

The Gospel Preceptor

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Psa 119:104

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A Modern Return to Babylon?

Jerry C. Brewer

The idea that the Holy Spirit performs an operation upon or within the Christian, separate and apart from the Word of God, is a soul-damning lie that has led millions of Calvinistic adherents to perdition.

Philosopher-wannabes among us may call it an operation “in conjunction with the Word,” but it amounts to the tired old Baptist doctrines from which good brethren departed almost two centuries ago. The present Holy Spirit mania will surely lead us backward to the superstitious ignorance that characterized previous generations of Calvinists.

Jesse L. Sewell was one of those whose study of the Bible brought him out of the superstitious darkness of Calvinism. Born into a Baptist family in 1818, he married in 1839 and began preaching in the Baptist Church that same year. But his serious study of the Bible soon set him apart from his Baptist preaching brethren.

His disposition to study thoroughly and closely whatever he attempted, and his critical mind and well balanced judgment, led him to a different style of preaching from the Baptist preachers generally of that country...the preachers, however, feeling reproved by his knowledge of the Bible, as compared with their own ignorance of it...or really alarmed, lest vital, heartfelt religion should be sacrificed or suffer from this book preaching, soon began to complain that he preached too much about and from the Bible, and not enough of the work of the grace of God in the heart, and the converting power of the Holy Ghost. They were afraid he would sacrifice heart experience for a book religion" (David Lipscomb, *Life and Sermons of Jesse L. Sewell*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, 1954, pp. 54-55).

The most striking thing about the above is that the same accusations and complaints against Bible preaching are now coming from our own brethren 150 years later! Not content with a “thus saith the Lord,” they would foist upon us that Holy Ghost religion of 19th century Baptist Calvinism that was “better-felt-than-told” and then accuse us of being divisive if we don't swallow it!

Mark it down! It won't be too long ere the Holy Ghost zealots among us begin calling the Bible a “dead letter.” Right now they tell us that the Holy Spirit operates “in conjunction with” the Word of God upon the hearts of Christians. That's half-way back to Baptist Calvinism and but a step away from the claim that the Holy Spirit directly converts alien sinners to Christ. That's exactly where their doctrine will lead! And when that happens they will regard the Bible as the Baptists did in Jesse Sewell's day—a “dead letter.”

While he was yet regarded a sound Baptist preacher, he and a brother preacher were away from home preaching together. Sunday morning when they started for the meeting, his companion observed Jesse had his Bible. He turned and very seriously said to him, 'Brother Sewell, I am sorry to see you carry that book with you to church.'

“Why so?” asked Brother Sewell.

He replied, “I am afraid the people will think we learned our sermons out of it.”

This was the very thing brother Sewell was, even then, trying to do. The other was ashamed of it. With him, to learn from the Bible what to preach, was to ignore and deny the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, was to surrender and trample underfoot, the claim that he was a chosen mouthpiece of the Almighty, and was to disrobe his preaching of its divine authority and make it the imagination of a poor human being (Lipscomb, p. 55).

It was his love for, and preaching of, God's revealed Biblical truth which eventually led to Jesse L. Sewell's expulsion from the Baptist Church on the first Saturday of February, 1843. Jesse Sewell was an honest seeker of truth and he found it in the Bible. That same Bible will lead men to the Lamb of God and His precious cleansing blood today.

Everything man knows of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the mercy of God, the grace of God, the blood of Christ and salvation is to be found within the Sacred Volume.

Proponents of the false idea that the Holy Spirit works “in conjunction with the Word” wouldn't even know there was a Holy Spirit were it not for the Bible, and their feeding at the soup lines of Calvinism will only lead them and their coterie of admirers away from that source of divine truth and back to the Babylon of sectarianism.

A Scandalous and Outrageous Lie

Nana Yaw Aidoo

A preacher once wrote:

It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation... Abundant good works are the fruit of salvation, but the finished work of Christ at Calvary is the only act of merit in human redemption.

If the above quote is true, then,

1. Either faith is not necessary to be saved since it is something the sinner must do for himself in order to be saved (Heb. 11:6) or faith is something God does for the person being saved.
2. Either repentance is not necessary to be saved since it is something the sinner must do for himself in order to be saved (Luke 13:3) or repentance is something God does for the sinner in need of salvation.
3. Either confession of faith is not necessary to be saved since it is something the sinner must do for himself in order to be saved (Matt. 10:32) or confession of faith is something God does for the one who wants to be saved.
4. Either immersion in water unto the remission of sins is not necessary to be saved since it is a human activity (Acts 2:38) or immersion in water unto the remission of sins is something God does for the sinner seeking salvation.
5. Either love for Christ is not necessary to be saved (1 Cor. 16:22) since the sinner must choose to love Christ or love for Christ is something God does for the sinner.
6. Either all men will be saved since Christ died for all or finished His work at Calvary for all (Titus 2:11) or Christ will save a select few.
7. Either a person must not obey God to be saved (Heb. 5:9) or obedience is something God does for the alien sinner.

Friends, it is **a scandalous and outrageous lie** to teach that salvation is **wholly, completely or entirely** by the grace of God, without any acts of obedience on the part of the sinner. While it is true that we are saved by the grace of God, those who teach a “grace only salvation,” because they equate grace with doing absolutely nothing, shock us. Was Noah not saved by grace from the flood when he obeyed the command of God to build the ark (Gen. 6:8, 22)? Since God's grace alone did not

transport Noah and his family to the new world, it ought to be obvious to all that Noah appropriated the blessings of God's grace, when He met God's condition to build an ark according to His pattern. Likewise, all who would be saved by God's grace today must obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If this isn't so, then why has the owner of the quote above attempted to preach the gospel all these years if ...*the finished work of Christ at Calvary is the **only** act of merit in human redemption?*

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

"What We Baptists Believe"

Cled E. Wallace

"Rev." W.J. McDaniel, a prominent Baptist minister of Chattanooga, Tennessee appears on the front page of the *Baptist and Reflector* in a long article on "Salvation By Grace." This impresses me as about as strong a statement and defense of the Baptist position as can be made. I believe the gentleman to be dangerously wrong and shall address myself to the task of showing that he is by the scriptures. There are some points of agreement I am glad to acknowledge.

Man is lost and needs to be saved. Human power and resources are incapable of accomplishing the work. Man possesses no merit that puts God in debt to him. He must be saved by the grace of God. He must exercise faith in God, put his trust in a divine Saviour, else his case is hopeless.

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). Anything, therefore, that a man does to be saved must be an act of faith, an expression of trust and in obedience to God. He does it because God tells him to do so. To expect salvation in the performance of any act that God has not commanded in specific relation to salvation would be the height of presumption. God does not require a man to do anything, nor can he do anything, that entitles him to boast, "that no flesh should glory before God." I take it that this fundamental situation is clear and agreed upon. It should serve to protect us from some more or less ugly charges that are sometimes made against us. The Baptist brother seeks to clarify the discussion with a series of questions:

As a matter of clarifying this discussion allow me to further reveal the position of Baptists by asking the following questions: (1) Can a person be saved by uniting with the church? (2) Does the rite of baptism save one or have any part in saving one? (3) Does the observance of the Lord's Supper have any part in the salvation of the soul? (4) Can a person be saved by just doing the best he can? Is there any work a man might do which will bring about salvation for him?

I shall first answer these questions in the light of what the scriptures say and then pay my respects to why "We Baptists do not believe" it.

(1) A person cannot be saved by uniting with the Baptist Church or any other religious denomination of human origin. They are plants which the Father did not plant. The New Testament knows nothing of them. The church the Lord built is "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27) and includes all the people of God (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 12:4-5). "God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18). The church is the family of God, including all the children of God and he adds them to the church, the family, when he saves them (Acts 2:47). We invite Mr. McDaniel to point out even one Christian in the New Testament who was not a member of the church. They became Christians through the spiritual process of the new birth and entered the family of God, the church in the same way. "Uniting with the church" may be sufficient to get somebody tangled up with the Baptist denomination, but he has to be born in order to establish membership in the church of God. "Can a man be saved by" being born again? That is exactly how he is saved, and that is precisely how he en-

ters the family of God, the church! “Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). By common consent the new birth has nothing to do with making a man a member of the Baptist church. He can have everything the new birth has to offer **outside** that human denomination.

(2) “Does the rite of Baptism save one or have any part in saving one?” If the purpose is to “clarify this discussion” care should be taken to frame questions so that they will **reveal** rather than becloud issues. God saves sinners when he pardons their sins. Sinners must exercise faith in Jesus Christ by being baptized into Christ, into his death (Rom. 6:3-4). Baptism is “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). Is it essential that such a relationship be established in order to salvation? Let us alter the form of the question somewhat “as a matter of clarifying this discussion.” “Does the rite of baptism” put “one” into Christ or into the death of Christ? Paul says it does, even if “We Baptists do not believe that.” I believe I’ll just stick to Paul.

(3) “Does the observance of the Lord's Supper have any part in the salvation of the soul?” It is clearly taught in the New Testament that the Lord's Supper is for the Lord's children and nobody can partake of it who is not a Christian. It is a memorial feast for Christians. It is a communion of the blood and body of the Lord for baptized believers. It is nowhere stated that the Lord's Supper introduces “one” into Christ or puts “one” into his death. When convicted sinners in the New Testament asked what they must do, they were not told to repent and take the Lord's Supper for the remission of sins. They were told to repent and be baptized. Why should the Lord's Supper be introduced into “this discussion?” The use that has been made of it is not “clarifying” for an effort is made to make it parallel with baptism. They differ widely in both act and design. What is said of one does not apply to the other at all. A theory that requires such a mis-handling of the word of truth cannot be right.

(4) “Can a person be saved by just doing the best he can?” Man must not depend on his own efforts for salvation. He must trust in the Lord with all his heart. “Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:8-9). “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

(5) “Is there any work a man might do which will bring about salvation for him?” Yes. “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29). “What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him?” (Jas. 2:14). “Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith” (Jas. 2:24). The “works” by which a man is justified is “the obedience of faith” and makes faith “perfect.” It is active trust in God. Baptists contend that “baptism for remission” makes faith void. **I deny it.** Baptism is not a work of human righteousness. It is a command of God definitely related to the cross of Christ and the remission of sins. It would be refreshing if Baptists would quit beating around the bush and come up to the issue “as a matter of clarifying this discussion.” About all they have succeeded in doing when they talk about baptism and the Lord's Supper is to muddy the water.

I believe that I have contributed something definite “as a matter of clarifying this discussion” by answering Pastor McDaniel's questions. These are scriptural answers. Now I am going to give you, in his own words, some of the reasons why “We Baptists do not believe that.”

We Baptists do not believe that uniting with our church or any other church can or will save a single lost soul. We do not find in the Word of God a single reference where church membership is necessary to the forgiveness of sins. Our conviction is that the work of salvation is the combined work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and therefore outside the pale of the church. The church is vital and necessary but possesses no saving power in itself.

That power rests with God and has never been given to mortal man who as individuals go to make up the organism known as the church. The church is an area ordained of Jesus Christ in which the sheep are to be cared for and nurtured. It is Christ that leadeth into the church and not the church which leadeth into Christ.

“We Baptists” have no monopoly on the conviction “that power rests with God” and “the church...possesses no saving power in itself.” On the other hand some of us who are **not** Baptists earnestly contend that the church is the body of Christ and consists of those who have been saved through “that power that rests with God.” When God saves a man by “that power” he adds him to the church. I’m afraid that “We Baptists do not” know what the church is. This talk about “our church or some other church” sounds somewhat Ashdodish. “Christ is the head of the church, being himself the Saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). The Lord built the church that he “might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:16). “That power that rests with God” saves men “in one body” **not out** of it as “We Baptists” contend. The fact that “We Baptists do not believe that” is a fairly good sign that “**we**” need to review our faith somewhat to make it conform to what the scriptures teach. Some of us are thoroughly convinced that Baptist pride cannot “save a single soul.” The Baptist brother is rather reckless with his use of “therefore.” Because “salvation is the combined work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” a fact I am not even inclined to deny, he concludes that it is “therefore outside the pale of the church.” That conclusion is remarkable for its irrelevance. It does not follow at all. We might with more justice conclude that he thinks that the church itself is “outside the pale of the combined work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” The church is composed of men and women who have been saved through “the combined work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” “That power that rests with God” to save sinners is divinely declared to be the Gospel. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). It was preached by men, produced faith and sinners are saved by faith. All thus saved constitute the church even if “We Baptists do not believe that.” Paul **is right** and “**We Baptists**” **are wrong**. We are told that “the church is vital and necessary.” What church? Is it “our church” that “is vital and necessary” or is it some other church? It is a little hard to figure out how any church can be either “vital” or “necessary” when a sinner can be born again, enjoy the blessings of divine citizenship in the kingdom of heaven and finally reach glory, and never even be a member of it. If such a church is vital, to what is it vital? If such a church is necessary, to what is it necessary? I’m inclined to think “We Baptists” are a queer people. Here is a divine reason why the church is both vital and necessary. “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). This baptism that introduced them “into one body” also put them “into Christ” and “into his death” (Rom. 6:3-4).

“We Baptists” are fanatically opposed to the idea that baptism is a condition of remission of sins, even though the New Testament specifically teaches that it is: It is classified as “obedience of faith” but “We Baptists” prefer to shift it to the realm of works of human righteousness and exclude it on grounds of grace. Here is a Baptist sample of that sort of thing:

The two ordinances of the New Testament church are the Lord's supper and baptism. Neither of these have within themselves or contribute toward the salvation of a single lost soul. Both are to be observed and participated in by the saved man and in no manner of means saves him or contributes toward his salvation. Both are symbols and representative. Various religious bodies attach more or less saving powers to these two ordinances but Baptists attach absolutely none. God is consistent and the Bible is consistent. There is no contradiction to be found in the Word of God. And yet, if either or both of these ordinances played any part in the saving of a lost soul, then our text ‘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,’ would be inconsistent with

such beliefs. The argument of some people with regard to one or both of these ordinances is grossly illogical and inconsistent with hundreds of Biblical references. The work of mortal man in the administration and preparation of either or both of these ordinances will make salvation dependent in part on the work of man. For example, a sinner desires to be saved and has thus repented of his sins and turns to God in faith—God sees the penitent sinner and discerns his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ but is held up in saving the poor sinner until mortal man prepares and administers either or both of these ordinances. Such presumption is of man and not of God or to be found in the Bible.

