

The Glorious Gospel



Oscar B. Mink

The Glorious Gospel

by

Elder Oscar Brian Mink

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FOREWORD

With joy of heart but with feeble hand, I, with great thankfulness to Almighty God for once again being allowed and enabled to undertake to magnify His great and matchless Name, now, by His leadership write concerning the propagation of “The Glorious Gospel”.

This treatise, having been penned by a great and noble man of days past, was first presented in a series of seven articles which appeared in The Baptist Herald in 1993-94. It was my good honor to edit and send forth to many hundreds of readers, with further distribution being made to multiplied millions perhaps via the world-wide web, this writing in the Baptist Herald.

As I meditated and prayed, seeking God’s face to reflect His consummately wise will in regard to my task of writing in full and total agreement, I have been assured that “The Glorious Gospel” needs to go out. Many need to be comforted, reassured, and encouraged in the face of the oppositions to the necessity of preaching the gospel to mankind just as they are, lost sinners in desperate need of deliverance.

An examination of the realities of the condition of the masses of lost humanity reveals the sobering and awesome truth that apart from the saving efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ as declared by the gospel, there is no hope or possibility of lost sinners being saved. Ever.

Further examination reveals and confirms that it has eternally been the will and purpose of our Sovereign God to save His elect by the application of the perfect and sinless blood of His Son as the reconciling atonement, or covering for their grievous sins against His holy and righteous nature and character. No other price is demanded by God, and no other ransom is, or ever will be accepted by Him against Whom we all have sinned.

Still further examination will reveal that all deviations or departures from this eternal will and purpose have originated in, and been propagated from creaturehood and never from God. Please note the two prepositions of

the foregoing sentence, “in” and “from”. These both declare that God is not the author of any doctrine or precept that advocates the salvation of lost sinners by any other means than that which He clearly and unmistakably sets forth in the message of His Gospel. And it pleased Him for this to be His means to effect the salvation that He purposed and that lost sinners so desperately need.

Now, with these truths being clearly presented, it becomes unmistakably obvious that any denial of, or deviation from the preaching of the gospel as God’s declared means unto the salvation of lost sinners is, and must be laid clearly at the feet of the depraved nature and fallen will of the creature.

All deviations or denials have originated in time ... never in eternity. Therefore, we can safely conclude that they are the product of the creature, and differ only in the time in which they were first presented, and in severity of the deviation, remembering that ANY deviation from God’s eternal purpose, will, and means is in fact a denial of His eternal purpose, will, and means. And all such is blasphemous and God dishonoring, and will be judged by Him who is the Righteous Judge.

It is my prayer that all men come away from the errors and heresies of our time and come in repentance and faith to Jesus Christ and to the deliverance that He, and only He provides. Come to Him and to His glorious gospel and be found in His will and standing. Resist not, nor contend for any other than this precious truth.

Elder Oscar Brian Mink was mightily used by God over a period of some forty-five plus years to not only preach abroad the glorious gospel which he dearly loved, faithfully defended, and properly expounded by written word, also was to those who knew him, an outstanding steward and example of a sovereign grace conquered recipient sinner who had been apprehended of the gospel and made willing captive to its tenets, precepts, demands and privileges. He was a God made mighty warrior, conscripted to serve in His victorious army, and enabled and then caused to do so until he had run his course with joy and thankfulness.

It was my great privilege to count him as my dear brother and friend. I was blessed to have thirty plus years of sweet fellowship and wonderful human companionship with him and to share some of the fondest memories and remembrances as we often times journeyed to Bible Conferences and other such gatherings and were encouraged in these occasions and times of good and wholesome worship with the many faithful brethren who came and rejoiced around God's word.

We talked and talked, prayed and communed these many years, to the enrichment and betterment, I believe, to both and each of us. We grew, matured, and aged together and both believed these precious truths and numerous other wonderfully God honoring and brotherly edifying doctrinal and profound edicts of Holy Writ.

I now prayerfully beseech all, each, and every person who may be privileged to read and carefully, prayerfully consider the subject matter, to do so with one principal thought in mind: Is it true? And then ... If true, then what is my duty?

I ask everyone who has access to this publication to read with your Bible at hand. Read carefully, and verify, from the Scriptures the postulates set forth. Read with the deep-seated desire to know whether these things set forth are in accord with the teachings of the Scriptures. Do not read to condemn but rather to verify. In so doing, you will be not only blessed, but edified and strengthened.

Having been privileged to count Brother Mink as my closest pastoral friend, I can truthfully declare that I always found him to be a greatly blessed and diligent, studious, and scholarly man who prayed, searched, prayed and searched with determination to properly represent God in his work and in his life, and was more than willing to assist others in their searchings. And he invariably did so with genuine brotherly love and concern. He was truly a contender for the faith with the right attitude.

Should you ask anyone who knew Oscar Mink their evaluation of his motive and intent, you will find an overwhelming majority who declare that

he was studious and dedicated, and that he had presented himself as a devoted servant of the Lord.

Oscar Mink was a gentleman and a gentle man who journeyed the path that was laid out for him with dignity, grace, and joy. He ran his course, and has now gone to the Father's house, never, never, ever to depart.

Wm. Doyal Thomas

January 14, 2011

CHAPTER I

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Corinthians 4:3-4).

In the preceding chapter (II Corinthians 3) from which our text is taken, Paul, speaking of the Law of Moses, said: it **“was made glorious,”** but went on to say: **“For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious”** (II Corinthians 3:10-11). The Law of Moses was first the law of God, and therefore glorious, but there is no parallel between the law and the gospel and there can be no comparison made of them, except to highlight the infinite distinction between them. The law was a ministration of condemnation and death; the gospel of Christ is a ministration of righteousness and life (II Corinthians 3:7-9).

The gospel is glorious because God is its exclusive originator. It is called **“The gospel of God ...”** (Romans 1:1, Romans 15:16, 2 Corinthians 11:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 1 Peter 4:17). The gospel is glorious because Christ is its consummator. **“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ...”** (Hebrews 12:2; John 19:30). The gospel is glorious, for it is **“the sword of the Spirit”** (Ephesians 6:17), and let no man **“grieve the Holy Spirit”** by taking the edge off of the gospel sword. Now, let us go to the record God gave of His Son, and see how the Spirit uses the gospel and other means in calling God’s elect out of darkness into light and from sin unto salvation. Notwithstanding, there is a denomination going by the name **“Baptist,”** and many more who emphatically reject and intensely oppose the doctrine of gospel means.

THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE GOSPEL IN REGENERATION

“... For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (I Corinthians 4:15).

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:23).

There is no intrinsic power in the letter of the gospel. The gospel has no inherent sovereignty in it; it is by itself ineffectual in revealing the Lordship and Saviourhood of Jesus Christ. It is as the sword yet in its sheath, powerless, but when unsheathed by the skillful hand of the Master swordsman, it is the means of subduing some, and putting others to flight. So it is with the gospel sword, when empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit, the enmity in the hearts of God’s elect is slain thereby, and they are given a peace that passes all understanding. The Holy Spirit is the regenerative agent, or the life-giving power. Therefore, it is no demeaning of the Spirit, to attribute to Him the use of the gospel in His quickening ministry. It is through the means of gospel preaching, the elect see Christ lifted upon the pole of Calvary to bear the soul-damning judgment due them, and hence He becomes the object of their world defeating faith (I John 5:4-5).

Regeneration belongs wholly to the sphere of Divine activity, it is a product of sovereign grace, and there can never be regeneration that is according to the will of the flesh. It is “... **Not of the will of man, but of God**” (John 1:13). Man has no volition, option, or action in regeneration, there is no contribution given or made on his part, and none is needed, for man is the clay and God is the potter (Romans 9:21-23). While man is utterly passive in the regenerative experience, he is not irresponsible, for God “... **Commandeth all men everywhere to repent**” (Acts 17:30). As with repentance, so it is with faith, for “**Without faith it is impossible to please God ...**” (Hebrews 11:6). “**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God ...**” (Ephesians 2:8). Paul says: “... **For all men have not faith,**” and in the same breath, he

says: they who have not faith are **“unreasonable and wicked men”** (**II Thessalonians 3:2**). Men who are destitute of God-given faith, are utterly depraved, and are in their entity an abomination to God.

However, there is hope, for Jesus **“shall save His people from their sins”**, and He has in infinite mercy revealed in His unimpeachable word, how He saves all the Father gave Him in the covenant of redemption, and that is by the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God. Our Lord preached the doctrine of regeneration to Nicodemus, saying unto him: **“Ye must be born again”** (**John 3:7**), and then He connected this absolute requisite with the gospel, saying: **“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life”** (**John 3:14-15**). It is this very gospel that permeates the New Testament, and is the instrument God invariably uses in the regeneration of His people.

“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (**Romans 10:11-17**).

Paul irrefutably declares that a hearing of the gospel of Christ is essential to regeneration, for he asks: **“How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard?”**

The concept or idea of regeneration belongs exclusively to the province of omniscience, and its revelation and effectuation is strictly the work of the omnipotent and omnipresent Spirit. Man had nothing to do with his first birth, and he is utterly passive in his second birth, for **“the flesh profiteth**

nothing” (John 6:63). It is no contradiction of the truth stated in the foregoing part of this paragraph to say: No man comes to God without faith and repentance, for these gifts are not of the flesh, but of God, and are expressive of the predestinating love of God for His people. Furthermore, no man ever comes to Christ unwillingly. Some who believe in the sovereignty of God may think, or say, “That smacks of Arminianism.” But it is not so, for it is in perfect harmony with the word of God. We are not saying that man in his natural state has a choice or freewill, whereby he determines his own destiny. The natural will of man is not cooperative in the work of regeneration, but is enmity against it (Romans 8: 7-8). In regeneration, man is given a new nature (II Corinthians 5:17), and therewith a new will whereby he can please God, and he comes willingly and joyfully unto God (Psalm 110:3).

While regeneration **“is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”** (Romans 9:16), the first evidence or fruit of regeneration is a new heart and will. Simply put, regeneration must be its own witness, as with Saul of Tarsus, his first words at the time of his quickening were: **“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”** (Acts 9:6). In regeneration a new nature is given the subject, and with the new nature comes new and holy desires, and a willingness to please God. God’s will is sovereign and cannot be resisted (Romans 9:19), but the will of the new nature of man is invariably resisted by the powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12). Paul said: **“... When I would do good, evil is present with me”** (Romans 7:21). This is the sad lament of every regenerated person, for they know that as yet they have not put off the old man with his depraved and implacable will, but while their trials are exceeding bitter, they persevere; **“because greater is He that is in you (them), than he that is in the world”** (I John 4:4).

