

The Berea Baptist Banner

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COLONIAL LANDMARKISM

THE EARLIEST BAPTIST CHURCHES IN AMERICA WERE INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGN GRACE LANDMARK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES

By Curtis Pugh
of Bocsa, Romania



the first Baptist Churches in Colonial America were indeed practicing Landmarkers, although of course they had no knowledge of that term as it had not been coined at that

early date. This present article will also indicate to the thoughtful reader that the Welsh Churches – from whence these Colonial Baptist Churches immediately succeeded – had practiced Landmarkism in their Churches in that island nation prior to the coming of the Welsh Baptists to North America. And those who know Welsh Baptist history will be aware of the fact that these Welsh Baptist Churches must have learned these practices from

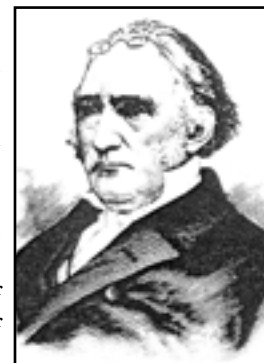
the apostle to Wales, for they have a valid claim to having been planted by no less personage than Paul himself when he made his visit to Britain in connection with Claudia and Pudens (mentioned in 2 Tim. 4:21). Thus Landmarkism may with historical evidence logically be seen to be the Scriptural practice of early Welsh Churches planted by Paul and we dare suggest that these Churches must have imbibed Landmark principles from that apostle who first taught them the Word of God.

Before going further let these things be noted: (1) Quotations will be from the book titled, *MINUTES OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION FROM A.D. 1707 TO A.D. 1807 BEING THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE*¹ I have with diligence copied these several quotations and

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Baptists Acknowledge the Sole Authority of the Bible

By Francis Wayland
(1796-1865)



The fundamental principle, on which our difference from other evangelical denominations depends, is this: we profess to take for our guide, in all matters of religious belief and practice, the New Testament, the whole New Testament, and nothing but the New Testament. Whatever we find there we esteem binding upon the conscience. What is not there commanded, is not binding. No matter by what reverence for antiquity, by what consent of any branches of the church, or of the whole church, at any particular period, an opinion or practice may be sustained, if it be not sustained by the command or the example of Christ, or of His apostles, we value it only as an opinion or a precept of man, and we treat it accordingly. We disavow the authority of man to add to, or take from the teachings of inspiration as they are found in the New Testament. Hence, to a Baptist, all appeals to the Fathers, or to antiquity, or general practice in the early centuries, or in later times, are irrelevant and frivolous. He asks for divine authority as his guide in all matters of religion, and if this be not produced, his answer is, **"in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."**

It is from adherence to this principle that our divergency from other

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The Bible Is Right

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7-8).

The Holy Spirit, through the pen of the psalmist, applies the word **"right"** to the Bible in my text. This means the body of revealed truth contained in the Old and New Testaments conforms to the facts. The Scriptures are equal, just, and proper; they are as they should be. They are agreeable to the right reason of man and the right counsels of God. All

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The Godhood of God

By Arthur W. Pink
(1886 - 1952)

The Godhood of God! What is meant by this expression? Ah, sad it is that such a question needs to be asked and answered. And yet it does; for a generation has arisen that is well nigh universally ignorant of the important truth which this term connotes. That which is popular today in the colleges, in the pulpits, and in the press, is the dignity, the power, and the attainments of man. But this is only the corrupt fruit that has issued from the Evolutionary teachings of fifty years ago. When Christian theologians (?) accepted the Darwinian hypothesis, which excluded God from the realm of Creation, it was only to be expected that more and more God would be banished from the realm of human affairs. Thus



it has proven. To the twentieth-century mind God is little more than an abstraction, an impersonal "First Cause," or if a Being at all. One far removed from this world

and having little or nothing to do with mundane affairs. Man, forsooth, is a "god" unto himself. He is a "free agent," and therefore the regulator of his own life and the determiner of his own destiny. Such was the Devil's lie at the beginning---**"Ye shall be as gods"** (Gen. 3:5). But from human speculation and Satanic insinuation we turn to Divine

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*Let me be a sorrowing saint, rather than a merry sinner.
Let me rather sigh for sin, than sing in sin.
The sacrifices God loves best are broken hearts for sin oppressed.*

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1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellowship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

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denominations of Christians originates. We do not make this assertion in any invidious sense. Other Christians may believe as firmly as we, that they also adhere to this principle; and, in fact, did they not claim such to be their belief, they would cease to be Protestants. We fully concede these to be their sentiments, and therefore we love and honor them. We can not, however, divest ourselves of the opinion, that we have escaped some of the errors which crept into the church at the time of the Reformation, and in this respect, how much soever we may fail in other respects, that we are nearer to the New Testament than many of our Christian brethren, whom we love as heirs with us of the glory which shall be revealed.

As I have before remarked, we agree in holding the general doctrines of the plan of salvation with the other evangelical denominations in this country, and throughout the world. The Westminster Confession of Faith probably expresses our sentiments on these subjects as nearly as almost any other document. With the thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal church, we should find but little at which we could take exception. With the Orthodox Friends we are, on most points, closely in harmony. From the Methodists we differ principally in our view of the sovereignty of God, and the doctrine of election. The Congregationalists of the North, in their general teachings, express our sentiments in all important particulars. With all these Christian brethren we delight to take sweet counsel, and walk to the house of God in company. We rejoice in their success. We grieve in their affliction, and we gladly cooperate with them in every good work, just so far as we can do it without compromising our fidelity to conscience.

The difference which separates us from other denominations of Christians arises, mainly, from our views of the ordinance of baptism; and from the results which naturally flow from that difference. What our views are on this subject, it will be proper for me here briefly to explain.

First, then, as to the mode of baptism.

We believe that the ordinance of baptism is to be administered by the immersion of the body in water, baptizing the candidate "into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." We much prefer the simple formula as given in the Evangelists though of late, some of our ministers have here and there added a phrase or two to it, after the example of other denominations, or in explanation of their own views of the subject.

We prefer the preposition "into" to "in," in the apostolic formula, into is

the proper translation of the original word. This is a sufficient reason for our preference. Nor is this all. It expresses, as we believe, the meaning of the ordinance, which the other word does not. In the name of any one means merely by the authority of, and nothing more. The word name here, however, has a totally different signification. The name "of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" is only the Hebrew mode of signifying "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Thus, "we will trust in the name of the Lord our God." "Hallowed be thy name;" that is, we will trust in the Lord our God. Hallowed be our Father in Heaven, etc. The idea of the formula of baptism is, then, baptizing into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Thus, says Robinson, "To baptize, or to be baptized into any one is, into a profession of faith of any one, and sincere obedience to Him." (See Robinson on this word.) So the children of Israel were "baptized into Moses," that is, into discipleship to him. They thus took him for their leader and lawgiver, promising to obey and follow him. Precisely thus do we understand the formula of baptism. The person baptized adjures the world, and enters into covenant with God. He was an enemy to God by wicked works, he is now a child of God through faith in His Son; he was dead in sin, he is now alive to God; the Spirit of God dwells in his heart, and to that Spirit he professes to subject every thought and purpose, every motive and action. This is what we suppose is meant to be symbolized in the ordinance of baptism, and hence the meaning of the expression, baptized into the name of, or into the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The difference between the two expressions is thus clearly manifest. We could baptize any thing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Episcopalian service uses this expression (we think very improperly) in the ceremony of marriage. The Romanists baptize bells, standards, or any thing whatever in the name of, etc. We can not, however, baptize into the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, any thing but a rational being, a sinner repenting of his sins, and now entering into covenant with the Father of his spirit.

In the administration of this ordinance we immerse the whole body in water, instead of merely sprinkling water upon the face. The reason for this is briefly stated. We believe this to be the meaning of our Saviour's command, when He directs us to go forth to baptize the nations. In this belief we are confirmed by the testimony of all antiquity, by the practice of the Greek Church, by all the indirect allusions to the ordinance of baptism in the New Testament, and by the almost universal consent of scholars, from the revival of letters in Europe to Conybeare and Howson of the present day.

We know it is said, Suppose this be so, yet any precept of this kind is to be modified according to the customs of the age and country in which we live. To this we reply, that we do not feel at liberty to institute such changes, in a matter which Christ has commanded. Besides, were this so, our brethren who differ from us should abide by their principle. Among Greeks, among Orientals, and Mohammedans, where bathing the whole body is a matter of daily practice, they should certainly follow the apostolic example. The manner of obedience to the command of Christ would thus become a matter of climate and of public opinion. We do not feel at liberty to adopt such principles of interpretation.

But it is said again, the manner is of no consequence, every thing depends upon the spiritual act, the state of mind of the candidate. If he renounces sin, and submits himself to God, this is the essence of the act, and all else is "mint, and anise, and cumin." Here, however, it seems to us that our brethren who differ from us relieve themselves of one difficulty by plunging into a greater. If the manner be nothing, and the state of mind everything, if baptism be essentially the profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, how can that be baptism which is administered to unconscious infants, who are absolutely incapable of these spiritual exercises? We well remember to have seen the father of exegetical study in this country sorely embarrassed in the lecture-room by a question of this kind. Nor have we ever been able to perceive how these two views can possibly exist together.

It may, however, be said, that a public profession by an act in itself so noticeable, is a severe trial to persons of delicacy and refinement. It is a cross which they will not take up, and if we adhere to what is here supposed to be a command of Christ, we shall keep many of the most intelligent and influential persons out of the church of Christ.

Of all this we are perfectly aware, and yet it does not move us. Men and women living in sin are perfectly willing in the most open and noticeable way to profess their allegiance to the enemy of souls. They do not go to theaters or operas by stealth, but glory in the service which they have chosen. They do not shrink from performing dances, at which modesty must blush, in the presence of a whole assembly. And when they put off of these things, renounce the service of Satan, and assume the livery of Christ, is it not proper that this should be done by the performance of a public and noticeable act? If they have denied Christ before men, is it not right that they should also confess Him before men? It is not meet, that at the commencement of the Christian's life, he should take up his cross in the presence of those who by

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his example may have been led into sin? Would not a disciple in a right state of mind do this from choice and insist upon doing it?

But this is not all. If we believe that Christ has commanded any thing, be it ever so small, it is morally dangerous to decline the doing of it, because we choose to call it a little thing. This principle once admitted, where shall it end? Why shall we not repeat this plea as often as it suits our convenience until every precept which we wish to escape seems a little one, and therefore we may be at liberty to ignore it? With these views, whatever be the consequences, we prefer to obey the simple command of the Saviour.

Few things are more impressive than the act of Christian baptism. In the sight of the whole world, the candidate is buried with Christ, with him renouncing allegiance to the world which he formerly served. He rises from the water as Christ rose from the dead to live a new life, the life of which Christ is the author and finisher. The act may be an offense to the world, but it is glorious in the sight of God, of angels in Heaven, and of saints on earth.

I do not, however, propose to enter into this controversy. My object is merely to set forth the views which we entertain on this subject. The correctness of our opinions on the apostolic mode of baptism is now to generally concede, that argument in its favor is almost a work of supererogation. (*Notes On The Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches*, pp. 85-92, 1857 edition).

The Bible Is Right

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God's precepts concerning all things are always right: **"Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way"** (Ps. 119:128). The person who receives these precepts will become right with both God and man.

The books written by men are out of date. Most of our public libraries are the cemeteries of dead books. When I review books written by men of a generation ago, I find time has discovered many errors and rendered obsolete many positions. But this is not true of the Bible, for it is the most up-to-date book in the world. As a standard of Divine truth the Bible remains fixed, tried, unyielding, and unimpaired.

The production and preservation of the Bible is one of the wonders of the world. It began in the infancy of the world with a man named Job. It increased with the children of Israel in the wilderness by the pen of Moses. It grew more under

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theocracy and monarchy. It enlarged under the prophet's mantle and the fisherman's coat of the apostles. Tyrants issued edicts against it, infidels denied it, Romanism hid it, Mohammedanism pronounced anathemas against it, but it lived on in eternal youth.

In the Dark Ages the Bible lived in secrecy in the Swiss Alps. It crossed the English Channel and was greeted by John Wickcliff and William Tyndale. Finally, it crossed the Atlantic and came to these American shores. Now each Lord's Day it is preached from thousands of churches throughout our land. It abides faithful because it is right---it contains nothing which is destructible.

RIGHT IS ITS AUTHENTICATION

There is much more evidence that the Lord God wrote the Bible than there is that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. There is more convincing proof that God inspired the Scriptures than that Benjamin Franklin wrote *Poor Richard's Almanac*. There is more solid evidence that God moved men to write the Word of God than there is Howard Pyle wrote *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*. The Bible contains internal characteristics of Divinity. Its pages have the stamp of the Holy Spirit upon them. The overpowering evidence of Divine inspiration is so conspicuous that it should cause every sanctified heart to cry, "It is the voice of God, and not any creature that speaks in them."

Adam Clarke once said: "A good man could not have written the Bible, and a bad man would not have written it." Over and over again the Bible tells us that God the Holy Spirit was the Author of the Bible. Now, if a man wrote it, he was a liar, and consequently not a good man. A bad man would not have written the Bible, for it condemns wicked men in no uncertain terms. It is not thinkable that any man would write such things against himself.

The writers of the Bible were competent, upright, and trustworthy. None of them wrote like enthusiasts or fanatics. There is a great moral earnestness pervading their entire writings. There is utter lack of any evidence that these writers were merely trying to put something over on any one, or to defend any one, or to make any personal gain for themselves. Being competent they were able to tell the truth. Being upright and honest they were duty-bound to do so. It

may be said of the Bible that a righteous God used righteous men to write a book of righteousness.

RIGHT IN ITS STYLE

Each writer wrote in his own style while being borne along by the Holy Spirit. God is capable of expressing himself even through the pen of ignorant and unlearned men. The Bible is written on a seventh grace level to be the book of the common people. It is wrong to assume that it is only addressed to the priests and popes. The Bible is addressed to all the faithful in Christ, to every one without distinction of rank, riches, or region.

The blessed Book contains a message for all classes of people. Children read with delight the story of David and Goliath. Lawyers read Moses and base most of their laws upon the civil laws in Israel. Poets profit from a perusal of the Psalms and Proverbs. Scientists glean helpful facts from the books of Job and Genesis. Lovers are impressed with the Songs of Solomon. Historians gain by a study of the historical books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.

The depth of the Bible is infinite; its length incomprehensible; its height inexhaustible. The higher you climb up a hill, the wider grows the prospect of rolling land and liquid plain. Even so, the further and longer we study the Bible, the more we see of God and spiritual matters. The true Christian never tires of its pages. He discovers new beauties every day. He finds by searching the Scriptures that there is always new knowledge to be obtained and old truths to be better understood.

The style the Bible is written in is such that all classes can be found reading it. Boys and girls read it in Sunday school but so does the President. Not only is it read by all classes but in all lands. The American Indian reads it in his tepee. The cold-blooded Greenlander reads it by the light of his fire. The tanned inhabitant of the equator reads it in his grass hut. The Arabian reads it riding upon his camel across the desert. The Eskimo reads it in his igloo. The Swiss lad reads it in the Alpine valley.

RIGHT IN ITS PROPHECY

The future is impenetrable to human ken. Men have in all ages, and by all possible means, endeavored in vain to unlock the future. God only can declare **"the end from the beginning"** (Isa.

46:10). He must be the Author of the Bible because it declares things not yet done centuries before they happened. There are more than 150 prophecies concerning Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, written from 400 to 1500 years before He was born, all of which were fulfilled during our Savior's life on earth. Fulfilled prophecy proves that the Bible is right in its prophetic utterances written centuries ago by the holy prophets.

Some 2400 years ago the Prophet Ezekiel foretold the nation of Egypt would become a base nation. **"And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations"** (Ezek. 29:14-15).

