

God Promises All Believers *ETERNAL* Life

Louis A. Turk, B.A., Div. PhD.
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"And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even *ETERNAL LIFE*." (1 John 2:25)

God's gracious promise to give eternal life to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the best news of all ages. Anyone including you--can receive eternal life by simply believing God's promise. Have you believed God's promise? If you die today are you absolutely certain you will go to Heaven?

Beware lest you make God a liar by disbelieving His promise to give eternal life to everyone that receives Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. Because if you do not believe that once a person believes in Jesus Christ he is saved once and forever by the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have NEVER really trusted in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, you are lost in your sins, and you are heading straight to Hell. This is true even if you have been baptized and are an active church member, and is true even if you are a Sunday school teacher or preacher.

This is written, not to offend, but out of genuine concern for your soul. Because, repeat it, if you do not believe in the eternal security of the blood-bought believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have NEVER been saved, and except you repent of your unbelief you will end up eternally tormented in the flames of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone:

But the fearful, and UNBELIEVING, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Rev. 21:8)

PEOPLE IN HELL HAVE NEVER KNOWN CHRIST

Said the Lord Jesus Christ:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I NEVER knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Mat. 7:21- 23)

Who is this verse referring to when it says "he that doeth the will of my father"? Not those who have "done many wonderful works," but rather BELIEVERS in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and Christ will NOT lose or cast out God's children. "For ye are all the CHILDREN of God by FAITH in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; AND HIM THAT COMETH TO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I SHOULD LOSE NOTHING, but should raise it up again at the last day. AND THIS IS THE WILL OF HIM THAT SENT ME, that every one seeth the Son, and BELIEVETH on him, may have EVERLASTING LIFE: and I WILL raise him up at the last day. (John 6:37-40)

Note in Matt. 7:21-23 above that on the judgment day Jesus will tell all religious, but UNBELIEVING, professing Christians. "I NEVER knew you." He will NOT say to them, "I once knew you, but then you sinned and lost your salvation."

People who believe that salvation can be lost are trusting in their own religious works to save them, and are not trusting in Christ. They believe that they are doing "many wonderful works," perhaps even including having "cast out devils," and are therefore worthy of salvation. Because they are trusting in their own good works instead of in the finished work of Christ upon the cross, they have NEVER been saved.

SALVATION IS BY GRACE, NOT BY WORKS

The reason some people believe a saved person can lose his salvation is because they believe good works are necessary for salvation. Yet they know in their hearts that their works are often sinful, not good. Therefore, such people believe that you cannot know for sure that you will make it to Heaven until after the Judgment Day. Then, "If your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds", they reason, "you will be allowed into Heaven. Otherwise, you will go to Hell or Purgatory." This is a tragic misunderstanding (or rejection) of what the Bible teaches about salvation.

The Bible very clearly tells us that salvation is by God's grace through faith in the finished work of Christ, and is *NOT* of our own works.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that NOT of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)

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; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Tit. 3:5-7)

None of us are worthy of salvation. If we get what we deserve, we will all end up in Hell.

For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. (Ecc. 7:20)

But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and ALL our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we ALL do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (Isa. 64:6)

As it is written, There is NONE righteous, NO. NOT ONE: there is NONE that understandeth, there is NONE that seeketh after God. They are ALL gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is NONE that doeth good, NO, NOT ONE (Rom. 3:10-12)

For ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Rom. 2:23)

Without Jesus Christ, none of us are righteous, none of us are good, and none of us are profitable to God. Quite to the contrary, without Christ, all of us are unclean, all of our righteousnesses are filthy, and we sin continually. Only because of the finished work of Christ is there hope for us wicked sinners.

For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

SALVATION IS ETERNAL

As the above verse illustrates, the Bible very clearly tells us that the salvation Jesus Christ authored is ETERNAL salvation.