The gospel says: **“Repent or perish”** (Luke 13:3). There is great urgency in these awesome words, for they do not allow for deliberation or procrastination. This word **“repent”** is emphatic, for it points directly to fallen man’s utterly corrupt nature, and calls for an amendment of life that consists in an about-face, wherein the gospel of the substitutionary work of Christ has brought infinite contrition and endless gratitude to his heart. In

regeneration the Holy Spirit grants **“repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21). Repentance brings with it a genuine regret for having lived a life of rebellion against God’s holy, just, and good law (Romans 7:12). But with repentance comes faith, and by this faith in the Christ of the gospel the sinner is made righteous and stands in the presence of God justified, for God has taken the perfect obedience of His Son and placed it to the helpless sinner’s account. For God is **“the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”** (Romans 3:26).

Speaking of the instrumentality of the gospel in regeneration, Robert Haldane in his classic, *‘An Exposition of Romans’*, says: **“The gospel is the great and admirable mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, into which the angels desire to look, whereby His manifold wisdom is made known unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places. It is the efficacious means by which God saves men from sin and misery, and bestows on them eternal life, the instrument by which He triumphs in their hearts, and destroys in them the dominion of Satan. The gospel, which is the word of God, is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword. By it, as the word of truth, men are begotten by the will of God.”** (Pages 46 & 47)

Sovereign Grace Baptists, contemporary and ancient, have never taught that the gospel, per se, saves anyone from their sins. What they have consistently taught is: No person is ever saved without hearing and believing the gospel. Baptists are ever aware of the primacy God has given His word. His word is the antithesis of error, and its light cannot coexist with darkness. Baptists know that God has magnified His word above that of His own name, and that His word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish that which He pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto He sends it (Psalm 138:2; Isaiah 55:11). Baptists know that the gospel is the (instrumental) power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), but they have never attributed to the letter of the gospel redemptive efficacy, for they KNOW it is the PERSON of Christ that saves the sinner from his merited damnation, but they equally know that it is through the gospel that Christ **“hath brought life and immortality to light”** (II Timothy 1:10).

The opponents of gospel missions argue, saying: “The gospel cannot save, and has no part nor lot with salvation from sin.” They are correct when they say the gospel has nothing to do with salvation from sin, for the gospel is truth, the truth upon which regeneration stands, and apart from which no soul shall ever be saved. It is the components of the gospel that Paul refers to when he says: **“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16)**. It is Christ’s substitutionary death, burial, and triumphant resurrection from the grave that is the power of God unto salvation, and Paul tells the Corinthian believers: **“... In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (I Corinthians 4:15)**. Paul, in magnifying the saving truth of the gospel, says to the same church: **“... I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, ... unless ye have believed in vain” (I Corinthians 15:1-2)**.

Paul knew the gospel was not the author of salvation. He knew the gospel did not have the power to forgive sin, and he knew as surely as any man ever knew that the all-wise God had ordained the manifestation of Christ’s particular and insuperable salvation by the preaching of the gospel, and so much so, that to reject the gospel was to reject Christ (**John 12:48**). It is Christ and Christ alone that died for His people, it is Christ and Christ alone that took the guilt of His people into the grave of forgetfulness, and it was Christ and Christ alone Who arose from the grave with the scars of redemption in His body. It is this gospel Paul said, he was set in defense of (**Philippians 1:17**); and it is this same gospel Paul spoke of when he said: **“... Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:16)**.

Paul knew the gospel was the gift of God’s unmerited grace, and that it was and is the power of God unto salvation. He knew there was no room for dilatoriness in his call to preach the gospel, and so it is he says: **“... Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (II Corinthians 5:11)**. Paul knew the gospel was heaven’s ordained means in calling God’s elect people unto everlasting glory, and he knew the Holy Spirit empowered and endowed the gospel with regenerative light. So in view of the high and exalted place that God had given the gospel in the scheme of redemption, Paul said: **“... Woe is unto me, if I preach not the**

gospel” (I Corinthians 9:16). Any and all preaching that does not give the gospel the honor, power, and place God has given it in the covenant of redemption has aided and abetted the enemy’s cause, and the only safeguard against such shameful compromise is an impartial loyalty to the word of God and a perpetual praise of the Holy Spirit for revealing to you the gospel of your salvation.

The gospel of grace and regeneration have an eternal and indissoluble union, they are really two aspects of the same thing, and that is the eternal unconditional election of God. It is this great truth Paul stresses when he says: **“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).**

Only an artificial analysis can separate the gospel from the regeneration of these Gentiles, for the immediate context connects **“the word of God”**, or gospel light with the regeneration of these Gentiles, whereby their election was manifested.

CHAPTER II

THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE GOSPEL IN REGENERATION

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

“A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Luke 8:5-8).

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11).

“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15).

The Lord in His brief ministry on the earth went from village to city and from city to village, “preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:1). And to many of His hearers He spake “the parable of the sower”, wherein the “seed” with a general application was sown. Some of the seed fell by the wayside, and was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. Some fell upon a rock, and being without moisture, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and it was choked out by the thorns. But that is not the end of the parable, for the Divine agrarian, says: “And other fell on good ground, and sprang up,

and bare fruit an hundredfold ... And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? ... And He said, ... The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:8-11).

Parabolic teaching is no stranger to the Bible, and that for the simple reason, parables are an efficient means of conveying and communicating much of the mind of God to His people. A parable is a comparison, an illustration, or analogy. A parable is a means of explaining something that is unknown by comparing it with something that is known. Much of the preacher’s homiletical time is spent in looking for a good analogy or parable with sufficient parallel to clearly show his meaning and emphasize his point. No preacher or public speaker can in any wise compare with Christ in the art of parabolic teaching, for HE ALONE has infallible proficiency. May God the Holy Spirit be pleased to simplify the parable of the sower, so as we may understand it, and profit therefrom.

It is my aim in considering the parable of the sower, to compare Scripture with Scripture, and thereby show how graphically the parable teaches the instrumentality of the gospel in regeneration. And he that hath eyes to see, let him see.

Two things we know with absolute certainty is, the “seed” in this parable, is the gospel of God, and secondly, the “**hundredfold fruit**” was the result of the broadcast preaching of the gospel (Luke 8:8). But the remonstrant objects, saying: “**But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience**”, they had an ‘**honest and good heart**’, and were regenerate before they ever heard the gospel.” The problem with this contention is one of great import, for it has people with honest and good hearts that know nothing about the gospel of Christ. This is not merely an absurdity, but a most dangerous one, for it has to do with the eternal destiny of the soul, and makes the “**good ground**” the product of human nature.

Jeremiah metaphorically refers to fallen man’s nature as “**fallow ground**” (Jeremiah 4:3). Fallow ground is cultivated ground that is left idle during the growing season. So it is with man’s native intellect, many a

gospel furrow has been plowed across it, but it has not and cannot ever be planted with the seed of regeneration. **“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7)**. Every teaching of the Bible is rank foolishness to the natural man, and he can never by the power of his old nature know anything about the word of God as he ought to know it **(I Corinthians 2:14)**.

Man in his fallen nature is utterly depraved, his heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked **(Jeremiah 17:9)**. There has not been one among the multiplied millions of Adam’s fallen posterity that ever sought after God **(Romans 3:11)**, and the Scriptures declare that there is no way for the Adamic nature to please God **(Romans 8:8)**. But the gospel of Christ is not defeated, for it is God’s power unto the salvation of His people, and it is through the Holy Spirit’s application of the gospel that man is given a new nature. **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17)**.

God has never been without a people, yea, His host is so exceeding great, that it defies enumeration; but there is not one among this grand and glorious host that did not come the gospel route, for when the Divinely appointed time of regeneration comes, so comes the corresponding power of the gospel, and God’s people are made willing; for it is **“the power of God unto salvation” (Psalm 110:3; Romans 1:16)**. The gospel of regeneration is underwritten by the grace of God. Paul knowing this grand truth, said: **“... I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24)**.

THE GOOD GROUND

“And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold ...” (Luke 8:8). The **“good ground”** cannot be the result or effect of the natural man’s labor, for his work is not good, but perverse **(Psalm 125:5; Acts 20:30)**. According to the Divine plumb line, all their **“ways are crooked” (Proverbs 2:15)**. Spiritually speaking, no offspring

of human nature has ever ploughed a straight furrow, for **“they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one”** (Romans 3:12). The word **“good”** according to Heaven’s definition of the term is utterly alien to the Adamic vocabulary. So then, we are irrevocably driven to the conclusion that the natural man had nothing whatsoever to do with making the ground **“good”**. However, from the loose and conventional use of the term, we learn (?) that there is a lot of good in the very worst of people.

Good ground is consistently productive, and is highly valued. But the question which perplexes so many honest and searching minds, is: **“Whence cometh this ‘good ground’ the Lord spoke of?”** Indulge me please to once again answer the question in the negative, and in so doing we **MUST** go to the word of the unerring God. And we find those blessed pages replete with the doctrine of the total depravity of human nature. The Lord speaking inclusively of the original progenitor and his last and furthest descendent, said: **“The flesh profit nothing”** (John 6:63). The Apostle Paul, who was as much a perfect example of Christ as any man who ever lived, after diligently searching his own heart, said: **“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing”** (Romans 7:18). The most dedicated saint, after a brief moment in the study of God’s word, reflecting thereon, and looking introspectively at his thoughts and experience, will cry out like the God-fearing Prophet Isaiah, saying: **“Woe is me! for I am undone”** (Isaiah 6:5).

Seeing then that the omniscient God finds no **“good ground”** in the whole realm of human nature, and yet the Holy Spirit-inspired Word refers to **“good ground”** in all three accounts of the parable (Matthew 13:8; Mark 4:8; Luke 8:15). The Lord did not speak this parable to confuse His disciples, for He said unto them concerning this parable: **“Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God”** (Mark 4:11). Parables are often used as comprehensive aids, or as teaching instruments, to facilitate understanding. When His disciples were confused by any of His parables, their confusion was soon erased; for **“He expounded all things to his disciples”** (Mark 4:34). To the contemporary saint, the Scripture

says: **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, ... and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering”** (James 1:5-6).