Ezekiel did not make a good guess in this verse. There is no human foresight here. There is no pseudo-Ezekiel here who wrote centuries after Christ. When Ezekiel penned these words Egypt was one of the greatest nations in the world. She remained such until the seventh century of the Christian era. But look at her today! She is the base kingdom that Ezekiel foretold. The Bible is right in its prophecies.

Moses, 1491 years before the birth of Christ, and before Israel had ever entered the promised land, foretold the dispersion of the nation of Israel. **"And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste"** (Lev. 26:33). This began to be fulfilled at the fall of the divided kingdom of Judah and Israel and culminated at the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. The words which the Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of Moses were right. They are according to the facts of the case.

In this same chapter of Leviticus, Moses wrote that Israel would be dispersed but not destroyed: **"And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God"** (Lev. 26:44). Notwithstanding their dispersion to all nations, the Jewish people remain a distinct people from all others.

One critic of the Bible said, "Give me one word which proves the Bible is true." The Christian replied, "The Jew."

RIGHT IN ITS SCIENTIFIC STATEMENTS

Properly speaking, the Bible is not a book of science. It is a revelation of God to man concerning **"all things that pertain unto life and godliness"** (II Pet.

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1:3). But I do not mean to convey that the Bible contains scientific inaccuracies. When the Bible makes a statement about scientific matters, it is right in its statements. Bible-believers have no cause to fear true science. There is no contradiction between it and the Bible. When science disagrees with the Bible it is "**science falsely so called**" (I Tim. 6:20).

The only infallible book of science in all the world is the Bible. Scientists could learn much from the Bible. Modern scientific research has discovered that the blood is not the simple fluid it was once thought to be. They now know that it is the source of life in the body. While scientists have known this for only a few hundred years, Moses said it was so 3400 years ago: "**The life of the flesh is in the blood**" (Lev. 17:11). It took the scientists over 3,000 years to catch up with the Bible.

For many centuries of time men thought the earth was flat. They expressed a fear of going so far out to sea that they would drop into the abyss. But the Holy Bible declared thousands of years ago the earth was round: "**It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in**" (Isa. 40:22). The Septuagint reads: "**It is he that comprehends the circle of the earth. . .**" The word translated "circle" can be rendered "circuit, compass, or sphere." Without a doubt it is applicable to the globular form of the earth. God is presented in this verse as the One Who sits over the globe of the earth. When Isaiah wrote these words men were certain in their own minds that the world was flat! Isaiah by Divine inspiration was years ahead of his time.

Thousands of years before the birth of our Savior, Job said the earth was suspended out in empty space: "**He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing**" (Job 26:7). For millenniums various theories of what supports the earth were accepted by mankind as truth. Some said it was upheld by elephants or giants. Still others said it was by some other fantastic means. But the Bible made no such absurd error. How did Job, more than 3000 years ago, know that God hung the earth upon nothing, except by Divine inspiration? The Bible is right in its prophecies.

Our modern astronomers tell us the earth spins, or rotates, making day and night. Jesus Christ disclosed a knowledge of these facts over 1900 years ago. "**I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be**

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taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Luke 17:34-36). Jesus spoke here of the Rapture of all the saints which is to occur all over the world at the same time. He revealed that when it was night in one part of the world, it was day in another. How did He know all of this over 1900 years ago? Because He was the Creator of the heavens and the earth as the Bible says.

God's immutable law is stated in Genesis 1:24: "**Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind.**" This law, given millenniums ago, has never been violated. Horses do not give birth to cows. Neither do rabbits have elephants. Women do not bring dogs into the world. Everything brings forth after his kind. Evolutionists have never crossed this immutable law. The missing link is still missing! The Bible was right in this statement.

RIGHT IN ITS EFFECTS

It makes no difference where you put the Bible, it just suits the place. Put it in the hands of a drunkard, and if enlightened by the Spirit, it will make him a sober man. Give it to a criminal, and he will become a law-abiding citizen. Cause a prostitute to read it, and she will become a virtuous woman. Place it in the hands of a sinner, and he will become a saint. Let a religionist ponder its words, and he will become a true Christian. Let a Christian take its teaching seriously, and he will become a Baptist.

Give an entire nation the Bible, and if the citizens will receive its teachings, you will have a nation established in righteousness (Prov. 14:34). Let children be taught it to the point they will observe its teachings, and they will obey their parents (Eph. 6:1-3). Cause a wife to read it, and she will reverence and obey her husband (Eph. 5:24). Give it to a husband, and it will cause him to love and protect his wife and children (Eph. 5:25, 28-29). Present it to a troubled heart, and this heart will find the "**comfort of the scriptures**" (Rom. 15:4). Allow a heathen to read it, and he will become a civilized man.

RIGHT IN ITS DOCTRINE

There is one statement in the Bible that even evolutionists accept. Skeptics

and atheists admit the Bible is right in this one verse. Even godless Communists do not deny its words. I refer to Hebrews 9:27 which says: "**And as it is appointed unto men once to die. . .**" Death is a universal fact which no intelligent person denies. He who says a man shall live and not see death is a fool!

Another teaching of the Bible is that man is a sinner: "**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**" (Rom. 3:23). Disease, conscience, crime, war, aging bodies, and many other things declare that men are sinners before God. We each know by our own earthly experience that we sin every day of our life. None of us do all the good we could do. None of us are as gentle and kind as we should be. There is room for improvement in the life of each mortal. James so well said: "**For in many things we offend all**" (Jas. 3:2). The Bible is right when it says man is a depraved being.

The Book of God declares man is incapable of saving himself from the guilt and penalty of his sins. "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost**" (Titus 3:5). The mouth of the Lord has said it is so. These words which the Holy Spirit spoke by the pen of Paul are the true sayings of God. They are worthy of all acceptance.

The Holy Writ presents Christ as the only Savior of sinners. Acts 4:12 says: "**Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**" We can be sure that these words are right, for they are inspired by a righteous God. They are true and faithful. Blessed is the man who receives the Christ of the Scriptures. He is sure of eternal life (John 3:16) and the remission of his sins (Acts 10:43).

CONCLUSION

The Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of the eternal God. It does not contain some truth. It contains the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The greatest need of the hour is for Christians to come out of the mists and shadows of uncertainty and unbelief, into the absolute conviction of the Bible's authority as the living Word of the living God. Let us make it our life-time guide and our pillow in death.

The major denominations are now engaged in what some have called "the Battle for the Bible." Controversial issues surrounding the various ideas about Biblical authority have recently been thrust into the forefront of theological discussions in most of the major denominations. A recent poll taken of Lutheran pastors and United Methodist ministers revealed some startling information. The poll taken for *Christianity Today* disclosed that 40 percent of the Lutheran pastors thought

the Bible contained some mistakes in its statements and teachings. A full 45 percent of the Methodist ministers polled were prone to admit to the possibility of Biblical statements containing errors. In other words, only a little over half of the pastors and ministers believe the Bible is right. To many of them the Bible is wrong in its statements and teachings.

God pity any man who sets himself up as a judge of the Bible. No fallible man is qualified to judge the infallible Word of God. Those who are slow of heart to believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God are "**fools**" (Luke 24:25). Let them say what they will against the Word of God. Let them rant and rave until their last breath is gone from their body. Let them argue about the different Greek manuscripts and the various translations. It matters not what these worms of the dust say, for God's Word is settled for ever in Heaven (Ps. 119:89). At the last day God will judge men by the very Book they have despised and denied (John 12:38; James 2:12).

Godhood of God

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revelation.

The Godhood of God! What is meant by the expression? This: the omnipotency of God, the absolute sovereignty of God. When we speak of the Godhood of God we affirm that God is God. We affirm that God is something more than an empty title; that God is something more than a mere figure-head; that God is something more than a far-distant Spectator, looking helplessly on at the sufferings which sin has wrought. When we speak of the Godhood of God we affirm that He is "**King of kings and Lord of lords.**" We affirm that God is something more than a disappointed, dis-satisfied, defeated Being, who is filled with benevolent desires but lacking in power to carry them out. When we speak of the Godhood of God we affirm that He is "**the Most High.**" We affirm that God is something more than One who has endowed man with the power of choice, and because He has done this is therefore unable to compel man to do His bidding. We affirm that God is something more than One who has waged a protracted war with the Devil and has been worsted. When we speak of the Godhood of God we affirm that He is the Almighty.

To speak of the Godhood of God then, is to say that God is on the Throne, on the throne as a fact and not as a say so; on a throne that is high above all. To speak of the Godhood of God is to say that the Helm is in His hand, and that He is steering according to His own good pleasure. To speak of the Godhood of God is to say that He is the Potter, that we are the clay and that out of the clay

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He shapes one as a vessel to honor and another as a vessel to dishonor according to His own sovereign rights. To speak of the Godhood of God is to say that He is the Divine Despot doing **"according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou?"** (Dan. 4:35). Therefore, to speak of the Godhood of God is to give the mighty Creator His rightful place; it is to recognize His exalted majesty; it is to own His universal scepter.

The Godhood of God stands at the base of Divine revelation: **"in the beginning God"**---in solemn majesty, eternal, un-caused, self-sufficient. This is the foundation doctrine, and upon it all other doctrines must be built, and any doctrine which is not built upon it will inevitably fail and fall in the day of testing. At the beginning of all true theology lies the postulate that God is God---absolute and irresistible. It must be so. Without this we face a closed door; with it we have a key which unlocks every mystery. This is true of *Creation*: exclude an Almighty God and nothing is left but blind and illogical materialism. This is true of *Revelation*: the Bible is the solitary miracle in the realm of literature: exclude God from it and you have a miracle and no miracle-Worker to produce it. This is true of *Salvation*. Salvation is **"of the Lord,"** entirely so; exclude God from any aspect or part of salvation, and salvation vanishes. This is true of *History*, for history is *His-story*: it is the outworking in time of His eternal purpose; exclude God from history and all is meaningless and purposeless. The absolute Godhood of God is the only guaranty that in the end it shall be fully and finally demonstrated that God is **"All in all"** (I Cor. 15:28).

"In the beginning God." This is not only the first word of Holy Scripture but it must be the firm axiom of all true philosophy---the philosophy of human history, for example. Instead of beginning with man and his world and attempting to reason back to God, we must begin with God and reason forward to man and his world. It is failure to do this which leaves unsolved the "riddle of the universe." Begin with the world as it is today and try and reason back to God, and what is the result? If you are honest of heart and logical of mind, this---that God has little or nothing at all to do with the world. But begin with God and reason forward to the world as it is today and much light is cast on the problem. Because God is holy, His anger burns against sin. Because God is righteous, His judgments fall on those who rebel against Him. Because God is faithful the solemn threatenings of His Word are being fulfilled. Because God is

omnipotent no problem can master Him, no enemy defeat Him, and no purpose of His can be withstood. It is just because God is who He is and what He is that we now behold what we do---the gathering clouds of the storm of Divine wrath which will shortly burst upon the earth.

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things" (Rom. 11:36). In the *beginning*---God. In the *center*---God. At the *end*---God. But as soon as this is insisted upon men will stand up and tell you what they think about God. They will prate about God working consistently with His own character, as though a worm of the earth was capable of determining what was consistent and what was inconsistent with the Divine perfections. People will say with an air of profound wisdom that God must deal justly with His creatures, which is true, of course, but who is able to define Divine justice, or any other of God's attributes? The truth is that man is utterly incompetent for forming a proper estimate of God's character and ways, and it is because of this that God has given us a revelation of His mind, and in that revelation He plainly declares, **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"** (Isa. 55:8-9). In view of such a Scripture as this it is only to be expected that much of the contents of the Bible conflicts with the sentiments of the carnal mind which is **"enmity against God."** And further: in view of such a Scripture as the above we need not be surprised that much of human history is so perplexing to our understandings.

The natural world, to begin with the simplest, presents sufficient problems to humble man, were it not that he was blinded by pride. Why should there be diseases and remedies for them? Why poisons and their antidotes? Why rats and mice, and cats to kill them? Why not have left un-made the evils, and then no necessity for the instruments to remove them! Ah, why are we so slow to learn that God's ways are different from ours? And when we enter the human realm the mystery deepens. What is man placed here for at all? To learn some lesson or lessons or to undergo some test or experience which he could not learn or undergo elsewhere? If so, then why is such a large proportion of the race removed in infancy, before such lessons can be learned and such experiences be gained? Why indeed! Such questions as these might be multiplied indefinitely, but sufficient has been said to point out the manifest limitations of human wisdom. And if we are confronted with insolvable problems in the domain of nature and of human existence, what of the Divine realm! Who can fathom the ways of the Almighty? Canst thou by searching

find out God? No indeed. **"Clouds and darkness are round about Him"** (Ps. 97:2). If God were not a mystery He would not be God to us.

But why write in this strain? Surely the need of our day is for that which will strengthen faith, not that which paralyzes it. True; but what is faith? we mean faith in the abstract. Faith is, essentially, an attitude rather than an act; it is that which lies behind the act. Faith is an attitude of dependency, of recognized weakness. Faith is a coming to the end of ourselves and looking outside of ourselves---away from ourselves. Faith is that which gives God His proper place. And if we give God His proper place, we must take our proper place, and that is in the dust. And what is there that will bring the haughty, self-sufficient creature into the dust so quickly as a sight of the Godhood of God! Nothing is so humbling to the human heart as a true recognition of the absolute sovereignty of God. So then, instead of seeking to weaken faith, we write to promote and strengthen it. The chief trouble is that so much that passes for faith today is really only maudlin sentimentality. The faith of Christendom in this twentieth century is mere credulity, and the "god" of many of our churches is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but a mere figment of the imagination. Modern neology has invented a "god" which the finite mind can understand, whose ways are pleasing to the natural man, a "god" who is altogether **"such an one as"** (Ps. 50:21) those who profess to worship him, a "god" concerning whom there is little or no mystery. But how different the God which the Holy Scriptures reveal! Of Him it is said, His ways are **"past finding out"** (Rom. 11:33). To particularize:

1. The "god" of the moderns is altogether lacking in *power*. The popular idea of today is that deity is filled with amiable intentions but that Satan is preventing the making good of them. It is not God's will, so we are told, that there should be any wars, for wars are something which men are unable to reconcile with their ideas of Divine mercy. Hence, the conclusion is that all wars are of the Devil. Plagues and earthquakes, famines and tornadoes, are not sent from God, but are attributed solely to natural causes. To affirm that the Lord God sent the recent Influenza epidemic as a judgment scourge, would be to shock the sensibilities of the modern mind. All such things as this are a cause of grief to "god" for "he" desires naught but the happiness of everybody.

2. The "god" of the moderns is altogether lacking in *wisdom*. The popular belief is that God loves everybody and that it is His will that every child of Adam should be saved. But if this be true, He is strangely lacking in wisdom, for He knows quite well that under existing conditions the majority will be lost. If He is really desirous that every

creature should have an equal chance to be saved, then why suffer so many to be born into families (of criminal parents, for example) and be brought up under conditions where they will never hear the Gospel---and there are many thousands such in this country. If it should be said in reply God has not created these criminal conditions, the point is readily ceded, but nevertheless God is responsible for sending children into them, for the fruit of the womb is solely in His hands. Why not produce sterility among criminals, if it is contrary to His will for children to be born into such conditions, conditions which frequently preclude all reading of the Scriptures and all hearing of the Gospel.

3. The "god" of the moderns is lacking in *holiness*. That crime deserves punishment is still allowed in part, though more and more the belief is gaining ground that the criminal is really an object of pity rather than censure, and that he stands in need of education and reformation rather than of punishment. But that SIN---sins of thought as well as deed, sins of the heart as well as the life, sins of omission as well as commission, the sinful root itself as well as the fruit---should be hated by God, that His holy nature burns against it, is a concept that has gone almost entirely out of fashion; and that the sinner himself is hated by God is indignantly denied even among those who boast most loudly of their orthodoxy.