So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another *place*, *Thou art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of ETERNAL SALVATION unto at them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. (Heb. 5:5-10)

EVERLASTING MEANS NEVER ENDING

It is amazing how many people do not understand the meaning of the words everlasting and eternal. They claim to have everlasting life; yet, claim that they can lose it if they fall into sin. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "everlasting" as "never coming to an end; lasting forever; eternal." Now to lose life is to die. Death ends life. Life is not eternal life or everlasting life if it can end in death.

Over and over again in the Bible Jesus promises eternal life or everlasting life to all who place their faith in Him. Here are just a few examples:

- And this is the promise that he bath promised us, even *ETERNAL LIFE*. (1 John 2:25)
- That whosoever believeth in him should *NOT PERISH*, but have *ETERNAL LIFE*. (John 3:15)
- My sheep hear my voice, and I *KNOW* them, and they follow me: and I give unto them *ETERNAL LIFE*; and they shall *NEVER PERISH*, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and *NO MAN IS ABLE TO PLUCK THEM OUT OF MY FATHER'S NAND*. *I* and *my* Father are one. (John 10:27-30)
- But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end *EVERLASTING LIFE*. For the wages of sin *is* death; but the *GIFT* of God *is* *ETERNAL LIFE* through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 6:22-23)
- In hope of *ETERNAL LIFE*, which God, that cannot lie, *PROMISED* before the world began. (Titus 1:2)
- *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; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his *GRACE*, we should be made heirs according to the hope of *ETERNAL LIFE*. (Titus 3:5.7)
- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should *NOT PERISH*, but have *EVERLASTING LIFE*. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is *NOT CONDEMNED*: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3.16-18)
- He that believeth on the Son *HATH EVERLASTING LIFE*: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:36)
- Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath *EVERLASTING LIFE*,

and shall *NOT* come into condemnation; but IS *PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE*. (John 5:24)

- And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have *EVERLASTING LIFE* (John 6:40)

Now if Jesus is the author of eternal salvation, who, we must ask, is the author of non-eternal salvation? Surely, none other than Satan himself. People worshipping a non-eternal, salvation-giving Jesus are actually worshipping Satan himself without realizing it!

BEWARE OF "ANOTHER" JESUS WHO PROMISES NON-ETERNAL SALVATION

The Jesus of the Bible is the author of *ETERNAL* salvation. The Jesus of the Bible gives all those who believe in Him *EVERLASTING* life. The Jesus of the Bible saves repentant believing sinners and *KEEPS* them saved. The Jesus of the Bible does not need us to help Him save our souls. He is *FULLY* capable of saving us *ALL BY HIMSELF*. He does not need our help to keep us saved; he keeps all believers saved *ALL BY HIMSELF*.

Some people, however, believe in a different Jesus than the Jesus of the Bible. They believe in a Jesus that is weak and powerless and cannot finish what he starts. Their Jesus is, in fact, a liar, for he promises eternal life, supposedly gives it to people when they believe in him, but then, that "eternal" life *ENDS* when they sin. The eternal life he gives is fake, and he is a fraud. He starts to save people, but is unable to finish the job. Thus, in reality, he is of no use whatsoever, for people have to end up saving themselves by their good works anyway. They are thus stronger than their phony, useless, counterfeit Jesus. *THEY ARE REALLY TRUSTING IN THEMSELVES. THEY ARE THEIR OWN GODS.* Their Jesus is a creation of human imagination--they have created and must do for their god, rather than God creating and doing for them, and so they are actually greater than their Jesus. *VAIN PRIDE* is the basic reason this false Jesus and false gospel is so popular.

The apostle Paul wrote the following divinely inspired words to the churches at Galatia and Corinth concerning this phony gospel and phony Jesus:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the *GRACE* of Christ unto *ANOTHER* gospel: which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and would *PERVERT* the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *LET HIM BE ACCURSED*. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, *LET HIM BE ACCURSED*. (Gal. 1:6-9)

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as a chaste virgin* to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth *ANOTHER* Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if ye receive ANOTHER* spirit, which ye have not received, or *ANOTHER* gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him....* For such *are FALSE* apostles, *DECEITFUL* workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (2 Cor. 11:2-15)

TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION

Realizing the meaning of *eternal* salvation and *ever lasting* life—that is, that eternal does mean eternal, and everlasting does mean everlasting—, some people who reject the doctrine of once saved always saved defend their position by saying that no one is saved until God judges his works on the Judgment Day. Therefore, according to these people salvation does not come at the moment we put our faith in Christ, but rather sometime after physical death.