The Adamic man, being utterly devoid of spiritual life, desperately needs to be regenerated, or as the Lord said: **“Ye must be born again”** (John 3:7), and this second birth or regeneration is the Divine imperative, which without there can be no **“good ground”** or **“honest hearts”**. The parable plainly says that the **“good ground”** and **“honest hearts”** is the result of hearing the word and keeping it. They did not merely hear the word with their carnal faculty, but the word was implanted in their hearts, beyond the uprooting power of Satan. James refers to this same **“word”**, admonishing his readers to **“... Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls”** (James 1:21).

So as not to be misunderstood, I repeat, **“It is the Holy Spirit of God that regenerates.”** The **“word”**, unquickened by the Spirit, is destined for deaf ears or stony ground, but when the **“word”** is made alive by the Spirit **“it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”** (Romans 1:16). The doctrine of sovereign election and the glorious gospel are eternal parts of the infinite counsel of God, and it is the invariable pleasure of the everlasting Father to use the gospel to regenerate all whom He gave the Son in the everlasting covenant (John 6:37; Hebrews 13:20). Thus it is, Paul with great joy tells the Thessalonians saints: **“... Because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe”** (I Thessalonians 2:13).

In his second letter to the same church, Paul accentuates this faith-uplifting and God-exalting truth, by saying: **“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (II Thessalonians 2:13-14). Any and all efforts to separate the work of the gospel from regeneration is an exercise in absolute futility, and borders on

blasphemy, for it is to say; the unregenerate heart is more powerful than the word of God.

The Holy Spirit is the Author and effectual force in regeneration, but in the calling of God's elect unto salvation it has pleased the Holy Spirit to use the gospel of the Son of God as an instrument of quickening grace, whereby all whom Jesus represented on the cross are regenerated. The appointment of instrumentalities, such as the gospel and all who are called of God to declare it, does not take anything away from the exclusive power of God in salvation, nay, the very opposite is truth; it demonstrates the absolute sovereignty of God over the means as well as the subject. The Lord asks: **"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"** (Matthew 20:15). The gospel and the Holy Spirit called preacher are instruments of God's sovereign pleasure, and it has pleased the Lord to make His preachers advocates of the gospel of grace. Paul said that he was **"a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God"** (Romans 1:1). And he said: **"... I have fully preached the gospel of Christ"** (Romans 15:19). With Paul, the gospel was of primary importance, and that for many reasons, two of which are:

- 1.) He knew that God used the gospel in calling out His elect.

- 2.) He knew there would be some who would pervert the gospel (Galatians 1:7).

Evil so fully permeates the nature of the unregenerate man that he never has one right thought about God (Psalm 10:4). His mind is enmity against God, and he thinks that God is altogether such a one as himself (Psalm 50:21). He trusts in his own heart, and is therefore a fool (Proverbs 28:26). Paul, in summoning up his old nature, said: **"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing"** (Romans 7:18). And Peter being deceived by his old nature, said: **"I am a sinful man, O Lord"** (Luke 5:8). According to the Divine yardstick, Adam and all of his posterity have come fatally short of that glory which without, no man shall see God and cannot by his native will do anything that is pleasing unto God.

Peter asks: “... **What shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?**” (I Peter 4:17). Peter did not ask this question because he did not know the answer, but he asked it to apprise his readers of the terrible judgment appointed unto them that obey not the gospel. Speaking of the gospel, the Lord said: “... **He that believeth not shall be damned**” (Mark 16:16). But let us not despair, for “**many**” hear the word, and believe (Acts 4:4).

“**Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.**”

CHAPTER III

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:11-15).

In our last article on the subject of “THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL” it was clearly and irrefutably shown from Scripture that the “good ground” and the “good heart” could not have been produced by human nature, for human nature at its very best state is altogether vanity (Psalm 39:5), and fallen man in his utterly depraved mind, thinks that God is altogether such an one as himself (Psalm 50:21). So it is, the elect of God are by “nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:3). Thus, we are forced to conclude whatever the “good ground” and “good heart” are, they were unproductive prior to the “seed” or word of God being sown in them.

It was the gospel or “the word of God” that manifested the difference in the various grounds, and made the heretofore barren “good ground” alive and fruitful. Paul asked the Corinthian saints a pride-destructive question, saying unto them: “Who maketh thee to differ from another? ...” (I Corinthians 4:7). Then, in the same chapter, verse 15, he lets them know by Whom and what means their difference was realized; “... For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” Speaking of Christ and His gospel, Paul wrote the Ephesian church, saying: “In

whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). When Paul said he was “not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ...” (Romans 1:16), neither was he fearful of being disproved, for his evidence at the time was yet alive and exceeding great in number (II Timothy 2:2).

The Apostle Peter, by inspiration of God, emphatically declares that the gospel is a Divine means of regeneration. Peter testifies, saying: “**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever**” (I Peter 1:23). Peter’s words in this text are self-explanatory, and give the novice Christian a ready exegesis that cannot be gainsaid. So as to highlight the place of the gospel word in regeneration, and to allay any confusion that would arise concerning the incarnate Word and the gospel word, the Lord said: “**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life**” (John 5:24).

By hearing the gospel word, and believing what it says about the living Word, we are saved; but we need to keep in the forefront of our mind, that it was the power of God that enabled us to believe the gospel. The gospel is a Divine means that God uses in regenerating His elect people, whereby they are made spiritually alive, become the sons of God experientially, receive the imputed righteousness of Christ, and become heralds of the gospel. It is not the power of mere human words, nor is it the power of the persuasive preacher. It is not the sophistication and learning of the hearer, nor is it by the will of man, but it is by the power of God. God, by sovereign design and mercy, speaks to His people through His written word, and uses that word in connection with the living Word to regenerate His people.

THE GOOD GROUND - HONEST AND GOOD HEART

In **Matthew 13** Jesus spoke in parables to great multitudes of people, and in verse 35 of **Matthew 13** the Lord tells us why He spoke in parables to

the multitudes: **“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world”** (Isaiah 6:9-10; Acts 28:25-28). At the conclusion of this session of parabolic teaching by the Lord, He asked His disciples, saying unto them: **“Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old”** (Matthew 13: 51-52). Please note, the **“new”** and **“old”** things are **“treasures”**. The Lord in these parables (Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8) is teaching His disciples something that is new and something that is old to their ears.

In **Matthew 13:52** the Lord gives His disciples scribal status. They had been disciples of Moses, but now they are disciples of the prophesied and manifested Messiah, and are to bring forth things new and old from the treasury of the gospel. There are many covenants referred to in Scripture, such as the Edenic, Noachian, Abrahamic, Mosiac, etc., but none are as ancient as the gospel covenant, which is referred to as the **“better covenant”** with **“better promises”** (Hebrews 8:6). The gospel of Christ is an indispensable part of the eternal or **“everlasting covenant”** (Hebrews 13:20), and is referred to as **“new”** only in the sense the Mosiac (works) covenant has waxed old, decayed, and ready to vanish away (Hebrews 8:13).

The fall of Adam nullified the Edenic covenant, but did not in any sense or degree alter the covenant of sovereign grace, for it antedates creation, and is underwritten by Divine omniscience and omnipotent providence. The Lord of glory never decreed or intended to save any person by a covenant of works (Hebrews 10:4), but they were products of God’s wisdom, for they were shadows which reflected the gospel of salvation, and the one sacrifice in Whom the elect of God were chosen before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4; Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1). The eternal covenant of redemption has never been in a state of inertia, for God has never left Himself without a gospel witness in the earth (Acts 14:17; Hebrews 2:3-4). Christ said if His disciples refused to witness of His mighty works, then

“The stones would immediately cry out” (Luke 19:40). So, there has never been a season since creation, wherein the gospel was ineffectual or fruitless.

The “good ground” in the parable of the sower was prepared and inviting before the sower went out to sow his seed. The covenant of elective grace was prepared ere the ages were born, and Christ the Mediator of that covenant, says: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28; I Peter 1:18-21). The “ground” of election is eternal ground, for it is made ready by the Lord, and all that the Father gave unto the Son in the covenant of redemption, which the Lord likened unto “good ground”, shall be a part of that bountiful harvest which hear the gospel; for the Lord hath loved them with an “everlasting love” (John 6:37; Jeremiah 31:3).

To say, as Arminianism says, that election is a bilateral covenant, drawn up by God and presented to the will of fallen man for ratification, is blasphemy. The covenant of election is a unilateral compact, drawn up by the triune God ere there was an angel, much less man. The covenant needs not the sanction of creatures, for God is absolutely sovereign, His “counsel shall stand”, and He says: “I will do all My pleasure” (Isaiah 46:10). While God does not look to man for ratification of any of His actions, He does look to His blood bought children for gratification, and He is never disappointed in this matter, for one of the first fruits of hearing and believing the gospel is gratitude toward God for His infinite mercy in providing them a Saviour from their merited condemnation. Thus it is, Paul says: “Rejoice evermore” (I Thessalonians 5:16).

The preacher of the glorious gospel of Christ does not have access to the “Lamb’s book of life” (Luke 10:20; Revelation 21:27). He cannot distinguish by his own intellect between the covenant sons of God, and those whom God passed over in the redemptive scheme. Spiritually speaking, the God called preacher cannot tell the “good ground” from any other ground. This is why the gospel is to be preached indiscriminately, or to “every creature” (Mark 16:15). The Holy Spirit tutored preacher knows that Jesus “shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew

1:21), and he knows the gospel is the glorious instrument the Lord uses in calling His elect people from death unto life, or from sin unto salvation. He knows there is some **“good ground”**, or covenant souls in whom the gospel seed needs to be sown. Then too, he knows if he is faithful in preaching the gospel, the Lord will give him an increase, even as much as an hundred fold in some cases (**Matthew 13:8**).

