upon the already struggling brothers and sisters of the church.

Every member is either a blessing or a burden to the church, and one sure way to be a blessing and have loving concern for our fellow pilgrims is to meet constantly with them at the Lord’s house. Then, shall the world around us know that we have been with one another, and that we all have been with Jesus. To habitually miss the services of the church is to abuse one of the greatest privileges we have, and it is to shirk in a shameful way our responsibility to Christ and His church which He so lovingly considered, worked and died for. Can we, or will we be so ungrateful as to reproach Him by failing to meet with Him and His faithful people at the appointed time? God forbid!

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Hebrews 10: 25)

(The Baptist Herald - September, 1996)

The Pastor's Responsibility To The Church

“This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (I Timothy 3:1).

I was not in the ministry very long before I realized the word “work” in the above text should be underscored. I have never found the ministry to be easy. But knowing the pastor’s office is ordained of God affords me great joy, and like Paul, **“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord ... for putting me into the ministry” (I Timothy 1:12).**

A pastor is not essential to the being of a church, but he is essential to the well-being of the church. The church that has a God fearing pastor needs to realize it was God that joined together the church and the pastor, and woe to the man who endeavors to put asunder what God has joined together. The Bible plainly states the pastor is a gift of God to His church(es), **“He gave ... pastors ...” (Ephesians 4:11).**

Every true pastor recognizes that his ministry is a multitudinous one and that his duties are many and varied. He knows the court of heaven has delegated him the awesome responsibility of overseeing every function of the greatest institution on earth. Yet, some churches need to be reminded, while it is the duty of the pastor to oversee all things it is not his duty to perform all things.

In this message I want to mention three things which I consider to be the most profound and demanding responsibilities of the pastor. I will list them in their logical order and endeavor to highlight each in its respective place.

FIRST: The pastor should be an example of godliness.

SECOND: The pastor should properly feed the flock.

THIRD: The pastor should defend the flock.

1. The Pastor Should Be An Example Of Godliness Unto The Church.

Paul writes to pastor Timothy, and says, “... **Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity**” (I Tim. 4:12). Peter writes saying pastors should be “**Ensamples to the flock**” (I Peter 5:3).

The story is told of a pastor who was more at home on a hunting trip or out in a boat fishing than in the pulpit. The pastor and some friends had planned a hunting trip, but a parishioner died and the pastor had to remain behind to preach the funeral. He was annoyed by the delay. He told his friends to go ahead, that he would catch up with them a little later. As soon as the funeral was over he started out in pursuit of his friends. He knew where they were going, but did not know exactly how to get there. He met an old lady on the road, a member of his church. The pastor sought information of her. She said, “Follow this road to the top of the hill and there you will find a sign-pastor; follow the arrow, soon you will see another sign-pastor; follow its direction and you will soon catch up with your friends.” The pastor said, “I thank you for the information, but tell me, when you say sign-pastor, do you not mean sign-pastor?”

“You see,” said the old lady, “before you became our minister, we called them sign-posters, but since you have been here, we call them sign-pastors, for they point others the direction, but they never go themselves.” If the pastor fails in being a pattern of Christ, his entire ministry is a failure, and irreparable damage will be inflicted on the church, for he is the chief example to the flock in this world. The pastor is not the supreme example; Jesus Christ, and He alone is the absolute perfect example. Yet, every pastor should be able to say, like Paul, “**Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ**” (I Corinthians 11:1). And to the Thessalonians he says, “**For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you**” (II Thessalonians 3:7).

The pastor, by virtue of his office is a leader, and he is to lead by his walk, as well as by his talk. Many people would much rather see a sermon

than hear one, and the pastor's life should be a graphic epistle of truth, easily read and known of all men.

The pastor's ministry is but a brief few years, and there is not time for him to be anything but his best. His life must magnify Christ, and he must be willing to live decreasingly so that Christ might be increased. It is not reason that the pastor should leave the word of God and serve tables, but it is his duty to give himself continually to prayer, and the ministry of the word (**Acts 6:24**). For the pastor to "serve tables" that is, for him to be burdened with the carnal needs of the church is to circumscribe his prayer and study time. Consequently, the pastor's sermons shall lack the necessary ingredients to properly feed the flock, and the spiritual power of the whole church will be severely diminished. The pastor cannot be an effective leader, nor the correct example, when so burdened.

Most pastors do not mind being the first one at church, and the last one to leave. He does not mind shoveling snow to clear a walkway to the church door. Most are happy to pick up, or provide transportation with his car for some who do not have a ride to church. The pastor does not mind visiting hospitals, and homes of the sick, etc. But these duties do not belong exclusively to the pastoral office. They are a part of membership obligation, and when collectively shared they cease to be a burden for any individual member. Nevertheless, the pastor usually takes the lead in these things, hoping to set an example thereby.

Yet, the fact remains, if the church would accept in greater measure the carnal responsibilities, the pastor would be more spiritual, a better preacher, and a real power for God in his everyday life.

The best pastor merits some criticism. Jesus Christ is the only member Who cannot be justly criticized, but woe to the person who destructively or unjustly condemns his pastor. Moses was maligned by Miriam and Aaron (**Numbers 12:1**). Moses did not recriminate, but went right on with the business of leading Israel. However, God rebuked Miriam and Aaron for vilifying Moses, and Miriam was struck with leprosy. They confessed their

sin of questioning the authority of Moses, Moses prayed for them, and Miriam was healed (**Numbers 12:11-14**).

Some people, it seems, think the spiritual vocation to which they have been called, is that of keeping the pastor straight. I read where one self-appointed critic objected to every proposal the pastor put forth. One mild mannered and God fearing brother voiced an objection to the attitude of the persistent critic. The critic, in angry tone cried out, “These objections are within the realm of my rights!” The meek brother replied, “What if Jesus would have asserted His rights. Where would we be at this time?”

Most people feel a degree of reluctance when it comes to criticizing a doctor or a lawyer, but when it comes to criticizing their pastor many members feel themselves to be competent critics. A lot of preacher criticism is tactical diversion, or a dodge to keep the critics own dilatoriness from being questioned. Generally, the pastor with his God endowed fortitude, and with undiminished resolution, endures the critic’s ranting and goes on his way, more determined than ever to be an example of Christ.

Paul says of himself and his missionary company, “...**Unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe**” (**I Thessalonians 2:10**). And he exhorts Titus, “... **In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works**” (**Titus 2:7**). Thus, we conclude, the primary responsibility of the pastor to his church is to preach Christ through the medium of an irreproachable character. In so doing, the pastor will not fear the moral scrutiny of the public, and his adherence to the example of Christ will go a long way in gainsaying the unjust critic.

2. It Is The Pastor’s Responsibility To Feed The Flock.

Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, “**Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood**” (**Acts 20:28**).

One of the prerequisites for the pastoral office, yea, the chief one, is: love for Christ. It was not until Christ received an affirmative answer from Peter to the question, “**Lovest thou Me?**”, that He said to Peter, “**Feed My sheep**” (**John 21:16**). A head full of seminary training is no substitute for a heart filled with love for the Head of the church. Love for Christ begets love for the church, and the pastor’s love for the church is the parent of a proper spiritual diet.

It is not so much a question in New Testament Baptist churches of what to feed the sheep as it is, how to feed them. The “what” is abundantly revealed in the Scriptures. Christ said, “**Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ...**” (**Matthew 28:20**) Let not the indolent pastor excuse his laziness by saying, “But I do not know what the ‘**all things**’ of the commission consists of.” He will never know unless he gives himself “**continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.**” Paul was preeminently a man of prayer and study, and being blessed thereby, said to the Ephesian pastors, “**I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God**” (**Acts 20:27**).

The pastor should never make eloquence in speech his main objective in preaching, for one of the great things about the Bible is its ability to say for the preacher what he cannot say himself. He should fervently labor to express his ideas accurately, forcibly, and with the minimum of words. He should, above all, speak as a dying man to dying men.

Peter charges the pastor, saying, “**Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof ...**” (**I Peter 5:2**). The “flock of God” consists of sheep of various ages and learning. The same flock may have a Ph.D. and a ten year old fourth grader. And once the pastor begins to rationalize, saying, “I will put this in for little Junior, and I will put something else in for Dr. Allwise,” the sermon at that point takes on a total humanistic character and can only serve to feed the intellect. The pastor needs to keep in mind, it is the Holy Spirit Who takes the message to the heart, and plants the spiritual manna in the soul, feeding both the wise and unwise. If the pastor prepares his sermons with a purpose to glorify God, he need not worry, for all the sheep will be fed. It is true, “**New born babes**

desire the sincere milk of the word” AND, “Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age” (I Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5:14). Yet, the aging process is the work of the Holy Spirit. Accumulated years and keenness of intellect do not, per se, contribute to spiritual growth. It was not David’s skill with a slingshot that killed Goliath. David let the stone loose, but it was the Holy Spirit Who directed the stone to its mark. It is the pastor’s responsibility to preach the word of God in season and out of season. If he is faithful in this the sheep will be fed, for the Holy Spirit will open their hearts that they may attend unto the things spoken, and they will grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (**Isaiah 55:11; II Peter 3:18**).

“Only He Who made the world can make a preacher.” It is through the local New Testament church the Holy Spirit calls out God’s elect from sin’s condemnation, and it is through the local New Testament church that God makes His preachers. Arminian seminaries have produced legions of preachers with tremendous powers of expression, but what worth is a man with great power of expression, if he has nothing beneficial to express? There is no right way to feed a sheep wood, hay, and stubble. Preaching is the greatest work on earth, and when a pastor enters the pulpit, his study and preparation should be of such nature that it enables him to feed the sheep. A pastor who enters the pulpit with less than his best is guilty, in degree, of despising the church of God.

There never was a church that did not demand more time than the pastor had to give it. So it is, every pastor needs many hours every day of uninterrupted study and prayer time, and the church that does not allow the pastor this time shortchanges itself. The church with a God called pastor needs to realize that their pastor has spent many hours in sermon preparation so as the church may worship a few minutes. One pastor said to another, “I wonder why you spend so much time on your sermons, with your ability and ready speech. Many are the times I’ve written a sermon and caught a salmon before breakfast.” The studious pastor replied, “Well sir, I would rather have eaten your salmon than listened to your sermon.”

The pastor is an aqueduct through which the water of life flows, not that God does not use all believers as conduits of truth, but the ministry of feeding the sheep is primarily the pastor's, and if his life is clogged up with the cares of the world, the inevitable will be a spiritually starved and dwarfed church. The pastor who is morally honest and fruitful in study and prayer, need not fret himself about the results of his preaching, for God has promised to use him **“for the perfecting of the saints” (Ephesians 4:12).**

3. The Pastor Is Responsible To Defend The Church.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

What an awesome responsibility is charged to the pastor! He **“MUST”** give an account of his watchmanship over the flock unto God. On the other hand, the responsibility of the church is to **“obey them (pastors) that have the rule over you, and submit themselves.”** The God called pastor will not lord it over God's heritage, neither will he let God's heritage usurp the authority divinely vested in his pastoral office.

A soldier may not see any sense in the training and discipline required by the military, but many a soldier has learned that submission to those in authority over him and their training enhances their safety in time of battle.

Satan hates the New Testament Baptist pastor more than he hates any other Christian, for he holds the highest rank in the army of the living God. In ancient warfare there were men especially and purposefully trained to kill the captain or leader of the opposing forces. They knew if they could kill the chief officer, it would have a demoralizing effect on the enemy, usually resulting in a rout and sure victory. The devil employs the same strategy in his war against the Lord's churches.

Satan has his spiritual sharpshooters, and they have adjusted their scopes, and focused them on the Lord's undershepherds. Our adversary, the

devil, walks about like a roaring lion, and he knows if he can devour the shepherd, the sheep will become easy prey. The chief reason Satan singles out the pastor and makes him the primary object of his hatred is not because the pastor is necessarily a better Christian, but it is because the pastor has been charged with the care of the church (**I Timothy 3:5**); and the wise pastor knows that the church's security is the devil's opportunity.