Such an idea, however, does not originate with the Bible. For example, when wicked tax collector Zacchaeus trusted Christ as personal Lord and Savior, he was saved that very day.

And Jesus said unto him, THIS DAY is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:9-10)

Also, the Bible never says that the Judgment Day is the day of salvation. Rather it says, "behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2)

"I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE"

The Lord Jesus very plainly promises that He will not blot the names of overcomers out of the book of life:

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will NOT blot out his name out of the book of life, but I WILL confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Rev. 3:5)

That certainly means once saved always saved for overcomers. Who then are these overcomers? And do they overcome by their good works or by their faith in Christ? We are not left to guess.

Whosoever BELIEVETH that Jesus is the Christ *is* born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.... For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our FAITH. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that BELIEVETH that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4.5)

Every human being's name was written in the book of life before the foundation of the world, but the names of those who die without trusting Christ as their Lord and Saviour are blotted out.

Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. (Ps 69:28)

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book. (Rev. 22:19)

IF A BELIEVER'S WORK BE BURNED, HE SHALL SUFFER LOSS: BUT HE HIMSELF SHALL BE SAVED

What about a person that gets saved, but backslides? Won't that person lose his salvation? Not if he really got saved. Anyone who has placed his faith in Christ Jesus has laid a sure and everlasting foundation for his life.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: BUT HE HIMSELF SHALL BE SAVED; YET SO AS BY FIRE. (1 Cor. 3:11-15)

In other words, if a believer's works do not meet with God's approval, he will lose all rewards on the Judgment Day—a horrible and eternal loss. "But he himself shall be saved;" he will *NOT* lose his soul!

While the life you live is certainly important, of much more importance is the foundation upon which you build your life. Mat. 7:24 speaks of the "wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." 1 Cor. 10:4b says: "...and that Rock was Christ."

I once knew a man who hired an unscrupulous contractor to build his home. Alas, while he was away the contractor poured a shallow, unreinforced foundation. Upon this paper shell foundation was built a luxury home with the very finest of materials. Even before it was finished, great cracks appeared in all the walls, and it began to sink in one corner. Its ruin was great, and there was no remedy. So is a seemingly clean and moral person, doing many good works, but who has never trusted Christ as personal Lord and Savior. Without the foundation of Christ, cracks will soon develop in his golden life to

render it ruined, and he will die to spend eternity in the torments of the flames of Hell.

Lot is an example of a saved person who wasted his life, yet was still saved. The Bible says he "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12). He eventually got so far away from God that he got drunk, and in his drunkenness got both his daughters pregnant (Gen. 19:30-36). Yet, in the eyes of God Lot was still considered a "just" and "righteous"—though miserable—man. The Bible says that God "delivered JUST Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that RIGHTEOUS man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* RIGHTEOUS soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)" (2 Pet. 2:7-8).

Cain is an example of a lost religious man. He believed there is a God, and even gave an offering to God. But his offering was bloodless, showing that he was trusting in his own good works to save him, and was not trusting in the coming virgin-born Messiah who would shed His blood on a cruel cross for the sins of the world.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. (Gen. 4:3-8)

Cain was never saved, and so did not lose his salvation. One cannot lose that which one never had. Being religious will not save your soul: only Jesus can save your soul. Believing God exists is not saving faith. Believing Jesus Christ died on the cross to give you eternal salvation (once saved always saved type salvation) is saving faith, without which you will go to Hell.

"I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE NOR FORSAKE THEE"

One of the most comforting verses in the Bible is Heb. 13:5 which says, "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE.*"

A similar verse is John 6:37 where Jesus promises, "...and him that cometh to me I will IN NO WISE cast out." These verses certainly teach "once saved always saved," for if a believer could lose his salvation and end up in Hell, Christ could not honestly say that that believer was neither forsaken nor cast out.