“We Baptists” abruptly reject anything that “will make divine salvation dependent in part on the work of man.” It is freely conceded that a sinner is saved by grace, that he can do nothing by way of securing it that entitles him to even one little boast. His salvation is a gift from God. At that it is “dependent in part on the work of man” because God has ordained it so, whether “We Baptists” believe it or not. The sinner has access into grace through faith. He must believe. He cannot believe without testimony. He must be taught and he must learn. “It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). “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 whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:13-14). Why do “We Baptists” preach to sinners anyway and plead with them to accept a Saviour, if salvation is not “dependent in part on the work of man?” Trying to clarify the design of baptism by talking about the Lord's Supper is a futile gesture. “We Baptists do not believe that” the Lord's Supper is “to be observed and participated in by the saved man” unless he has been baptized. It can be easily proved by scripture citations that the Lord's Supper is to “be observed and participated in by the saved man,” but where is the text that says or implies that a saved man must be baptized? “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Shall be saved! Where salvation and baptism are mentioned in a connected manner, salvation, invariably follows baptism. There is no text that says that “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized.” “Such presumption is of man and not of God or to be found in the Bible.” Possibly, but I think not, Pastor McDaniel will explain to us why the saved man can “observe and participate in” the Lord's supper repeatedly, but cannot “observe and participate in” baptism but once. What other Christian duty does the Baptist brother know about that a Christian cannot perform but one time? Baptism is a “symbol.” Why cannot a Christian be baptized often to symbolize what baptism is the symbol of? What the New Testament says about the design of baptism explains it, but “We Baptists do not believe that,” you know.

“For example, a sinner desires to be saved and has thus repented of his sins and turns to God in faith...” How did this sinner know he was a sinner and what made him desire to be saved and what caused him to turn to God in faith? The preaching of the Gospel. If God was “held up in saving the poor sinner until mortal man” preached to him so he could believe, the added delay occasioned by his baptism would not amount to much of a hold-up, unless “We Baptists” prolonged the inquest and took too much time in hearing his experience and voting on him. Elder McDaniel is not explaining the scriptures. He is merely talking back at some very plain texts which “We Baptists do not believe.” “With regard to one or both of these ordinances” he “is grossly illogical and inconsistent” in dealing with what the scriptures say about them. He asserts and assumes with little effort at proof. “We Baptists” are like that when we get worked up on what “We do not believe.”

I read “for example” about a fair-sized bunch of sinners desiring to be saved on Pentecost. They even asked the apostles what they must do to be saved. Simon Peter did not think he was holding God up when he told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. The *Baptist and Reflector* thinks that “such presumption is of man and not of God or to be found in the Bible.” Too bad that “We Baptists” were not there to set Peter right and rebuke his presumption. “**We**” got here late but we can

still shout “We do not believe that.” It is “found in the Bible” all right. It is in the second chapter of Acts.

Bible Ignorance is a Sure Road to Hell

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was in *The Elk City Daily News* a few years ago. It pictured the religious landscape then, and nothing has changed today.

Nathan Brewer

Four weeks ago, we at the Northeast church of Christ published an article called “Wash Away Your Sins,” which argued from the Apostle Paul’s conversion in Acts 9, 22, and 26 that sinners are not saved from their sins until they are baptized.

Below the article, we listed our mailing address and an e-mail address for anyone with questions or comments. No one has responded, in spite of the fact that approximately 92 percent of you who read the article disagree with its conclusion.

This is too bad. We hoped that someone who disagreed might write to us explaining how he thought the article misfired. We hoped for real dialogue.

Last spring, after publishing some articles on Mormonism, a kind and courteous Latter Day Saint wrote to us to make his case, and we have enjoyed a cordial and robust discussion comparing the Bible with the Book of Mormon since then.

But with baptism, no takers.

This, in spite of the fact that salvation by faith alone, or one of its off-shoots, has been common among Protestants since denominationalism arose in the 1500s. And based on the radio programs, articles, tracts and conversations we’ve observed over the years, almost no one is teaching the biblical requirement of baptism for the remission of sins.

This may be symptomatic of a problem in America today: People don’t discuss the Bible. There’s plenty of **talk about** “religion,” but little or no **discussion of biblical passages**.

Our last article covered the passages dealing with Paul’s conversion from Acts 9, 22 and 26, and we concluded that Paul was still in his sins after believing and repenting. His sins weren’t washed away until he was baptized.

There must be widespread disagreement among those of you who read it, yet no one responded, even though opening the Bible and reasoning from the scriptures is in the tradition of the Apostle Paul (see Acts 17:1-3).

And the subject is an important one since it deals with salvation. If salvation depends on baptism, **then many of you have been misled and your souls are in danger**. If our last article was wrong, **we** are in danger for teaching error.

Hopefully, you care enough about souls—yours own, and ours—to think about these matters. And hopefully, one day soon, we’ll see people actually **want to discuss the Bible**, the way people around here, in the so-called “Bible Belt,” used to.

“What Shall a Man Give in Exchange for His Soul?”

Jess Whitlock

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26).

In the year 193 A.D. Pertinax, the emperor of Rome had died, leaving no heir to the throne. Instead, the Praetorian Guard was charged to determine who would be the next emperor of all Rome. The Guard was so corrupt they determined to sell the office to the highest bidder. The wealthiest citizens of Rome came to the “auction.” Didius Salvius Julianus Marcus, a very wealthy citizen, then became the new emperor. He paid in excess of five million dollars in gold for that high office. Didius became the most powerful man on the earth. The Roman Senate took the oath of loyalty to

Emperor Didius on March 28, 193. Remember that date!

It was not long until the word of this ludicrous sale reached the ears of the Roman Legions, who were taking care of Roman affairs in Great Britain. They were so upset with the news that they hurried back to Rome under General Septimus Severus. The Roman Legions captured Didius and beheaded him on June 2nd, 193. Therefore, for the sum of five million dollars, Didius was the most powerful man on earth for 2 months and 4 days (March 28 until June 2!

May I submit that Emperor Didius came to learn the true meaning of Matthew 16:26. In light of Hebrews 9:27, the time will come when every person that has ever lived or ever will live on the face of this earth will come to fully comprehend the full import of Matthew 16:26.

In Luke 12:16-21 we have recorded the parable of the “Forgetful Farmer”! In just three verses (17-19), I counted twelve personal pronouns:

And **he** thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall **I** do, since **I** have no room to store **my** crops?’ So, **he** said, **I** will store all **my** crops and **my** goods. And **I** will say to **my** soul, ‘Soul, **you** have many goods laid up for many years; take **your** ease; eat, drink, and be merry (Luke 12:17-19).

Twelve times the “forgetful farmer” was all wrapped up in himself and his possessions. How could he possibly know that on that very night the Lord would say to him: “Thou fool, this night thy soul will be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (Luke 12:20).

Forthwith, both secular history and inspired history are filled with some great examples of the Lord’s truthful statement of Matthew 16:26. It matters not what you or I may accumulate in this life, how much land, how many stocks and bonds, how many cars, houses, boats, antiques...**stuff!** The day is coming for all of us when our souls shall be required. What then?

“Then whose shall those things be?”

“What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

It is a hymn that we sing often:

“Are Ready for That Day for Coming?”

Restoring the Ancient Order

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The text of scripture which will introduce our lesson is found in Jeremiah, chapter six and verse sixteen: “Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” The figure of the Prophet is that of a traveler who finds himself where a number of roads lead in different directions. He has a definite destination in mind but only one of the roads leads to it. He does not say it makes no difference which road you take just so you are satisfied. He does not say that the wrong road becomes the right road if you think it is! The word stand means to stop, see means to look, and ask is about equivalent to listen. Too, there are many ways to be wrong but only one way to be right. The ways of false teachers are many, but the Lord has but one way. Peter speaks of the “pernicious ways” of “false teachers” and calls them “damnable heresies” and in the same connections speaks of “the way of the Lord” (2 Pet. 2: 1, 2).

There are three things here that determine our attitude toward God to which I would direct your attention at the very threshold of such an investigation as this lesson proposes. First, God has taught man his way. “Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressor shall fall therein” (Hos. 14:9). Second, God forbids man’s way. “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). Third, God curses perversion.

“But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:7, 8). These solemn warnings from God mean that it is a hazardous thing to trifle with his Word.

The discussion of “the ancient order” of things in connection with so many modern departures involves a certain amount of history—religious and secular. The Bible sets forth the ancient order, and history puts on record man’s departures from it. Thus the Bible and history blend and can be profitably viewed together. Our plan of procedure is to trace the history of the church through several epochs or periods: First, the period of perfection; second, the period of departure, immediately after, which indeed began even during, the apostolic day; third, the period of apostasy, when human ecclesiasticism reigned through dark and dismal ages; fourth, the period of reformation, when noble men sought to shake off the shackles of superstition that fettered them and at least start back in the direction of the Bible and divine authority; and fifth, when the restoration of the ancient order was actually accomplished through men who had the courage of heart to preach the Word of God. Believing that you will follow along in this plan of investigation, we shall proceed to discuss these things in biblical and historical order.

Perfection in The New Testament

When Adam was created there was not a jar in his whole nature; not a cloud in the sky; no fear of evil and no dread of death. Man fell away by breaking through the restraint of God’s law. “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Ecc. 7:29).

So man in his primeval state was perfect. Adam was perfect, made in the “image of God;” he was God’s model. God’s design. But he fell. Centuries of degeneration separate man as he is from man as he was. Yet we can span the space of time and see man as God created him, not as sin corrupted him; and strive to regain his lost perfection.

So it was also in the beginning of the new creation that God formed a perfect church. Paul calls it the “new man,” which he says God created when Christ became “our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:14-16). Thus it was that out of the two nations—Jew and Gentile—God created the church.

The new man which is the body or church of Christ mentioned in the second chapter of Ephesians was also made perfect in every respect, but apostasy set in, just as it was predicted so many times in the New Testament Scriptures. The second Thessalonian letter says there would be a great “falling away” and says that in this falling away one would arise, “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God; or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.” It is further stated here that, “the mystery of iniquity doth already work,” which means that a great departure from the truth had already begun to show itself in Paul’s day. Paul says again, to Timothy:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

John also says: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: for many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Paul when giving his last warning to the elders of the Church at Ephesus makes this statement: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them” (Acts 20: 29,30).

This ought to be enough to prepare the student of church history for the departure from Christianity revealed there. Moses was commanded to “make all things according

to the pattern shown thee” and Paul quotes this and emphasizes the same caution to those who would be Christians (Heb. 8:5). The New Testament is our pattern and everything must conform to it. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21). The church outlined in the New Testament was perfect in government or organization; perfect in doctrine; perfect in its worship.

A Gradual Departure

As we have already learned the departure had begun in Paul’s day with the eldership or government of the church. It is admitted by all scholars of all denominations that the only government in the New Testament was local. There were no synods, councils, conferences, conventions, nor associations. Catholics say of their system of church government, “Some parts of the governmental system of the Catholic Church are of divine origin; and many of them are human institutions” (*Externals of the Catholic Church*, page 19). And again, “The divine institution of the three fold hierarchy cannot, of course, be derived from our texts; in fact it cannot in any way be proved directly from the New Testament; it is a Catholic dogma by virtue of a dogmatic tradition, i.e., in a later period of ecclesiastical history the general belief in the divine institution of the episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate can be verified and thence be followed on through later centuries, But the dogmatic truth cannot be traced back to Christ himself by analysis of strict historical testimony?” (*Cath. Ency.*, VIII, 334). These are samples of hundreds of admissions that the Catholic system is foreign to the New Testament.

This departure was gradual through several centuries. Soon after the Apostles, one of the elders of each congregation began to assume a place above the other elders, a sort of chairman elder. In a century or so, the affairs of congregations began to be administered by only one man and he began to assume control over smaller churches nearby and this gave rise to the “diocesan Bishop.” Those in larger cities soon began to usurp control over a greater territory and were called “Metropolitan Bishops.” After a few centuries of struggling for the supremacy by five great cities of the world the contestants were at last reduced to two, Constantinople and Rome. In the year 1054, the world was divided by them into Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic.

The Apostasy

The departure began in the days of the Apostles but the permanent division resulted when the Nicene creed was formed. Where the New Testament had been the only creed, the Nicene Council substituted therefore a human creed, and a new body had its beginning. A new name was needed and we meet for the first time “the Catholic Church” as it is now used. The church with a new name and a new creed was the new church. This begins the infancy period of Catholicism but she did not reach her present dimensions and character until about the thirteenth century. Her seven sacraments are a creation of the thirteenth century, the people were permitted to have the wine as well as the bread until about the same time. Immersion was practiced until the fourteenth century. They have apostatized until there is not a vestige of Christianity to be found in their system. In lieu of the New Testament practices discarded, they have paganism as this Catholic authority admits: “It is interesting to note how often our church has availed herself of practices which were in common use among pagans” (*Externals of the Catholic Church*, page 156).

The Reformatory Movement

Not only was the Bible forgotten as a book of authority by the Catholic Church but her political yoke became so galling that her overthrow was inevitable. The printing press was invented and Bibles began to flood the earth and a new day was dawning. The blood of the martyrs she had slain was crying from the ground! To read the article on the inquisition in the Catholic Encyclopedia of how they sealed men in dungeons, roasted them on the rack, burned them at the stake, for the crime of thinking, speaking, and worshipping contrary to the Catholic system, makes us rejoice to read of Luther, Calvin, and others who arose to break her power.