4. The "god" of the moderns is altogether lacking in a *sovereign prerogative*. Whatever rights the deity of present-day Christendom may be supposed to possess in theory, in fact they must be subordinated to the "rights" of the creature. It is denied, almost universally, that the rights of the Creator over His creatures are that of the Potter over the clay. When it is affirmed that God has the right to make one as a vessel unto honor, and another as a vessel unto dishonor, the cry of injustice is instantly raised. When it is affirmed that salvation is a *gift* and that this gift is bestowed on whom God pleases, it is said He is partial and unfair. If God has any gifts to impart, He must distribute them evenly, or else bestow them on those that merit them, whoever they may be. And thus God is allowed less freedom than I, who may disburse my charity as I best please, giving to one beggar a quarter, to another a dime, and to a third nothing at all if I think well.

How different is the God of the Bible from the "god" of the moderns! The God of Scripture is all-mighty. He is one who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast. He is the One with whom **"all things are possible"** and **"who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will"** (Eph. 1:11). He is the One **"who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with**

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the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance" (Isa. 40:12). He is One with whom "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance," with Whom "all nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:15, 17). He is One that "sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity" (Isa. 40:22-23). He is the One who declares, "Thus said the LORD, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretched forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish. That confirmeth the word of His servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus (a heathen idolater) he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure" (Isa. 44:24-28). Such is the God of the Bible, the God who throws out the challenge, "To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" (Isa. 40:18). And as though that were not enough, in the same chapter He asks again, "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? Saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. . . Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Isa. 40:25-26, 28).

The God of Scripture is *infinite in wisdom*. No secret can be hidden from Him, no problem can baffle Him, nothing is too hard for Him. God is *omniscient*--- "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5). Therefore is it said, "There is no searching of His understanding" (Isa. 40:28). Hence it is, that in a revelation from Him we expect to find truths which transcend the reach of the creature's

mind, and therefore the presumptuous folly and wickedness of those who are but "dust and ashes" undertaking to pronounce upon the reasonableness or unreasonableness of doctrines which are above their reason, and of speculating upon this that are a matter of pure revelation. Instead of coming to the Scriptures to be taught thereat, men first fill their minds with objections, and then instead of interpreting the Divine Oracles according to their obvious meaning, they submit and twist them according to the dictates of their own finite reason. Surely if we are unable to comprehend the mode of God's existence, because it is infinitely above us, then for the same reason we are unable to comprehend the counsels of infinite wisdom. Such is the explicit assertion of Holy Write itself--- "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

The God of Scripture is infinite in *Holiness*. The "only true God" is He who hates sin with a perfect abhorrence and whose nature eternally burns against it. He is the One who beheld the wickedness of the antediluvians and who opened the windows of Heaven and poured down the flood of His righteous indignation. He is the One who rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah and utterly destroyed these cities of the plain. He is the One who sent the plagues upon Egypt, and destroyed her haughty monarch together with his hosts at the Red Sea. He is the One who caused the earth to open its mouth and swallow alive Korah and his rebellious company. Yes, He is the One who "spared not His own Son" when He was "made sin for us. . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." So holy is God and such is the antagonism of His nature against evil, that for one sin He banished our first parents from Eden; for one sin He cursed the posterity of Ham; for one sin He turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt; for one sin He sent out fire and devoured the sons of Aaron; for one sin Moses died in the wilderness; for one sin Achan and his family were all stoned to death; for one sin the servant of Elisha was smitten with leprosy. Behold therefore, not only the goodness, but also "the severity of God" (Rom. 11:22). And this is the God that every Christ-rejecter has yet to meet in judgment!

The God of Scripture has a *will* that is *irresistible*. Man talks and boasts of his will, but God also has a will! Men had a will on the plains of Shinar and undertook to build a tower whose top should reach unto Heaven; but what came of it? God had a will, too, and their willful effort came to naught. Pharaoh had a will when he hardened his heart and refused to allow Jehovah's people to go into the wilderness and there worship Him, but

what came of it? God had a will, too, and being Almighty His will was performed. Balak had a will when he hired Balaam to come and curse the Hebrews; but of what avail was it? The Canaanites had a will when they determined to prevent Israel occupying the Promised Land; but how far did they succeed? Saul had a will when he hurled his javelin at David, but instead of slaying the Lord's anointed, it entered the wall instead. Jonah had a will when he refused to go and preach to the Ninevites; but what came of it? Nebuchadnezzar had a will when he thought to destroy the three Hebrews; but God had a will too, and so the fire did not harm them. Herod had a will when he purposed to slay the Child Jesus, and had there been no living and reigning God, his evil desires had been effected; but in daring to pit his puny will against the irresistible will of the Almighty, his efforts came to naught. Yes, my reader, and you had a will when you formed your plans without first seeking counsel of the Lord, and therefore did He overthrow them. As well might a worm seek to resist the tread of an elephant; as well might a babe step between the railroad tracks and attempt to push back the express train; as well might a child seek to prevent the ocean from rolling, as for a creature to try and resist the outworking of the purpose of the Lord God--- "O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?" (II Chron. 20:6).

The God of Scripture is *absolute Sovereign*. Such is His own claim: "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hast purposed, and who shall disannul it? and His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa. 14:26-27). The Sovereignty of God is absolute and irresistible: "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35). The Sovereignty of God is true not only hypothetically, but in fact. That is to say, God exercises His sovereignty, exercises it both in the natural realm and in the spiritual. One is born black, another white. One is born in wealth, another in poverty. One is born with a healthy body, another sickly and crippled. One is cut off in childhood, another lives to old age. One is endowed with five talents, another with but one. And in all these cases it is God the Creator who maketh one to differ from another, and "none can stay His hand." So also is it in the spiritual realm. One is born in a pious home and is brought up in the fear and

admonition of the Lord; another is born of criminal parents and is reared in vice. One is the object of many prayers, the other is not prayed for at all. One hears the Gospel from early childhood, another never hears it. One sits under a Scriptural ministry, another hears nothing but error and heresy. Of those who do hear the Gospel, one has his heart "opened by the Lord" to receive the truth, while another is left to himself. One is "ordained to eternal life" (Acts 13:48), while another is "ordained" to condemnation (Jude 4). To whom He will God shows mercy, and whom He wills He "hardens" (Rom. 9:18). To particularize:

1. THE ABSOLUTE GODHOOD OF GOD IS SEEN IN CREATION.

With whom took He counsel in creation? Whom did He consult when He determined the various and manifold arrangements, adjustments, adaptations, relationships, equipments of His myriad creatures? Did He not do everything after the counsel of His own will? Did He not decide that birds should fly in the air, beasts roam the earth, and fishes live in the sea? Did He not decide there should be one vast gradation among the creatures of His hand, instead of making everything equal and uniform? Did He not determine to make a revolving world on the one hand, and a floating atom on the other? Did He not determine to create the exalted seraphim to stand before His throne throughout endless ages, and also to make another creature which dies the same hour it is born? Was He not undisputed Sovereign in all His creative acts? Yea, verily, for the Three Persons of the Godhead were all alone in their solitary majesty. Why should God take counsel? Could man add to His knowledge, or correct His errors? God sovereignly assigned His myriad creatures their various habitations, members, movements, as it pleased Him. God never consulted man about a single member of His body, or about its size, color, or capacity; instead, "God set the members everyone of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (I Cor. 12:18). Man is as truly the product of Sovereign creation as any other of God's creatures---sovereign, we say, not arbitrary.

2. THE ABSOLUTE GODHOOD OF GOD IS SEEN IN ADMINISTRATION.

God not only created everything, but everything which He created is subject to His immediate control. God rules over the works of His hands. God governs the creatures He has made. God reigns with universal dominion. When He pleased, the sun and moon stood still (Josh. 10:12-13); and at a word from Him the sun went backward ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz (Isa. 38:8). At His command the Red Sea ceased to flow, and at His command it resumed its normal course (Ex. 14). In response to the prayer of Elisha, He

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made iron to float on the top of the water (II Kings 6:5). Yes, when He pleases, He reverses the order of nature, as when the fires of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace burnt not, as when the hungry lions touched not Daniel, and as when the ravens, which are birds of prey, were made to minister to Elijah. At a word from Him who made it, a fish carried a coin to Peter, a tree withers suddenly (Matt. 21:19), the raging tempest becomes a calm.

So it is also with men; they, too, are ruled by God; ruled by an unseen Hand; often unknown to themselves. Little did they know it, yet nevertheless, the sons of Jacob were but performing the pleasure of Jehovah when they sold Joseph into the hands of the Ishmaelites who carried him down into Egypt. Little was she aware of it, but when Pharaoh's daughter went to the Nile to bathe, she was being directed by God, directed there to rescue from the waters the babe Moses. Little did he know it, but in issuing the decree that all the world be taxed (Luke 2:1) Caesar Augustus was but setting in motion a movement which caused the word and decree of God to be fulfilled. Yes, even **"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will"** (Prov. 21:1). And so it is with Satan himself. He, too, is the (unwitting and unwilling) servant of God. He could not touch Job without first gaining Divine permission. He could not sift the apostles till he gained consent from Christ. At a word from the Lord Jesus Satan "left" Him (Matt. 4:10-11). Of him, also, God has said, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.'

Even death, the **"king of terrors,"** that which no arts of man can defy, is absolutely subject to the bidding of the Lord. In his sermon on Psalm 68:20-21---**"unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death"**---the late C. H. Spurgeon well said, "The prerogative of life or death belongs to God in a wide range of sense. First of all as to natural life, we are all dependent upon His good pleasure. We shall not die until the time which He appoints; for our death-time, like all our time, is in His hands. Our skirts may brush away the portals of the sepulcher, and yet we shall pass the iron gate unharmed if the Lord be our guard. The wolves of disease will hurt us in vain until God shall permit them to overtake us. The most desperate enemies may waylay us, but no bullet shall find its billet in any heart unless the Lord allows it. Our life does not even depend upon the care of angels, nor can our death be compassed by the malice of devils. We are immortal till our work is done, immortal till the immortal King shall call us home to the land where we shall

be immortal in a still higher sense. When we are most sick, we need not despair of recovery, since the issues from death are in Almighty hands. **"The Lord killeth and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up!"** When we have passed beyond the skill of the physician we have not passed beyond the succour of our God, to whom belong the issues from death."

3. THE ABSOLUTE GODHOOD OF GOD IS SEEN IN GIVING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

What part or lot did man have in the composition of the Bible? None whatever. Its very words are the words of God. **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."** No part of it was of human origination, **"for the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man"** (II Pet. 1:21). Did not holy men of God speak "moved by the Holy Spirit"? And how did they then record what the Holy Spirit communicated to them---in words of man's selecting? Nay verily, **"not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth"** (I Cor. 2:13). Balaam longed to speak otherwise than he did; but he could not. Caiaphas prophesied **"not of himself"** (John 11:51). Pilate was asked to make a change in the one sentence which God moved him to write, but he declared **"What I have written I have written"** (John 19:22). God acted sovereignly in the writing of the Scriptures as in everything else. The very words were all chosen by Him; and did He not sovereignly choose? Did He take counsel with either angels or men as to the words He should select for the communicating of His thoughts? No indeed.

4. THE ABSOLUTE GODHOOD OF GOD IS SEEN IN SALVATION.

God's absolute and irresistible proprietorship has been and is being displayed in the spiritual realm as manifestly as in the natural. Isaac is blessed, but Ishmael is cursed. Jacob is loved, but Esau is hated. Israel becomes God's favored people, while all other nations are suffered to remain in idolatry. Jesse's seven sons were all passed by, and David the shepherd-boy was found to be the one after God's own heart. The Saviour took on Him the **"seed of Abraham"** (Heb. 2:16), not the seed of Adam. His ministry was not world-ward, but confined to the people chosen of God. The proud Pharisees were rejected while publicans and harlots were sweetly compelled by sovereign grace to sit down at the Gospel feast. The rich young ruler, who from his youth up, had kept the commandments, was allowed to go away from Christ **"sorrowing,"** even though he had sought Him with real earnestness and humility, while the fallen Samaritan woman (John 4) who sought Him not is made to rejoice in the forgiveness of her sins. Two thieves hang by Christ on the cross: they were equally guilty, equally

needy, equally near to Him. One of them is moved to cry, **"Lord, remember me"** and is taken to Paradise, while the other is suffered to die in his sins and sink down into a hopeless eternity. Many are called, but few are chosen.

Yes, Salvation is God's sovereign work. "God does not save a man because he is a sinner, for if so He must save all men, for all are sinners. Nor because he comes to Christ, for **'no man can come except the Father draw him;'** nor because he repents, for 'God gives repentance unto life; nor because he believes, for no one can believe **'except it were given him from above;'** nor yet because he holds out faithful to the end, for **'who are kept by the power of God.'** It is not because of baptism, for many are saved without it, and many are lost with it. It is not because of regeneration, for that would make the new birth a practical duty. It is not because of morality, for the moralist is the hardest to reach, and many of the most immoral are saved---the ground of distinguishing grace is the Sovereignty of God: **"Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight"** (J.B. Moody).

But is God *partial*? . We answer, Has He not a right to be? Again we quote from Mr. Spurgeon's sermon "The Royal Prerogative" ---"Spiritually, too, this prerogative is with God. We are by nature under the condemnation of the law on account of our sins, and we are like criminals tried, convicted, sentenced, and left for death. It is for God, as the great Judge, to see the sentence executed, or to issue a free pardon, according as He pleases; and He will have us know that it is upon His supreme pleasure that this matter depends. Over the head of a universe of sinners I hear this sentence thundering, **'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.'** Shut up for death, as men are by reason of their sins, it rests with God to pardon whom He may reserve; none have any claim to His favor, and it must be exercised upon mere prerogative, because He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, and delighteth to pass by transgression and sin." How far away have the present-day admirers of Spurgeon departed from the teaching of this prince of preachers; Mark carefully the next sentences: "Our text, however, puts the prerogative upon the one sole ground of Lordship, and we prefer to come back to that. **"Unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death."** It is a doctrine which is very unpalatable in these days (it always has been.---A.W.P.), but one nevertheless which is to be held and taught, that God is an absolute Sovereign, and doeth as He wills. The words of Paul may not be suffered to sleep, ---**"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?"** The Lord cannot do amiss, His

perfect nature is a law unto itself. In his case Rex is Lex, the King is the law."

Is God partial? Certainly He is. And has He not the right to be? Shall He not dispense His favors as He wills, and bestow His gifts on whom He pleases? But is it reasonable to suppose that God who is Love has created millions of creatures to be lost? Seeing that His elect constitute but a "remnant," a "few," in comparison with the great multitudes who die unsaved? We reply, it is not a question of reason but of revelation. There are many things revealed in Scripture which are contrary to reason. Is it reasonable to think that God would give His only begotten Son to die for sinners? Ah, reason is ruled out entirely here. And so in many other things. If it lay within the power of the reader, would you suffer your worst enemy to be eternally tormented? And if you are honest, you will promptly answer, No! But God will deal thus with His enemies, and the sentence will be a righteous one, whether we can now discern its justice or not, for the Judge of all the earth will do right. How far asunder then is carnal reasoning from the teaching of Holy Writ concerning Eternal Punishment! Once more: would the reader "laugh at" and "mock" his worst enemy if that enemy was being severely punished before him and was entirely helpless to deliver himself from that punishment? Yet Scripture explicitly declares that God will **"laugh"** at the calamity of His enemies and **"mock"** when their fear cometh (see Ps. 2:4; Prov. 1:26). Can your reason harmonize this with your knowledge of God? And again we say, If you are honest you must reply, No! Then why prate so loudly and blatantly about the unreasonableness of Reprobation and of God's absolute Sovereignty in salvation? Once more: here is Satan, the age-long enemy of God and man, the one who has wrought incalculable evil, securely imprisoned at last in the bottomless pit. There he remains chained for a thousand years. Now would you, my reader, suggest for a moment that the Devil be released from that prison after the earth had been freed for a thousand years from his vile presence? Certainly you would not, and yet this is precisely what Divine revelation declares shall come to pass. The Scriptures of Truth make known how that God will cause the Serpent to be **"loosed"** for a little season, that God will suffer this even though He knows beforehand that the consequences will be the most dreadful revolt on the part of men, under Satan, revolt against God, which this earth has ever witnessed. Truly God's ways are different, very different from ours. Learn then the utter folly of man attempting to pronounce upon the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the doings and dealings of the Most High God. And

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Godhood of God

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now a few words by way of exhortation and we must conclude.