"IF I BELIEVED ONCE-SAVED-ALWAYS-SAVED, I WOULD LIVE LIKE THE DEVIL!"

Unbelievers will often say, "The idea that once you are saved, you are always saved encourages people to sin. If I believed once saved always saved, I would live like the Devil. I would drink, smoke, dance and fornicate and do drugs. Why not if once saved always saved?"

Such an attitude reveals a great misunderstanding of God's plan of salvation, and also reveals the true desires of these unbelievers' hearts. Because they have never truly been born again, they very much want to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Drinking, dancing, fornicating and doing drugs (or other sins) are what they consider fun. They think that to save their souls they must abstain from all those fun sins and force themselves to do "boring things" like praying, reading the Bible, and going to church, and act like they like it, when they really don't. However, because their nature has never been changed by the new birth, their efforts to live right are doomed to failure. For it happens to them according to the true proverb:

The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again: and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. 2:22)

There is, of course, only one cure for a sinful nature: YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN. (John 3:7)

Therefore if any man be IN Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Cor. 5:17)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (Gal. 6:15)

The fact is, people who are believing in Christ to save them once and for ever are the true believers in Christ, and because

they have been born again (and therefore have a new nature) they tend to live much more holy lives than do those who believe that salvation once gained can be lost. True believers love Christ for giving them everlasting salvation, and therefore serve Him with a willing heart.

People who do not believe once saved always saved tend to resent Christ down in their hearts, for they think He is forcing them by threat of Hell to live what they consider to be an unhappy, "goody-goody" life instead of what they consider a fun, sinful life. This is why Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:31)

IN CONCLUSION

Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ is a "once for all" and a "for ever" event.

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE FOR ALL. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for was FOR EVER, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. (Heb. 10:10-13)



The Doctrinal Test

Roy Mason

From the book, *The Church That Jesus Built*, Chapter 7

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." —Titus 2:1

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." —Heb. 13:9

"...In doctrine showing uncorruptness." —Titus 2:7

In the preceding chapter I sought to show by a process of elimination that only Baptist churches meet Christ's historical test as to origin and perpetuity. Laying aside for a time our findings, let us now pursue our search for the true *ecclesia* or church along the second line proposed, namely, that of DOCTRINE. This doctrinal test is fully as important as the historical test.

If it can be demonstrated that Baptist churches are apostolical in regard to the doctrines they hold, and that they are the only churches that do hold the doctrines that obtained in the New Testament churches in a pure form, it ought to be doubly apparent that Baptist churches are the true churches of Christ.

It is by no means a difficult task to ascertain the fundamental doctrines and practices of the churches that existed in the days of the apostles, because the church which Jesus founded has certain well defined doctrinal characteristics laid down in the New Testament by which it may be forever recognized and distinguished from all apocryphal institutions which may through the ages arise to call themselves Christian churches.

In seeking to identify the church which Jesus built by means of doctrinal comparison, it might be well to indicate the method which we shall pursue. Let us first go to the New Testament and note the characteristics of the churches of

apostolic times. Next we shall examine Baptist characteristics to see if they coincide with those of the New Testament period. Then, finally, we shall take a brief glimpse at the teachings and practices of other great denominations to see how they stand in relation to the doctrines and practices of the churches of the New Testament. In following this procedure we shall necessarily have to be brief.

One of the things that very forcibly strikes us when we read about the New Testament churches is that they were composed of THOSE WHO HAD BEEN REGENERATED AND BORN AGAIN. The doctrine of regenerated church membership is on the pages of the New Testament so clearly that none can mistake it. Indeed the very word *ecclesia*, as used in the Christian sense should signify to us an assembly of people "called out" of the world, so as to form a separate company—a company of regenerated people. As Dr. Bow puts it: "The word translated church originally meant 'called out' . . . so in the highest sense an holiest sense all the redeemed are called out, and it is fitly applied to them."