The first Protestant denomination to break away was the Lutheran Church, about the year 1530. But instead of discarding her human doctrines and practices he proceeded on the platform of retaining everything not expressly forbidden. He knew he was not on scriptural ground for he said: “The Pope in condemning Huss has condemned the

Gospel. I have gone five times as far as he, and yet I greatly fear I have not gone far enough” (Martin Luther, *D’Aubigne’s History*, page 173). So the Lutheran Church is not the New Testament church.

The Church of England was the next to begin. King Henry VIII, in order to marry his wife’s waiting maid, severed the portion of the Catholic Church in his dominions from the Pope, about twenty years after the Lutheran Church began. In this country it is known as the Episcopal Church. At first there was no difference between it and the Catholic Church and it has made but few changes until this day. Both these denominations have human names, human creeds, and human practices and neither of them is the New Testament church.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was established by John Wesley in 1784, but like Catholics, Lutherans, and Episcopalians has a human name, a human creed, and human practices. For instance the Catholic Church legalized sprinkling in 1311 and when the Episcopalian Church came out of Catholicism they carried it with them. When the Methodist Church came out of the Episcopalian Church they retained it. But it is no more Scriptural in the Methodist Church than in the Catholic. In fact the Catholic Church taunts the Protestant denominations for the many things they have borrowed from Rome which Rome admits are not Scriptural!

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, began in the city of Louisville Kentucky, as a result of the slavery question.

Nobody ever read of a Baptist Church in the New Testament. The Baptist creed is no better than the Catholic creed because it is human also. Their scholars do not pretend to find the Baptist Church in history before the seventeenth century. Immersion began to be practiced and the name Baptist Church came into use about 1641 and 1644. Not only do they have a human name and a human creed but they, too, admit that their practice is not according to the New Testament pattern (*Standard Baptist Manual*, page 22).

The Presbyterian churches in similar manner grew out of the work of John Calvin. Time would fail us to picture fully the rise of a host of smaller denominations during the nineteenth century. Instead of diminishing in number, they increase with the passing years, until there were 238 different religious bodies reported in the last federal census.

The Restoration Plea

The Catholic Church blames the multiplying of Protestant denominations on the unrestricted use of the Bible in the hands of the people, but this is not the case. It is caused by their disregard for it. We do not need a reformation of human religions but a return to the divine one. We do not need to write better creeds than those of the existing denominations but to discard them. We do not need to invent a new name but to wear the divinely given names of the New Testament. **We do not need reformation but restoration!** Let us do away with popes, archbishops presiding elders, stewards, and all governmental machinery except the local congregation. The words elders, bishop, pastor, presbyter, all refer to the same person, one of the rulers of a local congregation. No church of the New Testament had just one. Let us have a plurality in every congregation.

Let us not teach that we are saved by faith only when our pattern (The New Testament) says, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:24; emphasis added); let us not contend that children are under condemnation, because of the mistakes of their parents and contradict the Bible which says, “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father” (Eze. 18:20). The pattern says that baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12) so let us teach it and practice it. Water alone was never sprinkled upon anybody for anything from Genesis to Revelation. The pattern says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” and a puny, frail human being should be afraid to teach that he that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved.

If we worship according to the pattern we will sing and not play, and he who plays adds to the word of God. We will give of our own means instead of trying to get money out of some one else and this will be done on the First Day of the Week (1 Cor. 16:1,2).

One who follows the pattern does not forsake the assembling together (Heb. 10:25) for the breaking of bread on the First Day of the Week.

As for instrumental music, it was David's invention in the Old Testament among the Jews, and since that time it became the adopted child of the Roman Catholic church. John Calvin said that "the Catholics foolishly borrowed it from the Jews," and let us once more add that the Protestants borrowed it from the Catholics. The Christian Church (self-styled and so-called) borrowed it from the Protestants, and the New Testament Church never used it. You may read every passage in the New Testament bearing on the subject from the time that Jesus and his disciples at the institution of the Lord's Supper "sang a hymn and went out," through the book of Acts, through the epistles to the church, and all the instruction the Holy Spirit has given on how to worship God in the church of Jesus Christ, and the world sing exhausts the command on the subject. That is the limit of the command, friends, and we simply insist that it should be the limit of our practice. Instrumental music was thus a relic of Judaism until Rome adopted it, and Protestants have not learned to leave Rome's relics and images in Rome. Her daughters imitate her ways, and so do her stepchildren—but the Bible says "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch no unclean thing"—that was Paul's exhortation to the church to abandon every human particle in religion, and it is our plea to you tonight.

Some think that because there was probably no person on earth for a long period of time who worshipped exactly according to the New Testament that the church Jesus established ceased to exist, and, that the best thing we can now do is to find a denomination which suits us and join it. But the word is the seed (Luke 8:11) and the church or kingdom is not destroyed until the seed is destroyed, and since the word is the "incorruptible seed" (1 Pet. 1:23), it cannot be destroyed. Therefore, the church or kingdom cannot be destroyed and Paul said, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:21). The church of Christ is here and will be as long as man inhabits the earth. Those who believed, repented, and were baptized in that day were added (they did not join the church) and the same commands obeyed today will bring the same result (Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:18). There will be no uncertainty about it. If we would all do this the Lord would add us to the same church. Obeying the Baptist **Manual** makes one a Baptist, obeying the *Methodist Discipline* makes a Methodist, and obeying the *Catechism* make Catholics, and so with all the denominations, but obedience to the New Testament will never make anything but Christians. Will you not be just a Christian by leaving that institution you can't read about and obeying the gospel of Christ?

Through all history, down the surging stream of time, friends, there has been the ever present trend away from God's word. It was so in the Old Testament. Israel wandered; she was ever forward and wayward. Moses lifted the voice of tearful pleading against her deviations and God raised up prophet after prophet to call her back. But hers was a history of rebellion and of its inevitable result—her final rejection. To the call of Jeremiah to "ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein," Israel replied: "We will not walk therein." Is that not the spirit of all innovation and departure from God today? Do we not see and hear such in our very midst these days? Friends, the Word of God is divine, His commands are immutable, His law is inexorable, His authority is supreme, and He will not hold you guiltless who trample it under your feet. We call upon you to lay down your party creeds and your party names, your human doctrines and dogmas, your denominational affiliations and all that is of no higher authority than men and their movements, to come and strike hands with us across the Bible—the Word of God. For your soul's salvation and for heaven's hope, will you not come?

Sermon Preached in Port Arthur, Texas November, 1937.

Editor's Travels

We traveled to Yukon, Okla. on Sunday, Oct. 3, and Oct. 17, and to Chillicothe, Texas on Oct. 10. We ended Oct. 24 and 31 worshiped at the Pioneer and Bell at Elk City, Okla.

“What Saith The Scriptures?”

Harrell Davidson

An email question asks: “Bro. Davidson, A young Christian man who attends another congregation approached one of our elders about supporting him to some degree in his efforts as sponsor, leader, advisor, or whatever the title may be concerning the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. We are of the opinion that this is just another denomination and think that we should have nothing to do with it. What do you think?”

Sincerely,
Elders, Fordland church, Fordland, Missouri

There was some urgency when we received this question and we responded immediately, but thought other readers of *The Gospel Preceptor* might someday have to make a similar decision. We answered in part by saying, you are correct regarding your assessment of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). I went to several websites and found that FCA is an “interdenominational body.” It is for anyone who “has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ into his soul.”

You can see by these quotes that the Lord's church could not in anyway support it. The FCA would have a way of desensitizing an otherwise faithful young man to the point that he would think that one church is just as good as another. You were wise in rejecting any kind of sponsorship. It was likely the position of a “Huddler” which calls a group together to pray is what the young man would have been. The group is then called a “huddle.” They normally huddle around the flag and pray, but there are conventions in almost every state annually. Thanks for the questions.

Brother Davidson answers readers' questions in this column each month. If you have Bible questions, you may email them to him at: wd4lar@gmail.com

\$1,000.00 Reward Offered

We will pay \$1,000.00 to anyone who can produce a New Testament passage telling one to “Pray The Sinner's Prayer” in answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?”

Is My Baptism Valid?

Lee Moses

Baptism is glorious, baptism is beautiful, and baptism is crucial. Why? Because God says it is! Baptism is the point at which one enters into the church of Christ (Acts 2:41, 47; compare with John 3:5), the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), Christ Himself (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), freedom from sin (Rom.6:4, 7, 17-18), and salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Because baptism is the point at which one enters into Christ, it is the point at which one enters the location of “all spiritual blessings” (Ephesians 1:3, emphasis added). Truly it is difficult to overstate the glory, beauty, and importance of baptism.

Yet not all baptisms are valid. As one considers today's religious landscape, he sees numerous “baptisms” being administered by different religious bodies. Some immerse, others sprinkle or pour; some consider infants appropriate candidates for baptism, while others limit baptism to adults; some baptize as an outward sign of salvation that has already taken place, while others baptize for the purpose of obtaining salvation. But God only recognizes “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5). Just as there is only one true God (v. 6), there is only one true baptism. The one true baptism is that which is commanded in the New Testament. Paul wrote, “...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of **water by the word**”

(Eph. 5:26, emphasis added). Those in the church are sanctified, or set apart for God, and cleansed from their sins because their baptism is according to the teaching of the Holy Spirit in God's word (John 3:5; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). As one asks the crucial question, "Is my baptism valid?" he must turn to the New Testament to find the correct answer. And in turn, the New Testament provides the following questions one should ask himself to determine if his baptism is valid in God's eyes.

Was My Baptism Immersion?

There have been questions raised and debates held regarding the correct "mode" of baptism. Some people aver that they baptize someone when they merely pour or sprinkle water on that person. However, the word for "baptize" (Greek *baptizoo*) means literally, "dip, immerse."¹ God's word describes baptism as a burial: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12; see also Romans 6:4). It would certainly be a less than adequate burial that would sprinkle or pour a cupful of dirt upon a deceased person's body; truly it would be no burial at all. And truly it is no baptism at all that fails to immerse its recipient.

Was My Baptism in Water?

As the Ethiopian eunuch traveled in his chariot, listening to Philip the evangelist "preach Christ." "They came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Indeed the fact that there was water made baptism possible, an opportunity seized on that occasion as "they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (v. 38). The word for "baptize" generally refers to immersion **in water**, unless a figurative use is specifically stated.² Although Jesus administered Holy Spirit baptism to some, He commanded only water baptism (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; John 3:5). Baptism is said to be "the like figure" of Noah's salvation through the flood, "wherein eight souls were saved **by water**" (1 Pet.3:20-31). Regarding the household of Cornelius, Peter asked, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47-48). The "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5 is clearly water baptism.

Was My Baptism Administered by Another Person?

The Scriptures never speak of baptism as an act one does by or for himself. One must "be baptized" (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36; 10:47-48; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; et al.). When the Ethiopian eunuch desired baptism, Philip accompanied him into the water that the baptism might be Scripturally accomplished (Acts 8:38). There are no particular qualifications for an administrator of baptism—certainly the effectiveness of one's baptism can only be dependent upon his own faith and intentions. But one must have his baptism administered by another person for his baptism to be valid.

Did I Complete the Necessary Prerequisites?

As previously mentioned, baptism is the point at which one enters into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), and therefore into the place where all spiritual blessings are located (Eph. 1:3). However, there are other prerequisites that must be met before one can successfully enter into this location of blessedness.

Before one can be baptized Scripturally, he must be taught by the Scriptures and not by error (compare with 1 Pet. 1:22-23). And before one can meet the prerequisite of belief, or faith (see below), he must be taught by the Scriptures: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

One must believe in Christ before he can be Scripturally baptized. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The conjunction *and* demonstrates that there are at least two acts that must take place prior to salvation, and belief is every bit as crucial as baptism. In a way it is more crucial, because belief precedes baptism, and leads to one's appreciating the need and having the desire to be baptized. One must believe in Christ before he can obtain the "power" or "right" to become a child of God (John 1:12), a right which one exercises at baptism (Gal. 3:26-27). One must repent of sin before he can be Scripturally baptized. When the sinners gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost asked the

apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37); Peter responded, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (v. 38). Again, there are two acts spoken of as taking place prior to receiving the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit’s gift. Repentance has to precede baptism for it to be Scriptural; for, as the Lord said, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). One must confess Christ before he can be Scripturally baptized. Confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God is said to precede salvation (Rom. 10:9-10; compare with John 12:42-43; Acts 8:37; 1 Tim. 6:12); and therefore, this good confession also precedes baptism.

“One baptism” (Eph. 4:5). This is the number of baptisms that God has authorized for man today. Yet countless different baptisms are being administered and received every week, all by those who would claim that their goal is to please God and serve Christ. Thankfully, God’s word penetrates through this murk of man made tradition and opinion, enabling each of us to answer the question, “Is my baptism valid?” Last week, it was seen from God’s word that baptism must be immersion, it must be in water, and it must be administered by another person. Scriptural baptism also must follow the necessary prerequisites of hearing (or reading) God’s instructions on the subject, belief in Christ, repentance from sin, and confession of Christ. We will conclude by considering four other questions the New Testament provides us which serve to answer the larger question, “Is my baptism valid?”

Was My Baptism “For the Remission of Sins”?

The apostle Peter clearly stated the purpose of baptism: Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38, emphasis added).

The word *for* is used in this phrase “to denote purpose”; and “for the remission of sins” could just as well be translated, “so that sins might be forgiven.” Christ’s purpose in ordaining baptism was for the salvation of men’s souls (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21); and man’s purpose in receiving baptism must be the same. If one is baptized believing that his sins have already been forgiven, he is not baptized with the “one baptism” of the New Testament. If one is baptized with his object being other than the remission of his sins, he is not baptized with the “one baptism” of the New Testament. While the religious world administers many different baptisms for many different purposes, the apostle Peter clearly stated the purpose of the “one baptism” of the New Testament—“for the remission of sins.”