Let me say ere we leave off further consideration of the **“parable of sower”**, the covenant people of God or **“good ground”** people need to hear and believe the gospel, as much so as the **“way side”** people, **“rocky ground”** people, or **“thorny ground”** people, for all their **“righteousnesses are as filthy rags”** in God’s sight (**Isaiah 64:6**). The old nature is not changed in regeneration, but remains as depraved and capable of sin as it was prior to hearing and believing the gospel. The old nature is carnal, and is fully a servant of sin. The new nature is not merely God-imparted, but is God-implanted. Paul said: **“Christ liveth in me”** (**Galatians 2:20**), and in another place he said: **“For to me to live is Christ”** (**Philippians 1:21**). Paul knew the old nature was capable only of sin, but he also knew that hearing and believing the gospel would go a very long way in checking the old sin-loving nature.

The covenant of eternal and unconditional election is symbolized by the term **“good ground”**, for it is out of this **“good ground”** the fruit of election is brought forth. The **“honest heart”** does not precede regeneration in the experience of God’s elect, but it is what God sees in His chosen people when He considers the sovereignty of the gospel, and it is what He sees when He looks at His people through the eyes of covenant omniscience. Let us remember God is not subject to the law of time as is man. God is the God of supreme logic, but He is not bound by chronology. God is the author of time. With the creation of heaven and earth, time was first introduced, and time is infallibly subservient to the decrees of God. More about time later in this series.

CHAPTER IV

INSTANTANEOUS REGENERATION

“**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved**”
(Acts 16:31).

The word “**believe**” in this text is a synonym for “**faith**”, and the two terms are used interchangeably throughout Scripture, and more especially in the New Testament. “**For by grace are ye saved through faith ...**” (Ephesians 2:8). “**And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed**” (Acts 13:48), etc., etc.. While faith and repentance are not synonymous, they are inclusive and inseparable; they are the free gifts of God’s grace, and the alpha and omega of regeneration. Repentance and faith are like two gifts in one package, and are delivered and received at the same time.

“**He that believeth not shall be damned ...**” (Mark 16:16). “**... Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish**” (Luke 13:3). The congruency of the two terms (faith and repentance) is glaringly apparent, and their correlation bespeaks invariable accompaniment. Repentance and faith are the sure fruits of hearing and believing the gospel (Mark 1:15), and all who obey the gospel are regenerated or quickened by the Spirit (I Peter 3:18). The Lord said in giving His church the gospel commission, “**Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations ...**” (Luke 24:47), and that great gospel herald, Paul, said: “**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**” (Romans 10:17).

Paul was miraculously called of God to preach to the Gentiles, and he was not disobedient to his heavenly calling, but showed to the Gentiles that they should repent, and turn to God (Acts 26:19-20). But Paul was not the first man to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, for that great honor had been eternally reserved for His impetuous and God-fearing Apostle, Peter. Peter

said unto the apostles and elders: **“... Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe”** (Acts 15:6-7). An angel had instructed a Gentile by the name of Cornelius to **“Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved”** (Acts 11:13-14). These words restate the axiom that the gospel must be heard and believed in order to be saved.

All who make regeneration subject to time elements unduly complicate the matter, and make God’s redemptive decree subservient to supposed intervals between repentance, faith, and regeneration. Salvation is not dualistic or a trilateral event divided by time and experience, but is the undivided work of the timeless God of heaven, in Whom there can be no waiting period, for He is the eternal NOW. The unchangeable character of time is that of urgency, and urgency is alien to the nature of God. To contend there is an element of time, be it ever so infinitesimal, between repentance, faith, and regeneration is to bedim the glory of the sovereign Saviour of sinners. Salvation is of the Lord, and He will not share the glory of it with any created thing (**Isaiah 48:11**).

The entrance of Divine light into the soul is instantaneous, and light and darkness are simultaneously exclusive, since one cannot abide in the presence of the other, for one is contrary to the other and never more so than in the spiritual sense.

When God breathed into the nostril of soulless and lifeless Adam, he **“... became a living soul”** (**Genesis 2:7**). The life of Adam did not come to him in installments, but instantly. There was not a time-lapse or gap between God’s inbreathing and Adam’s life, and while Adam’s life was an effect of God’s inbreathing, it was not subsequent to it. Cause and effect are laws of nature, but while God is the Author of the laws of nature, He is not bound by them; for absolute sovereignty cannot be bound. Paul was bound by chains, but he said, **“... The word of God is not bound”** (**Acts 21:33; II Timothy 2:9**), for it is the sword of the Spirit whereby and wherewith the innumerable host of God’s elect are regenerated. It is owing

to this divine postulate, or axiom, that Paul said to the Corinthian saints **“... For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel”** (I Corinthians 4:15).

The blind man referred to in Mark’s gospel (Mark 10:46-52), whom the Lord healed did not receive his sight by progression of light, but Jesus said unto him, **“Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way”**. This man received his natural vision, and that without the least involvement of time. His healing was supernatural and miraculous, and time was in no way a factor in his healing experience. Miracles are humanly incomprehensible; otherwise they would not be miracles. And so it is with regeneration. It also is miraculous and defies human understanding, but being a miracle, no time is involved by the Holy Spirit in effecting it.

“What communion hath light with darkness?” (II Corinthians 6:14). Paul did not ask this question because he did not know the answer, but he asked it to highlight the distinction between sin (darkness), and God-given truth (light). Spiritual light and darkness are antagonistic, and are eternally divided. There can be no degree of mixture between them, much less merger as the ecumenical churches suggest. **“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness”** (Isaiah 5:20).

REGENERATION CANNOT BE DIVIDED

“Is Christ divided?” (I Corinthians 1:13).

Someone may say: **“Regeneration is not Christ, and Christ is not regeneration.”** This statement is true, for one (Christ) is the Author; and the other (regeneration) is the product. But it is through the medium of regeneration that Christ indwells the believer. The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer (I Corinthians 3:16), Christ dwells in the believer, and He is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). God dwells in the believer (I John 4:12), and the Holy Trinity dwells in the believer **“for truth’s sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever”** (II John 1:2). The

“truth” is Christ, (**John 14:6**), and Christ cannot be separated from the regenerated soul. To say that regeneration comes by gradualism, or in successive stages, is to say that Christ was in some degree of time absent from the soul during its regeneration.

There is not, and cannot be a partially-regenerated soul. God is the Giver of life, and life never comes in measures of allotted time, for if so, then time would be sovereign and God would be restricted to its boundaries. Perish the thought, for it is utterly foolish! The “gap” theory of regeneration is a debasing of Him who said: **“My sheep hear my voice ... and I give unto them eternal life”** (**John 10: 27, 28**). The gospel is the voice of Christ, and the divine channel through which regeneration comes in its entirety or fullness. Christ said to the legalistic young man who adhered to the Mosaic code with all of his strength: **“One thing thou lackest ...”** (**Mark 10:21**). The “one thing” which the young man desperately needed was Holy Spirit regeneration, and Christ referred to it as a single quantity, complete in itself. The disciples of Christ knew that He was referring to regeneration when He said to the young man, **“One thing thou lackest”**, for their immediate and anxious question addressed to Christ was: **“Who then can be saved?”** (**Luke 18:26**), for they knew they could not rebirth themselves.

It took zero time for Christ to give physical regeneration to the dead, buried, and decaying body of Lazarus (**John 11:43-44**). It took zero time for Him to change the water into wine, and it takes the same nonexistent period for the Holy Spirit to give life and light to all that obey the gospel, for they have been chosen of God unto salvation **“through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (**II Thessalonians 2:13, 14**).

The contention that regeneration comes in a division of steps or stages is a cause for confusion and doubt, for there is no way to determine or ascertain the time of any subsequent step. However, there is no second step as some people claim. The supposed interim between the initial step, and all subsequent steps in regeneration, would no doubt cause great anguish of soul,

no matter how rapidly they may follow. Christ is the Personified gospel, and cannot be divided (**I Corinthians 1:13**). The Lord spoke very clearly, saying: **“He that believeth on the Son hath life ...”** (**John 3:36**). Not merely a part of life, but life that cannot be diminished, or made subject to death, for it is of God, and is endowed by Him with a nature that cannot sin (**I John 3:9**). God uses the Holy Spirit anointed gospel to regenerate His people, and with regeneration comes faith in the Christ of the gospel, in Whom they are complete (**Colossians 2:10**).

In the realm of logic or human reasoning, study and learning is invariably progressive and it precedes believing. But in the domain of theological science, belief in Christ is previous to and necessary to all profitable study and learning of the word of God (**I Corinthians 2:14; II Timothy 3:7**). In regeneration there is an implantation of a holy nature, and its out-workings are the sure evidence of the new birth, for it manifests the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

Repentance and faith are the two parts and gifts of God which constitute regeneration, and they come with absolute cohesion and coherence, for their connection cannot be broken. Repentance and faith are parts of the singular and immediate work of the Holy Spirit in making the gospel of redemptive grace effectual for, and in the family of God’s elect. The gospel is never preached without effect. To some it is a stumbling (**Romans 1:16**). It is the **“savour of life”** in them that believe (**II Corinthians 2:15-16**), and the **“savour of death”** in them that obey not the gospel of God (**I Peter 4:17**).

To divide the work of regeneration by an unfolding or developing procedure, demands an indefinite staying of the secondary, and all other parts in the order or series of events leading unto regeneration. If a person is granted repentance, but must wait some degree of time for the gift of faith, is the person who has repented saved during the waiting for faith? We know that **“without faith it is impossible to please God”** (**Hebrews 11:6**). So then, whatever the time-lapse be (who is so daring as to venture a guess as to its measure of time), the repentant person would yet be an unbeliever, for he as yet has no faith in God. This deduction is forced upon us from Scripture and

logic, and it necessarily follows the premise which calls for a division of faith and repentance in regeneration. However, it is a deduction needlessly drawn, for that (division in regeneration) which forces it upon us has no basis in Scripture.

We do not speak derogatorily of time, for time is the gift of God and the saint is to do his utmost in redeeming it for the honor of God, and for his own esteem at the mercy seat of Christ, for we all must give an account of our earthly pilgrimage unto God (**Romans 14:12; Ephesians 5:16**).