The devil is too wise to use Arminianism or eccumenism in a frontal attack against the Lord's churches. He knows such an attack would be quickly and emphatically repulsed. So, what he does is: dress up one of his angels in sheep's clothing and infiltrate the flock. Paul said to the church at Ephesus, **"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock"** (**Acts 20:29**). And Christ warned against this satanic method, saying, **"Beware of false prophets, which come unto you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves"** (**Matthew 7:15**). The wolf cannot long restrain his vicious nature, and there will soon be in motion a plan to tear the church apart. The command to the pastor is, **"... rebuke them sharply"** (**Titus 1:13**), and the command to the church is, **"... note that man and have no company with him"** (**II Thessalonians 3:14**). Satan has an army of highly trained church saboteurs, and the pastor is ever to be on the watch for them to expose them before they can light the fuse which leads to the destruction of the church. More ships are lost at sea from internal problems than from external elements, and we are living in an era when more churches are destroyed from internal strife than by external persecution.

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (**Galatians 5:15**). It is the pastor's responsibility to stand uncompromisingly against every person and thing that would in any measure injure the church. One pastor said he wrote his sermons out in manuscript form, read them over, and if he found anything in the sermon which would offend any of his parishioners, he struck it out. The true pastor derives no genuine pleasure from offending any of his flock, but he should leave in his sermons everything that glorifies God and edifies the church, no matter how offensive it may be to some member(s). **"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be**

safe” (Proverbs 29:25). A ministry designed to please men excludes the favor of God (Galatians 1:10).

The story is told of a pastor who had in his congregation a member who was very wealthy, and the pastor compromised some of his convictions in order to court and keep the favor of the wealthy member. The member came down with a terminal illness and he began to reflect upon his past life. He thought of the large sums of money which he had spent on his family, and the little time and money he had given the church. The pastor came to his bedside to comfort him. The pastor said, “You have given as much to the church as any other member, and after all, we everyone are unprofitable servants.”

But the dying member found no peace in his pastor’s words, and as his end drew near he took the pastor by the hand, and said, “I am going to the Righteous Judge, and I am unprepared to meet Him. You have been unfaithful to me. For years I have lived and taught my family to live mostly for the world. We have denied ourselves nothing, but spent great sums on personal comfort, luxuries, and pleasure. When I gave those tens and twenties to the church, they should have at least been fifties and hundreds. My energy, time, and money have been devoted to self-pleasing, and now I must give an account of my ill stewardship to the Eternal and Infallible Judge. Pastor, I am beyond recovery. Do what you can to help my family, and warn other professors who are in the same current of self gratification, which is carrying them to the lake of utter destruction.”

God says to His pastors, **“I have set thee a watchman ... therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them for Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou has delivered thy soul”** (Ezekiel 33:7-9).

So, if the pastor will live godly, preach the truth without fear or favor, and defend the church at the peril of his own life, he will hear his heavenly

Shepherd say unto him at the end of the journey, “**Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant**” (Matthew 25:21).

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - January, 1978)

The Rapture Of The Saints

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

In eschatology, I doubt if there is a more controversial subject than the rapture of the saints. In the closing days of this age we find every branch of theology rife with controversy. So much so, that if we refused to preach on a subject because it was controversial, there would be nothing left to preach. I do not have any respect for a man who does not have the courage to stick with his convictions. His convictions may cost him cherished friendships and place him in the despised minority, but there is more honor in being wrong and courageously defending your views, than being right and not have the backbone to defend your convictions.

I do not consider myself a polemicist, nor do I thrive on disputes, and I have no desire to antagonize those with whom I differ. On the other hand, it would be shamefully dishonest for a person not to present his convictions as forcibly as he knows how to present them. It is my prayer that what I write on this subject will be “in season” with you, but if you consider it to be “out of season”, pray that I might be enlightened by the Spirit of truth. It is with a desire to glorify God that I write on this subject, and the closest earthly relationship is to be set aside, if necessary, to achieve this vitally important objective.

THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST

I cannot think of but one subject more important, or more pertinent to our present time than the second coming of Christ, and that is Christ's first coming to earth to die as the sacrifice for the sins of His people. Christ's first coming was heralded by almost every writer in the Old Testament. Isaiah's prophecy of Christ's first coming is so detailed it seems to be contemporary with the New Testament record. Some 750 years before the first coming of Christ to earth, Isaiah wrote "... **Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel**" (Isaiah 7:14). And while Christ was yet in the virgin womb of Mary an angel quotes the words of Isaiah to Joseph, the man to whom Mary was espoused. "**Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us**" (Matthew 1:22, 23). Also in Isaiah's prophecy we read of Christ, "**He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.**" No honest student of God's word will deny these words to be a direct reference to the vicarious death of Christ, and with this thought in mind, John the Baptist cried out, "**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29).

The Apostle John speaks of Christ's first coming, saying, "**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth**" (John 1:14). Paul speaks of Christ's incarnation and first advent in very plain language, "**When the fullness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law**" (Galatians 4:4). Paul, in this text, refers to **Genesis 3:15**, wherein God prophetically speaks of Christ's first coming as the seed of the woman to have His heel bruised at Calvary.

We summon from the Old Testament library thousands of prophecies and types which attest to the first coming of Christ, and could, from the New Testament cite their perfect and minute fulfillment. However, we will forego that great delight at this time, and turn our eyes to the future wherein we expect any day to see the second coming of our Lord in the air.

MEETING THE LORD IN THE AIR

A great measure of harmony prevails between the pre-trib and post-trib views as to meeting Christ in the air. Both schools agree there is an actual gathering of the saints unto Christ in the air, and that the saints will return to earth with Him. The designations, pre-trib and post-trib bespeaks the difference between them regarding the meeting of Christ in the air, and it is doubtful that the difference in their views will be erased this side of meeting Christ in the air. However, it is my firm belief that our text (**I Thessalonians 4:13-18**) teaches a pre-tribulational appearance of Christ in the air, and a gathering of the saints of the previous ages and the present age unto Him. The phrase in our text which says, “**The dead in Christ shall rise first**” spans the ages, reaching back to Adam and forward to the newest grave of God’s elect prior to that glorious appearing of the Lord in the air. Yea, some graves will remain virgin, having never received their tribute due to the intervening of Christ in the air. “**Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up (raptured) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words**” (**I Thessalonians 4:17-18**).

RAPTUROUS LIFTOFF

Some A-mil theorist will say, “The word ‘rapture’ is not in the Bible, and since it is not a Bible term, it should not be given the prominence that millennialism places on it.” This is unsound reasoning, for I am confident they would not apply the same rule to the words trinity, depravity, supernatural, attribute, etc. simply because they are not found in the English translation of the Bible.

The Greek word used in our text (vs. 17) for “**caught up**” is *harpazo*. This Greek verb has various meanings, such as, snatch away; carry off; catch away; to seize, etc. As used by Paul in our text, it conveys the idea of a joyous catching away. Our English word “rapt”, as defined by Webster, means to seize; lift up and carry away; transported with emotion. The word, “rapture” expresses the same meaning with the emphasis on being ecstatically and joyously lifted up. Thus it is, the two terms *harpazo* (Greek) and rapture (English) are virtually identical in meaning and when used in

connection with meeting the Lord in the air, call for the same effect or function.

In view of the above stated facts, it is biblically correct to refer to the coming of Christ in the air, and the uniting of the saints with Him in that glorious appearing as the rapture. I have heard girls on a number of occasions, when speaking of their sweethearts say, “He swept me right off of my feet.” This is but a figure of speech, but it is a figure which never loses any of its meaning in dialogue, and it is invariably a reference to ecstatic emotion. While such experience of sweethearts is rapturous, it in no wise comes close to what the Bride of Christ will experience when she is literally swept off her feet to meet her Beloved and long awaited for Groom in the air.

THE TWO PHASES OF CHRIST’S SECOND COMING

The two phases or appearings of Christ in the second coming are theologically referred to as the “rapture” and the “revelation.” First in order is the rapture, when only the redeemed up to that point in time shall see Him and meet Him in the air. Second, is the revelation, when every eye shall see Him: **“Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Revelation 1:7)**. In the rapture Christ comes for His people, while in the revelation He comes with His people. In the rapture, the saints are taken from earth to the judgment seat of Christ in heaven. In the revelation, the saints come with Christ from heaven to judge the earth (**Romans 14:12; I Corinthians 6:2; Jude 14, 15**). In the rapture, Christ comes to remove sin from the redeemed bodies of His people (**I Corinthians 15:51-58; Philippians 3:20, 21**). In the revelation, Christ comes to destroy the unredeemed bodies of His enemies (**I Thessalonians 1:7-9; Matthew 25:46**). In the rapture, Christ receives His people in the air (**I Thessalonians 4:17**). In the revelation, His people receive Him on the earth (**Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7**). In the rapture, Christ takes His Bride to His Father’s house, to the Jerusalem which is above (**John 14:2; Galatians 4:26**). In the revelation, Christ brings His Bride to the Jerusalem on earth, and to His own house (**Zechariah 1:16, 17; Matthew 19:28; Hebrews 3:6**).

The rapture is “**the day of Christ**”, the revelation is “**the day of the Lord**.” In our study of end-age events, the Biblical distinction between these two days needs to be maintained. To do so will go a long way toward enhancing our ability in keeping the chronology of the consummation of future ages in their proper order. The “**day of Christ**” begins at the rapture, and has to do with the marriage of the Lamb (**Revelation 19:7, 8**), the marriage supper, and the mercy or reward seat of Christ (**I Corinthians 1:8; 3:13; 5:5; II Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16; II Thessalonians 2:2**), and every reference has to do with His glorious appearing in the rapture.

Paul’s chief purpose in writing his second epistle to the Thessalonians was to remind them of the distinction between the “**day of Christ**” and the “**Day of the Lord**.” A short while after writing his first letter to the church at Thessalonica he learned that a forged letter bearing his name had been sent to them (**II Thessalonians 2:2**). Because of their faith they were suffering bitter persecution (**I Thessalonians 1:6; II Thessalonians 3:12**), and the forged letter led some of them to believe they were going through the great tribulation, or that the great and terrible “**day of the Lord**” had begun. To show that the letter was a forgery, that they had been misinformed by it, and to remove the detriment from their faith which had been created by the letter, Paul wrote his second letter to them giving a chronology of the events leading up to the millennium. First or preceding the “**day of Christ**” there must be a great falling away from the faith. Then the coming of Christ in the rapture for His people, and following the rapture will come the revelation and exaltation of the “**man of sin**” or he that “**maketh desolate**”. Then comes the Invasion of Israel by the armies of the antichrist, which precipitates the coming of the Lord with His people in awful judgment (**II Thessalonians 1:1-12**).

The “**day of the Lord**” has to do with the judgments of the great tribulation; the revelation of Christ at Armageddon; the millennial reign of Christ; the purging of sin from the universe by fire; the bringing in of new heavens and a new earth; and the eternal, uninterrupted reign of righteousness (**Isaiah 2:12; Joel 1:15; Zephaniah 1:7; Malachi 4:5; I Thessalonians 5:2, 3; II Peter 3:10; Revelation 19**). In Paul’s first Thessalonian epistle he stressed the fact that the “**day of Christ**” was imminent. In his second letter

to them he emphasized that the “**day of the Lord**” would come suddenly, but not necessarily immediately (**II Thessalonians 5:1-3**).

The contrast between the two phases of Christ’s second coming could be further highlighted, but I trust what has been said thus far is sufficient to make the distinction clear.

THE RAPTURE HOPE BEGETS PURITY OF LIFE

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

“Looking” is a verb which denotes activity born of expectancy. A man’s spiritual temperature can usually be ascertained by the “hope” thermometer. Some precious saints, who, at one time, were burning with expectancy of the Lord’s imminent appearing in the air, have dropped in temperature to lukewarm or cold, and apathetically ask, **“Where is the promise of His coming?”** Salvation from sin puts one on the right track, but even when you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there. So it is, the blessed hope makes Jesus more than a destination in some far of misty heaven. It serves to form Christ in the believer, and the thought of an any-day accounting of their stewardship before the Bema seat causes them to abound more and more in their labour of love for the Lord (**I Thessalonians 4:1**).