Did I “Obey From the Heart”?

The sixth chapter of Romans speaks at length of the implications of Scriptural baptism, in particular contrasting the spiritual states of a person prior to and following baptism. Thus the apostle Paul exclaims, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (verse 17). Obedience to the Gospel in baptism requires sincere motivation proceeding from the heart; the seat of one’s intellect, emotion, and will.

So one should ask himself, “Did I know what I was doing?” One cannot accidentally obey the truth without having understood the truth (compare with Matthew 13:19; John 8:32; Acts 2:41). This does not mean that one needs to understand exactly how Scriptural baptism takes away sins, nor that one needs to understand every fine point of doctrine found in the Bible. But one needs to know why he is being baptized.

One who is immersed against his will cannot be said to have “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered him.” Neither can it be said of one who is baptized merely to please his parents, friends, or significant other. One’s intellect, emotions, and will must be wholly given to submitting himself to God in the glorious, beautiful, and crucial reception of baptism.

Was I of the Age of Accountability?

While there is no clear numerical age one must reach in order to be Scripturally baptized, there is a point of mental maturity one must reach. For one to understand what he is doing when he is baptized, he must have attained an age where he is capable of understanding his need and purpose for being baptized. This by no means places chil-

dren who have not yet reached this age among the lost. The apostle Paul stated, “For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died” (Rom. 7:9). Of course, Paul had been born under the Law of Moses—the “commandment came” to him in the sense that he was now accountable to it, found to be in sin, and therefore spiritually dead. But prior to that time he had been spiritually alive. Jesus said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14). Children possess the nature that citizens of God’s kingdom possess. Upon another occasion Jesus told His disciples, “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (18:3). Jesus was not saying that the disciples needed to become as those who forsook God’s commandments and were dead in sin, but as those who remained spiritually alive. Children who have not yet reached the age of accountability can neither properly understand baptism—nor can they need baptism.

Into What Church was I Baptized?

Most religious bodies professing affiliation with Christ claim that the baptisms they practice place one into their respective churches. However, the “one baptism” of the New Testament only relates to “one body” (Eph. 4:5-6), which is the church of which Christ is head (1:22-23). When the glad recipients of God’s word in the first century were baptized, the Lord added them to His church (Acts 2:41, 47). None of them were added by men to man-made denominations. They had no need to be, for as the apostle Peter wrote them, “Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth” (1 Pet. 1:22). One who is baptized to be added to a man-made denomination cannot be said to obey God’s truth, for he has merely obeyed a tradition of men (compare with Matthew 15:9). Thus his soul has not been “purified,” but remains lost in sin.

Conclusion

It is sad and unfortunate that so many invalid baptisms are being taught and practiced in the religious world today. Yet the New Testament teaches but one valid baptism for mankind today. For one to ensure that his baptism is valid, he should ask himself the questions that have been discussed in this article:

- 1. Was my baptism immersion?**
- 2. Was my baptism in water?**
- 3. Was my baptism administered by another person?**
- 4. Did I complete the necessary prerequisites?**
- 5. Was my baptism “for the remission of sins”?**
- 6. Did I “obey from the heart”?**
- 7. Was I of the age of accountability?**
- 8. Into what church was I baptized?**

While this may strike some as overly complicated, it comes down to one question: “**Did I do what the Bible says to do?**” The conversions of the New Testament did not usually take a long time to occur, because these things are not terribly difficult to understand for one who truly desires to please God. Upon an occasion in Ephesus, the apostle Paul encountered some men who had been baptized with the intention of pleasing God, but they had not been baptized with the “one baptism” of the New Testament (Acts 19:1-3). Paul then taught them correctly, and “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (verse 4-5). Have you been Scripturally baptized? If not, your response should be the same as those earnest God-seekers whom Paul encountered. “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:26).

Endnotes

1 F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969 printing), p. 35.

2 “(‘To baptize’) means technically ‘to baptize in water.’ Hence it is unnecessary to specify a medium.” Oepke, “Baptoō, baptizōō,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Com-

pany, 1999 printing), 1:539; See also Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek, English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 164-167.

3 “eis,” in Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 290. Matthew 26:28 is the verse particularly under discussion here, but Acts 2:38 is cross-referenced under this usage, and uses the same exact phrase as that found in Matthew 26:28.

4 “kardia,” *BDAG*, pp. 508-509

The Last Days

Gene Hill

Realized Eschatology is that system of theology that holds:

The Holy Scriptures teach that the second coming of Christ, including the establishment of the eternal kingdom, the day of judgment, the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead, occurred with the fall of Judaism in 70 A.D. (Nichols and King iv).

This quote is the debate affirmation which expressed the view of Max King in his debate with Gus Nichols. This is the doctrine of hyper-preterism or full-preterism, which is the teaching that all prophecies have been fulfilled, and in this instance that

the second coming of Christ, including the establishment of the eternal kingdom, the day of judgment, the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead, occurred with the fall of Judaism in 70 A.D. (Nichols and King iv).

The topic, “The Last Days,” covers more ground than one might otherwise assume, for it deals with many prophecies and their fulfillment. Wallace says:

There is this to be remembered about the prophecies—they either had reference to the first coming of Christ or to the second coming of Christ, but whatever the prophecy meant at the time spoken or written, that is what that prophecy had to mean for all time to come (60).

The only infallible interpretation of prophecy is an inspired interpretation. This statement is sustained by Paul’s remarks on God’s wisdom in the revelation “the mystery” in the second chapter of first Corinthians, verses 7 to 13. Note first the seventh verse; “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.” This is that which Paul said in Rom. 16:25 had been “kept secret since the world began,” now “made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.” Verse 8 says “which none of the princes of this world knew.” They did not know the “mystery—the plan of the ages hidden in the prophetic word of God. Verse 9 says: “even as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God prepared for them that love him.” The things that no eye had seen, that no ear had heard, and that no man’s heart had contemplated, are the things out of God’s prophetic word revealed in the New Testament—verse 10—“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit”—then verse 13, “which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth.”

It is thus that Paul declares that revelation (the thing revealed) plus inspiration (the words by which to teach it) is the only true and infallible interpretation of the prophetic word (64).

Peter, in Acts 3:18-26, puts forth the argument that all that happened leading up to the sojourn of Jesus on earth: His birth (Gal. 4:4), death (Isa. 53), resurrection (Psa. 16:10), ascension into heaven, and coronation as King of kings and Lord of lords (Dan. 7:13-14) is a fulfillment of all that was spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:18-24). The “things” (3:18), “the times” (3:21), and the “these days” (3:24) all refer to this present Christian age, dispensation, or world which had its beginning in Acts 2 and will contin-

ue until the Second Coming of Jesus.

The prophet Daniel provides for us the prophetic time frame for the advent of Jesus all the way through to the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem by the Roman legions commanded by Titus and Vespasian in ad 70. In Daniel 2, he interprets the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The king had a vision that awakened him (2:1) that he could not remember and demanded his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans tell him what it was and then interpret it (2:2-3). They, of course, could not do and said as much (2:4), which brought a rather severe sentence of a gruesome death for failure (2:5-9). Daniel, hearing of the problem, intervenes, 336 The Last Days asks for some time, and along with his friends goes to the God of Heaven for help (2:12-18). God provides help; so Daniel advised Arioch the captain of the king's guard that he had (2:19-24). This vision contains images of five distinct kingdoms that come in succession (2:31-36). The kingdoms are understood to be the Babylonian (gold), Medo-Per-sian (silver), Greece (brass), Roman (iron/miry clay), and the fifth, a stone cut out without hands, consuming all that came before.

It is important that we acknowledge the Divine time element indicated in the king's dream by such phrases as "what shall be in the latter days" (2:28), "what should come to pass hereafter," and "what shall come to pass" (2:29), "in the days of those kings" (2:44), and "what shall come to pass hereafter" (2:45). Notice how definite these phrases are and with what certainty they are uttered. These things would happen exactly as prophesied.

In Mark 1:14-15, Jesus alludes to Daniel's prophecy when He says, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Likewise, the Hebrews' writer states in Hebrews 12:28 that they were "receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved," which is what Daniel says, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). Paul tells the Colossian brethren that they had been translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13).

Daniel's "in the days of these kings," in which days God would set up the fifth kingdom referred to by Daniel, is that of the Roman Caesars who ruled in the days Jesus was born (Gal. 4:4). The prophet tells us that one like the Son of Man would come in the clouds to the Ancient of days at which time He would receive a dominion and kingdom. This prophecy is distinctly fulfilled as depicted in the events of Acts 1:6-11. Peter cites this event in Acts 2:29-36 as the object of David's prophecies in Psalms 16:10, 110:1, and 132:11 as well as Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 9:6-7. The kingdom of heaven which was preached by Jesus as at hand in Mark 1:14-15 is not a material kingdom as expected by the Jews, but a spiritual one (Luke 17:20-24; John 18:36; Rom. 14:17).

The prophet Isaiah has very similar things to say about the when of the establishment of the kingdom. In Isaiah 2:2 it would be in the "last days" that it "shall be established." In verse 3 we see both the law from Zion and the Word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem. Jesus gave His apostles commandments that would fulfill that prophecy in Acts 1:8. Isaiah's last days and the latter days of Daniel 2:28 are one and the same. It was during the prophesied last days the kingdom of heaven was preached by Jesus (Mark 1:14-15); would be established in Jerusalem, from which city the Gospel would go forth (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 8:1-25).

The prophet Micah (in 4:1-2) says almost word for word what Isaiah says in Isaiah 2:2-3. Micah 4:8 provides another significant piece of information describing this kingdom by describing it as "the first dominion." The Bible teaches that the church Jesus promised to build (Mat. 16:18), to which the Lord added saved souls (Acts 2:47), purchased by God's blood (20:28), which Paul said is the body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), as well as the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15; Isa. 2:3), is likewise the kingdom of heaven (Mark 1:14-15; Mat. 16:19; John 3:3, 5) into which those becoming Christians are translated (Col. 1:13-14).

Jesus promised to build His church (Mat. 16:18), which Paul described as a body (Eph. 1:22-23), personifying it as an organism with functioning parts (1 Cor. 12:12-31). Peter says that as individual members making up that body we gain spiritual sustenance by which we are able to grow (1 Pet. 2:2; note Heb. 5:12).

When Jesus talks of the kingdom, He alludes to the form of government through which His body is ordered (Isa. 9:6-7; Acts 2:30-37) and He rules over as King (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev 15:3). Luke tells us the saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47), and Paul says the Father translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13-14), which is the kingdom of the prophets (Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14).

The descriptive terms—church, body, kingdom—all refer to that same group of souls sanctified by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 13:7) when they obeyed the truth through the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:22; Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5; 7:14). This heavenly creation came into existence 338 The Last Days at the right time and in the right place, precisely as specified by the prophets Daniel, Isaiah, and Micah. The prophetic “last days” had their beginning with the events recorded in Acts 2. These days did not end prior to the specific events of Acts 2, as asserted by Max King (Nichols and King 46-47). The first dominion of Micah 4:8 also applies to the exact same kingdom as that of Acts 2, for it is just another descriptive term of that first group of souls added to the church by the Lord. So, just to be crystal clear, each of these terms—the church equals the body equals the kingdom equals the first dominion—are terms that simply refer to the exact same thing. This thing has not only fulfilled prophecy by its coming into existence, but it has also fulfilled prophecy by the timing of its coming into existence, which is labeled as the last days.

The word translated “world” needs to be addressed at this time. It can be translated to mean the literal earth as in Acts 17:24—“God that made the world and all things therein” (Thayer 356-57). Thayer continues his definition by saying the word can also refer to “the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ” and references James 1:27 (among other passages) that we are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. There are also references to a human fleshly desire for physical things that if permitted can lead us astray (1 John 2:15).

The King James translates another word from the original with the English word “world.” It is the Greek *aion*. Thayer says, “as the Jews distinguished the time before the Messiah, and the time after the advent of the Messiah,” and “the end, or rather consummation, of the age preceding Christ’s return, with which will be connected the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, the demolition of this world, Matt 24:3” (19). The ASV in a footnote for *world* in Matthew 24:3 has this, “Or, the consummation of the age.” Robertson has the same in a footnote regarding *world* in Matthew 24:3 (184).

Yet a third word, *dispensation*, needs consideration. *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines it as, “A specific arrangement or system by which something is dispensed or administered” (407). Thayer defines the word translated “dispensation” in 1 Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 1:10, 3:2, and Colosians 1:25, as “the management, oversight, administration, of others’ property; the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship, and for stewardship: Lk. 16:2-4... as the management of a household or of household affairs” (440).

As we study our topic, it must be understood that world can refer to either the material creation or the ungodly multitude who inhabit the material creation. It also has reference to a period of time or an age in which people live. Dispensation, when coupled with Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian, refers to the system of law which God used to administer the affairs of mankind through these ages as he lived in this world.

The Patriarchal Dispensation refers to the time that began during the period in which Adam and Eve occupied Eden. The law they followed, as far as we can determine, was fairly limited. They were to multiply and have dominion over all creation (Gen. 1:28). Adam was to dress and keep the garden (2:15). The couple were to eat of every tree in the garden with the exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16-17). They were also given instruction in animal sacrifice (Heb. 11:4).

The Mosaic Age began in Exodus 19 and 20 with the giving of the Law at Sinai (Deu. 5), and ended at the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14), having acted as a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to their Messiah (Gal. 3:23-29). The Patriarchal system was likewise done away in the cross of Christ (Acts 4:5-12; 17:30-31; Eph. 2:14-22; 1 John 1:6-10; 2 John

9-11).

Since both the Patriarchal age/system/world and that of the Mosaical or Jewish age/system/world have fulfilled their purpose and have been replaced by that of the Christian age/world in fulfillment of prophecy, then we are in the last days of prophecy. When will the “consummation of the age” come about which the disciples asked Jesus (Mat. 24:3)? In Matthew 24:2 Jesus refers to a catastrophic event of such magnitude that the stones of the temple would be thrown down. The disciples naturally wanted 340 The Last Days more details. Matthew’s account adds, “and of the end of the world” (consummation of the age).