“Reformation is a tedious and protracted process; regeneration is INSTANTANEOUS (emphasis OBM) and complete. In short, reformation is human; regeneration is Divine”. A. W. Pink - The New Birth, Page 6

The new birth or regeneration is not man turning over a new leaf, nor is it by the best of man’s intentions, but it is a miraculous and creative act of the Holy Spirit. “**It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing**” (**John 6:63**). Regeneration does not come by ancestral lineage, as the Jews believed (**John 8:39**), nor is it a product of the will of man, but it is of God (**John 1:13**). Christ, in His dialogue with Nicodemus, said: “**That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit**” (**John 3:6**). In these words, Christ clearly shows the distinction and eternal demarcation between the works of the flesh and that of the Spirit. Arminianism is grossly blinded to this truth, for that God-debasing system teaches that salvation comes by an integration of the powers of the flesh and the Spirit, and they (decisionists) point to their statistics as proof positive of their cooperation with God in His effort to save mankind.

Arminianism is “**another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ**” (**Galatians 1:6-7**). Satan has taken the false gospel of decisionism, and has by it deceived multitudes of people. He has taken the Spirit and the flesh, which are diametrically opposed and radically different, and produced a counterfeit and soul-damning harmony. The works or freewill gospel is the antithesis of the gospel of grace, and they cannot be mixed; otherwise Christ died for nothing (**Galatians 2:21**). Paul graphically warns of Satan’s

convoluted concoction, saying: **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: (fooled) for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”** (Galatians 6:7-8).

As aggressive and popular as Arminianism is with the religious world, sovereign grace Baptists should not be dismayed by it, nor be reluctant to preach the instrumentality of the gospel of free grace in the regeneration of God’s elect; for we know that God shall **“save His people from their sins”**, and we know that He shall save them by making the gospel call effectual unto them. **“Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not”** (Galatians 6:19). The revelation and the effectuation of regeneration is by the omnipresent Spirit, Who is incapable of failure, and His instrument of accomplishment is the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ (John 14:26; Hebrews 4:12).

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). The instrumentality and sovereignty of God’s word is not a New Testament innovation, but is equally an Old Testament truth. The Psalmist said: **“Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes”** (Psalm 119:155). The gospel of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament are not merely enjoined, but they are one and the same gospel, for God has never had but one way of saving His people, and that is by grace through faith in His living Word and in His spoken word. Thus it is, the Psalmist insuperably declares: **“I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me”** (Psalm 119:93).

CHAPTER V

ELECTION AND THE GOSPEL

“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ...” (I Thessalonians 1:4-5).

Election unto salvation, rather than abolishing second causes, establishes them, and magnifies the Lord thereby. God, Who chose His people before the foundation of the world, “Appointed them not to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thessalonians 5:9). He (God) Who appointed this great and glorious end for His people, has also determined or appointed the means thereunto, and His sovereignty in the decree of election is as much honored by the ordination of the means to that exalted end and their sure subservience, as the end itself. Election is of God, and the means thereunto are no less of God. Salvation is of the Lord, but so is the gospel (Jonah 2:9; Romans 1:1).

Calling by the Holy Spirit-wielded gospel, justification, sanctification, and glorification are inherent and integral parts of the decree of election, and are the Divine underpinnings guaranteeing a heavenly destiny for all the Father gave the Son in the covenant of election. Based upon this God-exalting truth, Christ, the Mediator of the covenant, said: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). The giving of the elect by the Father unto the Son antedates time, and there is no power that can pluck them out of the hand of sovereign and triune faithfulness (John 10:28-30).

The covenant of election is not a contract or agreement between God and man, but it is a Kingly manifesto, emanating from the unimpeachable and omnipotent throne of God. It is based on this great truth that God says unto Jeremiah: “... I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with

loving kindness have I drawn thee” (Jeremiah 31:3). It is through the atoning blood of the **“everlasting covenant”** that Christ is made the great Shepherd of the sheep (Hebrews 13:20).

However, we need to know and ever remember that the covenant of election is not fatalistic in any sense or degree. Fatalism denies the death of Christ, and substitutes fate for Divine providence. The Koran is the Bible of fatalism, and **“It denies the death of Christ and sees no need of atonement”**. (A. H. Strong - SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, Pages 186, 427)

The fruit of eternal and unconditional election is judicial blamelessness and personal holiness (Ephesians 1:4). But to say this and no more is to leave this great truth shrouded in impenetrable darkness. So, Paul, the fervent and God-fearing Apostle, by Divine inspiration sheds much light on the subject, whereby the gospel of Christ is given its place and significance in the covenant of redemption. Paul, speaking of Christ, said to the Ephesian saints: **“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise”** (Ephesians 1:13). In the regenerative experience nothing precedes or preempts a hearing and a believing of the glorious gospel of Christ.

While the gospel cannot regenerate, it has pleased God to make it the power whereby He calls His elect out of their spiritual darkness, into the glorious light of the eternal and living WORD, from Whom redemption comes, and in Whom there is no variableness. To highlight the divinely-ordained necessity of the gospel in regeneration of God’s elect, Paul said: **“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost”** (II Corinthians 4:3).

While the gospel is on one hand bitterness to some, it is on the other hand made sweeter than honey to those effectually called by it. While on one hand it is as a millstone around the neck of the self-righteous, dragging them constantly downward unto the blackness and darkness of the bottomless pit, it is on the other hand a divinely appointed means to lift up God’s elect from their fallen state, and cause them to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus,

their Saviour and Lord (**Ephesians 2:5, 6**). The true gospel is a terror to the reprobate, and a source of unceasing comfort to the elect of God.

God's elect, like all of Adam's children, stand equally guilty and condemned before God. They are by nature desperately wicked and there is no fear of God before their eyes (**Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:18-19**). The elect of God are by their natural birth as much filled with enmity against God as the vilest reprobate, and their love for this present evil world leaves no room or time for God (**Romans 8:7; I John 2:15**). These truths are hard on the flesh, for the natural man thinks in his flesh there dwelleth every good thing, and in his dark and deceived heart, he says: "I will not have Christ to reign over me" (**Luke 19:14**). But all that man is by nature, and all that he does and says, points up his critical need of the new birth. It was to an extremely religious man, and a "master of Israel", that Christ said: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ... Ye must be born again" (**John 3:6-7**).

"The ministry of the word is the vehicle in which the Spirit of God conveys Himself and His grace into the hearts of men; which is done when the word comes not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost: and works effectually, and is the power of God unto salvation ... God the Father, Who is the Father of Christ; He as such begets men again according to His abundant mercy, (**I Peter 1:3**), and as the Father of lights, of His own sovereign will and pleasure regenerates with the word of truth ... which He sheds abundantly through Christ the Saviour, that He saves His elect." (John Gill - BODY OF DIVINITY, Pages 532-534)

No doctrine in the New Testament is more plainly and abundantly set forth than the teaching of salvation by faith in the crucified, buried, risen, and glorified Christ. "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" (**Ephesians 2:8, 9**). The fruit of salvational faith is:

Justification (**Romans 5:1**),

Preservation (**I Peter 1:5**),

Perseverance of sanctification (**II Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 2:20; Jude 1**).

And all whom God justified by faith, shall be glorified by the same faith (**Romans 8:30**). All this is the profit of God-given faith which comes by effectually hearing the gospel (**Hebrews 4:2**).

But whence cometh this all glorious faith? This is a profound question, and the interrogator should not be and cannot be satisfied with anything less than a divinely-inspired answer, and so it is we turn to the pages of Holy Writ and there we find the God-given, plain and incontestable reply, i.e. **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (**Romans 10:17**). Regeneration and salvational faith are the immediate or direct effect of hearing and believing the gospel of Christ, and faith being a constituent element of regeneration, bespeaks an eternal union of the two. Simply stated, he that is regenerated has faith, and vice versa.

The Lord, speaking of Paul, said: **“I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake”** (**Acts 9:16**). The sufferings of this dedicated saint were manifold and exceedingly bitter (**II Corinthians 11:23-27**), but he remained faithful to his heavenly calling (**Galatians 1:15-6**). He wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith, saying, **“I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory”** (**II Timothy 2:10**).

Paul knew God had His eternal and infinite host of elect people, and he also knew God had appointed the glorious gospel of His Son, as a means whereby they would be saved (**Romans 1:16**). Speaking of Corinth, the Lord said unto Paul: **“I have much people in this city”** (**Acts 18:10**). This **“much people”** were the Lord’s before the foundation of the world, and that by elective decree, but they were not as yet regenerated. Thus it is the Lord said unto Paul: **“... Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: ...And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them”** (**Acts 18:9-11**).

Near the end of his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul reminded them that he had preached Christ unto them during his eighteen months with them, saying: **“MOREOVER, (emphasis OBM) brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain”** (I Corinthians 15:1-2). Earlier in this same letter, Paul emphatically declares: **“In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel”** (I Corinthians 4:15). Paul knew there could never be a need for regeneration, but he also knew that a reiteration of the glorious gospel of the Son of God can and often does reinvigorate the weary saint.

THE ETERNALNESS OF ELECTION AND THE GOSPEL

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (II Thessalonians 2:13).

“But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (I Peter 1:25).

God alone is omniscient, and with omniscience there can be no new thing. It is owing to this great and indisputable truth that Peter refers to the addressees of his first epistle as **“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God ...”** (I Peter 1:2). Peter is not saying that the **“elect”** are saved by God’s prescience or foreknowledge, but that their status as sheep of His pasture (John 10:9) is an element of His eternal counsel.

Peter credits the **“elect”** to whom he writes as having experiential knowledge of the eternal gospel; and so as to glorify God and edify His people, Peter vividly restates the glorious gospel of Christ, saying: **“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained**

before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (I Peter 1:18-20).

While the gospel was graphically foreshadowed in the sin-slaying lamb of Moses (**Exodus 12:1-13**), it was (is) concretely manifested and personified in the sin-atonement anti-type of the ancient lamb of Israel. It is owing to the substitutionary and justifying death of Christ that God says of His elect: **“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”** (**Hebrews 8:12; 10:17**).

The abstruseness of the Old Testament gospel has been in great part removed, and God’s elect people now have **“in heaven a better and an enduring substance”** (**Hebrews 10:34**). **“God was manifest in the flesh”** (**I Timothy 3:16**), and by His sinless human nature and sacrificial death, many of the hidden truths of the Old Testament gospel were revealed. However, the mortal nature of God’s elect stands between them and full understanding of the infinite and glorious gospel of Christ, and in their earthly pilgrimage they look **“through a glass darkly”** (**I Corinthians 13:12**). Nevertheless, they should and can grow in grace and knowledge of their Saviour, and rejoice in knowing one day soon we shall behold Him **“face to face”** (**I Corinthians 13:12; II Peter 3:18**).