The prospect of Christ’s appearing at any moment is a tremendous help in the proper and daily ordering of the believer’s spiritual house. Paul looked for and loved the appearing of the Lord (**II Timothy 4:8**), and being motivated by this loving expectancy, his time and labour was consumed in preparation of His coming. The saints’ chief occupation in this life should be a Rapture Preparedness Program. Nothing should take priority over it, and nothing should deter him from it. The Lord’s message to His servants is, **“Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13).** **“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (I John 3:3).**

A well grounded hope in the imminent appearing of Christ in glory will serve to crucify sloth. It will cause the believer to abandon all creature security, and will stir him up to use the greatest care and diligence in the exercise of his profession.

Purity of life is prosperity in the sight of God, and in the eternal economy is the most valuable stock a saint can own. A person may own the combined millions of the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Rothschilds, etc., and yet be destitute of that hope which genders purity of life. On the other hand, a person may be as impoverished as Paul, who suffered the loss of all temporal riches that he may look with a steadfast hope to the coming of Christ, (**Philippians 3:8, 20, 21**), and yet, being purified by anticipating momentarily the Lord's return, lay up for himself treasures in heaven that surpass the wealth of this world. This hope makes the Lord's demands a delight, it helps to paralyze the believer's sinful nature. It stimulates missionary activity, and causes the Bride of Christ to veil herself with humility as she, moment by moment, awaits the embrace of her heavenly Isaac. The comfort realized from this hope is not mere euphoria, but genuine, and causes the believer to watch, as well as wait for his Lord from Heaven. **"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23).** "UNTO, in the Greek language, is "en" and it means "in".

THE THESSALONIAN QUESTION

The question in the Thessalonian church was no doubt as to the imminence of the rapture, but the question with them was, "Will our beloved brothers and sisters who have gone to the grave miss the rapture?" Apart from hope in an any-moment rapture, this question would be senseless, and it bears out the fact that Paul, in his brief visit with them had taught them to expect the rapture any day. Although Paul was only with the Thessalonians three or four weeks (**Acts 17:2**), he taught them much truth. However, the brevity of his stay necessitated omission of some doctrinal details. One of the things concerning the rapture which needed further elucidation was: "How would the rapture affect those who had gone to sleep in Christ? Would they

be caught up with the living saints, or would they be left in the grave?” Paul’s customary practice was to revisit the churches, or send someone to further establish them in the faith. Thus it was Paul sent Timothy from Athens to the Thessalonians to continue the work of perfecting the church in truth (**I Thessalonians 3:1, 2**). Timothy spends some time with the Thessalonians, and then rejoins Paul at Corinth (**Acts 18:5, I Thessalonians 3:6-8**).

Paul’s spirit was buoyed up at the good report which Timothy brought him concerning the spiritual health of the Thessalonian church. However, there were some in the church which held erroneous views concerning the rapture. Some were in deep sorrow concerning those who had died since Paul took leave of them, thinking that they would be left in the grave at the glorious appearing of the Lord in the rapture, and there were others in the church so overwhelmed by the thought of the momentary coming of the Lord that they had ceased to work (**I Thessalonians 4:11-13**). So, Paul makes haste and gets his first epistle off to them to correct these errors, telling them that their loved ones which had quit this walk of life were not dead in the pagan sense from which they were recently called out of was, “Hopes are among the living. The dead are without hope” (Theocritus, a Greek philosopher and poet). The philosophy of the pagan world was, “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” The great majority of people in the world today are without God and without hope beyond this life. Having reduced the number of their gods, and changing the names of those left, they do not consider themselves pagans, but their practice and philosophy betrays them, and they are not more than modern pagans in the sight of God. As they are, so were all at one time. We who have been made to differ, and have, by the grace of God, been made partakers of that hope which looks heavenward, should warn those who have hope in this life, only, that, “**It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment**” (**Hebrews 9:27**).

PAUL’S ANSWER TO THE GRIEVING THESSALONIANS

The hearts of the Thessalonian saints were weighted down with doubt as to having the company of their deceased loved ones in the rapture. Their sorrow was heavy, and infinitely increased with each new grave. While their sorrow and heaviness of heart was due to ignorance on their part, yet, Paul

did not blame or criticize them, but with a loving and tender hand wrote to them saying, **“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (precede or go before) them which are asleep (I Thessalonians 4:13-15).** Paraphrasing Paul’s words, he says: “Brethren, there is absolutely no basis for your worry and grief. Put far from your mind the thought that those who sleep in Jesus rise not at the rapture, for not only are they to be raised at the rapture, but they are to be raised before we are translated.” Hence, there was no ground for their uneasiness concerning those who had fallen asleep in Christ, for their bodies were resting in the grave, while their souls were alive in the presence of Christ. Not once did Paul dogmatically state that he would be alive at the “Parousia” of Christ. Nevertheless, in the plural pronoun “we” in verse 15 of I Thessalonians four, he included himself and makes it clear that he expected to be alive when the Lord came in the rapture. He wrote to the church at Rome and to the church at Corinth in the same vein, manifesting the same hope, wherein he included himself in that blessed company who would be alive and waiting for the glorification of the body (**Romans 8:22, 23**). To the church at Corinth he writes, **“Behold I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (I Corinthians 15:51, 52).** Again he says to them: **“For in this (tabernacle, tent, body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house from heaven” (II Corinthians 5:2).** While Paul was not absolutely certain that his body would miss the grave, he left no room for honest questions concerning what he believed about the believer’s undying soul. He says: **“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8).** These words should forever shut the mouth of those who say, “Everyone wants to go to heaven, but no one is willing to die in order to get there.”

Paul tells the depressed Thessalonians, your **“dead in Christ shall rise”** at the rapture, and to make their joy more full, he says, **“Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”**

A FURTHER WORD OF COMFORT FOR CHRISTIANS

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him” (I Thessalonians 4:14).

Not only did Paul tell the Thessalonians that their loved ones whose bodies were in the grave would be raised and raptured, but he used the word “sleep” to describe the motionless state of their bodies. In the pagan world death carried with it an awesome finality. All hope vanished with the closing of the grave, or faded with the smoke of cremation. Paul speaks of the body in its pre-rapture and wakened state as the home of the soul, saying, **“...Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:6)**. The Bible never uses the word “sleep” in reference to the soul. The soul never sleeps, and speaking of the soul, Paul says, **“... To be absent from the body (is) to be present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8)**. The cults which teach “soul sleep” need to be awakened out of their satanically induced slumber before they, like the rich man, (**Luke 16**) learn by unquestionable experience that the soul never sleeps. It is the body of the believer Paul refers to when he says, **“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (I Thessalonians 4:13)**. The Greek word for “sleep” in this text is “koimamonaí” and is used elsewhere in Scripture to speak of natural sleep (**Matthew 28:13; Luke 22:45; Acts 12:6**; etc.).

While the term “sleep” is used by Paul in a metaphorical sense in writing to the Thessalonians (**I Thessalonians 4:13-15**), the meaning he is endeavoring to convey by its use is glaringly apparent to the spiritual mind. A sleeping body is as close, or as perfect a picture of the death state of a body as can possibly be and it is in this precise sense Paul uses the term “sleep.” Sleep is temporal, and so is the death state of the believer’s body.

Christ, speaking of the dead and buried body of Lazarus, said: **“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep”** (John 11:11). Daniel describes the physically dead, saying: **“Them that sleep in the dust of the earth”** (Daniel 12:2). It is absurd to apply such language to the soul, for the soul is immaterial, eternally awake, never needs sleep and takes leave of its decaying tenement when the body falls asleep in death. It is based on this axiom that Paul says: **“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain ... for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better”** (Philippians 1:21, 23).

As baptism is the ordinance used to picture the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, a sleeping body is used uniformly throughout Scripture to depict the death of the believer’s body. There is a great similarity of sleep and physical death. Alarm clocks attest to the fact that sleep is temporary, and the resurrection of Christ proves that the sleeping death of the believer’s body is temporary. **“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept”** (I Corinthians 15:20). Like the word “sleep” the “resurrection,” always refers to the body. A soul cannot be buried, as a body is buried, and therefore, the term “resurrection” is inapplicable to the soul. It was to the body God said: **“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”** (Genesis 3:19). The body, at death, lies down under the blanket of earth, and the soul of the believer goes upward to God Who gave it (Ecclesiastes 3:21, 12:7).

The mightiest and most powerful dust this earth contains comes from the dissolved bodies of the Lord’s redeemed, but the soul cannot be broken up into parts for it is not made up of atoms and molecules, but of will, emotion, and intellect, all of which survive the grave. Thus, it is, we see by word picture, Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom being comforted, while his body is decomposing in the earth. On the other hand, we see the rich man in hell exercising his soulish faculties, while his body waits in the dust of the earth for the resurrection of the damned (Luke 16). The body consisting of matter, experiences, in death, a dissolution of organic forms. But matter is never annihilated, and the body of the believer not only exists after organic dissolution, but its mortality takes on a nature in resurrection that makes the power of death that once reigned over it, eternally null and void. It is this

state of body the Psalmist anticipates when he says: **“I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness” (Psalm17:15).**

The Greek word, translated “sleep” (**I Thessalonians 4:13, 14, 15**) is a derivative of the word “keimai” and it means, to “lie down,” and it is the body that lies down, never the soul. The Greek word for resurrection in the New Testament is “anastasis” and it means “up”. It is the bodies of believers that shall come “up” out of their graves at the rapture to be reunited with their indivisible and never dying souls. Then, with the living saints whose bodies, being changed from corruptible to celestial, shall be ecstatically lifted up to meeting the Lord in the air. The resurrected and glorified saints looking back on their pilfered graves will say: **“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (I Corinthians 15:55).**

Paul, reflecting on his words of assurance to the Thessalonians concerning the resurrection and rapture, says: **“Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (I Thessalonians 4:18).**

Historically, we are 2,000 years this side of Christ’s first coming. Futuristically, I believe Christ may, any day, stand up and step out into earth’s atmosphere, where He will embrace His Bride, and sound Heaven’s welcome to all God’s elect with her. **“Even so, come, Lord, Jesus.”**

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - February, 1979)

The Resurrection And Saduceeism

“Who is he that condemneth? *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us*” (Romans 8:34).

The resurrection of Christ is an integral and vital part of the gospel, yea, as much so as His death on the cross. A correct and concise view of the gospel is: **“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live...”** (Galatians 2:20). Separating Christ’s vicarious death from His justifying resurrection (Romans 4:25), or vice versa, is to leave the gospel sleeve without an arm. All who teach baptismal regeneration substitute water for the blood of Christ, and thereby nullify the gospel. The major cults make void the gospel by leaving the body of Christ in the grave.

A Historical Event

Let us consider the resurrection of Christ as an historical event. Historically, the resurrection of Christ stands on a par with the most attested to event in human history. Historians who subject themselves to the rules of historical documentation are forced to conclude that the resurrection of Christ is an irrefutable fact of history. The Bible is the world’s only infallible history book, and this divinely inspired history book has much to say about the bodily resurrection of Christ. **“He was buried ... and He rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (I Corinthians 15:4).

Christ, in His resurrection body, was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once and at the same time (I Corinthians 15:6). At the time the Apostle Paul recorded this blessed experience of the five hundred brethren **“the greater part”** of these eyewitnesses were yet alive and available for cross examination by the skeptics.

The modern day attorney who has one eyewitness to support the allegation of the claimant has his case half won. If he has two eyewitnesses it is practically an open and shut case. If he has three eyewitnesses, the case seldom goes to court. By paraphrase, Paul says: **“Christ arose from the grave**

in bodily form, and I have at least two hundred and fifty one (**the greater part**) eyewitnesses whose testimony to His resurrection is insuperable.”

There are eleven post resurrection appearances of Christ recorded in the New Testament But the skeptic with his insatiable contempt for the Scriptures, objects, saying: “All you have to support you in this contention is the Bible, and we do not accept the Bible as authentic.” The disciple of Christ does not need to resort to apologetics to augment his faith in the resurrected and glorified Lord. All who deny the inspiration and veracity of God’s word are in utter darkness, and consummate human logic cannot generate one infinitesimal element of spiritual truth in the heart of the world’s wisest man (**I Corinthians 1:21**).