Something worth noting is that Jesus did not always answer the question He was asked but gave what was needed. Observe His response to Nicodemus in John 3:1-3. Nicodemus states what was commonly believed within his circle of acquaintances. Jesus responds with a discussion of the new birth to enter the kingdom of heaven. Having powers of discernment, it is reasonable to conclude Jesus responded as He did because He perceived it was what Nicodemus needed regardless of why he came (John 2:25; Jer. 17:9-10).

Whatever the case may be, it is certain beyond doubt that Jesus provided all the detail and more than what the disciples may have been seeking. In spite of claims, this passage (Mat. 24:1-25:46) can be divided logically, reasonably, and scripturally. The only place it can be divided and must be divided is at Matthew 24:36 (Nichols and King 6, 15, 17, 23, 25-26, 67, 107, 133).

Jesus discusses two completely different events in this section. When Jesus said, “all these things” (Mat. 24:6, 33), He referred to indicators which His discerning disciples would be able to use to know when the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple would be imminent so they might flee: deceivers (24:4-5), wars and war rumors (24:6-7), natural disasters (24:7; Acts 11:27-30), persecution (Mat. 24:9-10), false prophets (24:11; Acts 20:29-30), greater evil (Mat. 24:11-12), Gospel spreading (24:14, 31; Col. 1:23), Roman army surrounding the city (Mat. 24:15), tribulation (24:16- 22), more false prophets (24:23-26), and then the fall of Jerusalem (24:29-30). Just as a sprouting fig tree signified summers nearness, just so the coming destruction would be signified by the “these things” listed by Jesus. What must have been truly disturbing to the disciples was His statement that they and their contemporaries would live through the prophesied destruction (24:34).

The event described in verses 36-51 is so fundamentally different from the one described previously that one must redefine words wholesale to fabricate a theology to explain this passage. The sea change is understood when we compare “this generation” from verse 34 to the “that day and hour” of verse 36. The distinction is made even more apparent with the suddenness and lack of warning of this second event (24:36ff) to the details and drawn out time line of the previous event (24:1-35).

Verses 36-39 teach through the suddenness of the flood in Noah’s time and the mundane events of everyday life as described, that this event is completely distinct from that of Jerusalem’s destruction. These verses mirror the events described by Peter in 2 Peter 3:3-10 and by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10. Both apostles describe a cataclysmic and catastrophic event with neither preceded by any indications of coming doom and destruction. Jesus labels this terrible event as “the coming of the Son of man” (Mat. 24:37). Paul styles it as “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed” (2 The. 1:7). Peter calls it “the coming of the day of God” (2 Pet. 3:12). There will simply be no warning, quite unlike the previously described event. “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Mat. 24:42). Those unprepared will face terrible consequences for their behavior (24:44-51).

In Matthew 25:1-30 Jesus provides two parables describing what the kingdom of heaven in its first dominion would be like prior to the Second Coming of the Lord. The Lord uses two events to compare kingdom citizens and their relative preparedness for His return and the beginning of the second dominion of the heavenly kingdom. The first picture is that of 10 virgins awaiting a bridegroom. Five of these women were prepared, and five were not; those unprepared were denied entrance into the feast to

which they had an invitation (25:1-13). The second illustration is that of a householder leaving on a trip and turning over various amounts of money to each of three servants, expecting a greater return when he came back home. There is no indication of when He would return to call for an accounting. Nevertheless, when the Son of man does return, He will judge each soul according to that person's actions while on earth (2 Cor. 5:10) with punishment and reward being meted out to each based on their actions (Mat. 25:14-30).

The lesson from these two parables is made in Matthew 24:36- 39, that there will be no signs indicating when the coming of the Son of man in judgment will occur. Consequently, we ought to always be prepared for judgment based on our preparedness for that event and the establishment of that second dominion of the heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. 4:18).

The eternal heavenly kingdom inaugurated with the coronation of the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 1:8-11; 2:29-36). The gates to that kingdom were opened on the day of Pentecost with the preaching of Peter and the eleven other apostles as we see in Acts 2. The three thousand who gladly received the Gospel were baptized for the remission of their sins (John 3:3, 5; Acts 2:38) and added to the church by the Lord (2:47; Col. 1:13-14). Thus the eternal kingdom's first dominion began.

As we have seen, the Second Coming of Christ will be sudden, without warning, in flaming fire, the elements melting with fervent heat, and all that is of a material nature will be completely destroyed and no longer in existence. It will be at this time that all of the dead shall come forth from the grave at the sound of His voice (John 5:28-29; 1 The. 4:16-17). Judgment will then take place (Mat. 25:31-46; John 6:29-40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48) with the majority of humanity sent into outer darkness and the remainder ushered into life eternal, which is that second dominion of that heavenly kingdom (1 The. 4:17; 2 Tim. 4:18).

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Back to the Bible

Dub McClish

The Bible has been translated into 1,250 languages and dialects, making it available to about 95% of the world's population. It is the best-distributed book in the world with perhaps 150 million copies distributed annually.

In spite of this, pagan religions are gaining in the world. Communism has captured onethird of the earth in less than 50 years. The United Nations reportedly no longer classifies the United States as a "Christian" nation. The American Bible Society estimates that 50 million Americans do not own a Bible. Even those who have Bibles and allegedly believe in them seem to have lost touch with the Biblical message. It is appropriate to question, "Why?"

Why Is This Modern World Retreating from The Bible?

Dr. Alan Richardson, in the book, *Cambridge History of the Bible*, speaks of a "gradual decay of the ordinary Christian's sense that he can read the Bible for himself without an interpreter and discover its unambiguous meaning." He further states, "... the Bible has come to be regarded as a book for experts only, requiring elaborate training in linguistic and historical disciplines before it can even be understood." If this is so, then one of history's great ironies is developing. This very contention (that the Bible had to have trained, licensed interpreters) produced the 16th century Reformation. Giving the Bible back to the common man brought death to the Dark Ages. It is passing strange that this ecclesiastical specter haunts, humanity again, now not by coercion, but by apathy and default.

One possible reason for such a retreat from the Bible lies in preachers and religious teachers themselves. By using technical terms understood only by the scholarly, the preacher or teacher may leave the impression that one must be a degreed linguistic scholar to understand the Biblical message at all. Who can deny that the Word of God has frequently become the playground for hazy and often unimportant speculations by ecclesiastical doctors, sometimes themselves infidels? This is not to oppose education, but to condemn the wrong use of it. The preacher should **illuminate** rather than obscure the text.

Men are asking if the Bible really applies to modern circumstances. He has lost that awareness of the relevancy of the Biblical message to his everyday life that was felt even a generation ago. Bill Banowsky has captured the modern attitude toward the Bible well as he says: "Its obscure message makes adequate fodder for the Sunday morning sermon, but hardly 2 qualifies as a pertinent issue in the Monday morning business deal—or the Saturday night date—or the April tax return." We can accurately attribute the present moral decline in our nation to the attitude that the Bible is not so much a book of fixed moral standards, as it is a theoretical source book for out-of-touch theologians.

To Whom and to What Is the Biblical Message Addressed?

The Bible was not addressed to the intellectual community. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek, the common language of the first century Roman world. While it was addressed to the "man on the street," this carries no implication that it is intellectually unrespectable. Anyone who has read it much knows that it contains some material that the genius cannot fathom. Paul pictured the Corinthian church as "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" (1 Cor. 1:26), yet he wrote two lengthy epistles to them, expecting them to understand them. "The common people heard Him (Jesus) gladly" (Mark 12:37) well states the true principle that the Bible is addressed to the masses.

The reason why people thronged to hear Jesus is because His message dealt with their needs. If the New Testament is written to the common man, it is also written for him. Paul was conscious of this purpose when he wrote, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, [i.e. that listeners can understand] that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor. 14:19 TEV). Thus the majority of Scripture is within grasp of the ordinary person's comprehension and self-application.

The Bible Well States Its Own Case of Worth to Mankind

“... We speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth ...” (1 Cor. 2:13), with many other Scriptures, affirms it to be from God. The documentary evidence is too massive and strong, the centuries and storms it has withstood too long and hard, and its internal qualities too convincing to allow us to conclude otherwise. It is our only source of pre-historic information—a letter from Heaven.

“The world through its wisdom knew not God, but it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). All nature says there is an all-powerful, intelligent Creator, but only the Bible reveals His love, His mercy, His will, His salvation.

Jesus said, “these [Scriptures] testify of me” (John 5:39). Through uninspired history we could know that a “Jesus” lived in Judea long ago, but how could we know His mission, Messiahship, or message without the Bible?

The Bible is the source of the knowledge of honorable living. “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). Man has no “inner light” to guide him, but he is a product of his teaching. “Thy word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path” (Psa. 119:105). The Bible is the sourcebook of all principles that help us live truly better.

It is the source of faith and salvation. We may try to ignore, forget, deny, or overcome sin, but it is still our universal malady. We desperately need a remedy. Jesus the Christ has provided it through the Gospel. “It [the Gospel] is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:15). It is the source of that belief necessary to salvation (Rom. 10:17). It tells one what to do to be saved: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16a).

The Bible is the standard of judgment. Jesus declared, “The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12: 48). It fixes upon man responsibility for his own behavior, provides the remedy for sin, the plan for righteous living, and calls him into account for his bodily life.

Conclusion

Modern man is plagued with doubt, loneliness, immorality, and fear. It is little wonder that he is thus burdened, for on life’s stormy voyage he has thrown chart and compass overboard. In ignoring the Bible, he has lost touch with absolute standards, placing himself at the mercy of every destructive wind that blows.

The urgent need of today’s world is not more social equality, federal handouts, higher education, increased food supplies, or deeper space probes. Nor is it for more “church services.” Never has man gone to church so much and known so little of the Bible. The real need is for professed “believers” in God, Christ, and the Bible to submerge themselves in the plain teaching of Scripture and fashion their lives after its demands. It is a foregone conclusion that unbelievers will never pay any attention to the Bible until believers begin doing so.

As the Bible provided faith, hope, purpose, and encouragement for the ages of the past, so it will for ours, if we but have the courage to go back to the Bible.

Do You Have the Time?

David Ray

Easy question. Easy answer, assuming you’re wearing a watch or have a cell phone. If someone asks you this question, you may indeed have the time to give to them. But do you have the time?

We recognize that this question has different meanings. Almost everyone has the first “time” (i.e., they know the time of day). But do they have the time to spare, even to give someone the time of day? Let me answer that question for you: No! Nobody seems to have the time these days!

In reality, we all have the time to give, if we choose to give it. It simply boils down to the question of priorities. Do I **want** to give you the time? And again, the answer is

usually “no.”

We could give lots of examples of this. However, the gist is that, in our “timeless” society today, with all the tragedies this attitude brings to our personal relationships for which we refuse to have the time, the most tragic of all is that nobody seems to have **any** time for God!

The lost don’t have time for your efforts to evangelize them. There’s virtually no way they’re going to take time to sit down to a traditional Bible study, actually opening our Bibles and reasoning from the Scriptures to the logical conclusions that will save our souls (remember, Peter made the point that “words” will save—Acts 11:14).

The average “believer” usually isn’t any better. For example, he seems to have little concern for the proper worship of God. Not only is he uninterested in studying the Bible with you, but when it comes to worship, he’s simply looking for the quickest way to get in and get out. Time is precious, and he has other things to do. Of course, he’s also looking for entertainment; this is the sole purpose of “worship” for many people and for this they will be willing to give their time.

The Lord’s church isn’t immune to this lack of time problem. Do we have the time to read and study God’s word? How much time do **you** spend in this noble, God-pleasing pursuit of Divine knowledge that can save your soul and enrich your earthly life? Do we have time to worship God acceptably? How concerned are we with the length of the sermon, or if the song-leader leads one more song than he normally does (or even one more verse)?

Faithful brethren aren’t affected by a lack of time for worship, Bible study, or evangelism. However, we are affected by those people we long to teach and save. It’s heart-breaking to watch a lost soul continue in his destructive path when we know that we have the words that can save his soul—if he will just take the time to listen. The same could be said of how we feel when trying to help weaker brethren who don’t have the time for God.

Unfortunately, there’s no easy answer. This is a heart problem for those who won’t give God the time. And if they won’t give it to **Him**, be assured they won’t give it to you!

If you are someone whose time is more valuable to you than God is, please consider your priorities. Give time to those things which matter most. Think about the things in your life that get the most of your attention. Will those things save you? Will they even be a topic of conversation on the day you kneel at the judgment seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10-11)?

To the faithful, keep trying! Never give up! We still have the gospel treasure they need, regardless of whether or not anyone recognizes this. So, keep offering it. You never know when you’ll find someone who will take the time to hear it.

Five Fundamental Errors of Calvinism

George W. DeHoff

God’s people have always been influenced by those around them. Instead of depending on God and His Word, they spend too little time in learning a “Thus saith the Lord” and depending on that Word. Instead, they watch what others are doing, and imitate them. Nearly every error of the denominations find its way into the Lord’s church. Indeed, sometimes when denominationalists have found that something will not work, our brethren are just beginning to take it up!

There are two principal sources of error today—Catholicism and Calvinism. Nearly all the errors which we see in the church today are coming from Calvinism. The seminaries which our “scholars” attend are usually filled with Calvinism and many of the new Bible “translations” are Calvinistic in their “translation.” It is not any wonder that our preachers receive this second-handed Calvinism from their teachers and that when they use and recommend “translations” and books saturated with this doctrine, it will be found everywhere.

There are five fundamental errors of Calvinism. We should know every one of them and how to refute them. (1) Election and Foreordination, (2) Limited Atonement, (3) Hereditary Total Depravity, (4) Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit Separate and Apart from the Written Word, and (5) Final Perseverance of the Saints.