In Acts 2:47 we find the following words, "Moreover the Lord was adding to the church day by day those being saved." (*SCO. Bible, Margin*). Throughout the New Testament we find no slightest hint that any, save those claiming regeneration, were admitted to the churches. In fact, without regeneration church membership loses all significance. The duties and obligations which the New Testament teaches belonging to church members presuppose a radical internal change on the part of every person uniting with a church so as to fit him for his task. The Scriptures most certainly do not bear out the idea that a church is to exist as a sort of reformatory into which unregenerates are to be taken, worked over and made into children of God. On the contrary, each church according to the New Testament idea, is to be an assembly God's people, regenerated, called out, and separated from the world—"a peculiar people, zealous and of good works."

And inseparable from the doctrine of a regenerate church membership we may mention incidentally that the New Testament churches practiced only BELIEVER'S BAPTISM. A profession of faith in Christ was necessary before baptism administered. In Acts 2:41 we read, "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized." Note that "receiving His word" preceded baptism. "His word" refers to the gospel preached by Peter. None are eligible for baptism, according to the Scriptures, until they have heard the gospel, believed and received it.

As one writer has put it, "The only difference between a person who has not 'received the Word,' before and after immersion, is that before their immersion they had on dry clothing while afterwards their clothing is wet." Many cases might be cited to prove that only believers were baptized and added to the church in New Testament times, if space permitted. I readily call to mind the case of Lydia, the Philippian jailer, Cornelius, and Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. In no verse of the New Testament is to be found anything to indicate that persons were ever baptized before reaching an age that permitted a personal faith in Christ. Indeed, scriptural baptism as taught in the New Testament presupposes saving faith in Christ. The order given in the Great Commission is, first make disciples, second baptize them.

Now let us ask, do Baptist churches today coincide with apostolic churches in the two respects just mentioned? Plainly they do. No one is baptized or becomes a member of a Baptist church until they have made a profession of faith in Christ, All claimed to have been saved. It is true that unsaved persons sometimes get into Baptist churches, but they get in by falsehoods and spurious claims.

Can Baptists claim any more than other churches in regard to the doctrines just mentioned? How do other denominations stand in regard to these matters? Note well this very true statement by Dr. T. T. Martin (*The N. T. Church*): "BAPTIST CHURCHES ARE THE ONLY CHURCHES ON EARTH THAT REQUIRE A PERSON TO PROFESS TO BE SAVED BEFORE THE PERSON UNITES WITH THE CHURCH OR IS BAPTIZED." This statement proved startling to me when I first read it several years ago. But investigation has confirmed me in the belief that it is true. Other great denominations either mix infant baptism with believer's baptism, or else hold the theory of baptismal regeneration.

For instance, the Methodists and Presbyterians hold evangelistic meetings and following such meetings often baptize (?) those who profess faith in Christ during the meeting. At the same service perhaps they baptize (?) infants who are not of an age to believe anything. Of course, if infant baptism were universally practiced, believer's baptism would perish from the earth. On the other hand, Campbellites baptize only those of an age to believe, but hold the theory of baptismal regeneration, and baptize to help save. Only Baptists require a profession of saving faith in Christ before baptizing or accepting into church membership.

Another thing that stands out in the New Testament as regards the churches of that time is the WAY OF SALVATION as taught by them. The apostolic churches held that salvation was by grace, through faith in Christ alone. As proof of this I submit Paul's well-known words found in Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast."

The vicarious death of Jesus was set forth as the only means of redemption for any human being, and the teaching was that it was only by faith in Him as Divine Redeemer and Saviour that one could be saved and become a child of God. Gal. 3:26 is to the point: "For ye are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ." Acts 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Are Baptists in accord with the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Christ? Indeed they are. "This is a doctrine that is fundamental in Baptist thought. It runs through the whole system of Baptist ideas, and helps to determine everything else in Baptist thinking." No other way of salvation is held or taught in true Baptist churches.