The faithful saint knows the word of God is infallible, and when he reads from the blessed page: “**The Lord is risen indeed ...**” (**Luke 24:34**), he not only accepts it as truth, but looks with joyous anticipation to the glorious moment when he can say like Peter, We are “**eyewitnesses of His majesty**” (**II Peter 1:16**). Not only shall the saint see his exalted Lord, but he shall be like Him, resurrected and glorified (**I John 3:2**).

The preponderance of Scripture leaves no room for an atom of doubt concerning the resurrection of Christ. But then too, there is something in secular history that attests to the resurrection of Christ, and which causes the infidel and skeptic to gnash their teeth. That is: the willing and joyous martyrdom of the apostles and others who claimed to have seen their resurrected Lord. Their ceaseless labors for the cause of Christ, and their cruel deaths at the hands of the enemies of the cross cannot be explained apart from their claim to have seen Christ this side of His entombment. When Christ was laid in the tomb the faith of the apostles began to wane, defeatism overwhelmed them and pessimism moved them back to boats and nets, but after the resurrection of Christ there was never again a turning back for them. On the contrary, henceforward, it was a turning of the world upside down for Christ (**Acts 17:6**).

In a few brief years the Roman World was evangelized for Christ. The disciples went forth “**Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have**

suffered and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, Whom I preach unto you is Christ” (Acts 17:3). A dead Christ decaying in the tomb could not have produced such men, nor spurred them on with glad hearts toward their own excruciating martyrdom. Peter explains the mystery of it all in a few brief but powerful words. He says: **“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (I Peter 1:3).**

The faith of the disciples began to falter with His arrest in Gethsemane, and it halted at the sealing of the tomb, but after the resurrection of Christ, it is said of them: **“With great power (irrevocable testimony) gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them” (Acts 4:33).** Now, the empty tomb was behind them, and the risen Lord before them.

Job, looking toward the post resurrection glory of Christ, said: **“For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25, 26).** David, speaking of the resurrection of Christ, said: **“His soul was not left in Hades, neither His flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:31).**

Zechariah with a prophetic eye toward the millennium, says of his beloved nation, Israel: They shall look upon Him (Christ) **“Whom they pierced, and shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son* ...” (Zechariah 12:10).** The world’s only infallible history book is replete with unequivocal language that Christ burst asunder the bonds of death, and arose the Victor over the dark domain.

The Resurrection and Saduceeism

“The Saducees say there is no resurrection ...” (Acts 23:8). This Saduceean heresy has been perpetuated unto this late day. All around us are twentieth century Saducees crying out; “No resurrection, Christ never in the flesh came out of the grave.” Some of the contemporary Saducees in their

diabolical effort to deceive the credulous have taken to themselves the appellation; “Jehovah Witnesses.” There has never been a people in the history of religion more ill deserving of that superlative connotation than the nineteenth century cult who refer to themselves by that name. There has never been a people further apart from what they claim to be than this pernicious cult.

The Jehovah Witnesses, so-called, mock the doctrine of the trinity, deny blood atonement, vehemently oppose the biblical doctrine of eternal punishment for all who die in their sins, and impugn the doctrine of the deity of Christ. This cult gestated in the mind of Satan, their spiritual father, are by their denial of the deity of Christ necessarily anti-resurrectionists regarding the body of Christ. Error begets error, and in this case damnable error, leaving them immeasurably hopeless.

The Jehovah Witnesses, so-called, claim that only the spirit of Christ came out of the grave. However, the scriptures teach that His spirit did not die, but that Christ commended His spirit into the hands of His Father while yet alive on the cross (**Luke 23:46**). It was not the spirit of Christ that Thomas was bidden to reach forth and to thrust his hand into the side of, but it was the imperishable, corporeal, glorified, bone and flesh body of the resurrected Christ. Our risen Lord says to His troubled disciples: “**Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have**” (**Luke 24:39**).

Another cult, the so-called Christian Scientists, which is neither Christian nor scientific; allow for a resurrection of the principles of Christ, but not His body. The Scripture says: “**If Christ (not merely His principles) be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain**” (**I Corinthians 15:14**). Modern day Saducees, in an effort to get around the truth of the bodily resurrection of Christ, have infinitely multiplied erroneous and fatal theories. Let us note a few of these soul damning theories, i.e.:

1. The Swoon Theory. This theory claims that Christ had a temporary suspension of animation on the cross, and that His friends took Him from the cross to a cool cave where He was revived and soon after appeared to His

disciples in the same body as before His crucifixion. We have already seen from Scripture that the bodily resurrection of Christ was the one factor which encouraged and empowered his disciples to go forth at the cost of their lives with the gospel of the resurrection. Such a theory as stated above would have had the very opposite effect on them. Instead of seeing Him as conqueror over death and the grave, the impression He would have created in them would have been one of weakness and subjection. But the fact is: He died on the cross, was buried, and arose from the grave the third day following (**I Corinthians 15:3, 4**). Now, in this late hour, He says in triumphant tone to every heart of faith: **“I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have they keys of hell and death” (Revelation 1:18).**

2. The Telegram Theory. This view contends that Jesus sent spiritual messages or telegrams to His disciples from the grave, and that these messages became to the disciples spiritual appearances or manifestations of Christ. This theory leaves far too many unanswered questions, one of which is; How about the empty tomb? This theory would be ludicrous if it was not so pathetic.

3. The Hallucination Theory. This theory teaches that the friends of Christ were under great stress due to the events associated with the crucifixion. That they were tired, brokenhearted, nervous, and near to despair. To alleviate for this agonizing state of mind they imagined that Christ was still with them. This may be possible with one or two people, but to allow it to be true with eleven men, is to allow an absurdity. Surely, it is rank foolishness to try and charge five hundred brethren with simultaneous hallucination.

There are many more Saduceeian theories extant concerning the resurrection of Christ, but all are more or less repugnant to sound reasoning, and diametrically opposed Scripture. So, I pass them by as unworthy of note, and will now consider one of the philosophical arguments put forth concerning the resurrection of mankind. The argument is: “If all of mankind from Adam to the last man was resurrected there would not be standing room on the earth for them. They would have to stand on each other’s shoulders ten

high.” Somebody took the time to answer this silly argument, and has shown the implausibility of it. The following statistics are gleaned from the answer.

Allowing for population increases from Adam until now, every person could stand in the state of Texas with a square yard per person, and there would be billions of yards left over. In the state of Texas there are 816,664,654,400 square yards. Earth’s present day population is a little over 3,000,000,000. Allowing this many in every generation from Adam until now there would only be 540 billion living and dead. That would leave three billion square yards for the Texas jack rabbits. Moreover, all the resurrected people are not going to live in Texas, nor the USA, neither are they going to live on earth. Millions and millions of people will never again see this earth after death, and this most surely includes the anti-resurrectionists. **“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).** The “lake of fire” is a mighty long way from Texas and this earth.

All the combined powers of darkness tried to keep Christ in the grave, and were rewarded for their nefarious efforts with miserable and utter defeat. **“And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:12-15).** So shall it be with Satan’s efforts to keep the bodies of men in their graves. Let us hear the final verdict on this matter from Him Who is the personification of the resurrection: **“... All that are in their graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28, 29; 11:25).**

The Resurrection: Life Giving Principle

“But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:24, 25).

When Christ was on the cross He said: **“It is finished” (John 19:30).** The power of the curse to condemn those for whom He died was eternally

terminated. The vicarious death of Christ is the believers' "**nail in a sure place**" but the pardon gained and written in the blood of Christ waited three days to be sealed and notarized by the resurrection of Christ from the dead (**Hebrews 9:12**). Though He "**spoiled principalities and powers**" by His death (**Colossians 2:15**), it took the resurrection "**to make a show of them openly**." Thus it is, Paul in retrospect asks: "**Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ 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**).

The so-called Christian religion of today has a lot of crossianity, but little to no genuine Christianity. The crucifix is universally popular, and the empty knick-knack cross is worn by multiplied millions who know nothing about the living and Sovereign throne sitting Christ. The ceremonial cross of mock christianity is a stench in the nostrils of the Thrice Holy God, for it depicts a dead and decomposed Christ. Paul never made a fetish of the cross, but he said of his cross bearer: "**I know Him and the power of His resurrection**" (**Philippians 3:10**). The resurrection of Christ is the consummate work of redemption (**I Corinthians 15:1-5**), and it is this great truth Paul used to gainsay the Gentile Saducees in the church at Corinth (**I Corinthians 15:12- 20**).

The devil has had a great and fearful success in rolling the stone of doubt over the sepulcher of the mind of professing Christendom, and they are perfectly content with their crucified and buried Jesus. Nevertheless, the true church, owning Christ as its living Head, continues faithful; preaching the God exalting truth of Christ's victory over death and hell, and with glad patience waits for the living, glorified and Sovereign Lord.

Paul was charged with preaching "**Jesus and the resurrection**" (**Acts 17:18**). Should we who believe in the resurrection of Christ be less zealous than Paul in this matter? Nay, we should strive with all of our might to be found equally guilty of this rewarding charge. Let all who believe in the resurrection of Christ, rejoice and be glad, for the risen Lord will one day

soon rid the earth of Saduceeism, and we shall be blessed with His everlasting presence.

(The Baptist Herald - May, 1990)

The Woman's Headcovering

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ. [2] Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you. [3] But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God. [4] Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head. [5] But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. [6] For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. [7] For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. [8] For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. [9] Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. [10] For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels. [11] Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. [12] For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God. [13] Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? [14] Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? [15] But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering. [16] But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (1 Corinthians 11:1-16).

Verse 1 “Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.”

The text paraphrased: “Be imitators of me, even as I imitate Christ.” The apostle Paul was a worthy follower of Christ, and great spiritual profit could be realized by emulating the life of Paul; but Paul, knowing he was prone to error, points to Christ as the perfect pattern of holiness. Christ is the Christian's supreme example, and none other person can compare with Him,

but in following Paul the life of Christ would in a very great way be manifested.

This epistle was written to the “**Church of God which is at Corinth**” (**I Corinthians 1:2**). The Corinthian church as an organized body could follow Paul’s godly example in many things, such as prayer, Scripture study, charitableness, etc. Clearly the admonition contained in verse 1 applies to every church member in his or her individual capacity, but it is truly a wonderful thing when a minister is qualified to stand before the assembled church and say: “Follow me.” This is what Paul was doing by way of this epistle. It was an apostolic communiqué to the official church at Corinth. In a letter to the Philippian church, Paul says, “**Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample**” (**Philippians 3:17**).

It is good to follow any man as far as he follows Christ, for in so doing one is following Christ; but where the best of men leave off in their example of Christ, the saint must leave off following those men and go on into maturity by carefully copying the life of Christ. Paul told the Corinthian church “**And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you ... abundantly I love you**” (**II Corinthians 12:15**). Paul’s heart was heavily burdened for the Corinthian church, for some members of the church had by evil example caused much strife and division in the church (**I Corinthians 3:3**). While Paul says “Follow me,” he warns the church of these evil workers, saying: “**Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate ...**” (**II Corinthians 6:17**). The inflexible rule of Scripture concerning those who walk contrary to the Word of God is, “**Mark them ... and avoid them**” (**Romans 16:17**).

Verse 2 “**Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.**”

While error permeated the Corinthian church, Paul yet finds something to compliment them for. He does not approach them with a “holier than thou” attitude but he says to them, “**I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God**” (**I**

Corinthians 15:9). Even though infantile, Paul realized the Corinthian church was as much an official and genuine church as the church in Jerusalem or in Antioch. Paul was careful not to wound their tender conscience, and to win their confidence. He highlights a good element in their character, and then strategically proceeds to reprove them for their many and various deviations from truth.

“... **Keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.**” The word “ordinances” in this verse is taken from the Greek word “paradosis” which was commonly used in that era of the handing down of traditions. Paul uses the word “paradosis” in **I Corinthians 11:2** to refer to the handing down of the teachings of Christ to the apostles.

The word “paradosis” is used in only two ways in the New Testament.