(All of these errors are discussed in the *DeHoff-Davis* and the *Woods-Holder Debate*, both of which may be ordered from the Firm Foundation Publishing House.)

Election and Foreordination

God has never been a respecter of persons. In every nation they that fear God and work righteousness are accepted by Him. The Calvinistic notion is that before man was born God decided whether he would be saved or lost. He “elected” some to be saved and some to be lost. If you are among the elect you will be saved but if you are one of the non-elect, you will be lost. This false doctrine negates everything the Bible teaches. John 3:16 teaches that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us. God loves the whole world. Jesus died for all. This gift of salvation depends on our accepting it. “God will judge every man according to his works”—not according to a crooked election conducted before the man was born!

Many of our pioneer preachers called attention to the fact that there are three votes to be cast in this election: God votes for you to be saved, the devil votes for you to be lost and when we get your vote, the decision will be made.

Limited Atonement

Closely connected with the election and foreordination doctrine is the doctrine of limited atonement—that Jesus did not die for all but only for the elect. This is so contrary to the teaching of the New Testament that one is amazed that anyone would take up with this false doctrine.

Hereditary Total Depravity

These words cannot be found in the Bible one in a place, let alone all three together! The idea here is that Adam sinned and that all of his offspring—all mankind—thus inherited sin from Adam. Adam did sin and all have suffered the consequence of his sin, but not the guilt of his sin. Even the Old Testament taught that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son (Eze. 18:20).

Sin is a transgression of the law. That is not something that we inherit but something that we do. Little children are born into the world pure, holy and innocent. Jesus said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 19:14). He certainly did not mean that God’s kingdom is filled with totally depraved individuals. Our Lord told the disciples that to enter the kingdom they must be converted and become as little children—pure, holy, free from sin (Mat. 18:3). Little children who die are not saved—they are safe. “Safe in the arms of Jesus, Safe on his gentle breast.” When our little ones die, we cannot bring them back but we can go to them. How precious, indeed, is this promise!

Direct Operation of The Holy Ghost

In the Bible, God’s Holy Spirit operated only through His Word. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth (John 16:13). They wrote that truth for us in the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16). “These things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and that believing you might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31). Faith comes by hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17). The preaching of our pioneer preachers knocked the mourners bench out of the denominations. Most of them gave it up. No man today knows any truth in religion unless it is in the written Word of God.

Indeed, everything the Bible says that the Holy Spirit does for us on earth, it also says the Word of God does it for us. This simply proves that God’s Holy Spirit operates through God’s written Word. Saints and sinners depend on this Word for God’s message.

The notion that the Holy Spirit is operating in some manner separate and apart from His Word is Calvinism—it is false doctrine. (The famous *Hardeman-Bogard Debate*—now out of print—is one that every Christian should be familiar with.)

Final Perseverance of the Saints

The doctrine that one of God's children cannot be lost regardless of what he does is the most amazing of all false doctrines. More than 2,500 times the book of God warns God's children about being lost, falling away, being rejected. Do these warnings mean nothing? The first religious debate in the history of the world was between God and the devil in the garden of Eden. God told His children that they must not eat the forbidden fruit; that they would die the very day they did. The devil told them they were God's children and it would not hurt them no matter what they did. They obeyed the devil. Sin entered the world. Paul said he was afraid the same thing that happened to Adam and Eve would happen to Christians today (2 Cor. 11:3). The notion that Christ bore all our sins and we have nothing to fear is rank nonsense. Christ will not forgive our sins unless we repent of them. Every alien sinner must do what Peter told them in Acts 2:38. All the teaching about God imputing our sins to Christ is meaningless unless alien sinners will repent and be baptized like the Lord said. When members of the church—Christians—sin, they must “Repent and pray” to be forgiven (Acts 8:22). We need not attempt to excuse ourselves by saying, “Christ died for me. He bore my sins. God will not impute sin to me.” He will and does unless you repent and pray like He said.

We need sermons on “Can a Child of God Fall From Grace?” The book of God teaches that they certainly can (Gal. 5:4). Example after example may be given from the Bible. “The wages of sin is death... Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?”

These five doctrines of Calvinism are false. They are having great influence in the world today. Members of the church—even our preachers—are being influenced by them. One does not need a degree from college nor a knowledge of “Greek and Latin” to expose them. A simple knowledge of the Bible will do the job.

The Gospel Preceptor May Go Where a Man May Not Go

These are a few countries whose residents visited the www.thegospelpreceptor.com in Aug. 2021: Thailand, Singapore, Russian Federation, China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Egypt, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Jordan, State of Palestine, Libya, Iraq, Kuwait, Sudan, Somalia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Syria Arab Republic. You will note that they are Communist or Moslem countries. In many Moslem countries, a man entering to preach Christ would be killed. We are preaching the Gospel around the world on the internet **where a man may not go.**

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The Opened Door Of Repentance

Luke 24:44-47

Kent Bailey

The greatest obstacle to the salvation of accountable humanity is the obstinacy of the human will. Since the introduction of sin in the Garden of Eden, God has been calling upon sinners to repent. H. Leo Boles once commented, "When God shut the gate of paradise to Adam, He opened the door to repentance."

It has been falsely argued that we have placed too much emphasis upon baptism and not enough on repentance. As for me, I have never been able to put as much emphasis upon it as did Christ and the apostles. There is not a case of delayed baptism recorded in the New Testament for individuals who had accepted the truth relative the gospel terms of pardon. On Pentecost in Acts 2, 3000 were baptized that day. In Acts 8, the nobleman was baptized along the way without reaching his destination. There was no assembly of a faithful local New Testament church when this baptism took place! We cannot and do not over emphasize the truth on baptism, however we do need to make sure that we give equal emphasis to the subject of repentance.

Repentance Defined

There is much confusion regarding the subject of repentance. Some individuals think that because we do not preach some direct, incomprehensible, inconceivable, unintelligible, intangible, mystical, mystified, better felt that told sort of a direct influence of the Holy Spirit; that we do not believe in repentance. Such is not the case!

Repentance is "the change of mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter upon a better course of life, so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds..." (*Thayer's Lexicon of The New Testament*, p. 406). Repentance (*metanoia*) is thus a change or turning of mind, literally another mind and/or thought process that leads one to reform one's life.

Repentance is not fear. While indeed there is a need for godly fear in all of our lives, just because may be fearful does not mean that they have repented. Repentance is not regret. Many are sorrowful over their sins because they were caught in them. and receive retributive justice. Repentance is not prayer as there are some prayers that are an abomination unto God (Prov. 28:9; Psa. 66:18; Matt. 7:21). Repentance is not conviction. Conviction is needful for salvation, however the gospel produces conviction in the hearts of believers. It only after conviction that one is moved to repent (Acts 2:36-38). Repentance is not reformation.

Reformation is a product or result of repentance. Repentance must first occur before reformation of life can take place.

Repentance is therefore a mental act—the act of the mind where one determines to cease sinning (Matt. 21:29).

Repentance Delineated

Repentance was part of the fundamental message which after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension was preached (Luke 24:44-47; Acts 2:38; 11:15-18). Repentance was preached by Paul on Mars Hill (Acts 17:30-31). Repentance was preached by Peter not only on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, but also in his epistles (2 Pet. 3:9). Repentance was preached by Christ (Luke 13:1-5).

Repentance Developed

Repentance is developed in one's hearing of the gospel of Christ and believing the message that is preached (Acts 2:30-38). Hearing the gospel brings about repentance due to the fact that when the word of God is received into good and honest hearts it produces godly sorrow which brings about repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). Repentance in the life of an alien sinner brings one the desire to become a servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18; 6:3-7). Repentance in the life of a covenant sinner brings about restoration of fellowship with God (Acts 8:22-24).

Motivating Factors of Repentance

Genuine motives for repentance are set forth in the scriptures. In consideration of such we note three crucial factors;

- The goodness of God (Rom. 2:4).
- Eternal Judgment of God (Rom. 2:5-9; Rev. 20:11-15)
- The promise of Eternal Life (Rom. 2:7-10).

The Difficulty of Repentance

Repentance has often been referred to as being the most difficult command found within the scriptures. Such is indeed the case because it involves the human will. J.W. McGarvey correctly stated:

When you look through the record of the Savior's earthly ministry, you find that he induced a great many to believe in Him...But when you search for those who repented under the Lord's preaching, you will find but few... When you go out preaching among the people of this country, you will not find it at all difficult to induce your hearers to believe the truth concerning Christ, and, when they are prepared in heart and mind for baptism, you not find it difficult to persuade them to submit to that...You will find no difficulty provided they have repented and desire to obey the Lord; but how difficult it is to induce men to repent! Sinners outside the church and sinners inside the church cling to their sins, and it appears impossible in many instances to bring them to repentance (*Chapel Talks*, pp. 71-72).

May we all be convinced of the necessity of repentance.

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Who Did Hinder You That You Should not Obey the Truth?

Philip Smith

Text: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal. 5:7).

Introduction

Paul, along with Timothy and Silas, went through the region of Galatia on Paul's second evangelistic tour (Acts 16:6). It is likely that this is the beginning of the churches in Galatia (Gal. 4:13). He returned on his third tour and strengthened the disciples (Acts 18:23). Later, after this epistle was written, while Paul was in prison, he sent Crescens to Galatia (2 Tim. 4:10).

Paul is the penman (Gal. 1:1), and being an apostle of Jesus Christ he did not write from his own wisdom or memory but was directed by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:13). As a result, we understand that Paul's writings (like his words) were the words of God (1 The. 2:13; 1 Cor. 14:37) and must be obeyed (2 The. 3:14).

The purpose of the Galatian epistle is to bring the Galatian congregations back from apostasy. Judaizing teachers were leading them back into the Old Law (Gal. 6:12-13). They were in great danger of falling away from the Truth of the Gospel (3:1). In view of this, Paul warns them not to believe any man or angel who preaches any other gospel

than that which had been preached to them (1:8-9). All who preach anything else are accursed.

Paul, in Galatians 4, taught the allegory of Sarah and Hagar (4:21-31). He stated that Sarah was the freewoman and Hagar was the bondwoman. Sarah was Abraham's wife, while Hagar was Sarah's handmaid (Gen. 16:1). Isaac, who was born of the freewoman, was the child of promise; Ishmael, who was born of the bondwoman, was born after the flesh. Paul concluded by stating that we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Paul wrote this allegory to show that the Galatian saints were not of the Law given on mount Sinai (as represented by Hagar), which bears "children unto bondage" (Gal. 4:24— ASV). Paul points out Old Testament Law could not free anyone from sin (3:11), but being Christians, they were of the Gospel (as represented by Sarah), which is of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is free and so makes us free from sin and death (4:26; John 8:32).

Beginning in Galatians 5, Paul exhorted the Galatians to stand fast in the freedom for which Christ had made them free (Gal. 5:1). Paul then proceeded to show that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails in pleasing God under the New Testament (5:2-6).

With this background let us now examine our text.

Ye Did Run Well

The word translated, *ye did run*, is in the imperfect tense in the Greek, which indicates that the action is in the past, but with no assessment of the action's completion (Heiser). The ASV translates it. "Ye were running well." Vincent states concerning this word: "Better, as giving the force of the imperfect, *ye were running*. You were on the right road, and were making good progress when this interruption occurred" (158).

Well means "fitly, appropriately, in the right way, splendidly" (Heiser). The Galatian Christians had been running appropriately. To run well, it was necessary that they did so according to God's Word. It is just as necessary that we, today, run according to the Word of God. This means that we must obey the Word of God. We cannot please God if we refuse to obey His Word. Samuel told Saul: "to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). Peter and the other apostles emphasized the importance of obedience in responding to the Jewish council who had commanded them 50 Who Did Hinder You That You Should Not Obey the Truth? to not teach in the name of Jesus: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). The Hebrews' writer states that Jesus is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9).

In an age where so many preachers and elders are willing to do almost anything to attract as many people as possible and hold them on the church role, the principle of "running the race" apparently has fallen by the wayside. It is truly heartbreaking that so many once-faithful congregations are now apostate. Many who had at one time defended the Truth on TV, radio, in newspapers, and in debates have ceased doing so. We have seen once-faithful congregations accept neo-pentecostalism, children's worship, simultaneous worship, drama, family life centers (i.e., gyms), praise teams, instrumental music, re-evaluation of elders, a multitude of errors on Divorce and Remarriage, and numerous other unauthorized doctrines and practices into congregations that were "running well," but that no longer are. Like the Sardis congregation, many of these congregations have a name that they live, but they are dead (Rev. 3:1).

Who Did Hinder You

The word translated *did hinder* means to "beat back, check" (Thayer 39). They were running appropriately, but are now being beaten back by false teachers.

This is what happened to the young prophet who prophesied against the idol in Bethel (1 Kin. 13:1-24). God sent him to prophesy against the idol that Jeroboam had erected. God commanded him not to eat bread, drink water, or return by the way that he came. He was following God's commands faithfully until he received word from an older prophet of God who claimed that an angel had spoken to him the Word of the Lord commanding him to bring back the younger prophet to his house for refreshment. The young prophet was deceived by the lie and went to the older prophet's home where he

ate bread and drank water. This young prophet was later killed by a lion as he was returning home. Even though the young prophet was running well at first, the older prophet hindered him (beat him back) from obeying the Word of the Lord.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders of grievous wolves who would enter in among the flock of God to destroy and devour it (Acts 20:29). He said that even of their own selves some would arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples of Christ after themselves (20:30). Paul commanded the elders to watch for deceivers (20:31). These false teachers that Paul warned against would, if allowed, hinder the Ephesian Christians just as the Galatian Christians were being hindered.