Are other denominations as one with the New Testament and Baptists in this matter? On this point I give another quotation from Dr. S. E. Tull:

"The Catholics believe that salvation is not purely of grace, that the death of Jesus Christ is not the only means of salvation, but that the ordinance of baptism is efficacious, contains sacramental grace, and is essential to salvation." The Council of Trent declared that in "baptism not only remission of original sin was given, but also all which properly has the nature of sin is cut off." It makes one "a Christian, a child of God, and an heir of heaven."

On the doctrine of salvation purely by grace through faith, the Baptists stand alone, and all others hold the position of the Catholics. Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists hold squarely to the Catholic position that infant baptism contains sacramental grace, while the Campbellites hold that baptism by immersion is essential to salvation.

For fear that some may find fault with me for classing them with the Catholics on this doctrine of baptismal regeneration, I will quote from the law of some of the other churches on the subject. Unless church legislators have changed the law very recently, the following obtains among the churches named, and is a fair sample of the position of all covenantal churches on this doctrine.

The Episcopal Catechism says, "Baptism is that wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven."

If the above does not teach baptismal regeneration, pray tell what words could be used to teach it?

The Presbyterian Confession reads, "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and a seal of the covenant of grace, of his in grafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life."

The Methodist ritual reads as follows, "Sanctify this water for his holy sacrament and grant that this child, now to be baptized, may receive the fullness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children."

Look well at what you have just read, "Grant that this child . . . may . . . ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children." This ritual puts the infant into the kingdom and family of God, and that without personal faith. It may grow to maturity with the idea that it is a baptized child of God and thereby never be regenerated, or perhaps even see the need of it. This certainly does not accord with the words of Jesus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

The Methodist articles were based on those of the English Church, and reference to the writings of the founder of Methodism shows that he believed in baptismal regeneration as regards infants. Concerning the articles of the English Church, to

which he belonged, we find John Wesley writing as follows (*Sermons*, London, 1872, Vol. 2, sermon 45, p. 74): "It is certain our church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds on this supposition." I have known Methodists to vehemently deny that the founder of Methodism held to baptismal regeneration of infants, but in the quotation above, from his own printed sermons, we have it in black and white.

Again, let us examine the Lutheran view. This is expressed by the founder in the Augsburg Confession as follows, "Concerning baptism, they teach that it is necessary to salvation . . . And condemn the Anabaptists, who hold...that infants can be saved without it." (Neander, *History of Christian Dogmas*, Vol. 2, p. 693)

"In a city where the writer was laboring in the gospel, the pastors of all the churches in the city came together one morning to consider the propriety of inviting Dr. R. A. Torrey to conduct a city-wide evangelistic meeting. To that pastors' conference came the Episcopalian rector of the city. The rector asked to make a statement. He proceeded as follows:

"I want to put myself right before all you pastors of the city, in my relation to the proposed evangelistic meeting. I cannot cooperate with you in the movement, and I want you to understand my convictions in the matter. I do not believe in what is known among you as evangelism. I do not believe in what you call conversion under the spontaneous operation of the Holy Spirit in the human heart. I believe in covenantal grace and that people become Christians by baptism and confirmation into the Church. Believing as I do, I cannot consistently engage with you in your proposed evangelistic campaign.'

"All this the rector said very frankly and earnestly. Then in seeming justification of his position, after a moment's hesitation he continued: 'I want to say to you Presbyterian pastors here, that if you live up to the covenantal teaching of your church, you cannot engage in an evangelistic meeting. You should either abandon our covenantal teachings or quit holding evangelistic campaigns. By undertaking to carry out both, you make two plans by which men become Christians. As I see it, these Baptist preachers are the only preachers in our city who can consistently carry on an evangelistic meeting. They do not believe in covenantal grace, but they consistently hold every man to a personal experience of religion, which they call conversion and regeneration.'" — (*Denominationalism Put to Test*)

Further study of the apostolic churches as described in the New Testament, reveals several facts in connection with the ORDINANCES WHICH WERE ADMINISTERED BY THEM. These facts may be stated as follows:

1. The ordinances were two, and only two, in number: Baptism and the Lord's Supper—Matthew 18:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-30.