1.) The false traditions of the Pharisees being passed down (**Matthew 15:2-6; Mark 7:3-13; Galatians 1:14; Colossians 2:8**).

2.) Secondly, the term is used in reference to the teachings and commandments of Christ handed down to His apostles or church (**I Corinthians 11:23; I Corinthians 15:3; II Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6**). It is in this sense Paul uses the word (“paradosis”) in **I Corinthians 11:2**.

The word is in the plural (ordinances), and from a study of the immediate context it is seen that Paul has in view the ordinances of a headcovering for women, and the observing of the Lord’s Supper. Both of these ordinances are discussed at length and in great detail in this chapter, so it behooves the saints who are seeking to honor God in all things to diligently study this portion of Scripture and to obey the ordinances as applied to their lives. Let us with delight magnify the ordinances of Baptism and the Memorial Supper, but let us not neglect any of the ordinances handed down from the all glorious Head of the church.

With insatiable disdain Paul refers to the many false and hurtful traditions or commandments of the Pharisees which they had added to the Mosaic Law. In one place Peter speaks of them saying: “**Now therefore why**

tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear?” (Acts 15:10). In **Colossians 2:13-14** he refers again to the false traditions of the Pharisees, saying, that the death of Christ was the means of **“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing to His cross.”** But Paul admonishes the Corinthian church to keep the **“commandments of God” (I Corinthians 7:19)**, and in verse **2** of our study, Paul says, speaking of the woman’s headcovering and the Lord’s Supper, **“Keep the ordinances as I delivered *them* to you.”** The traditions of men must give way to the commandments of God (**Mark 7:8**). Let us obviate or withstand the traditions and commandments of men, and be careful to never ridicule the ordinances of God, but rather obey them, for **“His commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3).**

Verse 3 **“But I would have you to know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.”**

Christ, in His glorified humanity seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven, is the Head of man; but He is yet positionally subordinate to His Head, which is God the Father. The omniscient counsel of God has made man the head of the two sexes on earth, and the woman’s headcovering is the divinely appointed symbol of her submission to the headship of man. The symbol does not in any way teach that the woman is subnormal, or that she is a mere supplement to man; but that she is a complement to him, and an honor unto God in obeying His ordinance.

Man looks up by faith to the Mediatorial throne to see his Head, and figuratively speaking, a headcovering such as a hat would obscure the view of his Head. But not so with the woman, she by sight looks horizontally or straight out to see her head; and a headcovering does not in the least hinder her in seeing her head. One day, as it is now with the faithful woman, the saved man will look straight out to see his Head, and will communicate with Him face to face. It is truly sad that so many otherwise faithful and God honoring women, who in every way qualify to wear the God appointed symbol, have not taken this distinction of excellence unto themselves.

God has given man headship over the woman, and charges him with the responsibilities enjoined thereto. Man's headship over the woman is not like that of Christ's over the man, for the headship of Christ is infallibly exercised. Nevertheless, man's headship over the woman is God given and genuine, and the woman should not usurp the authority God has vested in man's headship over her.

Woman's subordination to the man is the legislation of heaven. It is the position God has placed her in, and she should have a mind suited to her rank in God's economy. Such a mind will serve as a shield against vitiating God's appointments as relates to the husband and wife relationship.

For a wife to be insubordinate to her husband is to manifest a desire, not merely to be equal with him, but superior to her husband. Such insidious conduct on the part of the wife will without variance effeminate her husband. Who and where is the woman that would want Ahab for a husband? God forbid! No spiritually minded woman would want an Ahabish husband, for such a relationship demands role changes in the assignments God has given the husband and the wife. Such perversion of God's ordinances is akin to blasphemy.

"... The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God" (verse 3). What Paul has in view in this text is not democratic equality, but graded authority. The chain of command is plainly delineated and any infraction thereof is an insult, not only to the immediate headship, but also to God, the originator of the respective headships. However, let the man remember he is to love his wife, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it (**Ephesians 5:25**). Conjugal love has no room for abuse, but is the author of respect.

Verse 4 **"Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head."**

The word "covered" in this text is translated from the Greek word "katakalypto." In using this word, Paul, in contemporary vernacular says, "The man who prays while wearing a headcovering such as a cap or a hat

dishonoureth his head.” The word “katakalupto” means “something down on the head,” and in Paul’s time the customary head-dress for both Jews and Greeks was a shawl for men and a veil for women. Surely, none would contend that the word “covered” in this text is a reference to man’s hair, for such an interpretation borders on the ludicrous, and closes the prayer access unto God to all men with unshaven heads.

It is an aberration of a serious nature for a man to pray while wearing a humanly fabricated headcovering, for in so doing he dishonoureth his Head and nullifies his prayer. For a man to appear in the official assembly in apparel unbecoming to the rank God has bestowed on him is to reproach the authority of Christ, and manifests disrespect for the church.

Verse 5. **“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.”**

Verse four plainly states it is wrong for a man to pray with his head covered. Verse five reveals that the contrary is true as relates women. It is wrong for women to appear in the worship service without the symbol of submission on her head, which is katakalupto, or a covering that a person can pull down on her head.

They who contend that the hair is what Paul was speaking of charge him with being ridiculous, for it has him saying, “Women ought to wear their hair to church, and men ought to leave their hair at home when they go to church.” I will not charge the inspired apostle with such absurdity, for his argument had not to do with the hair of either sex, but with the divine ordinance which requires a headcovering to be worn by women in addition to their hair while they are in the worship service.

God is a God of order, and His order of headship as stated in Verse 3 must be adhered to so as to avoid confusion, and usurpation of the authority omnisciently placed. For a man to question the authority and headship of Christ would make him disobedient to and ill respondent to the most merciful authority ever established. Likewise, the same charge can be levied against

women who set aside the authority and headship of man. For to do so would in essence be a rejection of God, for it is God who made man the head of the woman.

When the Bible speaks of Christ and His honor, glory, and majesty; it also and at the same time speaks in a secondary sense of redeemed men, for He is their Head. Man should be willing for Christ to get all the glory, for He is the all deserving one. But sadly, man will all too often forget his place of subordination to his Head and endeavor to assert himself. This is a terrible sin on the part of fallen man, for he is trying to take the honor which belongs exclusively to His Head, Jesus Christ.

The Scripture speaks of a God honoring wife, saying: **“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones” (Proverbs 12:4).** “Virtue” is more than sexual fidelity, for such fidelity is sanctioned by the marriage vows of all people. Virtue is more than moral excellence, for such excellence is the goal of every society. Virtue is the avoidance of anything that cheapens or debases, and nothing cheapens or debases the headship of a husband more than a defiant and brawling woman. Virtue, as used in **Proverbs 12:4** is manifested by the woman owning the rank and station God that has assigned her. Then and only then can it be said in truth, she **“is a crown to her husband.”**

Any home where God’s administrative appointments for the home are ignored cannot help but be in governmental disarray. In such a state quietude gives way to quarrelsomeness, and quarrelsomeness is one of the bitter ingredients which the recipe of marriage defeat calls for. A positive antidote for such a shameful state is found in the one infallible marriage manual, that is, the Word of God, i.e. **Ephesians 4:31-32.** **“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”**

This is a sinful and adulterous generation in which we live, and when the husband fails to recognize his Head and compromises the responsibility or headship divinely vested in him by his Head he is, whether conscious of it

or not, aiding and abetting the evil and disruptive schemes of the god of this world (**II Corinthians 4:4**). For marital peace and happiness, the husband must acknowledge Christ as his rightful Head, and the wife must recognize her husband as her God given head. When acknowledgment of the respective headships which God has established is properly owned, the result is a happy home, fellowship between husband and wife is the blessed experience, and their blissful state is perpetuated by their faithful adherence of God's ordinances.

Verse 6 **“For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.”**

The word **“also”** in this text is very significant. It is, as used in the text, indisputable proof that Paul had in view a head covering in addition to the woman's natural hair.

It is an ill supposition which contends that Paul is referring to a woman's hair when he says: **“... If the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn.”** Such unwarranted supposition has Paul saying; “If a woman does not have hair on her head, let her also be shorn.” This is blather or foolish talk, for I ask, how could the woman be shorn if she had no hair? The nonsense of such a fickle supposition is glaringly apparent, and it casts a shadow on divine inspiration.

So as to avoid nonsense let us not by-pass the good sense of the text. The insuperable truth which Paul sets forth in this text is a plain and forceful rebuke of all women who would try and annul the headship which God has given to man. Paul's perspicuous words in verse six are “If a woman does not have a headcovering in addition to her hair, let her hair be cut or her head be shaven as a badge of her shamefulness.”

Under the former dispensation if a husband was jealous of his wife, she was brought before the priest, and the priest set the woman before the Lord. The priest uncovered the woman's head while the test of her virtue was being made. A bareheaded woman being officially set before God was a woman whose fidelity to her husband was in question (**Numbers 5:18**). The question

has been asked, “Should Christian women, freed here from the Mosaic Law, be compelled to honor the ordinance of a headcovering? Does not their freedom allow them to set aside this inconvenience?” While Paul deals at length with the ordinance of a headcovering for women, he all but passes by the scandal which a failure to honor the practice would stir up. In Paul’s time, Christian women with uncovered heads would at once be taken as pagans, if not as prostitutes. This was so obvious, and the disgrace so terrible that this particular aspect or consequence which a neglect to honor the ordinance would bring, that Paul concluded it needed no further comment.

The man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his Head, Jesus Christ. For a man to appear in the official assembly in apparel unsuited to the authority delegated to him by heaven’s court would be a reproach of his head, Jesus Christ.

Conversely, if a woman appears in the official worship service of the church without a veil or suitable covering in addition to her hair, she shames her head, namely, the man. For her to so appear is to throw off the badge or token of her divinely obligated subjection, and minus the headcovering she appears in the awesome assembly in the dress which the Groom and Sovereign Head of the church has exclusively prescribed for man. For her to dishonor her head is to dishonor Christ, who gave the ordinance. It would be for her to lay claim to something God has given to the opposite sex. A woman should be satisfied with the station her blessed Redeemer has assigned her. Rebekah, when she met Isaac and was delivering herself into his possession took the initiative and without coercion put on her veil in token of her subjection. **“And Isaac ... took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her...” (Genesis 24:67).**

Man is responsible to exercise his headship, but not ever as a tyrant, nor without consideration for his help meet which God has given him. Christ, the Head of the church loved His bride, and gave Himself for her. To the same extent is the husband to love his wife and be governed by that love in the exercise of his headship over her (**Ephesians 5:25**).

In connection with verse six, let us look at verse fifteen, which reads, **“But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.”** The chief objection raised against the contention that a woman should wear an additional covering other than her hair in the official church assembly, is that her hair is the only covering Paul refers to in I Corinthians 11. However, the recalcitrant grievously errs, not knowing the Scriptures. At this juncture a brief etymological study of the word **“shaven”** used in verse **5**, and the word **“shorn”** used in verse **6** is necessarily in order to expose the fallacy of the contention that Paul, without exception used the word **“cover”** and its cognates in **I Corinthians 11** to refer to a woman’s hair.

The word **“shaven”** in verse **5** has for its origin or source the Greek word **“xurao,”** which means to shave entirely, as with a razor when a man shaves his face. This word (**“xurao”**) is used only one other time in the New Testament, i.e., **Acts. 21:24**. In this reference Paul identifies himself with some men who had placed themselves under the Nazarite vow (**Numbers 6:1-10**), and who had **“shaven”** all their hair off of their heads.

The word **“shorn”** in verse **6** comes from the Greek word **“keirasthai”**, which means to have their hair cut short or cropped off. There are two other places in the New Testament where the word **“keirasthai”** is used, **Acts 8:32** and **Acts 18:18**. In the first reference (**Acts 8:32**) it speaks of a lamb whose wool is to be shorn. A shepherd never shaves his sheep, but he fleeces them; or they are **“shorn”**. In the second reference (**Acts 18:18**) Paul mentions a vow which he had made. Paul’s vow in this reference was not the Old Testament Nazarite vow, for the Nazarite vow could be absolved only by a Temple priest in Jerusalem. However, in connection with his vow Paul had his hair cut short or shorn, not shaved. **“Xurao”** means to shave, and **“keirasthai”** means to have the hair cut short. These two Greek verbs translated by the words **“shorn”** and **“shaven”** in **I Corinthians 11:6**, are thus translated to keep the contrast between them in view. (See: Word Pictures in the N.T. By A. T. Robertson - Vol. 3, Acts).