Faithful Christians will watch for anyone who might hinder them in their race. Sometimes we are hindered by elders who care more about pleasing the people than pleasing God (Gal. 1:10). Also, preachers who have not been taught the Truth or who have departed from it will hinder us if we are not alert and willing to search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11; cf. Mat. 7:15; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 John 4:1). Members who have not been grounded in the Truth and who want to excuse their own sins or those of their friends and relatives will hinder us in running the race if we permit them to do so. It is tragic that in some congregations one will not hear the Truth preached concerning such things as fellowship, denominationalism, divorce and remarriage, drinking beverage alcohol, gambling, dancing, and mixed swimming. “The whole counsel of God” must be faithfully proclaimed if congregations and individuals are to be protected from those who would hinder us in our race (Acts 20:27—ASV).

That ye Should not Obey The Truth

Men have always had difficulty obeying the Truth. Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, having been deceived by Satan, while Adam followed her even though he knew better (1 Tim. 2:14). Their failure to obey the Truth brought sin and death into the world (Rom. 5:12). Eve was hindered by deception while Adam was hindered, apparently, by a desire to please his wife. A generation of Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness and were there consumed because they did not obey the Truth (Jos. 5:6). Saul was rejected from being King because he did not obey the Truth (1 Sam. 15:23-24). The Northern Kingdom was carried away into Assyrian captivity because they obeyed not the Truth (2 Kin. 18:11-12). Jerusalem was destroyed and Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity because they refused to obey the Truth (2 Chr. 36:11-21).

Now we read that the Galatian Christians were hindered by Judaizing teachers who were teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (Gal. 6:12-13, 4:21). The Galatians had to reject the false teachers and their doctrine so they could return to the Truth of God’s Word to be saved (5:4). Today, we must be watchful and willing to warn our brethren about false teachers (Rom. 16:17). We must not have any fellowship with those who pervert the Gospel (Gal. 1:7; 2 John 9-11) lest we, like the Galatians, find ourselves hindered in our obedience to the Truth.

Conclusion

If we allow anyone to hinder us in our spiritual race so we do not obey and faithfully continue in the Truth of God’s Word, the price is much too high, for it is our souls (Mat. 16:26; Luke 6:39; 2 The. 1:8).

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The Divine Creed of the Church

D. Ellis Walker

The church of Christ is that institution which has the divine creed. The creed of the church is Jesus Christ. Our faith is centered in the living, reigning Christ, God's Son. We do not say that we know **what** creed we have believed, but, like Paul, that we know **Whom** we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to guard that which we have committed unto Him against that day (2 Tim. 1:12). Peter's statement in Matthew 16:16—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," is our creed.

When a believing penitent comes to us and says that he believes that Jesus Christ is God's Son, we neither vote upon him nor require him to recite a human creed, but baptize him in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is all that Christ requires of a believing penitent, so why should anyone else require more of him?

Once I saw a little girl march down an aisle and give a Baptist preacher her hand. Do you know that her confession of her faith in Christ was not enough to satisfy that Baptist preacher? He turned and asked the Baptist Church to vote upon that little girl in order to find out if it wanted her. My friends, if every Baptist preacher in the world had voted against that little girl, it would not have stood in God's sight! Jesus said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14 ASV). Jesus Christ has already voted in favor of everyone who wants to come to Him, so I appeal to my Baptist friends to give up this and other human doctrines. Your own preachers admit that they are calling upon you to do something for which they can find neither precept nor precedent in the Scriptures.

It is most likely that in the apostolic age, when there was but 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism,' and no differing denominations existed, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, 'baptism was the door into the church.' Now it is different; and while churches are desirous of receiving members, they are wary and cautious that they do not receive unworthy persons. The churches, therefore, have candidates come before them, make their statement, give their experience, and their reception is decided by a vote of the members. And while they cannot become members without baptism, yet it is the vote of the body which admits them to its fellowship on receiving baptism (Edward T. Hiscox, *The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches*, p. 22).

This certainly does not sound like the case of the Eunuch found in Acts 8. The Eunuch recited no experience, and no one voted on him. The Eunuch wanted to be baptized, and Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37). And that is all the creed the Eunuch had to subscribe to in order to be baptized.

Well, it seems that if a man were a terrible sinner, the Baptist preachers might vote against him. Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13). It seems that Baptist preachers have made it harder for people to become Baptists than Christ made it for them to become Christians. Baptist preachers should defend their doctrine or quit imposing it on their members. They admit that it is not in the Bible, so they ought to give it up.

So, let us say to sinners, "Come to Christ!" Yes, let them come, but do not carry babies to preachers when they are too young to know what is being done to them. The Bible makes provision for people who have not reached the age of accountability—they are safe. But every sinner has to believe and confess Christ for himself. Paul said, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). My friends, you who "baptize" infants, how would you feel if someone far larger than you held you while someone else poured water in your face—especially when you had not asked for it? So, my friends, quit imposing on babies and get back to Christ. Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Jesus speaks to the individu-

al. Each person must believe and obey for himself.

Our creed, Jesus Christ, will never need changing. The Hebrews writer says, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Now here is a creed that needs no revising. Modern denominations constantly must revise their creeds and do so. In 1938 the Southern Presbyterian Church removed the doctrine of Calvinistic Predestination from its creed after it had been there for 300 years. They got that doctrine from John Calvin who got it from Augustine, who got it from the fatalists. Jesus Christ does not teach it. Jesus Christ died for all who will come to Him (Read John 3:16; Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 1:16-17).

The Methodists used to have the statement in their creed to the effect that babies were born sinners. Well, they saw their mistake and took that false doctrine out. Now, I'm glad to see people getting nearer to the truth, but it is my conviction that if they had had the right creed all the time they would not have needed to revise it. You do not need to revise Christ—He is perfect.

My friends, call upon your preacher to prove the doctrine he preaches by the Bible—God's word. Your salvation and the salvation of your children are at stake. Let each one of us cling to the divine creed and say with Paul, “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

The Seed and What it Produces

Dub Mowery

At the time of creation, God set the natural laws into existence. This included the law of procreation—each species of life having the ability to reproduce after its own kind. The scripture reveals that,

God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:11-12).

What was true of plant life was also true of all other species of life. All other types of life were fully developed with the ability to reproduce their own kind, including humans (Gen. 1:20-28). Each species of life **did not** come from any other species of life. Therefore, this rules out the unfounded theory of evolution. Since **mankind is of one blood**, this proves that the entire human race has a common heritage (Acts 17:26). Humans are not even the same kind of flesh as other species of life. The inspired Word informs us of this fact in the following words: “All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds” (1 Cor. 15:39).

This same principle of seed reproducing after its kind in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual realm. When a person obeys the gospel of Christ, that individual is born into the spiritual kingdom of the Lord (John 3:5; Rom. 6:17-18). The inspired Word of God is the seed in this process. The Apostle Peter reveals this truth as follows: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23). This same truth is taught in Jas. 1:18. Also, in the parable of the sower, we learn that the seed of the kingdom is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). Since the spiritual kingdom is the church, if we use the same seed that produced the church in the first century, then we will get the same results. There will not be a single denomination produced by the pure seed of the inspired Word. It takes something **other than, or in addition to**, the New Testament to produce a particular denomination. The doctrines of men, whether those doctrines are in the form of catechisms, church manuals, prayer books, or informally upheld, are vain (Matt. 15:9).

If a clay bowl filled with wheat grains that were 2,000 years old was found in a pyramid of Egypt, what would those grains be capable of producing if the germ of life

remained within them? We know that those grains of wheat would not produce watermelons, cucumbers, or any other kind of grain than wheat. In the spiritual realm, this same principle is just as valid. Those individuals who go past the creeds of men and their preconceived concepts to the pure and unadulterated Word of God found in the New Testament can learn how to become a Christian and how to live in harmony with the principles found therein. To do less or more than that religiously is to produce a denomination, not the New Testament church.

Errors Taught by The Roman Catholic Church

Nelson Greene and Gary W. Summers

[Editor's note: Brother Nelson Greene was raised as a Roman Catholic. After various changes in church laws (eating meat on Friday, changing the mass from Latin to the language of the people, etc., he started to question things. After learning something about various religious groups, some friends put him in touch with Roanoke Bible College in Elizabeth City, North Carolina (which was then a conservative Christian Church college). He was taught that the non-instrumental congregations had caused the split over a subject that could not be proven from the Bible. Eventually, he found his way to the Lord's church. Someone asked him to prepare the following material, which he did. The claim of the Catholic Church is in italics; brother Nelson's comments follow; mine will be in brackets.]

1. *Papal Infallibility* was proclaimed by the Vatican Council of 1870. This culminated in the authority of the church for the traditions of the hierarchy. Some doctrine and proclamation is in direct violation of Matthew 15:7-9, in which Jesus denounced the "doctrines and commandments of men." [People may have assumed that the Catholic Church has always taught this doctrine, but it has been in effect only since 1870. When Alexander Campbell debated the Roman Catholic Bishop Purcell in Cincinnati in 1837, Purcell said the concept of papal infallibility would never become part of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church; 33 years later it did.]

The reader must realize that all else that Catholicism teaches hinges on this one point. If the pope is truly infallible, then a Catholic has no choice but to abide by every tradition he institutes, since his word would be equally valid with the Scriptures. This is a dangerous doctrine, depending on what he says, but one thing it does—it allows a multitude of teachings to be regarded as from God though they have their origin from man. Nothing could more clearly fit the concept of adding to the Word of God (Deut. 4:2).]

2. Authority and The Bible: *Tradition is to be held as the highest authority in the church, even above the Bible.* Deuteronomy 4:2 and Isaiah 8:20 warn that man must not add to nor take away from the Scriptures inspired of God. Matthew 15:3, 6, 7-9 warn man that traditions of men make void the Word of God and make worship based on tradition vain. 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Revelation 22:18-19, and 1 Corinthians 4:6 state that the Scriptures are alone sufficient for the man of God. [Many of the traditions were introduced in the second, third, and fourth centuries—far too late to be authorized by the New Testament.]

3. *The founder and head of the church is Peter.* In 1 Peter 2:4-8, Peter denied the church was built by him or on him. Peter was not superior to the other apostles (see 1 Peter 5:1; 2 Cor. 11:5; Acts 15:13-19; Matt. 20:25-26). To be a successor to an apostle one must have the same qualifications as the apostle, which no man after Peter's death could claim (not even Francis). See Acts 1:21-22. When James was beheaded, no one was selected to succeed him as in the case of Judas. See Acts 1:15-26, 29.

[The church was built by Jesus (Matt. 16:18), and He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Furthermore, the Scriptures clearly claim that Jesus is the Head of the church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Sometimes Catholics will say, "Jesus is the head of the church in heaven, but the pope is the head of the church on earth." Yet in Matthew 28:18, Jesus said: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth."

Furthermore, where is the Scripture that talks about a pope? It does not exist. The only organization for the church involves elders and deacons, and they are to be in every congregation (1 Tim. 3:1-7).]

4. *Effusion or sprinkling is as sufficient for baptism as immersion is.* This man made doctrine violates and contradicts God's Word, which teaches that baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). That baptism is a planting Romans 6:5 teaches. That baptism is a resurrection Colossians 2:12 points out. That baptism is a washing Acts 22:16 declares. *Baptism* is a Greek word which is translated to “dip,” “plunge,” or “submerge.” There is only one baptism (Eph. 4:5)

[Like most of their teachings, Roman Catholicism relies upon traditions that developed 100 or more years after the entire New Testament was written. No one was ever sprinkled in those days in connection with salvation. All were baptized—that is, immersed (Acts 8:35-39).]

5. *Infants should receive baptism.* This is in direct violation to the Word of God (see Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16).

[All of these passages show that a person must be able to think and reason. He must have enough intellect to believe; he must have enough speech ability to confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; he must be able to understand what sin is and his need to repent of it; and he must be able to comprehend that in baptism his sins will be washed away. Infants do not have the ability to do any of those things. In the New Testament, there is no command to baptize an infant; neither is there even one example of such.]

6. *Original sin, inherited from the sin of Adam and Eve, is forgiven when an infant is baptized.* This doctrine is heretical. Original sin is not taught in God's Word. No sinful act or deed can be transmitted from one person to another person (Ezek. 18:20; 2 Sam. 12: 23; Matt. 18:10; 19:14; Ps. 127:3-5). Children are innocent until they themselves sin by their own lust (James 1:13-15).

[The idea of original sin arose at least three centuries later with Augustine, which is the reason it cannot be found in the Bible.]

7. *In the sacrament of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit is received by the hands of the bishop when the child reaches the age of accountability* (around 11 or 12). Confirmation can not be found in God's Word. The Holy Spirit is given when a believer is immersed (Acts 2:38; 5:32). Only Christ prayed for the Holy Spirit to be sent (John 14:15-17), and the apostles received what He prayed for.

8. *The Priesthood: The priest is another Christ—the means of access between the sinner and God.* The Word of God teaches that there is only one mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2: 5). Christ Jesus has the only unchangeable high priesthood (Heb. 7:11; 10:11-12; 12:22-24). All Christians are priests who have access to God through Christ Jesus (1 Peter 2:5-9, Rev. 1:5-6). Catholics and non-Catholics are expected to call the priest “Father,” yet God's Word teaches that we are to call no man “Father” in a religious sense (Matt. 23:9-10).

The priest has the power to forgive sins (declared by the Council of Trent and Lateran Council of 1215). God's Word teaches that forgiveness of sins belong to the Godhead (Mark 2:6-10; 1 John 1:9; 2:1). Priests may receive gifts (basically monetary gifts) to say prayers (a mass, a rosary for the dead, etc.). The gift of God cannot be purchased with money or any other gift (1 Peter 1:18).

[“Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (some asked in Mark 2:7). That was precisely the point Jesus wanted them to see—that He was God. So what point is a Catholic priest making today when he forgives sins? Whether or not he intends to, he is saying, as Jesus did, that he is God.]