All the attempts to deduce foot-washing as an ordinance, from the Scriptures, fail. Plainly the apostles had no such ordinance. Neither were the two ordinances mentioned above held in the light of sacraments. To speak of the Lord's Supper as the "Sacrament" is not only unscriptural; it is anti-scriptural.

2. The ordinances were church ordinances. This is admitted with practical unanimity by all the great denominations. In the light of this admission, "open communion" becomes not only an unscriptural practice, but likewise a glaring inconsistency. And if the ordinances were given to Baptists, as I have endeavored to show, then the receiving of "alien immersion" is of all things most inconsistent for Baptist churches.

3. They were symbolic ordinances, designed to picture great truths and possessing no saving power at all. There is no need for me to discuss this, as the New Testament teaching of salvation by grace dealt with above prohibits us from attributing saving efficacy to the ordinances. For of course if salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, it cannot be by baptism, the Lord's Supper, or the doing of any works on our part.

4. Baptism was administered by immersing the candidate in water. Not even the slightest hint of sprinkling or pouring is to be found in the New Testament. Many clear cases of immersion are recorded. That was evidently the only form of baptism, for Paul in Ephes. 4:5 writes, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." And indeed the meaning of the term "baptize," if studied

in the original, is enough to make perfectly clear to the unbiased mind that immersion was the primitive mode. Besides this, all reliable scholars of the different denominations frankly admit that immersion was the "mode" of baptism practiced in apostolic times.

5. The Lord's Supper, being a church ordinance, was restricted to church members. This being the case, it was of course preceded by immersion.

How do the beliefs of Baptists churches today square with the New Testament teaching concerning ordinances? The answer is, they are in perfect accord.

Other denominations are sadly at variance. The Catholics admit that they changed the ordinance of baptism in the twelfth century because sprinkling is more convenient. I quote just here from Cardinal Gibbons (*Faith of Our Fathers*, pp. 316, 317):

"For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion. But since the twelfth century baptism by infusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church, as this manner is attended with less inconvenience than baptism by immersion...Baptism is the essential means established for washing away the stain of original sin, and the door by which we find admittance into the Church. Hence baptism is as essential for the infant as for the full-grown man. Unbaptized infants are excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven. Baptism makes us heirs of heaven and co-heirs of Jesus Christ."

Protestant churches (remember again that Baptists are not Protestants), the direct descendants of the Catholic Church, got their infant baptism and their perverted modes of baptism from their parent, the Catholic Church. The Campbellites and others who hold baptism essential to salvation, get their baptismal regeneration from the same source.

As regards the Lord's Supper, we find that the Catholic and Protestant world have departed from the simplicity of the New Testament idea that the bread and wine is merely a symbol or memento which is to be taken in remembrance of the Saviour. The Catholics hold to transubstantiation, the doctrine that the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ. The Lutherans hold to consubstantiation, which is but a modification of the Catholic view. Others, such as the Presbyterians and Methodists, hold the sacramental or spiritual blessing idea, which makes of the ordinance something more than a mere memorial. Besides this, most denominations in actual practice do not make immersion a prerequisite to the partaking of the Lord's Supper as did the churches of the New Testament, for they practice "open communion" which admits everybody who wants to eat - immersed, sprinkled, unsprinkled, or what not.

Further, we find that the apostolic churches were DEMOCRATIC IN THEIR FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT. This means, of course, that they recognized the absolute lordship of Christ, and had no human head or master. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8-10) is the New Testament teaching. There was no higher or lower order of clergy; no popes or bishops in the modern sense, to boss the rest around. Peter had no thought of being a pope, for he called himself a fellow-elder with other preachers (1 Peter 5:1).

When a successor was needed to fill the place of Judas Iscariot, Peter did not appoint him, but the one hundred and twenty members of the Jerusalem church (Acts 1:15-26). When the first deacons were appointed, their appointment was not by Peter, nor by the apostles as ruling elders, or as constituting a college of bishops. They were chosen by the multitude of disciples, or church.