With the definition of the words **“xurao”** and **“kerirasthai”** as given above fixed in our minds, it is seen that the contention **“uncovered”** simply

means short hair has no basis in Scripture. The objector is forced to concede by use of the terminology in verse 6 (“**covered**”), that the woman’s hair must be as short as the man’s, for the same term is used in a prohibitive sense in verse seven in referring to man. Verse 7 “**For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head ...**”

For a woman to be “**uncovered**” is to dishonor her head (verse 5), and in so doing, Paul says she should have her hair cut (“**shorn**”) as short as that of the man, for she has by her refusal to wear a head covering made herself equal in authority to the man. However, Paul says, it is a “**shame**” for a woman to be found in fashion as a man; and to avoid such an ignoble state, Paul says: “**let her be covered**” (verse 6). That is, let her wear in addition to her hair the proper headcovering, which mutely but gloriously symbolizes her submission to her God given head.

If the objector persists in his contention that the word “**covered**” in verse 6 refers to a woman’s hair, then he would have to read the first part of the verse on this wise: “For if the woman have short hair, let her also be shorn.” Such a reading proves far too much for the objector and renders his contention inviable, for the evident and indisputable meaning of the word “**shorn**” in the text is to cut the hair short. Hence, the objector finds himself trying in vain to convince intelligent people that what the apostle Paul really says in the text is; “If the woman have short hair, let her also cut her hair short.”

Verse 7 “**For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.**”

This verse restates the order of headship as given in verse 3, and describes the particular stations of man and woman as glorious. The superlative language of the text should thrill the heart of every redeemed man and woman, and cause them to seriously consider the great honor and awesome responsibility connected with their heavenly assigned roles.

Various and complex are the duties which are inherent in man's headship office, and these duties are superimposed by the Word of God, man's first and supreme duty is unto his Head, Jesus Christ. And man's second greatest duty is to his wife. If he fails in either of these duties, he will be derelict in all that his headship office involves. If he is faithful in the exercise of his headship he will glorify his own Head, bring honor to his family, and attain for himself a good reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

The husband's ascendancy over his wife does not imply absolute domination of her, but his is an authority which demands loving leadership. Therefore, Paul says the husband is to "**love his wife even as himself**" (**Ephesians 5:33**). Man's greatest duty to his wife is "to love her as his own body" and careful attendance to this all important duty will greatly enhance the discharge of all his other headship obligations.

For a husband to love his wife so ardently necessitates, or makes it incumbent on his wife that she have a devotion to her duty of submissiveness to him that will make her precious in his sight. It is not expected of any man that he love that which is unlovely. Ability to love people who are unlovely belongs to Christ exclusively. Neither can it be expected that a wife be unreservedly submissive to a husband who is deficient in his love for her. Reciprocity in these duty areas is essential to a God honoring marriage therefore it is the obligation of both husband and wife to achieve the ultimate in their particular responsibilities toward one another.

Simply put, no marriage can realize its divinely prescribed goal without consistent and positive input by both partners. This input will have a cohesive effect on the marriage relationship, and make the conjugal bond more than equal to the disparities which shall try it. Acquiescence is the chief duty of the wife to her husband. This does not mean the husband is not to consult with his wife in matters relating to family government, for the family household is affected either for good or bad by every prominent action of its head, whether it be private or public. Therefore, in all doubtful cases it behooves the husband to solicit the advice of his wife, and whether or not she consents or dissents does not in any way infringe upon his authority as her head. But if she can in truth, cheerfully acquiesce in the matter, it will

afford the husband the blessed and needed assurance, and keep his house from being “divided against itself.”

Anger is inevitable, it will come from one or the other, or in most cases from both husband and wife. Nothing will destroy marital intimacy quicker and more extensively than uncontrolled anger. But anger per se is not necessarily evil. Paul says: **“Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Ephesians 4:26)**. Anger is an emotion as natural as love and joy, but anger becomes hurtful when it is mis-vented. Anger must, for the sake of the marriage relationship be vented in a non destructive way; and it can be done with the due exercise of forethought owing to the sacred union. Paul follows his admonition, wherein he says: **“Be ye angry and sin not,”** with the greatest conciliatory prescription ever penned, and, it remedially applies to marriage. The prescription reads: **“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)**. Taken daily and in large doses, it is a positive preventative against bitter dissension and the hateful stigma of divorce.

Let the husband be ever mindful that his headship is subordinate to the Headship of Christ, and for him to assume any of the functions which belong to the exercise of Christ’s Headship is for him to think that Christ is such a one as himself. Then too, the wife needs to be incessantly and acutely aware that her governmental position in marriage is authoritatively and distinctly inferior to her husband, and that for her to take to herself any of the authority delegated to him by Christ is to make that authority not only mis-proportioned, but ill-proportioned. But when their places in the divine order of headship are strictly adhered to, then the man is a true image of God and manifests His glory thereby. And so it is with the faithful wife; she is an extension of God’s glory by her ready submission to her husband (verse 7).

Verses 8-9 **“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”**

These words have to do with more than the order of creation. The text (verses 8-9) points directly to and highlights the wife's role of submission to her husband. The apostle Paul says: "**But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed then Eve**" (I Timothy 2:12-13). Adam's seniority over Eve in creation is not in and of itself the exclusive reason for his headship over her, nor did his first place in creation make him more noble and wiser than Eve; but it did make him first in responsibility toward God. Eden was given to Adam's authority, and he was to answer directly unto God for the dispensation of that authority (Genesis 2:15-17). Immediately following the Lord's commands unto Adam (Genesis 2:15-17), He said, "... *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*" (Genesis 2:18). Nowhere in Eden's government did God give Eve a direct commandment, but not so with Adam; for he was the federal head of Eve and responsible to God for her conduct. "God brought Eve unto Adam" and this bringing her to Adam by God had to do with more than introductions. It had to do first of all with positions and authority as husband and wife. The first marriage covenant was formulated at this time, and it is commonly understood that where all parties in a covenant are equal there is no need for a covenant. Thus it follows that in a covenant one or more of the parties to the covenant must necessarily be subordinate to at least one other person in the covenant. It is upon this principle that Paul says, speaking of the "everlasting covenant," "**and the head of Christ is God**" (I Corinthians 11:3).

When Rebekah was brought to Isaac to be his wife, she was excited and filled with joy and without a moment's hesitation, "... **she took a veil and covered herself.**" Rebekah's action in covering her head was a public acknowledgment of her submission unto Isaac. "... **and she became his wife; and he loved her**" (Genesis 25:65-67). When Saul of Tarsus was by the Holy Spirit brought to Christ to be His servant, Saul acknowledged the headship of Christ over him by asking, "**Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?**" (Acts 9:6). Henceforth, Paul was before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4).

In owning the Headship of God over Him, the Lord Jesus said, "... **I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love**" (John

15:10). From the Scriptural examples referred to in this paragraph it is clearly seen that submission to the respective and divinely appointed headships begets mutual love; and this love is manifested by noble feelings and loyal submission of the subordinates.

Trine Immersion

The following article is a letter that was written by request of some dear saints who were deeply concerned about their baptism, whether it was scriptural or not? They, at the time had trine immersion, and assumed it was acceptable with Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptists. They sought membership in a New Testament Baptist church via trine immersion, and were told by the Baptist church that their trine immersion was invalid. Hence, the following letter was written at their request, and with a sincere desire to be of help to them. It is a glorious joy for me to say, the precious saints who were trine immersed, received New Testament or Baptist baptism, and are now a properly functioning New Testament church. There are a few deletions and additions in the article that were not in the original, this is due to going public with a letter that was heretofore, private. The article is written with permission of all parties involved.

Dear Brother M.

Greetings in the name of our Sovereign Lord, and merciful Saviour, Jesus Christ. I thank God for you and make mention of you and the Dear saints of S. Valley in my petitions at the throne of grace.

Regarding our phone conversation (November 25, 1980), wherein you solicited my assistance in your effort to resolve the controversy between yourself and Brother K. in the matter of trine or singular immersion as to which is, or if both are valid baptism. Let me say at the outset, I immensely appreciate your confidence in me, and I will do my honest utmost to preserve and cultivate that confidence. I commend you for the candor and gracious manner in which you expressed yourself in stating your variances with Brother K. on the subject matter.

I asked for and received from Brother K. a copy of your letter to him, and his letter to you dealing with the subject at hand. I have diligently considered your defense of trine immersion, and compliment you for the articulate manner in which it was presented. However, it would be dishonest of me to say I considered your claims with an objectivity absolutely free of

bias. So, when you consider my reply, opposing your view, you may discount it proportionately to the measure of bias you can honestly charge me with. Nevertheless, I trust there will be after all honest deductions are made by you, sufficient force left in my defense of singular immersion to constitute a basis for further consideration by you of the single immersion position. If this much is accomplished, my efforts herein will not be totally free of success.

I prosecute this work with the knowledge that it is rarely possible to refute all that an opposing view may offer, and neither will I try to relegate all you have offered in your contention for trine immersion to the realm of oblivion. Such an effort would be an exercise in futility. It is my purpose to be constructive in answering your objections, and at the same time hold fast to the much good you have brought to my mind on the matter.

Again, I remind you, it is by your request that I am involved in this controversy. I do not consider myself a polemist, and would not intentionally wound the feelings of any disciple of Christ. If you consider some of what I say in my defense of single immersion to be abrasive, rest assured it was not intended to be so, for I desire to be a help, rather than a hindrance.

The first proposition I submit for your prayerful and diligent consideration is:

1.) Trine immersion destroys the symbolism of the ordinance of baptism.

Romans 6:3-5 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of His resurrection.”

Please note the phrases in the scripture cited above, “**Buried with Him by baptism ... planted together *in the likeness* of His death.**” The preposition “**by**” declares with certainty that baptism is the means whereby

the burial or planting is achieved. The baptism referred to in this scripture is a burial, not burials. God given faith in the vicarious and atoning death (not deaths) is the ground or basis whereby the subject is pronounced judicially dead in God's perjureless court. The believer is judged as though the death penalty has been exacted from him, and as though he were actually dead. The first thing Christians do with their dead is to bury them. They do not dig three graves for the deceased person, nor bury them three times in the same grave. Trine immersion goes as far in destroying the symbolism of baptism as pedobaptist sprinkling or Roman Catholic affusion. Burial is not accomplished by sprinkling or pouring a little dust or dirt over the corpse. Trine immersion goes to the other extreme and prescribes far more than what the Lord has required in the gospel order (**I Corinthians 15:1-4**).

Trine immersion symbolically demands three deaths, three burials, and three resurrections of Christ. The singleness of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection is taught throughout the New Testament and is accepted by Christendom, trine immersionists included. Why is it then, that trine immersionists teach three deaths, burials, and resurrections of Christ by their practice of the ordinance of baptism, and contend for one death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in their oral and written dissertations?

The element of inconsistency in this implausible contention, would, I believe, become apparent to the student who gives only a casual appraisal of the subject.

Romans 6:10 "For in that He died, He died unto sin ONCE ..."

I Peter 3:18 "For Christ also hath ONCE suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God ..."

Hebrews 9:28 "So Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many ..."

(Capitols Mine).

Many other scriptures could be cited which highlight the singleness of action in the redemptive death and justifying resurrection of Christ, but I am

confident the need to do so does not exist.

Scriptural baptism signifies the death of Christ, not deaths (**Romans 6:3**). Baptism signifies the burial of Christ, not burials (**Romans 6:4**). And baptism signifies the resurrection of Christ, not resurrections (**Romans 6:4, 5**). Baptism is a graphic picture of death, burial, and resurrection. A symbol or picture must resemble, and a picture that has been doubly exposed irreparably bedims the true character, and is disposed of. What shall we then say of one that has triple exposure?