One of the most flagrant sins of this age is irreverence. By irreverence I am not now thinking of open blasphemy, or the taking of God's name in vain. Irreverence is, also, failure to ascribe the glory which is due the great and dreadful majesty of the Almighty. It is the limiting of His power and actions by our degrading conceptions: it is the bringing of the Lord God down to our level. There are multitudes of those who do not profess to be Christians who deny that God is the omnipotent Creator, and there are multitudes of professing Christians who deny that God is absolute Sovereign. Men boast of their free will, prate of their power, and are proud of their achievements. They know not that their lives are at the sovereign disposal of the Divine Despot. They know not that they have no more power to thwart His secret counsel than a worm has to resist the tread of an elephant. They know not that God is the Potter, and they the clay.

Ah, my reader, this is the first great lesson we have to learn: that God is the Creator, we the creature; that He is the Potter, we the clay. This is the harvest of all life's lessons, and when we think we have learned them, we soon discover that we have need to re-learn them. God is God and has the right to dispose of me as He sees fit. It is for Him to say where I shall live---whether in America or Africa. It is for Him to say under what circumstances I shall live---whether amid riches or poverty, whether in health or in sickness. It is for Him to say how long I shall live---whether I shall be cut down in youth, like the flower of the field, or whether I shall live unto old age. Yes, and it is for Him to say where I shall spend eternity.

The first sin of man was the refusal to be clay in the Potter's hand: Adam wanted to be something more---"**Ye shall be as God**" was the bait which the Tempter used to hurl him to his destruction.

One of the profoundest mysteries of the Incarnation is that "**the mighty God**" descended from highest heaven and took upon Him the nature of the creature and came down here to show us how to wear it. That which differentiated the Life of Christ from all other lives, was His absolute and joyous submission to the Father's will---"**My meat is to do the will of him that sent Me**" struck the keynote of the thirty-three years that He tabernacled among men. Have you profited by the example left us by the Beloved of the Father? Has Divine grace shown you how to wear your creature nature? Only if you live not in self-assertion, but in self-renunciation. Only if in the school of Christ you have been

taught to say, "**Not my will, but Thine be done.**" O may Divine grace so subdue our rebellious hearts that more and more we can say:

"I bow me to Thy will, O God,
And all Thy ways adore!
And every day I live I'd seek
To please Thee more and more.

Thy will, the good, the blessed rule
Of Jesus' toil and tears;
Thy will the passion of His heart
Those three and thirty years.

I love to kiss each print where Christ
Did set His pilgrim feet;
Nor can I fear that blessed path,
Whose traces are so sweet.

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee.

I know not what it is to doubt,
My heart is ever gay;
I run no risk, for, come what will,



Colonial Landmarkism

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present them here as they appear in this published book of minutes without any changes made to them except that I have highlighted some things for emphasis. (2) This writer does not approve of the formation of any kind of supra-church or para-church organization whether it is called an association or something else. (3) It is with the early days of the Colonial Baptists of North America that we concern ourselves in this article and not with what this association may have become at a later date – in fact there is evidence that during the second fifty years of the association's existence compromise and a rejection of their earlier principles took place. (4) The Churches making up this earliest Baptist association in North America were, I believe, inconsistent in some of their practices: They practiced denominational communion and they believed in the laying on of hands after baptism as a requisite for Church membership. There may have been other idiosyncrasies practiced by them as well. But I believe that it will be demonstrated that these earliest of Baptists in North America were not only practicing Landmarkers, but that they were independent, sovereign grace, missionary Baptists as well and worthy ancestors of independent, sovereign grace, Landmark, missionary Baptist Churches that exist today both in North America and around the world and that have descended from them.

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS:

First of all, let us consider some interesting and revealing information given about these earliest Baptist Churches in North America as found

in excerpts from the "PREFACE" to the "MINUTES..." by H. G. Jones. "*The Philadelphia Association originated with churches planted by members from Wales. Attracted by the freedom of religious opinion established by Penn, they purchased and settled large tracts of land as early as 1683. ...It*" (i.e. the association – CAP) "*has been favored with the services of many distinguished ministers – men of eminent piety, solid judgment and finished education. Among these are found the names of Morgan Edwards, Abel Morgan, John Gano, Samuel Jones, David Jones, Keach, Griffith, Rogers, Ustic, Holcombe, Staughton, Brantly and others, who have gloriously fought the good fight*" (pp. 3, 4).

Notice that those who were organized into these Churches had been members of Baptist Churches in Wales prior to their coming to North America. Attracted by the freedom of religion in William Penn's colony, able and educated ordained ministers journeyed with non-ordained members to this wilderness region and settled themselves and were organized into Baptist Churches. In at least one instance a Baptist Church was organized in Wales for the express purpose of immigrating to North America together as a Church. Prior to coming to the actual minutes of the association meetings, some histories of the Churches are given: some in detail, others are not so specific, but the information about the Welsh Tract Church is most interesting. "*THE CHURCH AT THE WELSH TRACT, in the County of Newcastle Upon Delaware. This church was constituted in Pembrokeshire, in South Wales, in the year 1701, at which time the first members of this church were about to come over into Pennsylvania; they then, by the advice and counsel of the churches they came from, in Pembrokeshire and Camathenshire, entered into a church covenant, and state their number was sixteen persons; and among them was the Rev. Mr. Thomas Griffith, to be their minister.*" (p.15). So here we have a congregation of Baptists along with their pastor moving together in Church capacity to Penn's colony. Other Churches were organized among these Welsh emigrants after their arrival in the colony.

1. THESE CHURCHES WERE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCHES:

We doubt that any association can long exist without eventually growing into a monster that uses political machinations to exercise unscriptural influence or outright control over the Churches that make up the association, but at least in the first several years of this association it was clear that these Baptist Churches were independent and proclaimed this in both word and deed. In an "Essay" written for the Churches we read: "*That an Association is not a superior judicature, having such superior power over the churches concerned; but that each particular church*

hath a complete power and authority from Jesus Christ, to administer all gospel ordinances, provided they have a sufficiency of officers duly qualified, or that they be supplied by the officers of another sister church or churches, as baptism, and the Lord's supper, &c.; and to receive in and cast out, and also to try and ordain their own officers, and to exercise every part of gospel discipline and church government, independent of any other church or assembly whatever..." (pp. 60, 61). Again they state in the minutes of "1768" the following: "*Some jealousy arising on account of an appeal to the Association, mentioned pages 100 and 101, it was agreed that the word appeal was not quite proper, as the Association claims no jurisdiction, nor a power to repeal any thing settled by any church; but if, before settlement, parties agree to refer matters to the Association, then to give their advice*" (p. 105).

This independence is further seen in the entry for "1771" where we read: "*3. The church of Newtown desired the Association to appoint time and ministers to ordain Mr. Nicholas Cox; the Association reply, that the appointment of both properly belongs to his church.*" (p. 119). Both the selection of ordained men to help the Church in the work of ordination – i.e. to serve as a presbytery – and the other details of the proposed ordination were within the authority of the Church meeting in that place. The association had no authority or right to do this for the Church! Awful Landmarkism!

Surely it shall be sufficient to quote one more example to show that in "1775" they still maintained individual Church independence and autonomy. We read as follows: "*In consequence of two letters received from the church at Coram: the first lamenting their loss of a worthy pastor, Rev. Noah Hammond, requested our assistance and prayers: the second was expressive of their great satisfaction in Brother Ebenezer Ward's visits, and edification under his ministry, which concludes by desiring this Association to ordain him as an itinerant. Agreed, That this Association claim no such right, and therefore, resolved to encourage Mr. Ward to assist said church in all that he consistently can, until either the church, whereof he is a member, chooses to have him ordained, or he first becoming a member at Coram, and they should continue in the same mind, which, if they do, and write for assistance, we make no doubt our brethren will duly attend to it.*" Ordination was the right of the Churches and not the association. The polity of these Churches consistently shows them to be independent Baptist Churches!

2. THESE CHURCHES WERE SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST CHURCHES:

It should also be noted that these Baptists stood strongly for the doctrines

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of sovereign grace and in that connection regarded themselves to be doctrinally in agreement with Baptists of earlier times and diverse locations. H.G. Jones testifies to this fact as follows: "To let the world know how we understand the teachings of the Holy Ghost in these inspired books, the Association published, in 1742, its Confession of faith and discipline. This is in substance the same as that of the ancient Baptists in Poland and Bohemia; and of the Mennonites in Holland, and the early English and Welsh churches" (p.4). Again he writes: "In every period of its existence the Association has firmly maintained the soundest form of Scripture doctrine; nor could any church have been admitted, at any period, which denied or concealed any of the doctrines of grace" (p. 4). I note that either denying or "concealing" the doctrines of grace would equally disqualify a Church from this association – would to God that some of our Brethren who "believe the doctrines" but who do not openly preach and teach them were so inclined as these old Brothers were! I include next a question sent to the association for their opinion regarding whether or not an Arminian could be admitted to the fellowship of a Baptist Church along with the pertinent parts of the answer given. These are not the words of some biographer, but minutes of their own meeting and thus the strongest of testimony. "1752- Query from the church at Kingwood: Whether a person denying unconditional election, the doctrine of original sin, and the final perseverance of the saints, and striving to affect as many as he can, may have full communion with the church?"

Answer: That the very consequence of it opposeth the absolute sovereignty of God... Upon which fundamental doctrines of Christianity, next to the belief of an eternal God, our faith must rest; and we adopt, and would that all the churches belonging to the Baptist Association be well grounded in accordance to our Confession of faith and catechism, and cannot allow that any are true members of our churches who deny the said principles, be their conversation outward what it will." (pp. 68, 69).

3. THESE CHURCHES WERE LANDMARK BAPTIST CHURCHES:

The polity of these Churches was the same as that of today's Landmarkers as follows: First of all, in order to form themselves into a Church they required letters of dismissal from the Churches where their membership lay. (They did not believe that a member could dismiss himself from a Church in order to form a new Church!) In the section titled, "Important Excerpts from 'A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE CHURCHES

HOLDING BELIEVERS BAPTISM, IN PENNSYLVANIA AND THE JERSEYS," we read regarding "THE CHURCH AT LOWER DUBLIN, in the County of Philadelphia, Province of Pennsylvania. Mr. Jenkin Jones... was unanimously chosen to be their pastor, and so continued until the year 1746, when the brethren residing in Philadelphia requested a dismissal from the church at Pennepek, in order to incorporate a distinct church; which being granted, Mr. Jones was dismissed with the other city members..." (p. 12).

Regarding "THE CHURCH AT HOPEWELL. Several persons of the denomination of Baptists settled in and about Hopewell in Jersey; some of them members of the Baptist church of Middletown, and others members at Philadelphia and Pennepek; and being remote from those churches, it was thought more for their benefit to be settled in a church-state by themselves, and accordingly they obtained dismissal from the said churches, and the assistance of their ministers and elders, by the name Mr. Abel Morgan, Mr. John Burrows, Mr. Griffith Miles, Mr. Joseph Todd and Mr. William Kinnerly; and on the 22d day of April, 1715, being a day appointed by fasting and prayer, they entered into a church covenant, and were owned a sister church, the number of persons being fifteen or sixteen, as appears by Pennepek Church Book, page 55" (p.17). Awful Landmarkers these! They went to their respective Churches that had authority over them as members and obtained "dismissal" – read "permission" and "authority" – and then called upon the ordained ministers and elders of these previously existing Churches to organize them into a new and distinct Church. That's what Landmarkers insist upon today! To show that this was no single occurrence but the regular practice of these Baptists we include information regarding "THE CHURCH NEAR BRANDYWINE ... these, on the 14th day of June, Anno Domini 1715, at a meeting for the purpose appointed at the dwelling-house of John Powell, in Providence aforesaid, in the county of Chester, in the province of Pennsylvania, having for their assistance and direction the Rev. Mr. Abel Morgan, of Philadelphia, and some brethren from the church at the Welsh Tract, were constituted and settled in Gospel church, ordered, and owned, and declared as a sister church;..." (p.18). And again we see Landmarkism in the way they started "THE CHURCH AT BEHTLEHEM. Several members of the Baptist church at Hopewell having removed and settled in and about Bethlehem, they the said members, and others added there, requested a dismissal from the church at Hopewell; which, being obtained, they appointed the 31st day of July, Anno Domini 1742, to be constituted a distinct church of Jesus Christ, Mr. Joseph Eaton and others assisting." (p.20).

If further proof of their Landmarkism

is needed, consider the "1761 MEMORIAL" regarding the Church near Dividing Creek and how it was constituted: "Whereas, a number of persons resided near Dividing Creek, in the county of Cumberland, in the western division of the province of New Jersey, some of whom, members of Cohansie church, some of Cape May church, and some not of any particular church; and whereas these lived at a great distance from the said churches, and at the same time our Rev. brother Samuel Heaton providentially settled at the said creek; Therefore, the above said persons made applications to their respective churches for dismissal, and leave to form themselves into a distinct church, both which they obtained. Accordingly, we whose names are under written, being sent by the church of Cohansie, did meet the said people at their meeting house on the day above mentioned; and after sermon, laid hands on such persons as had been baptized, but had not joined themselves to any church: then all gave themselves to the Lord and to each other by a solemn covenant which they signed; and were declared by us to be a regular gospel church; and as such we recommend them to our Association..." (pp. 81, 82). Again, they requested from the Churches of which they were members "dismissal" and "leave" (permission) to form themselves into a distinct Church, having been previously considered a "branch Church" or what we would today call a "mission." Some would argue against Landmarkism saying that they formed themselves into a distinct church. To any thinking person, understanding that a Baptist Church is a voluntary organization, it cannot be than another would do for them what they must do for themselves – and that is voluntarily agree together to walk together as a scriptural Church. But first they showed that they believed in Church authority by each applying to their respective Churches and obtaining permission and authority to do so – and under the direction of those "whose names are under written being sent by the church of Cohansie" even went so far as to sign their Church covenant! Landmarkism in the first degree!

Neither did they believe that a member might capriciously move his membership to a more distant Church while maintaining his residence in the vicinity of another Baptist Church. This is clearly seen in the year "1728" as follows: "2. A query from the church at Montgomery: Whether a church is bound to grant a letter of dismissal to any member to go to another church, while his residence is not removed? Answered in the negative, we having neither precept nor precedent for such a practice in Scripture. See Discipline." (p. 29). My point here is this: it took a letter of dismissal for a member to leave one Baptist Church and be joined to another! Landmarkism!

Secondly these Churches show forth

their Landmark colors in that they rejected non-ordained men and refused to recognize them or their baptisms, etc., as valid. In the minutes for the year "1732" we are given the following information: "In the year 1732, a question was moved: Whether a person, not being baptized himself, and presuming, in private, to baptize another; whether such pretended baptism be valid or no, or whether it might not be adjudged a nullity? Resolved. We judge such baptism as invalid, and no better than if it had never been done." (p.33). This is just the thing that makes modern Landmarkers so objectionable to their religious neighbors! We are called narrow and bigoted and proud and worse for taking the very same stand that the first Baptist Churches in North America took – and doubt not that this was the same stand the Welsh Churches learned from their apostle. That position is that the administrations of men not ordained by a scriptural Baptist Church are null and void!