The means by which election is brought to fruition is the preaching of the Holy Spirit-empowered gospel, which is never void of quickening grace, and it is through the medium of the **“engrafted (inborn) word”** that regeneration is effected (**James 1:21**). All the praise for election, the gospel, and regeneration belongs exclusively unto God, for the root and fruit of election grows out of the ground of Divine initiative. The gospel is part and parcel of the sovereign scheme of redemption, and the rejection and mockery of the gospel by the non-elect, does not in the least impair its effectiveness in calling out all those for whom Jesus died. All whom God elected unto life everlasting, shall without exception hear and believe the gospel, for God has **“appointed”** them to **“obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ”** (**Acts 13:48; I Thessalonians 5:9**).

The antiquity of the gospel antedates the creation of the world, and shall postdate time by an endless duration. The gospel did not have its origin in Bethlehem, Nazareth, or Jerusalem. Neither did it have its origin in Egypt with the lamb of Moses, nor with faithful Abraham who laid his own son on the altar (**Matthew 2:1; Exodus 12; Genesis 22**). Jesus told the Jews: **“Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw *it*, and was glad ... Before Abraham was, I am”** (**John 8:56, 58**).

Neither did the gospel originate with Abel and his bloody sacrifice, nor with the animal blood which God shed to get a covering for our original and fallen ancestors. The origin of the gospel cannot be ascertained by angels or men, for it is a part of the unsearchable and eternal counsel of the omniscient God, and one of its attributes is timelessness.

The gospel is an infinite and glorious part of the **“everlasting covenant”**, in which God the Father is the Covenantor; Christ Jesus, His Son, is the Covenantee; and the Holy Spirit is the Executor. Christ said: **“It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing ... When He, the Spirit of truth, is come ... He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you”** (**John 6:63, 16:13-14**).

The Spirit does only the things that magnify the Son, and the Son does only and always those things which please the Father (**John 8:29; 14:31**). Christ did not die intestate, and the WILL of the Sovereign Testator reads: **“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world”** (**John 17:24**). The eternal and covenant suretyship of Christ has been sanctioned by His atoning death, and it is owing to this very truth that Paul asks: **“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? ...”** (**Romans 8:33**). Of course Satan and reprobate men bring many charges against God’s elect, but they are foolishness in God’s sight, and He accepts none.

The preaching, hearing, and believing the gospel are the means which the Holy Spirit uses to make God’s elect, not merely alive, but derivatively God-like, for a new Person lives within them, and this new life is evidenced

by a new and God-honoring personality. Paul said: **“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”** (Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 5:17).

Paul said to the church at Corinth: **“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”** (I Corinthians 2:1-2). Paul knew that Jesus Christ was the personified gospel, and that remission of sin was realized in hearing and believing the gospel. Thus it is, Paul says in the conclusion of this epistle: **“I declare unto you the gospel ... By which also ye are saved”** (15:1:2).

The freewill salvation of Jacobus Arminius, Campbell’s baptismal salvation, and Romanism’s sacramental regeneration, are superficial and void of any redeeming substance. They are no more acceptable to God than the fig leaves of Adam and Eve, for God hates every false way, and every would-be regenerative work of man is a hiding under falsehood (**Psalm 119:104; Isaiah 28:15**). The carnal mind is enmity against God, and with absolute consistency seeks the elevation of self. The natural man is egocentric, and all of his thoughts and actions are self-serving. He flatters himself by thinking it is in his power to determine his own eternal destiny. The Lord said to one of these puffed up self-predestinarians: **“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”** (Luke 12:20). Man has come up with many religious inventions, (**Ecclesiastes 7:29**) and they all seem right unto him, but God says: **“... The end thereof are the ways of death”** (**Proverbs 14:12**).

The gospel and the Lamb of the everlasting covenant are coeternal, and the conduction of the gospel was and is committed to the Holy and eternal Spirit (**I Corinthians 2:4**). The Holy Spirit-propagated gospel will never return unto the Lord void, for He says: **“... It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”** (**Isaiah 55:11**). Our Lord rebuked the doubting apostle,

by admonishing him to check the scars of His redeeming wounds (**John 20:27**). The beloved John refers to Christ as “... **The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**” (**Revelation 13:8**). The wounds which the Saviour received at Calvary were for the transgression of His people, and were the result of His faithfulness and commitment to the everlasting covenant, but in the mind of God the scars of redemption antedated time. Thus, the gospel is as ancient as the redeeming grace of God, and when God’s elect see their nail-scarred Saviour in heaven, they will say, “There never was a time in the purpose of God when these scars were not present and apparent.”

CHAPTER VI

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name **JESUS**: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

“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).

“Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (Luke 24:7).

SOME GLORIOUS THINGS THAT DO NOT SAVE OR HELP TO SAVE

A.) Salvation is not in a name, be it the glorious name of JESUS, but there is NO salvation apart from the Man whom the angel of the Lord named JESUS (Matthew 1:20-21).

B.) There is no salvation in creature good works (Isaiah 64:6; Titus 3:5). However, salvation and eternal life are realized through the substitutionary labor of Him Who said unto His Father: “... I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:3-4). Good works are the fruit (not the root) of salvation, and are glorious (Matthew 5:16), but they are never the cause of it.

C.) Baptism is a glorious ordinance, but as wonderful as baptism is, it is yet a creature work, and is therefore destitute of saving virtue.

D.) Every New Testament church is glorious (Ephesians 5:27), but the strongest and most faithful church is yet powerless to save, for salvation is

the exclusive work of Him Who bought the church with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**).

E.) The gospel is not merely glorious, but infinitely excels the glory of all the Old Testament covenants which preceded it (**II Corinthians 3:6-11**). Nevertheless, as glorious as the gospel is (**II Corinthians 4:4; I Timothy 1:11**), it is spiritually sterile, and cannot give life, or help to give life. Yet, it has pleased God to use the gospel of Christ in the regeneration of His elect people (**John 5:24; Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 4:15**, etc., etc.) and there is no salvation apart from the glorious gospel of Christ (**John 5:24; I Peter 1:23**).

F.) Repentance is glorious, and is essential to salvation (**Luke 13:3, 5**), but repentance does not save. In another place, Luke records the words of the Lord, wherein He says: “**For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost**” (**Luke 19:10**).

G.) Faith is glorious, and like repentance, it is indispensable in the work of salvation. But, again, like repentance, faith is not salvation. Oft times theologians refer to faith as “**Saving faith**”, but their meaning is not that the “**faith**” is the Saviour, but that it is impossible to please God without faith (**Hebrews 11:6**). Paul says: “**... He (God) which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ**” (**Philippians 1:6**). God-given repentance and faith are the means which manifest the Authorship and finishing work of God in salvation (**Isaiah 43:11**). Man does not initiate his salvation, nor does he carry it one step forward, for salvation is of the Lord, from regeneration to glorification (**Isaiah 26:12; Luke 17:10**).

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL AND ARMINIANISM

Arminianism is a theory regarding sin and salvation, and gets its name from Jacobus (James) Arminius who lived in Holland (1560-1609). A simple definition of Arminianism is: “**The depravity inherited from Adam is the cause of sin, sickness, and death, but this depravity is not total or absolute.**” Arminianism claims that man’s sin in Adam was not voluntary,

and God being just, gave man a will and ability to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in His redemptive work, if he so chooses. Which choice, when exercised, is sufficient to negate the curse of sin inherited from their original ancestor, Adam.

Many and various are the heresies that Satan has invented, and with which he has permeated pseudo Christianity, but none are more subtle and dangerous than Arminianism, for Arminianism cloaked in Biblical phraseology deceives man by making him the determiner of his eternal destiny. In which determination, the preacher has had a part, the church has had a part, but God is passive, anxiously waiting on the sidelines to see if man will do his part. Such foolishness would have the Lord walking away from a church service, saying within Himself, “I wish the church would have sung one more verse of ‘Softly and Tenderly ... Jesus is pleading ... see on the portals He is waiting and watching’, someone might have made Me his helper in salvation.” The Arminian may charge me with sarcasm in the above quoted statement, but be that as it may, the logic of the quote cannot be gainsaid.

Salvational competence is not, nor has it ever been, in the power of men or angels; and Arminianism with all its power and popularity is a soul-damning fallacy, for fallen man’s volitional power is in its every exercise anti-God (**Genesis 6:5; Psalm 50:21; Jeremiah 17:9**). Paul said: “**The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men ...**” (**I Corinthians 3:20-21**). “**So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy**” (**Romans 9:16**). Man’s heart, by nature, is foolish and darkened (**Romans 1:21**), and one of the most supreme intellects in the family of man, said: “**He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool**” (**Proverbs 28:26**).

Arminianism is a Christ debasing error, for it attributes salvational efficacy to the fallen and utterly depraved nature of man. But the Scriptures are replete with clear contradictions of this insidious departure from the truth, some of which Scripture I now refer the reader to: “**It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing**” (**John 6:63**). “**For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing ...**” (**Romans**

7:18). Paul tells the Ephesian saints that they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they were predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, and that all of these blessings were according to the eternal and **“good pleasure of God’s will”** (**Ephesians 1:4-5**). The term **“will”** in this Scripture is a function word, showing the source of all the action stated therein, and leaves no doubt as to Who (not what) is the Author and Finisher of salvation. **“Salvation is of the Lord”**, plus nothing (**Jonah 2:29**).

To super induce the glorious truth of the unmerited favor of God in the deliverance of His people who were without hope, **“... and without God in the world”** (**Ephesians 2:12**), Paul reminds the Ephesians of their ill state in nature, and of God’s sovereign and remedial grace, saying: **“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”** (**Ephesians 2:8, 9**). **“Not of yourselves ...”** There goes the vaunted will of man, with all its bragging, and vain works. There goes the fickle work of intellectualism, with its assumed power of decisional salvation. There goes the fictitious claim of baptismal regeneration and every other effort of man to commend himself to the saving favor of God.