9. *The church claims that there is an intermediate state called **purgatory** where the dead go to suffer punishment until they have been purified from their sins* (Council of Florence, 1439). Those in purgatory have not fully made amends for their failings (sins); so they must atone for them by suffering before being admitted into heaven. Those in purgatory can have their sufferings lessened (reduced) by prayers, rosaries, and masses by the living. Hebrews 9:27, however, states: “And it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,” which implies that the prayers of saints cannot change our destiny after death. The righteous acts of others cannot be

transferred and/or given by the living to one who has died. A person must answer for his own sins (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:6). After one's death, there is no changing from a place of punishment to a place of bliss (Luke 16:19-31). There is no mention of **purgatory** in God's Word (Heb. 2:3).

[When this editor's aunt died in New Orleans, and his family had the unpleasant task of going through the possessions remaining in the house, he came across an official certificate from the Roman Catholic Church, guaranteeing that a mass would be said for his uncle (who had preceded the aunt in death) on a regular basis. It had been bought and paid for by the aunt, who was not even a Catholic. One wonders how much money it takes to get a loved one out of torture before he can enter into paradise. The Bible teaches no such doctrine.]

10. **Moral Issues:** (a) *Stealing is permissible when it is an extreme necessity—when a person takes only what is necessary.*

[This precept is not found in the Scriptures. The eighth commandment does not read: "Thou shalt not steal except when it is an extreme necessity." This is the philosophy of **situation ethics**, in which Divine law is replaced by allowing a situation to determine morality. Who defines *necessity*?]

(b) *The doctrine of "Mental Reservation" permits Catholics to lie if by so doing they can further their religion/faith.* Yet the Bible says: "Do not lie to one another" (Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:15).

(c) *Lying about one's faith:* A Catholic who, on being asked whether he is a Catholic, may lie about his faith and in so doing not necessarily deny the faith (2 Tim. 4:4; 2 Thess. 2:10; 1 Tim. 4:2).

[This is a strange teaching in light of the fact that Christians in the first few centuries were put to death for acknowledging the truth concerning their faith. We admire them and are confident of their reward. Revelation 21:8 says that the cowardly (or fearful) and all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire.

It is always a dangerous precedent to attempt to lessen the force of what the Scriptures clearly teach. Man is not supposed to add to them or take away from them, and these modifications do that very thing. When people get into the habit of justifying sin (particularly based on a particular situation), is there any sin that might not be justified?]

11. *Holy Eucharist:* The doctrine of *transubstantiation* refers to the bread and fruit of the vine **changing** into the *actual* body and blood of Christ, performed at the consecration of the mass (adopted at the Lateran Council in 1215). One must remember that Christ Jesus was materially present at the Last Supper with His disciples when He gave the bread and fruit of the vine and said, "This is my body," and, "This is my blood." This is obviously a figure of speech (a metaphor), the same as when Christ Jesus referred to Himself as a "door" and as a "vine." Christ Jesus was not literally a vine or a door (John 10:7, 15).

12. *Holy Communion* (Eucharist) is an "unbloody" sacrifice performed during a **mass** by a priest. The Scriptures teach that Jesus was offered once for all—not that He would continually be sacrificed (Heb. 9:25-26; 10:11-12). Hebrews 6:6 does say that those who have fallen away crucify Him afresh, but this is figurative rather than literal.
13. *The Last Rites* (used to be known as *Extreme Unction*) is a tradition involving holy oil, blessed candles, and a priest; its purpose is to give strength to the soul and body at the point of death. It can also be given to one who has just died. It is also believed that sins are forgiven by the ritual of Last Rites even though one has not repented nor asked to be forgiven. 1 Corinthians 4:6 teaches that one must not go beyond what is written in God's word. There is no such ritual/practice/tradition in the Bible. (See Deuteronomy 4:2, Isaiah 8:20, Matthew 15: 3, 6, 7-9. Also see 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Revelation 22:18-19 and 1 Corinthians 4:6.)
14. *Doctrine of Holy Orders:* One of the seven sacraments involves *Holy Orders*, which is the means of ordaining bishops and priests. The word *sacrament* is not in the

Word of God. It is difficult for all of us to speak the same thing when some are using vocabulary words not in the Scriptures (1 Cor. 1:10).

[*Sacrament* is a word used by church leaders in the early centuries after Christ to refer to religious ordinances which were obligatory to Christians, and they conferred grace to the recipients of it.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published in 1994, defines *Holy Orders* as “the sacrament which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the church until the end of time. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate” (383).]

These orders involve special attire (known as “habits”), which distinguish those individuals from others. Matthew 7:20 teaches that by **fruits** (not white collars or robes) we shall be known.

15. *Sacrament of Matrimony*: Marriage is void unless performed by a catholic priest. All married non-Catholics are living in “concubinage” (sin) instead of Christian Matrimony because their marriage was not performed by a catholic priest. One might ask: Where was the priest at the wedding of Cana that Jesus attended? (John 2:1-11). Marriage is neither a “church ordinance” nor a *sacrament*, according to the Bible. Children born in “concubinage” are not considered legitimate.

[Marriage was established in the Garden of Eden, and no special group of men conducted marriage ceremonies in the Old Testament. Jewish priests did not perform weddings. Jesus gave no instructions in the New Testament to His apostles for the performance of marriages. Paul gave no charges to Timothy or Titus, either. The main emphasis of Jesus was that some are disqualified from marriage because of adultery and unlawful divorce.

The question had apparently been asked of Paul: “If I am a Christian married to a non-Christian, is my marriage a valid one?” Paul answered: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy” (1 Cor. 7:14). Paul had never heard of “concubinage,” as applied to marriage. If a man and a woman are eligible for marriage, then they are married, regardless of their religions affiliation or the beliefs of the man who conducted a ceremony.]

16. *Divorce*: There is no cause for which the marriage bond may be broken. Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 teaches that Christ Jesus allowed fornication as the sole cause for divorce.
17. *Annulments*: Nothing in the Word of God gives anyone the right to dissolve a marriage for causes other than fornication. Annulments are granted usually by the Bishop of a region. Most of them are reviewed thru the Vatican before a decision is rendered.
18. *No Artificial Birth Control*: *No method of birth control may be employed in marriage—even if the life of the mother is in jeopardy. Artificial contraceptives violate the teaching of the Bible because it prevents procreation—to populate the earth.* 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 teaches that the Christian is to care for the body which is the temple of God. Anything done intentionally and deliberately which endangers health is sin. Furthermore, the husband is to give honor to his wife (1 Peter 3:7), which does not mean putting her life in jeopardy.

[Abstinence would not be a good solution to the problem because such a measure would violate another command—for the husband and the wife to render the affection that is due each other (1 Cor. 7:1-5). The fact is that the earth has been filled; so that command has been obeyed. Various birth control techniques do not violate any Scripture, so long as conception is prevented. Using RU486 or abortion would be wrong because both destroy a life that has already been created.]

19. *Celibacy*: The law of celibacy for the “clergy” (the word *clergy* is not in the Bible) is not a divine institution but is a rule of the Roman Catholic Church. Marriage between an eligible man and woman cannot be regarded as sinful (Heb. 13:4). The Bible actually teaches that bishops must be married (Titus 1:5-6; 1 Tim. 3:2). For-

bidding marriage is a doctrine of devils (1 Tim. 4:1-3). [The recent sex scandals prove that this idea of man is faulty.]

20. *Doctrines of Mary* (which are several):

- (a) *Mary alone can obtain pardon for those who pray to her.* Prayers are to be addressed to the heavenly Father—not Mary (Matt. 6:9). Furthermore, 1 Timothy 2:5 teaches that there is only one mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus.
- (b) *One cannot be saved without Mary.* Colossians 3:17 teaches all must be done in the name of Christ. [The name *Jesus* means “Savior” (Matt. 1:21), and there is no Scripture that states or remotely implies that Mary can save anyone.]
- (c) *Mary was a Perpetual Virgin—not defiled by man.* Matthew 1:25 implies that her husband *knew* her after the birth of Jesus. [Furthermore, Jesus had other brothers, whose names are listed in Matthew 13:55. Are we to believe that Mary refused to do what Paul would later write in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5? Could Joseph have received an “annulment” if, in fact, the marriage was never consummated? Could he divorce her and remarry without committing adultery if they had never been intimate? Would it have been lawful to impose on this husband and wife celibacy? This false doctrine raises a number of questions and is difficult to defend.]
- (d) *Mary was not subject to Christ Jesus.* How can such a thing be alleged, since Jesus Himself stated in Matthew 28:18: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”? Peter affirmed that Christ Jesus is Lord of all—not all but one (Acts 10:36).
- (e) *Mary is the Mother of God.* God always was, is, and will always be. Nothing in Scripture gives or bestows this title on Mary. [Elizabeth called Mary “the mother of my Lord,” which is accurate (Luke 1:43). Jesus did become Lord of all, as referenced above. Jesus was God in the flesh (John 1:14), while He was upon the earth. He was part of the Godhead before He came to earth. Mary gave birth to Jesus’ fleshly body—not His Divinity, which came from the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). To call her “the mother of God” is to say what the Scriptures do not say and to imply something that is not true.]
- (f) *Mary is the Queen of Heaven.* This doctrine teaches that Mary ascended (known as the Assumption of Mary) to heaven after her passing and was crowned by Christ Jesus as Queen of Heaven. Mary now sits at the right side of God and Christ Jesus. **Nothing** in Scripture teaches that several apostles and disciples were present at her passing, witnessed her assumption, or were privileged to see the alleged coronation ritual. The Bible was being written at this time as letters to congregations, and yet nothing is said or implied about this purported concept.

Something this big would no doubt have been included to the congregations in the letters. Thus it would have been in the Bible, but it is totally silent on the matter.

[For this reason it was noted at the outset that, once the words of the “pope” (who likewise is **not** mentioned in the Scriptures) are regarded as infallible and traditions and legends are regarded as equal with the truth, any doctrine could be established. What would prevent a person with this kind of power from claiming that the apostle John lived another century after the first one and was given seven truths to guard which a band of followers have through the millennia preserved, which can now be revealed in our day? The point is that, once the authority of the Scriptures is undermined, any doctrine or practice is permissible.]

- (g) *Mary had an “Immaculate Conception”:* This doctrine originated in England. Mary was born without the stain of “original sin,” concerning which the Bible says nothing. [Augustine invented the doctrine of *original sin* in the late fourth century; it was adopted by Luther 1100 years later and refined and popularized by Calvin—so much so that most of us refer to the doctrine as Calvinism.

Of course, if all people come into the world tainted (rather than pure), then Jesus,

as a human being, had to be born with original sin also. Nobody wants to draw that conclusion, but there is no way around it. Some Protestants simply say that, as the Son of God, Jesus did not come into the world with original sin upon Him, but this explanation does not suffice. Jesus was *fully* human as well as fully Divine. If babies enter the world with original sins, then Jesus entered the world that way, also.

Catholicism thinks they have a way around this predicament. By Mary having a miraculous conception, their theologians argue, Jesus was able to be born without original sin. Of course, this rationale fails because it is not found in the Scriptures. Although theologians today scramble to rid Jesus of this problem, the gospel writers never saw a problem because none of them believed in the man-made doctrine of *original sin*. For that reason one will never find a single reference to Jesus either having original sin or needing to be absolved from it.

Making Mary's birth "immaculate" is totally without Scriptural warrant. It was not prophesied; neither is it mentioned by any New Testament writer. Mary was a spiritual woman; Jesus loved her and made provision for her—even on the cross. She deserves respect and admiration; so do all the obedient (Matt. 12:46-50).]

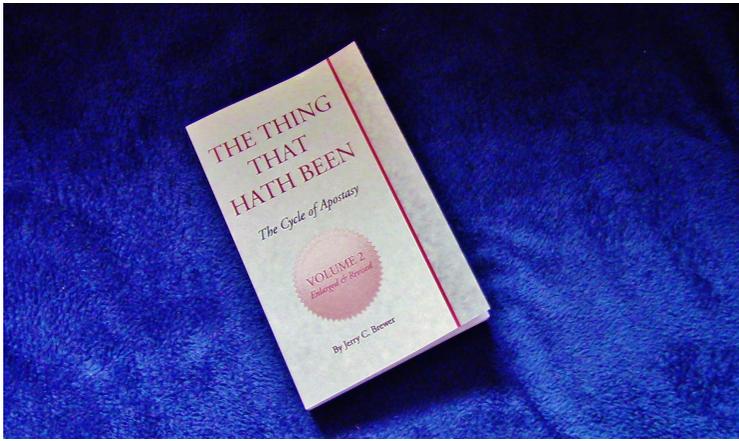
21. "*Limbo*": this doctrine teaches that infants and those not baptized (christened) pass into a state of Bliss called Limbo. The doctrine declares that God does not reside in Limbo. There is no punishment and no presence of God. In the latter part of the twentieth century, this doctrine was downplayed to the point that it is rarely mentioned. There is no Scripture for this doctrine.

[Since brother Greene assembled this material, the Roman Catholic Church has changed its view. On April 21, 2007 she made an announcement regarding the doctrine: "According to a Reuters news story, written by Philip Pullella, "the Church's International Theological Commission said limbo reflected an 'unduly restrictive view of salvation.'" (For more information see "*Limbo No Longer Rocks*" in the May 7, 2007 *Spiritual Perspectives*.) The reason this doctrine was invented in the first place was because, once again, of *original sin*. If babies inherited Adam's sin and were never "baptized," they could not be allowed to enter heaven. Yet, obviously, they had done nothing worthy of torment in hell; so *limbo* became the place for those souls to inhabit. The Bible teaches that hell is a place without the presence of God (2 Thess 1:7-9).]

[The reader is encouraged to study these 21 points in connection with the Scriptures. We thank brother Greene for putting together this material, and we ought to be sufficiently warned concerning what happens when we depart from the Scriptures God gave to us.]

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The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun. Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us (Eccl. 1:9-10).

Apostasy is the bane of God's people as Israel in the shadow of Sinai.

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me...And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt...To morrow *is* a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play (Exo. 32:1-6).

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