Again in "1744" a similar question was put to the association for their advice: "The Association convened September 22d, 1744. Query from the church of Bethelhem: Suppose a person baptized by a man who takes upon him to preach the gospel, and proceeds to administer the ordinances without a regular call or ordination from any church; whether the person so baptized may be admitted into any orderly church. Yea or nay? Resolved: We cannot encourage such irregular proceedings; because it hath ill consequences every way attending it; it is also opposite to our discipline. We therefore give our sentiments that such administrations are irregular, invalid, and of no effect." (p.49). Here we see that a person baptized by an un-ordained man was not to be received into one of their Churches. Awful, awful, bigoted Landmarkers!

Five years later in "1749" a similar question was put to the association with the same answer. "A query from the church at the Scotch Plains: Whether a person baptized by one that was not ordained, shall be received into the church, on the baptism already received; or whether he shall be baptized again, or shall such abide without the church's privileges all their days? In answer, we refer to the solution of the like query, in the year 1744." (p. 60).

Being plagued by free-lance, bogus "ministers," in the year "1756" the association decided to take action against such un-ordained men as follows: "Concluded, to publish in a public print, a certain William Leaton, for his irregular proceedings, in going about under the name of a Baptist minister, when he neither is, nor ever was, a member in any of our churches, if upon warning given him, he does not desist." (p.74).

In the third place: they believed in and practiced the ordination of those whom they believed were called to the

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

In Romans 16:17, who is “them” and why does Paul say “avoid them”? – Arkansas

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“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”(Rom. 16:17).

It seems plain to me that the word “them” could refer to anybody who causes division. This division is said to be contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Christ taught on all types of doctrines, not just “theological” doctrine.

He taught us to love one another. He taught us to speak the truth in love. He taught us to forgive one another. When people don’t do these practical things, they can become divisive. Unfortunately, some of the Lord’s own people are divisive in their attitudes. Trouble brews in churches easily and those that divide need to be avoided like the plague.

Obviously, Christ taught on all types of things such as the sovereignty of God and His own deity. He taught about His resurrection. Those that divide on such things as this, we must avoid.

“Them” could be anybody that is divisive and doesn’t follow the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. Obviously, this would include those of the world. However, this teaching is not limited to the world. Regrettably, the Lord’s own sometimes become divisive. We must, for the sake of our own congregations, avoid these. It’s not easy to keep down division and it’s much harder when we regularly invite those with a divisive spirit into our churches.

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“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive

the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:17-18).

The context clearly reveals the answers to both questions. The people identified as “them” are contrasted from the brethren who know, serve, and love the Lord Jesus Christ. They are unsaved religious teachers who are guilty of spreading heresies that are contrary to the doctrines laid out by Paul in the Epistle to Romans. These people may be labeled by a variety of names given them according to the pernicious doctrines they adhere to such as Arminians (anti-grace), Antinomians (anti-law), Universalists (anti local church), etc.

The Epistle to Romans clearly spells out the tenets of the doctrines of grace (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Particular Redemption, Effectual Calling, Preservation and Perseverance of the Saints), the practical truths regarding sanctification through our identification with Jesus Christ, the believer’s responsibility to follow the Lord in scriptural baptism, the correct way in which to serve in the church, along with other points of local church polity and practice. The Epistle to the Romans spells out the truths, practice, and polity of a New Testament Church. Those religious teachers who vehemently oppose the doctrines revealed in Romans are revealed to be self serving and deceitful.

The answer to the second question is relatively simple. God’s people are called upon to **“Abstain from all appearance of evil”** (I Thess. 5:22). Those who promulgate Arminianism, Antinomianism, and Universalism should have no place in the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. They infect the body with poisonous doctrines and practices that are contrary to the revealed truth of Scripture. Those who would dare spread these errors must be separated from. If they are found within the Body of Christ they must be purged and excluded (I Cor. 5) lest their influence spreads. If Baptists would get back to examining the professions and baptisms of those who apply for membership in the body a lot of potential divisions could be avoided. Make sure you know that folks are saved and have scriptural Baptist baptism before voting them into your church body.

Three requirements are necessary for valid church membership: 1) Salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone; 2) Scriptural baptism by a New Testament Baptist Church; 3) Submission to the doctrine, practice, and covenant of the local church they are in. When

these three requirements are met and maintained there will not be doctrinal divisions, hurtful schisms, or personality cliques that serve to undermine the unity of the church.

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“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1Cor. 1:10). The Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit constantly affirmed and reaffirmed the need for the unity of the Lord’s Church in every place. This being part of His ministry as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. This letter that was written to the saints of God in Rome touched upon the doctrinal and practical sides of their service to the Lord. We must remember this was written to a Church for the use of churches in all ages.

Church unity is paramount in the usefulness of the Church in service to God. I remember some one saying that even though you do not believe like we do on some doctrines you can be a member of this church as long as you don’t teach what you believe. I humbly disagree with this particular view point for **“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”** (Gal. 5:9).

The “them” in Romans 16:17 are those who do not hold to or are not complying to the stated doctrines of the Word of God and the truths that this Church in Rome is standing for. The “them” have caused divisions within the church body and have rejected the counsel of God concerning unity. Therefore the “them” have not observed the number one command of God. **“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”**(Rom. 16:18).

Why are we to avoid them that cause divisions is a question that I have great concern over. I, being a pastor of one of the Lord’s Churches, have a responsibility to the Lord to watch over the sheep. Unity germinates love, while division causes confusion. I was told by a very dear preacher one time that he would

rather have 12 faithful members than an hundred who could never get along. I, too, prefer unity over division. **“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints”** (I Cor. 14:33) to avoid them that cause divisions does one thing; puts them to shame. **“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed”** (II Thess. 3:14). Also it cleanses the church **“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us”** (I Cor. 5:7)

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“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:17-18).

Scriptural questions that arise can usually be answered if you just keep on reading. Such is the case with this question. The first question is answered right in the verse. The second question is answered by looking at the very next verse.

The “them” of verse 17 are those who constantly argue against the doctrines of the Bible being taught in the Lord’s churches. It includes those who live contrary to the doctrines they profess to believe. Additionally it seems that those Paul is referring to are not just quiet unbelievers but are actively arguing, disrupting the services, and causing contention in the church. Proverbs addresses this same issue in Proverbs 6:16-19: **These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him...An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations...and he that soweth discord among brethren.”**

Avoiding them does not mean shunning them! They need the gospel message as much as anyone. God shows grace to the worst of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15) Cf. Zachæus and Mary Magdalene. But these kinds of people are not to be members of the Lord’s churches, nor are they to be allowed to disrupt the services. In my ministry I have seen the damage done by these people. Space is too short here to give illustrations. If they become too active in trying to lead our people

◊ (Continued on page 472)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

Will Satan be the father of Antichrist? Please explain your answer in detail. – Alabama

Mike DeWitt Sr.
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The father of Antichrist is Satan, not will be as in a future tense. **“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it”** (John 8:44). Satan has been the father of Antichrist from the beginning. **“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”** (Gen. 3:15).

I will not fall into the explanation of something that has no biblical truth attached to it. All that is against Christ is antichrist. Satan seeks to destroy all righteousness and those that are righteous. **“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat”** (Luke 22:31). **“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die”** (Gen. 3:4). Satan tries to accomplish this task thru the weakness of man's sinful nature. Satan desires the souls of the righteous even though God's promise is steadfast and sure.

The opening verse of Scripture states that those who are not born again have a father. I suppose there are some of you reading this and say not so, for the elect have never had Satan as their father, are you sure? In prospect we see the elect have God as their father, and from the beginning they are owned by Him and protected, that is why they are considered to be the elect of God. All I have to say is this, if you love God you will serve Him and no other, if you serve Satan you will serve him and no other.

Antichrist will serve his father just as all that are not born again **“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others”** (Ephesians 2:2-3). But thanks be to God for **“These shall make**

war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

I hope to direct you in a path that leads to the study of instruction in righteousness, reproof and correction. The use of God's Word for the edification of the saints. **“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world”** (1 John 4:4).

MIKE DEWITT

Raymond F. Bennett
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Prophecy is not my area of expertise! There are many theories about the identity and genealogy of the antichrist but the only thing we know for sure is that the antichrist will, in fact, be a counterfeit or imitation of Christ. **“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?”** (Rev. 13:1-10, verses 3 & 4 quoted here.)

I suspect that one of the counterfeiting aspects of the antichrist will be the very question that is asked here. There were certain questions always surrounding our Lord during His earthly ministry concerning who His father was. The virgin birth will need to be mimicked so I suspect there will be a deliberate cloudiness concerning the antichrist's father. However we can be certain that Satan cannot produce a virgin birth!

Satan is powerful and fully capable of performing copy-cat miracles. The healing of a supposedly fatal wound (Rev. 13:3) is the closest he can come to reproducing the resurrection and a cloud of mystery concerning the parentage (at least the father) of the antichrist will be the closest he can do to reproduce a 'virgin birth.' So as far as a direct lineage is concerned, Satan will not be the father of the antichrist as God was the father of Christ in His earthly ministry.

It can be said that Satan is the father of the antichrist in the same way as he is the father of liars, etc. as per John 8:44.

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” Satan is the *spiritual* father of all liars and false prophets or teachers, including the 'antichrists' that John speaks of in I John 2:18. **“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”**

I suggest that there is too much time and effort spent trying to identify the antichrist. The Reformers considered the Pope the antichrist, and I understand those of Reformed or New Covenant theology today still do consider the Pope (that is the office) to be the antichrist. John said **there many antichrists**, and he spoke freely of the *spirit* of antichrist present in his own day. Paul tells us that the actual antichrist, **“the son of perdition”**, will not be revealed until the 'restrainer,' i.e.: the Holy Spirit, is taken away, (II Thess. 2:3-10) that is the Holy Spirit's continual presence as indwelling the church. The church today should be expending their effort in *preventative* action, seeking to get the gospel out, seeking the lost who have yet to be brought into the fold.

RAYMOND BENNETT

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First of all, the Bible is unclear about this at best.

There are two ways to approach this. First, will Satan be the physical father of the Antichrist? Well, if you believe that demons have the power to possess in this full way, then perhaps. I believe that the sons of God in Genesis 6 were fallen angels. Therefore, it is possible (if I am right about that) that the devil could do this. Will he? There's no way to know for sure.

Secondly, will Satan be the spiritual father of the Antichrist? There is little doubt about this. Surely, the Antichrist will be Satan's attempt to mock Christ. Not only will the Antichrist worship Satan, but, he will be the mouthpiece of Satan. I personally believe the Antichrist

will be assassinated around the middle of the Tribulation period and Satan will indwell his body and make it appear that he was healed of a mortal wound (Rev. 13:3, 12). Their relationship is more than we understand from a casual reading. The Antichrist gets his power from Satan.

There's no way to fully understand all of these things. We all have opinions. We need to make sure, however, that our opinions are based on the Scripture.

TODD BRYANT

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I wrote the following in 1996 and I still believe that the Antichrist will definitely be **“the son of perdition”**.

THE CHARACTER OF ANTICHRIST

1. There are several descriptive titles given in the passage before us (II Thess. 2) that reveal the character of the Antichrist. Just as Jesus was called the man of sorrows, the Lamb of God, and the **“I Am”** to describe His character and greatness, so the Antichrist has many descriptive titles that give us a clear indication of his character.

2. He is called the **“man of sin”** (II Thess. 2:3). The Antichrist is not merely a sinner among men, he is the full embodiment of sin. He is sin personified, Satan's masterpiece of human depravity. He is the apex of antinomianism as he will totally disregard the holy laws of God. The Man of Sin will push the extent of evil and wickedness to its greatest degree. If you were to combine all of the evil leaders of human history you would have some understanding of the nature of the coming Antichrist. He will be a liar, a murderer, a fraud, and an extortioner. What a contrast Satan's Antichrist is to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was a Lamb without blemish or without spot, a man with no sin or guile, completely holy and impeccable. The Antichrist is blackened and soiled within and without by sin, he is the epitome of human depravity at its worst. The fact that men and women will receive the lies of the Antichrist more readily than the truths of Jesus Christ proves how depraved the human heart and mind really are. By the time the Man of Sin is revealed, the world will have such a disregard for the holy laws of God they will gladly receive the lawless one. The coldness, apathy, and lawlessness that characterizes our present day should serve as a sure indication that the Man of Sin will be revealed very soon.

3. The Antichrist is called the **“son**

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Forum #1

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away, they must be disciplined and avoided.

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ.” A true worshiper of Jesus Christ will seek answers to his/her questions but not by being argumentative. A true servant of Christ will not be undermining the ministry of the local church, drawing people away with false doctrines. It is the ones Paul tells us to avoid, exclude from our memberships, whom he refers to again in II Timothy 3:6 **“For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.”**

These people are simply trying to enhance their own sphere of influence, sort of like a young stallion trying to win away the mares from the current dominant stallion. They serve **“their own belly,”** using enticing words and methods to attract those who are not willing to be Bereans. I suggest that Christendom is too full of these people.

It is a true saying that ‘doctrine divides.’ Too many use this as an excuse to avoid doctrine, making the churches weak. Cf. Ephesians 4:11-14: **“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”** (Italics mine.)

Doctrine does divide! It separates truth from error! It separates those who are only looking for a ‘fire escape’ salvation from those who are committed to maximum living for the Lord! It separates those who seek personal glory for their salvation or service from those who humbly serve by grace alone.

And the practice of doctrine separates the Pharisees from the grace believers, both in the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry and in the twenty first century.

RAYMOND BENNETT

Forum #2

(Continued from page 471) ♦

of perdition” (II Thess. 2:3). The Antichrist will not only be the epitome of human depravity, he will also be the offspring of the Devil, the literal seed of the serpent. By way of contrast, the Lord Jesus Christ was filled with the Holy

Spirit above measure, the Antichrist will be filled with the spirit of the Devil without measure. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Antichrist will be the son of Satan. What a wicked man indeed the Antichrist must be to have the title of the literal son of the Devil. There is not a more malignant being among all of God’s creation than the Devil himself and he will be personified in the person of the Antichrist. It is interesting that the only other person who owns the title, the son of perdition, in the Scriptures is Judas Iscariot (John 17:12). He was also referred to as the Devil by the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:70). It is also interesting to note that Judas Iscariot went to his own place (Acts 1:25), which is not said of any other human being when they die, and that the Antichrist arises out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7). All of these things put together led A.W. Pink to believe that the Antichrist will be Judas Iscariot reincarnated. Whether or not this is true we do know that the Antichrist will be the literal offspring of Satan sent on a mission of malignity, deceit, destruction, and violence.

4. The Antichrist is referred to as the **“Wicked”** one (II Thess. 2:8). He will be the culmination of satanic and human wickedness and lawlessness. He will ascend to heights of wickedness that no man has ever reached during his brief reign of terror. Psalms ten gives a perfect description of the Antichrist who will reign on the earth during the time of Jacob’s trouble. Psalms 10:2-5 declares: **“The WICKED in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. For the WICKED boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth. The WICKED through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.”** The pride, depravity, blasphemy, and violence of the Wicked One are plainly set forth in these verses. Think how awful the social conditions on earth are going to be when the Wicked One is in power! We are presently alarmed at the injustice, violence, and depths of depravity in our world, but these conditions will only intensify during the reign of the Antichrist. How thankful I am to know that I will be with the Lord in Heaven when the Antichrist will be practicing his wickedness on the earth!

5. The Antichrist is called by two other titles in the New Testament. He is called the Antichrist in I John 2:22 implying that he is opposed to Christ, and comes in the stead of Christ masquerading as the Messiah.