Our Lord's use of wine and unleavened bread as symbols of His blood and body was for the simple reason that they most candidly resemble flesh and blood. The elements of the Lord's Supper do not represent a plurality of bodies or bloods, but similarly the body and blood of Christ. This is not to imply that only the second person of the Godhead has an interest in the redemption which baptism symbolically proclaims, for we remember, in Christ, "**Dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily**" (**Colossians 2:9**). The Father gave the Son to die once, the Son through the Holy Spirit offered Himself once for the sins of His people. Thus it is written, "... **Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God**" (**Hebrews 9:14**). And so it is, the tri-unity of God is in no way infringed upon by single immersion.

The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are what baptism declares and three or one hundred baptisms of the same person cannot more fully declare the gospel than single immersion of the candidate does. Valid baptism cannot be repeated, and single immersion authoritatively administered meets the Divine requirement for proper observance of the ordinance. Having satisfied the biblical criteria, single immersion need not be duplicated, and can never be improved upon. Single immersion fits the figures of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Paul says, there is, "**One Lord, one faith, one baptism**" (**Ephesians 4:5**). A second or third immersion of the same candidate is as uncalled for as that of two Lords or two faiths.

Trine immersion wreaks havoc with Old Testament typology. Trine immersion typologically demands that Israel descend into the Red Sea three times, cross the Sea under the cloud three times, and emerge on the other side of the Sea three different times in their baptism unto Moses (**I Corinthians 10:1-2**).

The smitten rock (**Exodus 17:1-7; I Corinthians 10:4**) is a type of Christ's death wherein He was smitten for the sins of His people. Moses smote the rock the second time instead of speaking to it (**Numbers 20:8-12**). Trine immersion goes beyond Moses, and symbolically declares Christ to be smitten, not only twice, but three times. Many are the Old Testament types which could at this time be brought to forth, showing that trine immersion inflicts injury upon the Old Testament figures of the redemptive work of Christ, but trust the two mentioned to suffice for now.

Romans 6:5 - "Planted together in the likeness of His death." Baptism is compared to planting by the divinely inspired writer. To say, wheat or corn is planted, is also to say, it is buried. **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."** (**John 12:24**). This is a metaphorical reference to Christ Himself. Christ was the seed of the woman (**Genesis 3:15**), He died, was buried or planted in the earth, and rose again the third day (**I Corinthians 15:1-4**). The dead body of Christ was quickened in the grave by the Holy Spirit, and He came out of the grave, never to enter it again the second time, much less the third time. Likewise, with the dead body of the saint, it is planted, buried if you please, it is sown in the earth as a seed is sown. God has appointed a time when the dead bodies of the saints will as seed receives natural germination, receive Holy Spirit germination, and will come forth from their graves, to ever walk in the newness of life. Thus it is with the baptismal candidate, he goes down once into the watery grave, and is resurrected there from to walk in the newness of life (**I Corinthians 15:44; Romans 6:4**). **"Planted together in the likeness of His death."** Who would be so vain as to question this plain and Holy Spirit given analogy? Nay, who would be so absurd as to go to the farmer, and try to convince him that he must plant the same wheat, corn and beans the third time? The farmer knows that a single planting is sufficient to bring forth much

fruit, and that a digging up of the seed the second or third time is very likely to make void all three plantings. Single immersion symbolically demonstrates the true and complete doctrine of salvation by free grace.

The second proposition I submit for your prayerful and diligent consideration, is:

2.) Trine immersion is without proper church authority, and is therefore as invalid as Arminian immersion, Protestant sprinkling, and Roman affusion.

The scriptural authority to administer the ordinance of baptism is vested in a New Testament church that preaches and stands for the whole counsel of God. The commission of **Matthew 28:18-20** was given to the church as a corporate body, and included the observance of all things whatsoever our Lord commanded. Yet, there are a number of church denominations in America who practice baptism by immersion and at the same time deny that salvation from the condemnation of sin is by the pure, ill deserved, and humanly unmerited favor of God. The Campbellites and Neo-Pentecostals are among the self-salvationists. Then there are the more respectable ones, such as, the deep water Protestants with a Baptist name, and the Church of the Brethren. Church of the Brethren, sometimes called, Dunkards, are trine immersionists. As to their religious ancestry they are Protestants originating around the year 1708. Milner says of them, "These two companies had been members of one and the same church, which originated at Schwarzenau, in the year 1708. The first constituents were Alexander Mack and wife, John Kipin and wife, Gregory Grevy, Andreas Bloney, Lucus Fetter, and Joanna Nethigeim. These had been bred Presbyterians, except Kipin, who was a Lutheran" (Religious Denominations of the World By Vincent L. Milner, 1871). (I have this valuable book in my library.)

The Bureau of Census of the U.S. Dept. of Commerce: Religious Bodies - Vol. II, Title: Separate Denominations, 1926. In giving the date and founder of most religious denominations in America, states, "Church of the Brethren (Dunkards) Alexander Mack - 1708." With all due respect to the church of the Brethren, it is seen from their origin and founder, that they originated by man, that they are Protestants, and are at least seventeen hundred years too

late to be a New Testament ecclesia. Not only is the Church of the Brethren founding agent and date wrong, but the damnable error of baptismal regeneration is taught by the church. The following quote is taken from a book on doctrine published by the Church of the Brethren, “When the Lord Jesus Christ established his church he chose to appoint baptism as one of its sacred ordinances. By its observance the believer is initiated into the church, obtains the pardon of his sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Studies In Doctrine And Devotion - Brethren Publishing House - Elgin, Illinois - 1919 Page 119).

It is conceded that some of the people through whom Baptists trace their ecclesiastical genealogy gave countenance to the error of trine immersion. The Philadelphia Baptist Association (Founded 1707) had a smattering of trine immersionists within its ranks. J. H. Grime, in his Book entitled, History of Alien Immersion and Valid Baptism (1909), on page 31, says there were “two instances” of trine immersion being accepted by the Philadelphia Baptist Association. He goes on to identify trine immersion as alien baptism. There is little to no debate as to the historical position of Baptists being that of single immersion, and when this rule was violated it served to prove the rule, rather than impair it. It is to be exceedingly kind to call trine immersion, an irregularity, but even if this kindness was allowed, it would not be wise to begin church life upon an irregular foundation.

My third proposition submitted for your prayerful and diligent consideration, is:

3.) Baptism is not to be administered in the names, but in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (**Matthew 28:19**).

To augment this assertion I will give three brief quotations, the first two are from highly honored and widely acclaimed Baptist scholars. The third quote will be from Hastings Bible Dictionary. Following the quotes I will share with you a few of my own feeble comments in support of the third proposition.

First quote: commenting on **Matthew 28:19**, John A. Broadus, says, “Baptism then is here enjoined as to be performed with express reference to the Holy Trinity. Compare **2 Corinthians 13:14**. From this, no doubt arose the quite early practice of baptizing three times, a practice still maintained in the Greek Church, and in Germany and America by the Tunkers or Dunkards, and some others. It is not an unnatural conception, and not in itself particularly objectionable, but it has no warrant in Scripture; and indeed, the form of expression here employed, ‘unto the name’ being used only once, is distinctly unfavorable to the practice. It should also be discouraged as tending to exalt the ceremonial element, while New Testament Christianity has the minimum of ceremony.” (Broadus: Commentary on Matthew - Copyright 1886 by the American Baptist Publication Society - Edited by Alvah Hoovey).

The second quote is from A. T. Robertson, a Greek scholar of world renown, and prior to his heavenly home going was professor in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of Louisville, Kentucky. Commenting on **Matthew 28:19** he remarks, “Trine immersion is not taught as the Greek Church holds and practices, baptism in the name of the Father, then of the Son, then of the Holy Spirit. The use of the name (ονομα - onoma) here is a common one in the Septuagint and the papyri for power or authority.” (Word Pictures in the New Testament. Volume 1, Page 245).

The third quote: “We may unless our judgments are obscured by critical prejudices, turn to this passage (**Matthew 28:19**, obm) as supplying the needful summary of all those thoughts about God which we have gleaned from the teaching of Christ and the Gospels. The expression ‘εις το ονομα - eis to onoma’ is important: Christian baptism is to be ‘into the name.’ The phrase recalls the language of the Old Testament in which the ‘Name’ of God stood for Himself as revealed or brought into relation with men. So the name Jehovah was the sign or mark of the old covenant. Can we fail to gather that of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? In this name is contained the revelation of God which Christ brought to man. It must be also observed that the word is singular, ‘το ονομα - to onoma’, suggesting the unity of the Godhead. The name is threefold, yet is one.” (Hastings Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Volume II - Page 674)

While God is of tri-personality, which personality is manifested in the titles and offices of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we need to keep clear in our minds that these manifestations do not constitute tri-theism. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of one essence, which essence knows no variance, and never suffers by variable manifestations. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have but one name, the name God. This name is a unit name, common to all three persons in the Godhead. Omniscience gave the church the baptismal formula (**Matthew 28:19**) to reveal the interest and part that all three persons of the Divine Majesty had in the redemption of the elect. The three persons of the Godhead are One being, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Father, Son, and Spirit all prefixed with the unit name, God. The baptismal formula is tenaciously adhered to by Baptists, for they know to baptize in the name of one and not the other two would be to disobey an explicit Biblical precept, and would be a denial of the unit name and the Trinity which that name declares.

Baptists do not add a name to nor delete one name from the baptismal formula and they realize that a repetitious invoking of the unit name in baptism does not add any benefit to the ordinance. To do more than what the Lord requires in a specific command, is to question God's designs, it is to charge God with foolishness, and to make void every effort to comply with the command. Noah's Ark and the wilderness Tabernacle were of specific dimensions, anything more or less would not have satisfied the heavenly mandate. Trine immersion, even though it may carry a Baptist church label comes under the heading of Null and Void, and should be rejected.

Scriptural single immersion fully satisfies the baptismal formula, and irrevocably depicts the salvation which God has accomplished for His ill deserving children.

God bless you Brother M. Brother K's love for you has not diminished one iota.

What Kind Of Church Building Should We Have?

(2 Chronicles 3:6) “And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold *was* gold of Parvaim.”

(Isaiah 64:11) “Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.”

We are not to try to emulate the grand edifices of Protestantism, or the ostensible temples of so-called fundamentalists, and it is out of the question as to copying the temples of Solomon or Herod. Yet, we might be inspired by these temples to improve in some measure the beauty of our houses of worship. Having been given the ability to enhance the beauty and comfort of our place of worship, and leave off to do so, would be to our shame. We are to give our best to God, and His house of worship should not be inferior to our own homes. God said to David, **“For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle to *another* ...Why have ye not built me an house of cedars?” (1 Chronicles 17:5-6)**

The Jews idolized their temple, Roman Catholics hold their Basilica in Rome in idolatrous esteem. The Mormons are not one whit behind the Jews and Catholics concerning their temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Humbard Cathedral in Akron, Ohio, along with many of the so-called Baptist temples have gone the way of great extravagance. These buildings show the extremes men will go in their efforts to worship God with their hands, or to make a name for themselves.

Jesus, in referring to the church age, the Herodian temple, and all subsequent extravagance in church building, said, **“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” (John 4:23)** With these words Christ made it known that a gorgeous spectacle of a building is not necessary to true worship of God. In fact, excesses in esthetics are condemned by these words of the Head of the church. New

Testament teaching supports the view that a church building is not essential to collective or social worship. However, let us avoid this allowed extreme, for it is without controversy, a building to worship in, adequate to the needs of the congregation helps in promoting the worship service. Frugality and beauty are not antagonistic to one another, for beauty is born of God and wasteful expenditures are forbidden by common sense. Beautiful music and song make for a better worship service, and a church building modestly adorned with beauty and designed for comfort is conducive to a worshipful spirit.

The history of false Christendom attests to the fact that extravagance in church building, and extreme ritualism are wedded. It is for this reason early American Puritanism, and in later times Hardshell Baptists swung with the pendulum to the other God dishonouring extreme. Music in worship services was condemned and forbidden, ceremony in worship was considered evil, and church meeting houses were constructed without any consideration given to beauty and but little to comfort. Their rigid determination to be plain resulted in shoddy and uncomfortable church buildings, and earned for them the stigma of being stingy toward God. Many of their farm buildings which housed their animals were kept in better condition than their worship houses, and while they kept their affluence they lost much of their Christian influence.