It would be easier for a man to lift himself up by his own bootstraps, than it would be to will himself out of the horrible pit and the miry clay of his old nature (**Psalm 40:2**). It would be easier for a quadriplegic to swim the Atlantic Ocean from New York to London and back, than it would be for the carnal mind to have one thought that is pleasing unto God (**Romans 8:7-8**). Salvation is by the sovereign and free grace of God, and there are NO substitutes for God’s grace, be it extreme morality or the giving of one’s wealth, be it ever so vast, to the relief of the poor and starving. Simply, human works, be they ever so commendable, cannot save or help to save any of the numberless host of Adam’s children. The God of salvation, said: **“I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another”** (**Isaiah 42:8**).

ARMINIANISM, NOT A DETERRENT TO SAVING GRACE

It is not my purpose to disparage the moral integrity of any man, be he an Arminian or a Mormon, etc.. However, every “**false way**” is to be hated (**Psalm 119:104, 128**), and there is not a false way more repulsive to God than Arminianism. Nevertheless, while aversion toward Arminianism should be absolute and the loathing of it perfect, the sovereign grace advocate should not let these holy emotions diminish his concern for Arminians, lest he in due time become anti-evangelical or antinomian, both of which are anti-Scripture. The natural man and his religion are Arminian in theology, no matter what other names are given it, but the edifying and insuperable truth is, Arminianism in its consummate strength cannot delay or deter the elective decree of God, much less abort it.

So it is, over and against the high pressure and carnal methods of Arminianism, some people are actually saved, and it should be the holy desire and prayer of every sovereign grace believer, that the regenerate Arminian(s) would diligently and consistently study the Scriptures and be caused to see that “**the flesh** (the will, mind, and emotion) **profiteth nothing**”, and come out from among them (**John 6:3; II Corinthians 6:17**). It was this essential and grace-magnifying truth the Lord set before the pious, but erring Nicodemus, saying: “**Ye must be born again**” (**John 3:6-7**). The new birth is the result of the impartation of the Divine nature, therefore God Himself is the exclusive Author of the new birth, for by it one is made a “**new creature**”, and ONLY God can create (**Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; I Peter 4:19**). All would-be co-authors in the work of regeneration are fearfully deceived, for God will not share the glory of salvation with His holy angels, much less fallen man. Both angels and men are creatures, and God will not share His glory with any of His creatures (**Psalm 3:8; Colossians 1:16**).

Arminianism is a satanic effort to utterly negate the instrumental glory of the gospel in regeneration, and make the preaching of the cross work of Christ of none effect (**I Corinthians 1:17**). Paul said: “**But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead**” (**II Corinthians 1:9**). Surely, it is understood, that in order to be raised from the dead, the person must first

have died and been buried, and the believer's resurrection is a fruit of the substitutionary work of Christ, which is pictorially and infallibly set forth in the gospel. There is NO room for the work of man in regeneration, be it ever so infinitesimal. **"We should not trust in ourselves"**.

Arminianism is a fable, that is, a falsehood, and Paul charged Timothy before God, to **"reprove"** and **"rebuke"** the adherents of the fabulistic doctrine of self-salvation (**II Timothy 4:1-4**), and there is nothing that will be more effectual in opposing the heresy of Arminianism than the glorious doctrine of the gospel of Christ, for it is the **"sword of the Spirit"** (**Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12**) and it shall not return unto Him void, for the Lord never uses the gospel sword in vain. **"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"** (**Isaiah 55:11**).

The glorious gospel of Christ is underwritten by the sovereign providence of God, and will at God's appointed time and power work effectually in the heart of all those whom He has chosen in Christ (**Ephesians 1:4**). Then too, God in His kind providence shall bring many saved people out of the awful darkness of Arminianism into the glorious light of the gospel of grace, and henceforth they shall hold the grace of God in truth. The Lord shall cause them to see the shame and indefensible claims of that man-exalting system, and they shall no longer condone it, but shall abhoringly reject it. With their enlightened understanding, they will joyously embrace the glorious gospel of the unmerited favor of God. They shall henceforward be found propagating it, and be exceedingly grateful for His infinite mercy in revealing it to them. The sovereign grace believer knows there is NO spark of goodness in his old nature, and that his turning from the thick darkness of Arminianism was altogether of God's sovereign mercy, for he has now learned that he could not make himself to differ, or become acceptable to God.

CONCLUSION

I will close this article with Paul's Divinely-inspired assessment of man in his native state, and an assessment of the family of God in their new and GLORIOUS nature.

FIRST: The family of man as they are in their Adamic state:

“There is none righteous, no, not one:

There is none that understandeth,

There is none that seeketh after God.

There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Romans 3:10-18).

SECOND: The family of God in their regenerate state:

They are holy and without blame before God in love.

They are saved by the grace of God, and that according to the good pleasure of His predestinating will.

They are accepted in the Beloved.

Their redemption and forgiveness of sins is according to the riches of God's grace (Ephesians 1:4-7).

The only wise God is their Saviour, and they are, “by the justifying grace of the Son of God”, presented faultless before Him (Jude 24, 25).

CHAPTER VII

“MOREOVER, (emphasis OBM) brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand” (I Corinthians 15:1).

Earlier in this epistle, Paul reminds the Corinthians of their spiritual begetting, and that God had used him to declare the gospel of salvation unto them (**I Corinthians 4:15**), whereby they were begotten anew. Spiritual begetting is infrangibly connected to the gospel of Christ; and knowing the vital importance of this indisputable and indispensable truth, Paul, with great detail and emphasis, restates the gospel and its connection to the redemptive mission of Christ (**I Corinthians 15:2-4**).

There is no greater work in the infinite and endless realm of God’s activity than the incarnation of the gospel, and it is recorded many times in Scripture (5), wherein the Father said that **“He was well pleased”** with His Son, and His work, even though the gospel called for the bruising of His Son on Calvary (**Isaiah 53:10**). As for man and his brief tenure and limited function on earth, there is NO greater work than the preaching of the gospel, for it has pleased God to reveal His Son through the gospel (**Galatians 1:11, 12**).

Paul said: **“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:16)**. Paul knew that the gospel had been, by heaven’s decree, committed to his charge; and while it was incumbent upon the churches to provide his physical necessities, yet, whether or not they were faithful in this obligation, Paul was, in any event going to preach the gospel. Paul knew that his reward at the mercy seat of Christ depended on his obedience to **“the heavenly vision”**, wherein he was called to proclaim the good news, that **“Death is swallowed up in victory” (Acts 26:19; I Corinthians 3:11-15; I Corinthians 15:54; Philippians 3:14)**.

Paul was used mightily of the Lord in the proclamation of the gospel, and just prior to his martyrdom (about AD 69) by the Emperor Nero, he admonished Timothy, saying, “... **Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry**” (II Timothy 4:5). The word, “evangelist”, means a proclaimer of glad tidings, and in Paul’s dying hour, his chief desire was that His Lord’s injunction to preach the gospel to every creature would be obeyed.

HARDSHELLISM AND THE GOSPEL

The following quote is from Sylvester Hassell, the primary historian of the Hardshell Baptist movement. “The constant tendency of the missionaries is from the doctrine of predestination and election as set forth in the Bible to the doctrine of conditional salvation, made sure only by man; that they have abandoned the true church of Christ, and made a confederacy with the daughters of Babylon and of Papal Rome; and that the mother of harlots herself has as good a doctrine to preach to the millions of her deluded followers as have a large number of Missionary Baptists, so-called.” (THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, Pages 749, 750)

In the above quote Mr. Hassell has lumped together near to all who go by the name Missionary Baptist, and equated all of their missionary work with that of Rome and Babylon. Mr. Hassell’s error consists in a glaring omission, for he fails altogether to mention Missionary Baptists who were contemporary with his time, and were independent of official associationalism and were firm and consistent advocates of unconditional election and are commonly known as Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptists. So as not to be identified in any way with the ecclesiastical absolutism of Romanism, Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptists have consistently held to the New Testament mode of the church, the pattern of which is the church Jesus established while He was on earth; and that model and Archetype of the Lord’s churches allows for no other kind of church, but local, visible, and independent churches.

Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptists believe in and practice synergistic mission work; that is, as long as it does not in any way infringe on

the autonomy of the originating church. The church at Antioch, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, sent out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries, and the church at Antioch did not at any time solicit the approbation of the church at Jerusalem in this matter, for they knew their Sovereign Head had mandated their action (**Acts 13:1-3**). Paul was an apostle (one sent on a mission), as much so as Peter, John, etc., but he never used his apostolic office to usurp the authority of his membership church, or any other church, but in due season returned to his home church at Antioch, which has authorized their mission work, and “rehearsed all that God had done with them” (**Acts 14:26-27**).

The New Testament churches cooperated with one another in the missionary work of Paul and others (**Philippians 4:16-18**), but there was no official Cooperative Program or Association which determined their mission activity, for each church was an autonomous entity, and was governed by their Head, Jesus Christ. All ecclesiastical authority beyond the local church, be it an Arminian Convention or Association, or Hardshell Association, or Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist Association or Fellowship, are the inventions of men, for they are without scriptural precept or example; and having no warrant in Scripture they are detrimental to the gospel commission.

Concerning the gospel, there are cardinal differences within the vast company going by the name “Baptist”, and some of these differences are so radical that demarcation lines have been drawn, which bar all ecclesiastical fellowship. Hardshells have no fellowship with Arminians, and Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptists have no fellowship with either of them, for when they are set in juxtaposition, it is readily seen that they both err concerning the gospel. Hardshellism steadfastly denies the use of all means which have to do with regeneration, including the gospel. Arminianism has taken the means which God has provided for the calling and regeneration of His elect people into their own hands, and have made them subordinate to their every whim and notion. Hardshellism brings shame on the gospel by de-emphasizing it, and Arminianism dilutes the gospel by adding their own powers to it. Nevertheless, God’s word never returns unto Him void (**Isaiah 55:11**).

“When God gets ready to save the heathen, He will save them without your help or mine.” This quote was wrongfully attributed to John Ryland, Sr. (Jarrell’s Perpetuity, Page 417). This statement cannot in truth be charged to Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptists, but it is precisely the Hardshell position regarding missions (History Of The Church, Page 354 - Hassell). There are without doubt, some Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist churches with a Missionary declaration of faith, who are Hardshell in practice. Let us not take a false comfort in the doctrine of Divine predestination, for spiritual laziness is sin, and God is not the author of sin. The life and perpetuity of the Lord’s churches depends on their going and sowing the word of God. Simply, the succession of churches depends on the succession of missions.