He is called the beast in Revelation 11:7. In fact this title is assigned to him no less than thirty times in the Book

of Revelation. It describes his ferocity, carnality, and violent nature. It is interesting to contrast the Lord Jesus Christ who is called the Lamb of God with the Antichrist who is called the beast. The Lamb reveals Christ as the sinless and harmless One, whereas the beast reveals the Antichrist as the cruel and heartless one. The depravity of human nature is revealed by the fact that multitudes will reject the Gospel only to be drawn to the beastly Antichrist.

There are many more Old Testament references to the coming Antichrist which we have neither time nor space to go into. He is called the bloody and deceitful man (Psa. 5:6); the man of the earth (Psa. 10:18); the mighty man (Psa. 52:1); the enemy (Psa. 55:3); the adversary (Psa. 74:8-10); the head over many countries (Psa. 110:6); the violent man (Psa. 140:1); the spoiler (Isa. 16:4-5); the profane and wicked prince of Israel (Ezek. 21:25-27); the little horn (Dan. 7:8); the prince that shall come (Dan. 9:26); the vile person (Dan. 11:21); the willful king (Dan. 11:36); and the idol shepherd (Zech. 11:16-17).

All of the titles given to the Antichrist not only describe his character, they also reveal the fact that he is a literal man in human history. He is not a system, but rather a literal person who will one day be revealed to the unbelieving masses of humanity.

TOM ROSS

Colonial Landmarkism

(Continued from page 469) ♦

ministry. This is seen clearly for, *“In the year of our Lord 1747, the church at Pennepek made choice of the above named Peter Peterson Vanhorn to officiate among them in the work of the ministry; and accordingly appointed a day of fasting and prayer, being the 18th of June, in the year aforesaid. After solemn prayers to God, and a sermon suitable to the occasion, preached by Mr. Jenkin Jones, they proceeded to the ordination of the said person, having called to their assistance their former minister, Mr. Jenkin Jones, and Benjamin Griffith, John Davis, and Joshua Potts, who, by solemn prayer to God, laid their hands upon him and afterwards gave him the right hand of fellowship as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”* (p. 12). Notice that the Church chose Bro. Vanhorn to be their minister – not the association or the board of deacons or the pulpit committee or anybody else! Notice also that they fasted and prayed in connection with this ordination. Today, I fear, many Baptists do not fast and pray but proceed with their ordinations in connection with feasting and presumption. But the point is they ordained pastors in the Landmark way with a presbytery of ordained men called to assist the Church in this work!

In the fourth place, they believed

that baptized groups should remain in mission status when they were too small to be organized into Churches. They did not use the term “mission” to denote such groups of baptized persons, but called them “branch Churches,” but the intent was obvious. Consider what they did in *“1772 The people at Woolwich, in Gloucester, requesting to be constituted into a church, and the ordination of Mr. Locke, were advised from the smallness of their number, as appears by their letter, to join themselves as a branch to a neighboring church, until it shall please the Lord to add to their number.”* (pp. 124, 125). Several other instances where “branch Churches” are spoken of could be supplied, but surely one is enough on this point.

In the fifth place, they believed that when a person was baptized, they were baptized into the membership of the Church authorizing the baptism. This is seen in that they did not believe in baptizing a person apart from that person becoming a member of the Church doing the baptizing. We read about this in the minutes from *“1740”* where we read as follows: *“Query 2 from Piscataqua: Whether it is regular to baptize persons proposing for baptism, upon the plea that they may be at liberty to communicate where they please? Answered in the negative. Neimine contra dicente, for these reasons:- ...”* and they proceeded to give three reasons for their advice, citing pertinent Scriptures to back up their views. Awful, awful, awful Landmarkism!

The quotations cited, if read carefully and understood are sufficient to prove that these people believed and practiced what modern Landmarkers believe and practice.

4. THESE CHURCHES WERE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES:

I understand that the Welsh Tract Baptist Church is now numbered among those who call themselves Primitive or Old School Baptists who are really anti-mission Baptists, but she did not start out that way, for the Churches in this association of which she was a member were properly evangelistic and mission minded as shall be shown by the following quotes, which surely require no comment from me. *“By the formation of new churches, this Association extended over Virginia and New York, embracing a distance of about 400 miles...”* (p. 4). *“It will be seen also that, from the first, it has been an effective missionary body. Hundreds of churches have been gathered by the able and self-denying men, sent out at its expense to regions where no religious privileges had before been enjoyed.”* (p. 5). *“This was the first Baptist Association formed in the United States. From its earliest history it has been forward in the work of Domestic Missions. The pastors were requested and the churches urged, to be liberal in aiding them to visit destitute*

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Colonial Landmarkism

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churches and settlements. Morgan Edwards, in 1771, and John Gano, afterwards, were appointed 'EVANGELISTS' and sent into remote regions, especially South, to preach the gospel, and counsel the feeble churches, and instruct the scattered disciples of Christ." (p.6). *"With the growth of the body, evangelical efforts have correspondingly increased, till the world has become its field..."* (p.8).

Surely this article has set forth sufficient evidence to prove that the first Baptists in North America were independent, sovereign grace, Landmark, missionary Baptists properly organized into New Testament Churches. That being the case, we ask that those who have left our position and those who disagree with our position at least be honest enough to admit that today's independent, sovereign grace, Landmark, missionary Baptist Churches are only following in the footsteps of their spiritual forefathers who lived both in North America and in Wales. Hate and despise us if you will: argue against our position all you wish: but admit it – Today's independent, sovereign grace, Landmark, missionary Baptist Churches continue the faith and practice of their colonial Baptist forefathers. But more importantly, we believe that we are following biblical principles, examples and instructions as we walk in the old paths of our Welsh Baptist forefathers. We think we can do no better than that and that we must so walk according to the New Testament.



Mini-Edition

by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
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Creating Your Own Truth

The Roman Procurator, Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?" The average, sane, level headed common sense person of today should be able to answer this question, as well as give some qualities of truth. One of my college professors, Dr. Elmer Towns, said, "Truth is that which is consistent with itself and corresponds to reality." Professor Webster gives these thoughts for a definition of truth: "The real state of things; the body of real events or facts; CORRECTNESS."

Since God is the first cause of all things, He sets the standard for truth. All truth ultimately comes from Him. If God says something is right, it is. If He says it is wrong, it is. But man does not always agree with God. Truth stands on its

own, but never apart from God. Truth is that which is verifiable by facts. Notice also truth is absolute, not relative. The presence of truth demands the existence of that which is false. If one thing is true, then the opposite of that truth is a lie. One of the first truths uttered by God to man was absolute, concerning death by disobedience in eating of the forbidden fruit. Satan tried to counter the truth of God with His "yea hath God said...?" statement, which has been repackaged and used on man millions of times since Eden.

Truth is absolute, else it cannot be truth. Truth cannot be conditional. When truth becomes relevant because of time, culture or situation, it loses authority and becomes a servant, not a master. When any act can be wrong for me, but right for you, there can be no order or structure in society. Murder, theft, adultery, etc. can be justified. How can we know the truth of what is right or wrong for a society? What sets the standard for that which is considered legal or illegal, and what is the standard for punishment? If emotion or outcome determines right or wrong, then nothing can be ultimately right or wrong, anarchy is the result and no one has to adhere to any laws or principles, since no act can be said to be wrong, malicious, immoral, degrading, sinful or illegal.

Every time a law is broken or enforced, it is a statement of absolute truth. The existence of moral law demands the existence of a lawgiver. Either man has given the law or it came from another source. If man gave it, then it is not absolute, for it can be changed by man. If the consciousness of right and wrong came from another source, then what, who or where is that source? If it came from a source higher than man, then the law transcends man, and man cannot alter it.

In almost all societies world wide, it is usually wrong to steal, kill, defraud, etc. In other words, every culture has standards of conduct considered to be good or bad. Where did these standards originate? Even atheistic humanists will usually admit it is wrong to steal, kill, etc. Where did they get this awareness of right and wrong? What is their standard of measurement? This universal awareness came from God, who put His law in the heart of all men to give them a general revelation of the Creator who is also the divine law giver.

If there is a law and it is broken, then what? Is there accountability and punishment? The accountability is to God first, then man. Notice what Joseph said in the book of Genesis when he refused to commit adultery with the wife of Potipher: "**How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?**" If there is an absolute law higher than man, there must be a lawgiver higher than man and if man breaks His law, man is accountable to Him. And

now we have the rest of the story. Man denies a higher law, thereby denying a higher power, resulting in denial of accountability to the divine judge of the universe. Conclusion? Man can now sin freely.

With the denial of a higher moral law, given by the divine law giver, the stage is set to create your own truth. Abortion is no longer seen as murder, but birth control or a woman's choice. Being male or female is no longer an absolute, determined by God at conception and validated at birth, but gender can now be chosen by the person. And since you are not necessarily male or female, you can now choose which gender you want to marry, that is, if the other person has determined their gender. Stealing is no longer wrong. Redistribution of goods is acceptable if one has more than another, especially if the one lacking was born into poverty, the wrong ethnic background, etc..

People in the media tell us what is truth that we should believe. Science creates truth and tells us the earth is billions of years old, that it came from nothing with no design, and is slowly getting better and better. And you should believe it, because it's in a textbook.

Before taking the stand of testimony in court, a witness has to swear to, "Tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God" which is revealing. Notice, this oath is a confession of man's depravity and his dependence upon God for help in telling the truth. And man certainly needs help in being truthful.

A good perspective on truth is found on the second page of our catalog for Southeastern Baptist College. Here is printed this old Hebrew prayer: "From the cowardice that shrinks from new truths; from the laziness that is content with half truths; and from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth; Oh God of truth, deliver us."

My Dear Wormwater...

I realize among conservative Bible believers and most fundamentalists, Clive Staples Lewis is not a staple in their literary diet. I certainly do not agree with or endorse everything from his pen, however, "The Screwtape Letters" stand alone as genius. This work is an account of an experienced demon instructing his novice demon nephew in the ways of sabotage and subterfuge against Christianity. Below is my version of a Screwtape letter.

My Dear Wormwater,

This is just a note of encouragement for you in your ministry. I have been hearing good reports of your evangelism for our master. Your massive, intense campaign undertaken over the past 40 years has been fruitful. It is evident that lives have been changed, families transformed,

churches altered, and society affected as a whole. I notice as you have used phrases such as "reaching this generation" and "discovering felt needs," people have been encouraged to "make a decision" for our lord. Cunning is your prestidigitation indeed.

Changes in your converts are manifested in lifestyles, churlish attitudes, dress, and worship. As a demon in training, you have excelled in converting the church in your outreach program. In bringing the unconverted to our master's ways, many churches now look, act, talk, think and dress like the world. Instead of the church reaching the world, we have successfully reached the church with the world. The majority of churches today feel the pressure to conform to new and modern standards, with only a few still holding on to "the old paths," as they like to say. How thorough is your work. I commend you for focusing on burning the forest, not just cutting down a couple of trees.

Your "methods change, but the message remains the same" mantra was a stroke of genius. It has beguiled many unsuspecting churchmen into introducing worldly devices into their ministries and worship services they might not otherwise have tolerated. Your perfidy is unmatched. Our father below may even take note of your progress, if your perseverance is relentless.

Man has an insatiable desire to worship. Your mission is to always encourage worship, but incorporate small changes that steer incrementally away from their "worship in spirit and truth," but with the appearance of focusing on the enemy (and always cloaked in stained glass language), yet creating a god for them to worship who is strikingly similar to their divine, yet unmistakably different.

Patience, my dear Wormwater, patience. One cannot eat a whole elephant in one meal, but even the largest pachyderm can be ultimately consumed

♦ (Continued on page 474)

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 10-1-2006 to 10-31-2006

Beginning Balance	\$8,372.63
RECEIPTS:	
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	475.00
TOTAL	8,847.63
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	410.00
Tape Production	260.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	670.00
.....	\$8,177.63
Interest	+2.31
.....	\$8,179.97
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,011.52
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,168.45

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,211.52
RECEIPTS:	
TOTAL	1,211.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	200.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,011.52

Mini-Edition

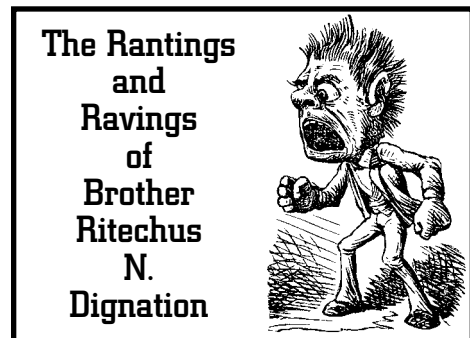
(Continued from page 473) ♦

one bite at a time. Resist the temptation to change the enemy overnight, but continue with small bites.

Your affectionate Uncle and Demon mentor,

Slewtape

"....Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor. 2:11).



The Great Omission??

I'm fired up! I just read a most disturbin' thing. It got me as depressed as a skunk who's just run out of stink juice. It seems there's this fellow preacher who don't believe lost people need savin'. And he's pastor of a Baptist Church over in Alabama. He claims his mission is not to get people ready for eternity, but help folks in the here and now. He is a part of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a bunch of liberal Southern Baptist churches. He's at odds with the conservative SBC leaders, since they're tryin' to reach the Jews. He said it was con-dee-sending to Jewish people to try and convert them. Land sakes alive, I thought it was compassionate. His church has even held joint services with a local Jewish synagogue. And this guy's a Baptist preacher.

Let me begin to straighten out this mess by quoting a Jewish rabbi I've read after a whole lot. Rabbi Shaoul said, **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"** (I Tim. 1:15).

You might know this rabbi as Saul whose name was later changed to Paul. Now folks, I'm not picking on Jewish people, but if you don't have Jesus, whether Jewish or non Jewish, you don't have forgiveness of sins and a relationship with the Father. Period. Another Jewish authority said, **"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12) (Jesus is that name; verse 10).

What kind of Baptist songs do they sing in this church, if they don't believe in bringing folks to Christ? "We have heard the joyful sound, Jesus ???, Jesus ????" "Pass me not, Oh gentle ????" "I love to tell the Story." OF WHAT? How do

you sing traditional hymns in a church like that? Might as well just switch to those non-offensive praise choruses.

Folks, when we cease to preach Jesus and Him crucified and risen for man's sins, all Bible teachin', spiritual work, and religious activities that follow, miss the mark. By the way, in the article I read, he never did say what his mission was. I can tell you what his mission is without the Great Commission: Nuthin'. Zip. Nada. When you throw out the Great Commission, you don't have a mission.

Brother Ritechus N. Dignation

Things That Just Rip My Gizzard

I have a list of things that really get next to me. I mean these things just chap my hide, rip my gizzard and generally hack me off. Everyone probably has a list like this. Ever' once in a while, it's good to blow off a little steam, so here are some things that are on my hit list.

(1) Church Fundraisers- The Lord's got a plan for financing His church and her ministries. That plan don't include selling donuts, having spaghetti suppers, holding car washes and rafflin' off the family dog. God's plan is called the "open your wallet and give cheerfully" plan. Church members ought to tithe and give above the tithe for special things. If the young'uns want to go on a trip, the church ought to be able to take care of it, instead of sendin' them traipsin' up and down the streets sellin' junk that nobody wants to buy anyway. Why, if ever'body in every church just tithed, the church would have to hold special meetin's just to figure out how to use all the extra money for the Lord's work.

(2) Unfaithful Church Workers- The sorry way in which elected workers treat the Lord's work is a shame. I've seen Sunday School teachers not show up and never tell 'nary a soul they weren't coming. I've seen committees elected to take care of important business (any business for the Lord is important) and never hold the first meetin'. If they performed on their money payin' job the way they work for the church, they would be fired before noon on Monday. The Lord's work is not second rate.