TRUE CHURCHES AND THEIR WORSHIP HOUSES

While true churches cannot go the route of extravagance in erecting their meeting places, they should not be guilty of the other extreme either. There is an area between the two extremes wherein adequate and comely church buildings may be built without creating a financial hardship for the members. What true churches need to keep in mind is that no church building be it ever so humble or magnificent can serve as a substitute for the inward beauty which the redeemed soul is to be adorned with. The beauty and physical comforts of the church house serve to make the worshippers feel good, but that in itself is not enough, for many commercial and public buildings provide the same or better. The deception to avoid is, when people feel good they are prone to think they are good. Many a poor deluded soul has pointed toward their palatial church home, and said, "The Lord is really blessing us."

The Lord blesses truth wherever it is preached regardless of The circumstances under which it is preached, but to have the power to have a suitable building to worship in, and not exercise that power may tend to circumscribe the blessing.

A beautiful, comfortable, and adequate building while affording a good feeling for the assembly can only enhance the worship service when it is kept in mind from whence these blessings have come, for what purpose they are granted, and when the heart is filled with gratitude to God for giving them. When this state of worship is achieved the service is lifted up in spirit beyond the beautiful surroundings of the carnal building to the celestial and incomparable grandeur of the palace of the King Eternal. Then too, the church needs to keep in mind that its primary work is not the construction of church buildings, but the building up of the spiritual house of God is the chief work of the Lord's churches. We are not to build expensive edifices at the expense of missionary work, on the other hand no church should let their building become so dilapidated as to bring a reproach on the church, and thereby impair its effectiveness in its own community.

A good and general rule in determining the cash outlay in providing a church building, and its measure of beauty and comfort, is, find the average income of the member-ship, the tithes and offerings of the church are usually greater than the average income of the individual members of the church. The difference between the two incomes should determine the superiority of the common building over that of the homes of its members. This rule is seldom applicable to newly organized churches, but there is no church that does not need its own building, and in due season, after the new church has grown in membership, the above rule may serve as a good tool in shaping the size and convenience of its own church home.

Wrath Versus Wickedness

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

The same apostle (Paul) said in another epistle, **“Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ...” (II Corinthians 5:11)**. Paul knew that **“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ...” (Romans 1:18)**. It is the unrelenting force of this knowledge which moves the apostle’s heart in issuance of the many tender warnings we have from his pen against sin.

The Sins of Our First Parents

“... As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). Ungodly men make a mockery of the Biblical account of our first parents’ sin. They sneer, and ask, “How could it be, that God would condemn man for the mere eating of an apple?” Adam’s sin was a capital crime, not a mere misdemeanor. God says to vain man, **“For my thoughts *are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways ...” (Isaiah 55:8)***. With God a person does not have to steal a thousand dollars in order to be a thief, the unlawful taking of anything, regardless of its value makes one a thief in God’s sight. With God it is not, “The soul that commits adultery, murder, theft, etc. shall die”, but **“the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”** Let us note something of the magnitude of Adam’s sin, and we may better understand why God said to him, **“... In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17)**.

1. Adam’s sin was disobedience to His Creator, and rebellion against His authority.

2. Adam’s sin constituted a breach of the whole moral law, the law of works under which our first parents were placed (**James 2:10**).

3. There was unbelief on Eve's part, which amounts to calling God a liar. Eve's confidence was transferred from God to a malignant spirit, which is the ultimate insult to God. While Adam was not deceived in the transgression (**I Timothy 2:14**), Eve was the object of his supreme affection, and that constitutes idolatry.

4. There was discontentment with God, and ingratitude for His unspeakable blessings. There was pride and a desire for elevation by unlawful means. There was self-will, which is insubordination to God. There was alienation of heart, brought on by listening to the slandering of God by the serpent.

5. Their sin was intensively compounded by the smallness of the temptation, thus it was stamped with the darkest hue.

6. Their sin was greatly aggravated due to the sinless nature which they possessed. There was no dark and impenetrable shroud upon their understanding, and they had the powers to master the appetite. Moreover, they were surrounded with all the help necessary to defeat the devil himself, but Adam chose fellowship with a sinful woman rather than God. It is humanly impossible to paint the Adamic sin too black, nay, man cannot with his verbal brush paint it as black as it is, much less too black. Adam, through his sin fell into the hands of the living and sin avenging God, the holy wrath of God was kindled against him, and spiritual death immediately ensued and at that point Adam began his sorrowful journey back to the dust from whence he had come. All the sons of Adam, without a single exception, are born in sin (**Romans 3:23**), and are, the very moment of their arrival in time, the objects of God's holy just and active wrath. This wrath is not as a waterless cloud which the gentle winds soon removes from their heads, but is "abiding" wrath, perpetual, and becoming more intense with their every sin. They unconsciously treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath. (**John 3:3 & 6; Romans 2:5**). Our God is a consuming fire and His burning wrath against sin has not over the long centuries of time from Eden's blight until now cooled down one single degree, to which ascertainment the doubly burned and burning Sodomites would hurriedly and will one day attest to.

Sin's Permeation of Man

“... **The whole world lieth in wickedness**” (I John 5:19). Sin has traveled its slimy path down from the garden of Eden to our present day, and has swept in its devastating wake, not only all of mankind, but all of each man. “**The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness ...**” (Isaiah 1:5-6) every man at his best state is altogether sin, and the hissing of the serpent is heard in the best deeds of ‘moralities’ best man (Psalms 39:5, Romans 7:18).

Sin has touched man's intellect and reasons, and the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness unto him (I Corinthians 2:14). Thus it is, “**The carnal mind is enmity (present tense) against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God**” (Romans 8:7, 8). Sin has rendered all of mankind wicked, and it has so thoroughly and completely permeated his essence and being that Solomon says, “**The plowing of the wicked is sin**” (Proverbs 21:4). There is not a thread in man's moral fabric that is not rotten through and through. Sin has touched man's emotions, causing him to love darkness rather than light, and has erased all fear of God from before their eyes (Romans 3:18). Sin has touched man's will rendering it averse to every similitude of holiness. He neither wills to come to God, nor can come to God (John 5:40, 6:44). His will is in bondage to the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, and he happily walks the course of this world, knowing not he is a child of Divine wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3). It is not denied that there are carnal pleasures in sin, but they are only temporal (Hebrews 11:25), and they who die while pursuing the course of fallen nature will awake to the eternal wrath and fiery indignation of God and find “**they have no rest day nor night**” for forever and forever (Revelation 14:11).

Who Then Can Be Saved

The Lord Jesus Christ laid bare the deceitful and desperately wicked heart of man in His teaching. He said, “... **there is none good but one, that is, God**” (Mark 10:18). He said. “**All that ever came before Me are**

thieves and robbers ...” (John 10:8). He used the metaphor “viper” to describe the utterly depraved state of fallen man (**Matthew 12:34**), and the disciples “... were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves **Who then can be saved?**” And Jesus looking upon them saith, **With men it is impossible but not with God: for with God all things are possible” (Mark 10:26-26).** Who then can be saved? Salvation is of the Lord, (**Jonah 2:9**) with men it is impossible.

Man has no part nor lot in the scheme of redemption, it is of the Lord from the beginning to the end (**Hebrews 12:1, 2**). Salvation being of the Lord, it is not human merit, but of sovereign and ill deserved mercy. “**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us ...” (Titus 3:5).** The best of human righteousness is as “**filthy rags**” in God’s sight (**Isaiah 64:6**), and is from His omniscient view seen as subtle rebellion against Him. The devil is no fool, so he takes his pawns, clothes them in the respectable robes of religion, gives them pious looks, and sends them forth with his soul damning error covered with just enough truth to deceive the unsuspecting. Heaven’s admonition is, “**Search the Scriptures, study to show thyself approved unto God” (John 5:39; II Timothy 2:15),** and God has warned over and over, saying, “**Be not deceived.**” God’s wrath abides upon everything outside of Christ, and His fury is never more heated than against those who would enter His holy presence clothed in their own righteousness (**Matthew 7:22, 23; 22:12, 13**). The prophet Habakkuk, having seen God’s wrath at work in the earth, prayed, “**O Lord ... in wrath remember mercy” (Habakkuk 3:2),** and had it not been for God remembering mercy He would have with the eternal stroke of His wrath hurled fallen Adam and his corrupt stock into a deserving and ransomless hell (**Job 36:18**). In Adam all men went astray, in Adam God’s sheep turned unto their own way, and became children of wrath the same as others (**Isaiah 53:6**). However, the Psalmist says, God “**Remembered us in our low estate: for His mercy endureth forever (Psalms 136:23).** God remembered the covenant of mercy made with His Son before the world began, wherein the iniquity of all the elect (sheep) was lain on Christ (**Isaiah 53:6**), and Divine justice wielding the flaming sword of eternal wrath exacted from the bleeding and sinless Son of God the last farthing necessary to pay the full wages of sin charged against the God hating sheep. God

remembered mercy in wrath. In mercy He has forgotten every offense of His people (**Hebrews 10:17**), and now the believer stands justified in His presence (**Romans 8:33**). How about you, dear reader, are you washed in the blood of Calvary's lamb? The great day of His unquenchable wrath is coming (**Revelation 6:17**) will you be able to stand?

Paul prayed for his friend Onesiphorus, saying, "**The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day ...**" (**II Timothy 1:18**), and this is my prayer for every person whose eyes peer over these pages.

"And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter ... And Peter went out and wept bitterly." "So shall it be, but in a different sense, with sinners at the day of judgment. The eye of Jesus as their judge shall be fixed upon them, and that look shall awake their sleeping memories, and reveal their burden of sin and shame , countless and cursed crimes, denials worse than Peter's, since lifelong and unrepented of, despisings of mercy that called them. All these shall pierce their hearts as they behold the look of Jesus. And they shall go out and flee from the presence of the Lord, go out never to return, flee even into the outer darkness, if so be they may hide them from that terrible gaze. And they shall weep bitterly; weep as they never wept before, burning, scalding tears, such as earth's sorrow never knew. Weep never to be comforted, tears never to be wiped away. Their eyes shall be fountains of tears, not penitential and healing, but bitter and remorseful; tears of blood, tears that shall rend the heart in twain, and deluge the soul in fathomless woe." (Anonymous)

Wrath versus wickedness, but not in the sense of contest, but to visit every sin with the measure of justice it deserves.

(The Sovereign Grace Advocate - April, 1981)

About the Author

Oscar Bryan Mink was one of ten children born in a small town in Eastern Kentucky to a coal miner father and a stalwart mother. He grew into a tall, lean handsome young man. He worked in the CC Camps in Minnesota and when the war came, he was determined to join and fight for his country. This was a difficult task, as he had lost the sight of one eye at birth and the Army kept rejecting his requests. With persistence, he continued applying and finally the Army said, "Yes." He spent his war years as a Sergeant serving in the Philippine Islands.

When the war ended, he returned to the hills of Kentucky and pursued many colorful and sometimes erroneous paths, seeking fulfillment. With the marriage to his beloved wife, Fay and the birth of his first daughter, he thought he should seek a more reputable career path. Leaving his small family behind, he soon found himself attending refrigeration school in Pennsylvania. Little did he know God had a greater plan in the works.

While attending school, he would often walk past a church and on occasion would stop in for a quick listen. One particular day he stopped, he listened, and the Holy Spirit performed a mighty work in this occasional listener. His new life began.

Returning to his family, he decided to accept a job in Ohio, but soon was restless for the Lord. God sent the call and Oscar Mink answered. He preached his first gospel message on May 4, 1955 and did not stop until nearly fifty years later. He preached, researched, wrote, executed the office of pastor, and raised a family of three very grateful children always with a humble prayer on his lips.

Oscar B. Mink was a true Gospel warrior. His words reflect the awe, honor and love he proclaimed for our Master, Jesus Christ.

Zee Mink Fuller
February, 2011