MISSIONARY BAPTIST HARDSHELLS

I have heard some Missionary Baptists with a wide streak of Hardshellism running through them, say: “Well, you know that missionary work begins at home. After all, Jerusalem was the home of the first Baptist church, and our Lord said, our missionary work is first Jerusalem.” This is true, but it is not even half of the truth which relates to the matter, and when a half truth is put forth for the whole truth, it becomes an untruth. What shall we then say of that which is less than half truth? Let us answer with Paul, and say: **“I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you” (Acts 20:20, 27).**

The Lord in His post resurrection glory, and just prior to His ascension, appeared unto His church and said: “... **Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem ...**”. But He did not stop with Jerusalem, but went on to say: “... **And in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth**” (Acts 1:8). Jerusalem represents the home area of every Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist church, and home missionary work is good, but it is in itself, not good enough; for a church in its missionary outreach is not to be satisfied with going no further than Jerusalem. However, the standard reply of some churches is: “But that is all we are able to do.” No doubt in some cases this answer is true. Yet I fear in far too many instances, it is not all they are able to do, but it is all they want to do. The

church was to tarry in Jerusalem until it was endued with power from on high (**Luke 24:49**), and that enduement of power came ten (10) days after His ascension (**Acts 2:1-4**), but the church tarried yet in Jerusalem. To get the church off of dead center, and to get the gospel beyond the perimeters of Jerusalem, the Lord allowed a great persecution to come against the church: **“And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria ... they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word”** (**Acts 8:1-4**). With the dispersion of the Jerusalem church, Judea and Samaria were soon evangelized, other churches were organized, and within a few brief decades the gospel was preached throughout the Roman Empire.

HARDSHELLISM AND PREACHER EDUCATION

Hardshells are critical of denominational seminaries, and their criticism is justifiable, but they have gone too far in their censoriousness of preacher education. We, too, are critical of denominational seminaries, be they called Baptist, or any other name. Conventional and Associational seminaries have no basis in Scripture, and many of them, if not all, have compounded their unwarranted existence by assuming for themselves a (superficial) legal status that makes the local church subordinate to its powers.

Sovereign Grace Baptist churches have gotten along for close to nineteen centuries without these anti-scriptural schools, and they will finish their earthly tenure independent of them. However, and it is a big **“however”**, the Lord’s churches should not desist or neglect the teaching ministry which the Lord has vouchsafed to every one of His churches (**Matthew 28:20**). The local church is the only scripturally authorized seminary; and when a local Baptist church is Divinely enabled to implement a teaching ministry for God-called preachers, it is not only free to do so, but it is clearly their duty, and the church cannot be faulted for so doing.

However, a formal preacher school education is not essential to an effectual ministry in a Baptist church. When God calls a man to preach, he

will preach with or without a preacher school education, **“For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance” (Romans 11:29)**. GOD MAKES NO MISTAKES. It is for sure, each and every New Testament church has a teaching ministry, for the Lord commanded His model church, saying: **“Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20)**. Nevertheless, the term **“Sunday school”** in reference to the teaching ministry of the church has become stigmatic with some New Testament Missionary Baptist churches, and this attitude is not altogether without foundation, but we should not align ourselves with the anti-missionary Hardshells, and do away with our Sunday teaching ministry altogether. Sunday is a most opportune time to preach and teach the glorious gospel of Christ (**John 20:19; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2**).

Study and education in the Scriptures is an absolute requisite for a God-honoring and church-edifying ministry. Paul said to the young preacher Timothy: **“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)**. In this text Paul says that correct interpretation of Scripture is the fruit of zealous Bible study, and the glaring implication in this text is, a slothful approach to Bible study results in an erroneous dividing of the Scriptures. Paul, in like fashion, admonishes Titus, saying: **“For a bishop must be blameless ... Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:7-9)**. **“All Scripture ... is profitable ... for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16)**. Paul was a great tutor.

A solitary search of the Scriptures is beneficial, and a family that conscientiously studies the Bible will be blessed. However, while these two approaches to spiritual learning are commendable, they do not absolve the local church of its corporate responsibility to teach the **“all things”** which its Head and Master Teacher gave unto it in the gospel commission (**Matthew 28:18-20**). A church without a regular Bible study is like a compass without a needle. It cannot edify its people nor magnify the Lord as it should; and that for the simple reason that, the church has neglected a major

part of its God-given responsibility. Paul said: “... **I teach every where in every church**” (I Corinthians 4:17). It is by Holy Spirit directed teaching, as well as preaching, that the church grows in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18).

We are admonished by Peter in the following words: “... **Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you**” (I Peter 3:15). Why are you a Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist, and not an Arminian? Why are you a Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist, and not an Antinomian? Faithfulness to the Lord’s church and its heavenly commission to preach / teach the gospel will provide the answer.

CONCLUSION

It is not the claim of the author, nor of any Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist of his acquaintance, that any of God's elect will be saved by hearing the gospel apart from the regenerating power of the Sovereign Holy Spirit. As I have said, and restate, the gospel being alone is a dead letter; but when the gospel is permeated with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, it is then, and only then, that the gospel becomes the instrumental means whereby the heirs of God are quickened (**Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:18**).

We are not saying God cannot save without the gospel, for there is not **“anything too hard for the Lord”** (**Genesis 18:14**). But what I am saying is, that it has not pleased the Lord to do so, and this scriptural assessment of the gospel is an unbridgeable gulf that separates Hardshells and Missionary Baptists. Salvation consists in the forgiveness of sin, so it is not the gospel that saves us, **BUT GOD**. Nevertheless, it has pleased God in His holy and infinite counsel to use the gospel in saving His people from their sins. Paul said to the saints at Rome and to the Corinthian church that the gospel was (**“is”**) **“The power of God unto salvation”** (**Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:18**), and to reassure the Corinthians and to erase any lingering confusion relative to the gospel and its place and purpose in the salvation of God's elect, he said unto them: **“... I have begotten you through the gospel”** (**I Corinthians 4:15**).

In confirming the faith of the Ephesian saints, Paul, speaking of Christ, said unto them: **“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation ...”** (**Ephesians 1:13**). Like the air we breathe, we cannot live without it. Yet the air we breathe is not our life, and so it is with spiritual life. No man can live without the gospel, but the gospel is not the life of any man. Christ is the believer's **“life”**, and it is in Christ the Beloved that we are accepted of the Father (**Ephesians 1:6; Colossians 3:4**).

POSTSCRIPT

It would be somewhat remiss on my part if I did not at least briefly, comment on the gospel in the Old Testament. And so as to stay the charge of reckless inattention to the “**glad tidings**” of the Old Testament, I concisely, but joyfully proclaim this great truth.

“**The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it**” (Psalm 68:11). The Old Testament saints proclaimed the gospel through the medium of types and shadows, but their preaching was nonetheless the gospel of their Messiah and expected Deliverer. Irrespective of antiquity, nationality, contemporaneity, or the future, none are saved apart from the glorious gospel of Christ (Isaiah 55:11; Mark 16:15-16; II Thessalonians 2:10-14).

The first gospel message (Proto-evangelium) in the history of man was proclaimed by God Himself (Genesis 3:15), and this was the primary message which God spoke by the prophets unto the fathers of Israel (Hebrews 1:1; Isaiah 53). God’s prophecy of the Redemption of His people through and by the “**seed**” of the woman has been fulfilled in Christ (Galatians 4:4), and now God speaks unto us through the New Testament message of His Son, but it is yet the same gospel (Luke 24:25-27; Hebrews 1:2).

The Lord carried the prophet Ezekiel out to the valley of “**dry bones**”, and set him down in the midst of them (Ezekiel 37:1). The Lord said unto Ezekiel: “**Prophecy (preach) upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD**” (Ezekiel 37:4). Whatever these “**dry bones**” are made to represent, one thing is absolutely sure, the “**word of God**” will be instrumental in its realization. It is first and foremost a picture of the resurrection of elect souls from the horrible pit and miry clay of spiritual death, and this resurrection is experienced with hearing and believing the gospel, and there is not a time-lapse between these two regenerative instruments, for faith and hearing are

simultaneously wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit (**John 5:24; Acts 15:7; Romans 10:17**).

The **“rich man”** (**Luke 16**) who died and lifted up his eyes in hell, believed the gospel was essential to salvation, and that it was preached in the Old Testament era. He knew it was eternally too late for the gospel to benefit him, but he had five brothers who were as yet alive on the earth, but were unsaved. He wanted and prayed that a missionary (Lazarus) would be sent to preach (**“testify”**) unto them, lest they also find themselves in hell. The reply to his petition was: **“They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them”** (**Luke 16:29**). That is, they have the Old Testament, and thereby have the glorious gospel of Christ. The dialogue is concluded with an awesome declaration, i.e., **“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead”** (**Luke 16:31**). Abraham knew whereof he spoke, for God had before preached the gospel unto him (**Galatians 3:8**). This account (**Luke 16:19-31**) proves beyond any rational dispute that the gospel was used by the Lord in the Old Testament dispensation to regenerate His people.

When the Hardshell says: **“The gospel cannot save you,”** they are wholly correct, but when they say the gospel is not used in the regeneration of God’s elect, they are wholly in the wrong. The glorious gospel of Christ is one of the sovereign forces which God uses in saving His people. God has made it incumbent upon His churches and preachers to make the gospel and its place and part in the covenant of election as clear as the Scriptures make it. Let us who have this heavenly calling never be **“ashamed of the gospel ... for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”** (**Romans 1:16**). Paul said: **“I declare unto you the gospel ... by which also ye are saved”** (**I Corinthians 15:1-2**). The eternal Son of God has died in the room and stead of His people. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and is now seated at the right hand of His Father in glory. Beloved, let us keep this glorious and incomparable truth indelibly stamped on our hearts and mind, and broadcast the gospel seed as widely as we can.

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)

Additional Books And Articles By The Author

In his forty-five plus year gospel ministry Brother Mink pastored New Testament Baptist churches in Ohio and Texas.

For many years he was also the editor of and chief contributor for the monthly publication “The Sovereign Grace Advocate”.

To read more of Brother Mink’s articles please visit the following URL: <http://www.pbcofdecaturalabama.org/OBMink/OBMink.htm>