(3) Stingy Church Treasurers- Let me explainify. I'm talkin' about treasurers who treat the church's money as their own private stash. In one church I pastored, the treasurer had a conption every time the church voted to spend a penny. The church once voted to spend \$50.00 on needed supplies. When I went to the money man for a check, he balked, turned red in the face, wrote the check and threw it at me. I considered givin' him a holy slap, but declined. The church voted to spend that money. Well, he later resigned and we commenced with spendin'.

(4) Dead Preachin'- Nothing is harder to endure than dead preachin'. Old Brother E. M. Bounds used to say, "Dead men preach dead sermons, and dead sermons kill." I know a preacher who literally puts the congregation to sleep. His people say church is where they get their best nap. Late one night, one of his members couldn't get to sleep, so she called up this preacher and asked him to give her a little devotion on the phone.

She was snoozin' in no time. Now, I know what your thinkin', and No, the preacher don't have to rant, rave, yell, stomp, snort and foam at the mouth to give some good preachin'. Ever'body's different. But every preacher ought to be excited and enthusiastic about his message. And folks can tell if you ain't. Now send me a list of your gripes.

Brother Ritechus N. Dignation

THE

BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read.

Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

DECLINE OF MARRIAGE BAD NEWS FOR U.S.

(EP)--World Congress of Families founder Dr. Allan Carlson warned America of dark days ahead as a new Census Bureau report highlights the further decline of marriage.

According to the recently released America Community Survey, for the first time in our history, married couples (with or without children) now represent a minority of U.S. households -- 49.7% or 55.2 million of the nation's 111.1 million households. The past half-century has seen the steady decline of marriage -- from 76 percent of all households in 1957 to 53 percent in 2000 to just under 50 percent today.

"Marriage is the bedrock of society," Carlson, the author of *Conjugal America: On The Public Purposes of Marriage*, observed. "It's married couples who have children -- guaranteeing society's survival. Married couples care for the elderly and infirm. They provide most of the support for charities and civic activities. Their decline is a harbinger of atomization and fragmentation."

None of this occurred in a vacuum, Carlson noted. "Since the 1960's, our institutions have combined to denigrate marriage and the family. Hollywood offered a jaundiced view of marriage and family life, celebrated extra-marital sex and made self-fulfillment -- not duty -- the highest goal. Our educational institutions, the news media and the bureaucracy reinforced this perspective."

No fault divorce destabilized marriage and created skepticism in the eyes of the young. Tax policy penalized family formation. Relativism demanded no moral judgments of those who chose to live together, sans benefit of clergy.

Said Carlson, "To understand the way that culture drives this phenomenon, consider the following: In conservative Utah County, Utah, married couples represent 69% of households. In liberal Manhattan married couples account for only 26%."

Carlson cautioned, "Unless America is to go the way of Europe, where married couples

are increasingly an endangered species, we must rediscover the importance of marriage in creating social peace and assuring society's future."

PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TAKE FIELD TRIP TO ABORTION FACILITY

(EP)--Family advocates are upset that a group of Pennsylvania high school students visited an abortion clinic on a field trip, but that the teacher would not allow them to listen to pro-life speakers, a Catholic publication reported.

More than a dozen kids from the Solebury School in New Hope, Pa., visited the clinic with social science teacher Jason Gordon as part of a class on activism.

"We're looking at activism throughout history," Gordon told the *Catholic Standard Times*. Eileen Stone, a pro-life advocate, was standing outside the clinic when the bus arrived.

"We tried to encourage them to come down and talk to us, to at least hear the other side of the story," she said. "But they weren't allowed."

Gordon said he didn't allow the kids to hear from the pro-lifers because he didn't want the kids to engage in a debate.

"They're not doing activism inside the clinic, (though) we talked to some of the people inside who are involved in activism," he said. "To talk to these other people, we'd be making a statement for their side."

TEACHER TELLS SECOND-GRADERS HE'S GAY

(EP)--Parents are outraged over a Minneapolis teacher who disclosed his homosexuality to his second-grade class, telling students he and his partner are planning to adopt -- but not telling parents of his plans ahead of time, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reported.

Peter Sage, teaching from the "Families All Matter" curriculum, read a prescribed

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book about a two-mom family. He then went on to explain to the 23 students that he, too, is gay.

According to Sage, he also said that some people have different views of people not like them, describing how he disagreed with his grandfather's negative view of blacks.

When parents complained to the principal, they were told their children could not be reassigned to another class. According to the Family Research Council, some were told they should consider enrolling their kids in a private school.

By law, parents have the right to review curriculum and request their children be excused from parts of it.

Felicia McCorvey Preyer, mother of seven children at the school, said she met with Sage in August.

"I mentioned," she said, "that I did not want my child hearing this information" about gay issues.

Genia Bound, a parent of one of the second-graders, said that while she isn't objecting to Sage's sexual orientation, she considers discussing it with 8-year-olds inappropriate -- and said parents had "no right or say-so" in approving the curriculum.

"On September 15, I gave my kids a big hug after school, but something was clearly wrong," she said. "She (her daughter Darriell) told me that her teacher had read the class a book about a girl with two moms. Then he told them that he's gay and that he and his partner are adopting a child, and the child will have two dads.

"Now Darriell thinks the school is telling her she needs to believe that two daddies or two mommies is the same thing as a mom and a dad."

Principal Laura Bloomberg said the mission of the school is to build "a partnership of diversity, community and technology."

She added that she denied parent requests for transfers because students at the school are placed carefully based on abilities, classroom mix and past performance. She said parents are free to object to the school board or withdraw their children from the school.

Preyer said that instead of supporting parental rights and authority, those who complained were treated with disrespect and even arrogance.

"They treat me," she said, "as if my beliefs are the problem."

SEA SCOUTS APPEAL TO SUPREME COURT DENIED

(EP)--The U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 16 announced it will not hear a case involving a group of California Scouts kicked out of a marina it used for almost 70 years. The Sea Scouts, a branch of the Boy Scouts of America, teach sailing, carpentry and plumbing. The Scouts began using the Berkeley Marina in the 1930s free of charge. In 1997, the city adopted a nondiscrimination policy and a

year later told the Sea Scouts it no longer met requirements for free use of the marina because the group won't allow openly gay or atheist leaders. The group took the decision to court and lost. The California Supreme Court ruled that the city of Berkeley was within its rights to force the Scouts to begin to pay for marina privileges despite the fact that other non-profits use the public boat slip for free. Eugene Evans, a Sea Scout leader, said the group removed two of its three boats because it could not afford the rent. Evans has paid \$500 a month out of his own pocket in order to keep the third.

ANOTHER FEDERAL VICTORY FOR MARRIAGE

(EP)--The U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 10 declined to hear a challenge to the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) -- the latest in a string of court decisions that has reinforced traditional marriage. The court effectively sided with U.S. District Judge Gary Taylor, who dismissed the case in 2005. It was filed by a same-sex couple seeking to overturn California's definition of marriage -- by overturning the federal DOMA. Taylor ruled there is no fundamental right to same-sex marriage. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld his ruling earlier this year.

TRANSIT EMPLOYEE DOESN'T HAVE TO DRIVE BUS WITH GAY ADS

(EP)--A Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro Transit employee who did not want to drive a bus displaying ads featuring homosexuals will be assigned vehicles with a different display, 365Gay.com reported. The transit authority, working with the gay magazine Lavender, agreed to place ads on 50 buses with the slogan, "Unleash Your Inner Gay." Bob Gibbons, a Metro Transit spokesman, said a female driver who was not comfortable with the ads was told by company officials she would not be assigned to any bus carrying them. "The decision has nothing to do with the content of the advertisement," he said. "It has everything to do with the employee's religious beliefs."

HATE CRIMES MOSTLY INVOLVE RACE AND RELIGION

(EP)--Race-based incidents make up 55 percent of hate crimes, according to a new report released by the FBI. Religion motivated the second largest number of hate crimes, or 17 percent of all hate crimes. Hate crimes based on a victim's sexual orientation ranked near the bottom. The FBI tracks "bias crimes" reported to the police. In 2005, there were more than 7,000 hate crimes reported in the U.S. More than 3,000 hate-crime offenses documented by the FBI were against property -- such as racial graffiti.

FOLEY SCANDAL HURTING GAYS MORE THAN REPUBLICANS BALLOT INITIATIVES, IF PASSED, WILL HOLD JUDGES ACCOUNTABLE

(EP)-- Christians have been complaining

about judicial activism for years, but the folks in Colorado are going to do something about it. They've put a referendum on the ballot that calls for term limits on the Supreme Court justices in the state. Currently, justices must be re-elected every ten years, and can be re-elected for life. The referendum would put a limit of one term on the justices. A South Dakota referendum would allow judges to be sued by citizens for decisions they think are bad ones.

N. J. SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS SAME-SEX COUPLES

(EP)--The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled on Oct. 25 that same-sex couples are entitled to all the rights and benefits enjoyed by opposite-sex couples. The Court ordered the state legislature to enact legislation within 180 days that would either include same-sex couples in the existing marriage laws, or create a parallel statutory structure. Gay activists hailed the Court's decision as an enormous victory.

The ruling overturned two lower court decisions that had dismissed the complaint brought by seven same-sex couples, which alleged that state restrictions of marriage to the union of one man and one woman violated the liberty and equal protection guarantees of the state constitution. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in favor of same-sex unions despite the fact that current state law defines marriage as between one man and one woman and despite the fact the court acknowledged there is no fundamental right to same-sex marriages.

PROTESTS PROMPT NBC TO DROP MADONNA CRUCIFIXION SCENE

(EP)--NBC announced that a concert special starring Madonna, slated to air Nov. 22, will not include a segment featuring the singer in a mock crucifixion. Controversy erupted when NBC announced its intention to air a scene featuring the singer wearing a crown of glittering thorns as she perched on a mirrored cross during one song. Mocking the crucifixion of Christ has been a trademark of Madonna for many years. A 1989 music video for the song "Like A Prayer" featured burning crosses, statues crying blood and Madonna, representing Jesus, freeing a saint from his sexual repression by seducing him. Though officials did not give a reason for the decision, Donald Wildmon, chairman of the American Family Association (AFA), said the more than 750,000 e-mail sent to NBC was the likely catalyst. Bill Dohohue, president of the Catholic League, told The Associated Press that he was disappointed in NBC for its failure to explain the decision. "NBC did the right thing, but the fact that it did not say why the offensive part of Madonna's concert was cut shows cowardice," he said.

FELONY CHARGES DROPPED AGAINST MOTHER WHO KILLED BABY

(EP)--A 22-year-old Virginia woman who shot herself in the stomach in order to kill her preborn child will not face legal

consequences, LifeNews reported. Tammy Skinner, who reportedly had been suffering from depression, initially told police she had been shot by a stranger. Further investigation revealed the wounds that killed her baby one day before its due date were self-inflicted. Last May, a state judge refused to certify the charge of illegal abortion, so prosecutors chose to pursue charges through a grand jury. After meeting twice, the grand jury failed to bring an indictment against Skinner. A circuit court judge dismissed the latest felony charge of producing an abortion or miscarriage. Marie Walls, attorney for the Suffolk Commonwealth, said her office is out of opportunities to hold Skinner accountable for the death of her baby. "At this point our options are done," she said. "It's a matter for the Legislature to address." Lawmakers in many states have passed legislation making it a crime to harm a preborn child in the course of committing a crime, but such laws routinely exempt the actions of the mother.

STREET PREACHERS THREATENED WITH JAIL TIME

(EP)--An attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) has filed a lawsuit against Gulfport, Miss., and its chief of police on behalf of two men threatened with arrest for expressing their faith on a public sidewalk. Shannon Wallace and Wesley Sewell were holding signs and speaking about their Christian beliefs through a loudspeaker when police demanded they stop or face arrest. The two men were then advised to obtain a permit if they wished to continue street preaching. When the pair approached city officials for such a permit, they were told no such policy existed and such speech would result in arrest for disturbing the peace. Austin Nimock, an ADF-affiliated attorney, said city officials and the Police Department cannot be allowed to disregard citizens' rights. "The First Amendment protects Christian speech and forbids the government from censoring it," he said. "Both Mr. Wallace and Mr. Sewell acted entirely within their rights when they chose to engage in religious expression on a public sidewalk. The city's harassment of these individuals and their activities is unconstitutional."

BUSH DECRIES N.J. MARRIAGE RULING

(EP)--President Bush criticized the New Jersey Supreme Court today for ordering the state Legislature to grant homosexual couples the same rights as married couples -- either by passing a law legalizing same-sex marriage or by creating civil unions.

"We believe in family values. We believe values are important," Bush said during a speech in Des Moines, Iowa. "And we believe marriage is a fundamental institution of civilization."

Yesterday in New Jersey, we had another activist court issue a ruling that raises doubts about the institution of marriage. I believe that marriage is a union between a man and a woman, and I believe it's a sacred institution that is critical to the health of our society

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and the well-being of families, and it must be defended.”

MOST AMERICANS OPPOSE FEDERAL FUNDING OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS

(EP)--Half of the nation's evangelical Christians do not support government funding of faith-based organizations, a survey shows. A study released Oct. 25 by the Baylor Religion Survey show that 50 percent of evangelicals, and 65 percent of the total population, think federal funding of religious organizations is inappropriate. Only 26 percent of the total respondents surveyed said they agree with such funding.

GAY MEGACHURCH NOW PART OF UCC

(EP)--The Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, the world's largest gay-friendly congregation, has been accepted as a member of the United Church of Christ (UCC). Officials at the UCC's North Texas Association granted the 4,300-member church congregational standing on Oct. 28, according to Religion News Service. That makes the church the fourth-largest congregation in the 1.2 million member UCC. Until 2002, the church was affiliated with the predominantly gay Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

MARRIAGE AMENDMENTS REMAIN POPULAR WITH VOTERS IN '06

(EP)--Eight states had constitutional amendments to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman on the ballot this year. Over the last two years, all 20 states that considered such amendments have passed them -- but this year, the battle took an uphill turn, and the first chink may have appeared in values voters' armor against activist judges looking to reweave the fabric of society.

It appears seven of the eight amendments passed -- but in Arizona, with 92 percent of precincts reporting, the measure was trailing, 48-52 percent. The sticking point was 300,000 early ballots in Maricopa County.

Elsewhere, the amendments passed, but sometimes only by the slimmest of margins: Colorado voters passed Amendment 43 by 57 percent and also refused to create domestic partnerships for same-sex couples with Ref. I, which failed with only 45 percent of the vote; Idaho passed Amendment 2 by 65 percent; South Carolina's Amendment 1 coasted to an easy win with 76 percent; South Dakota's Amendment C squeaked in with 52 percent; Tennessee's Amendment 1 carried the night with 81 percent; and Virginia passed Question 1 with 57 percent of the vote.

Tuesday's election brings the total number of amendments defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman to state constitutions to 27, with Arizona's still

too close to call. If control of the U.S. Senate slips to the Democratic Party, it would mean they would also control the Senate Judiciary Committee. And that means activist judges -- like the ones in Massachusetts and New Jersey, who ordered their state legislatures to either legalize gay marriage or pass a law creating its equivalent -- would possibly be increasing in federal posts.

ACLU DEFENDS RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

(EP)--The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) finds itself in an unusual position: arguing on behalf of the religious liberties of an inmate who feels called to preach. The Rhode Island Department of Corrections told Wesley Pratt to stop preaching, but the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) supports the right of prisoners to exercise their faith. So the ACLU has taken up his case. Patricia Coyne-Fague, a spokeswoman for the Department of Corrections, said, "Allowing Mr. Pratt to preach to an inmate congregation would place him in a position of leadership," she said, "which, for us, represents a threat to security." Steven Brown, a spokesman for the ACLU, "We're arguing that the prison simply cannot interfere with Mr. Pratt's clear exercise of religious freedom based on mere speculation and generalized concerns."

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS AVERAGE THIRD WORLD CHRISTIAN HAS NO BIBLE

(EP)--Research by Christian Booksellers Association and Zondervan Publishers indicates that the average American Christian owns nine Bibles and is actively in the market for more. However, the average Christian in the Third World has no Bible. That statistic troubled Christian Resources International Executive Director Fred Palmerton, whose organization receives more than 250 letters a month from pastors and Christian workers in developing countries whose churches own no Bibles or Christian books. "Every day, more than 122,000 people become Christians, and most of those people are in Africa, Asia, and South America," reports Palmerton, who serves as a volunteer. "They're attending churches where even the pastors have no Bibles. In our country, the church isn't growing so much. But the pile of Bibles on every Christian's bookshelf sure is." CRI has launched an initiative asking for Christians to donate their Bibles so they can be re-distributed to pastors and Christian leaders in the Third World.

QUEBEC PRIVATE SCHOOLS MUST TEACH EVOLUTION

(EP)--Quebec's education ministry has warned private, unlicensed evangelical schools in the province they must teach Darwin's theory of evolution and sex education or face closure, according to Religion News Service. The education ministry said Oct. 24 that the province will negotiate some evangelical schools to determine whether they can meet provincial standards that include the

teaching of evolution. If the negotiations do not satisfy education officials, the schools could be forced to close or find that their graduates will not be deemed qualified for higher education.

NICARAGUA BANS ALL ABORTIONS

(EP)--The Nicaraguan Congress voted unanimously Oct. 26 to outlaw all abortions in the country without exception.

Earlier this month several hundred thousand Nicaraguans marched to the steps of the National Assembly to present a petition with 300,000 signatures requesting such a ban.

Thomas Euteneuer, president of Human Life International, an organization with more than 90 affiliates in 75 countries, called the victory "an answer to the sincere prayers of millions of Nicaraguans."

"I congratulate these lawmakers for the courage that they have displayed by voting to boldly and unequivocally stand for the protection of the innocent unborn," he said in a statement, "despite overwhelming international pressure to vote in favor of the status quo." He was referring to a letter signed by United Nations officials warning of

negative economic consequences if a ban is imposed.

"This vote is not only an unparalleled victory for the sanctity and dignity of all human life," Euteneuer said, but has sent a clear message to the international community that thinly-veiled United Nations-instigated extortion letters will not work."

The bill must now be signed into law by President Enrique Bolanos, who faces extreme pressure from pro-abortion groups.

"Nicaraguans have made clear that they are proudly pro-life," Euteneuer said. "It is my sincere prayer that this support will embolden President Bolanos to sign this bill into law."

According to a story released by UPI in Washington, DC, lawmakers voted 52-0 in favor of banning abortions, even in the case of life-threatening pregnancies.

Marc Lacey writing for the New York Times from Mexico City, said that the ban even includes cases of rape and when the life of the mother is in danger.

Nicaragua joins El Salvador and Chile as the only countries in the western hemisphere to ban abortion without exception.



Which Way, Brethren?

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

For years I have lived and labored among Sovereign Grace, Independent Baptist people. Whatever length of days God may grant to me in the future, I expect to spend them with the same people. In my early ministry I lived and labored among associational Baptists. It was my choice and conviction which made me associate myself with Sovereign Grace Independent Baptists. God knows that I love these dear people. Hence what I am about to say is said in love but in the truth. It is said with a prayer that my statements may cause my brethren to consider and to cure some errors which are beginning to prevail among the brotherhood. May the Lord grant that we shall have reform and revival before our Saviour returns.

As a people we are quick to point out the errors of associational and convention Baptists. God knows that both these bodies of Baptists have numerous problems. But do we not have problems also? Are we not sometimes guilty of taking pride and pleasure in pointing out the problems of others while ignoring our own? I greatly fear we are. Hence in this article I shall dare to do what few have ever done---point out our own problems. This gives me pain, not pleasure.

A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP

The Scriptures teach that we are duty-bound to mark and avoid those that teach doctrines contrary to the

Bible (Rom. 16:17-18). I do not believe we ought to hold union meetings with unbaptized heretics. I do not believe we ought to compromise our convictions. I am not saying the Bible contains some non-essentials. But I do feel we make too many things a test of fellowship. I do not believe we should separate from every Christian and church which does not agree with us completely. This is to make us isolationists who have fellowship with no one. Baptist brethren who are agreed in the main on the great doctrines should be able to have both Christian and church fellowship. They should not be engaged all the time in fussing and fighting.

There are some areas in which I believe we should be able to disagree agreeably. On some points we should not be too dogmatic. Instead of always pointing out things we don't agree upon, why don't we call attention to what we do agree upon? Would this not make more sense? Would this not bring about an improvement of our fellowship and peace? Yes, it most certainly would! Too many times we say I like brother so-and-so, but. . .(then follows a long list of our disagreements with him). This is all wrong. It is contrary to the way Baptists have worked together in the past.

Some things are being made a test of fellowship which should not be made such a test in my opinion. I will point out a few: head-covering or no head-covering for women in church, tithing and non-tithing, mission boards or no

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mission boards, wine or grape juice in the Lord's Supper, Post-Trib and Pre-Trib, pants on women or dresses, etc. On all these points I have very deep-seated convictions. These convictions have been declared in print, and I have not changed my mind about any of them! However, I refuse to separate myself from every brother and church who may not agree with me on these things.

My motto has always been in the great doctrines unity, in matters of doubtful questions liberty, but in all things love. Oh, that our Baptist brethren could believe and practice this principle. To do so would greatly restore our ever-declining fellowship and unify our efforts against our real enemies--- Satan and his crowd. But all too many times you must completely agree with a brother, or he will break fellowship and declare you a heretic.

I do not think Satan is overly upset with our kind of Baptists. We are too busy fighting each other to have time to take on the Devil and his crowd. We do not know who our enemies really are. Many suppose the enemy is a brother who disagrees with us on some little point of Bible doctrine. Our enemies are Communists, liberal theologians, universal church contenders, evil world rulers, witches, false cults, false churches, false teachers, demons, fallen angels, and the Devil. Let us terminate our civil war among the brotherhood and direct our attention toward our real foes who ever seek our destruction. Then we will demonstrate sanity and common sense.

DANGEROUS DOCTRINAL TRENDS

One of the strong points of our people has always been our belief in the local church to the exclusion of the universal, invisible church. However, this worthy fortress is now threatened by radical forces on both the right and left hand. The radical right group of our people has exalted the church above Christ. To them salvation is in the church and to be in Christ is to be in the church. This is nothing but sacerdotalism, pure and simple. It is old Catholic heresy from the Dark Ages and Campbellite heresy of today. This radical position has greatly disturbed our people and driven some of our young preachers into the camp of Reformed Baptists.

On the other hand, there is even a more alarming trend. It is a growing weakness on church truth. Churches are granting and receiving letters from liberal and apostate Baptist churches. Ordination to the ministry is being made a non-essential. The belief continues to grow among our people of a universal bride. This doctrine is especially being put forth in one of our

religious schools to our young preachers. To my knowledge none of these brethren as of yet hold to universal, invisible church heresy. However, in my opinion they have taken the first step in that direction. Today a future universal church in Heaven, tomorrow a universal, invisible church on earth? Will this trend turn out a generation of weak preachers on the church and finally destroy our Landmark position and make way for our entrance into the one-world church? Time will tell.

MORAL EROSION

Our people have to a limited degree been influenced by the New Morality. More and more I see a lowering of moral standards. Divorce and remarriage is too commonplace in our churches. Even preachers and deacons forsake the wife of their youth. One preacher ravished a young girl. Another moved into the house with a woman who was not his wife. Some churchgoers had sooner lie than tell the truth. Still others refuse to pay their honest debts. Some refuse to do any of these things but spend all their time trying to justify the failures of their brethren. I have less respect for the latter than any of the former.

Those brethren who dare to take a strong stand on morality are called "legalistic fanatics." I grant that some brethren can go farther on some things than the Bible does. But does not the real danger lie in getting too near the world? Would it not be better to be Puritans (some of the old Baptists were called such for their moral stand) than Antinomians? Will any of us regret having lived too much for the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ? I fear we are rapidly moving into an anything-goes idea which will ruin our testimony before a lost world. Nothing can be religiously right which is morally wrong.

Our churches must remain morally strong; otherwise, we shall become spiritually weak. It is impossible to be spiritually strong and morally weak at the same time. We have the truth, and we ought to live like we do. We should preach a higher standard of holy living than the "Holy Rollers." Let us "**abstain from all appearance of evil**" (I Thess. 5:22) and "**cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God**" (II Cor. 7:1).

MISSIONARY WORK

It is not denied that some of our churches have settled down in a cold hardshellism and do little or no mission work. This is said to our shame. But this is the exception, not the general rule. In the main our churches are missionary in profession and practice. We differ only on whether the work should be done through the local church or through an extra-Scriptural mission board. This writer sincerely hopes to live to see the

day when mission boards will not exist to divide our people, and when we can all unite in supporting only church-sent missionaries who preach and practice the truth.

This old division has now merged into a third division among the anti-board Baptists. The big issue before many churches is whether a missionary should give a report of his work to supporting churches, consisting of even a detailed financial report. Some have declared in print an anything-goes policy. They do not want to know anything about how the money is used. These brethren would not give such a privilege to their own church treasures. This excessive liberty allows for mishandling of mission money and corruption on the mission field.

What has such excessive liberty produced? Do we dare to stop and consider? One missionary was believed to be doing a great work. Visitors to the mission field would see great crowds and souls being saved. One day a man visited unannounced. He discovered the missionary was running a hotel with a bar. There was no church and no souls being saved. The missionary had hired people to pretend for the former visitors.

Another missionary was reputed to be sound and successful. But one day a man went to investigate the work first hand. He found the missionary drinking and playing cards with the very people he was supposed to convert. Still another missionary whom the church liberally supported has built an empire on the mission field. Further investigation revealed shady financial dealings and the fact that some of the churches were built by taking excluded members, from non-Baptist churches, who had two wives. "**My brethren, these things ought not so to be**" (Jas. 3:10), but they will continue until our churches stand up and demand responsible missionary work.

I say let all missionaries give a report of how the mission money is used as well as the number of souls saved and churches established. The supporting churches have a right to know this, and good business demands that such reports be given. I believe that our churches will support liberally responsible and sound missionaries. Our church supports four such good men, although we are small in number and hard-pressed financially. Any missionary who refuses to furnish a detailed financial report probably has something to hide. The churches should investigate such people. Sovereign Grace, Independent Baptists need no religious racketeers.

I pray that God will send us more church-sent missionaries. I stand ready to pray for them and to help support them. However, I have no prayers, support or promotion for those who cannot

scripturally qualify as a missionary, and who refuse to give a doctrinal statement and a detailed financial report.

So, brethren, which way shall we go? Will we arrest doctrinal apostasy before it is too late? Will we revive our old moral codes? Will we have responsible missionaries, or irresponsible ones?



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 10-1-2006 to 10-31-2006

Beginning Balance.....\$6,515.68

RECEIPTS:

B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	36.24
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	716.72
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....	60.00
Berea M. B.C., Mansfield, OH.....	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN.....	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX.....	100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID.....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY.....	150.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....	25.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL.....	50.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Gene Flynn, Craigs ville, WV	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL.....	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....	35.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC.....	50.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA.....	100.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC.....	75.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM.....	500.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH.....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
New Testament B. C., Leivasy, WV	100.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA.....	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL.....	100.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS.....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC ..	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH.....	75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Wayne Huffman, McNeil, AR	80.00
Subscriptions	183.00
Anon.....	225.00
Dividing Checks	200.00
Sub Total	\$4,380.96
TOTAL.....	\$10,896.64

EXPENDITURES:

Printing (2 months).....	634.69
Postage	1067.13
Wages	2,240.00
FICA	171.31
Dividing Checks	200.00
Supplies	459.05
Total Expenditures	4,772.18
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,124.46

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Citrus Missionary Baptist Church 6690 Turner-Camp Rd, Inverness, FL 34453 and Pastor Troy Sheppard, will be hosting a Bible Conference on December 15th -17th.

Various speakers are scheduled. For more information call (352) 860-1636 or (352) 464-1636.

Elder Roger Reed has resigned the pastorate of the Berea Missionary Baptist Church of Mansfield, OH and has accepted the pastorate of the Meadow Creek Baptist Church in Sunberry, OH. This is the church the late John R. Lenegar pastored before the Lord took him home.

Please be in prayer for both churches and Bro. Reed.

Elder Don Pennington went home to be with the Lord on November 9th. He was pastor of the Victory Baptist Church of Courtland, VA.

Please remember Sister Barbara and the family in your prayers.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, Kansas is pleased to announce that they will be having their annual Bible Conference December 1st thru 3rd.

The church would like to extend an invitation to all.

The services will be held at Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, 400 N Main St., Caldwell, KS on December 1st, 2nd, and 3rd (Friday night through Sunday evening). The Conference will begin with a fellowship dinner prior to the services at approximately 5:30 p.m. on December 1st at the Church's Fellowship Hall located at 603 N Osage St. in Caldwell, KS.

Guest Speakers include Elders Arthur Blevins, Roger Dohrer, Timothy B. Hille, Timothy John Hille, Bill McDaniel, David O'Neal, and Larry Wilson. If you have any questions regarding the conference (directions, lodging, etc.) contact Pastor Nathaniel R. Hille by email: nhille@gmail.com, or phone, (620) 845-3624 or (620) 845-2432.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Donald Coppedge at (618) 288-4236. Or write to Landmark Baptist Church, 107 Meyer Dr., Collinsville, IL 62234.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Annville, KY will be hosting a special meeting December 15th, 16th and 17th. Meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. Friday and 10:00 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. Elder Mike DeWitt from Springfield, OR and Pastor Steve Flinchum will be preaching.

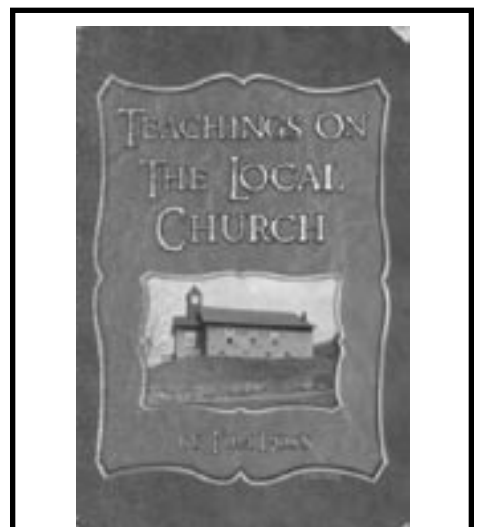
Meals will be served Saturday and

Sunday with time to visit and fellowship. For directions and information contact Pastor Flinchum at (606) 364-3162 or by email at: mail@landmarkbaptists.org.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Northport, AL will be having special services January 19th-21st with Elder Dana Douglas, pastor of the Grace Baptist Church of Corbin, KY, speaking.

This meeting will be held in conjunction with the area fellowship meeting on Saturday January 20th.

For more information contact Pastor Todd Bryant at (205) 242-8466 or email toddbryant@charter.net.



Thanks to all those who supported this project. God willing, my hope is to redo *Abandoned Truth: The Doctrines of Grace* in the first quarter of 2007 if there is enough interest in the reprint. I will be sending an email and a letter out with exact information prior to starting the project. I plan on offering an optional Study Guide that I developed for a correspondence college course for those who want it. I plan on taking pre-paid orders just like I did with *Teachings on the Local Church*. If there is enough interest, I will proceed. If not, I will shelve the project until a later date.

My goal is to start putting out one or two quality Baptist books per year. I am hoping to print a new volume in the Fall of 2007 entitled *The Fruit of the Spirit*. I am also working on *Expository Sermons on Acts*, a book on the subject of prayer, and some other commentaries. At the time of this announcement there are approximately 75 copies of *Teachings on the Local Church* available. This book consists of 370 pages dealing specifically with the doctrines and practices relating to "church truth".

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH 45680

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