We find that churches transacted business without outside interference or dictation. They elected their own officers, and by vote of the congregation received and excluded members. For example, Paul writes to the church at Rome (Rom. 14:1), "Him that is weak in faith, receive ye." This indicated that they were in the habit of receiving members. In 1 Cor. 5, Paul tells the church at Corinth to exclude an unworthy member. In 2 Thess. 3, he gives similar counsel to the church at Thessalonica. Again, from Acts 9 we gather that Paul himself was refused membership in the church at Jerusalem, because at that time the church was in doubt about his conversion and was afraid of him.

Having a democratic form of church government; being composed of individuals who were on an equality—and having no visible, earthly head, churches were separate and distinct, and were bound together in no organic way. This is conceded by

all the earliest and most reliable historians as having been the order for several centuries. Geisler, the historian, says in writing of the churches of the first two centuries: "All congregations were independent of one another" (Vol. 1, Chap. 3). Mosheim, the Lutheran historian, says (Vol. 1, p. 142), "During a great part of this (second) century all the churches continued to be, as at first, independent...each church was a kind of independent republic."

Do Baptist churches accord with the apostolic way in regard to their church government and polity? Anyone at all acquainted with Baptist churches knows that democracy in its purest form is to be found in them. Each church is separate and distinct as in apostolic times, and when churches meet together in associations and conventions, they come together in only a cooperative, voluntary way. There is no organic union in one big "Church." And furthermore no association or convention has the right to dictate to the local church. Baptist churches today, as in apostolic times, have no dignitaries or ecclesiastics to impose their will upon them. True, in these days we sometimes have an occasional individual who desires for himself ecclesiastical powers with which to force cooperation among Baptists. Such an individual is in each case predestined to an early fall.

But let us, for the sake of comparison, take a glimpse at the government of other churches:

- Catholics give church members no privileges but to obey "The Church," and no voice whatever in the government of the Church.
- The Lutheran Church is an episcopacy with legislative powers governing both the doctrine and polity of particular congregations and individuals.
- The Episcopal Church has legislative courts and does the same.
- The Presbyterian Church is what has been termed "a centralized aristocracy," composed of legislative courts with a gradation in authority, from the sessions of the particular church to the General Assembly of the whole denomination. From the decisions of the General Assembly there is no appeal, either for churches or individuals.
- The Congregational Church comes nearer the Baptist position in this matter than most others, but veers farther away on some other points.
- The Methodist Church is an episcopacy with a system of ecclesiastical machinery that leaves little room for the autonomy of the local church or the expression of individuality on the part of its members.

This form of church government is not only unbiblical; it proves to be unwise in many instances from the standpoint of what is expedient. The matter of where preachers shall labor, the choice of their respective fields, is taken out of their own hands so that they must needs go where they are sent. In this system a preacher may be sent where he does not want to go and where he feels that neither the Lord nor the people want him.

In one case that came under my observation, a man was sent to a smaller pastorate to which was attached a smaller salary than he had been accustomed to receive. The change was so arbitrary and unsatisfactory that the preacher rebelled and only remained on his new field long enough to dispose of his household goods. If I was correctly informed, he left with the avowed intention of joining another denomination. Such happenings are very embarrassing to both the church and pastor. They are the natural outgrowth of an unscriptural, ecclesiastical system.

The Campbellite or "Christian" Church received its form of government from its founder, Alexander Campbell, who, from his brief association with the Baptists, had imbued some of their ideas. Campbellites profess a congregational form of government, but in reality the pastor is vested with episcopal powers to receive members without a vote of the congregation.

Another thing that is to be clearly gathered from the New Testament concerning the churches of that day is that they WERE ENTIRELY FREE FROM COERCION. In other words, they believed in religious liberty. Religion was a purely voluntary matter.

They were deeply impressed with their duty to preach, teach and persuade, but their work ended there. As to whether or not the individual accepted the gospel and affiliated with the church, was a matter to be decided by the individual himself apart from all coercive measures of any kind. There was entire separation of church and state. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" was the admonition of Jesus. With such a conception as the New Testament churches had of freedom of conscience, religious persecution was with them impossible.

Again let us ask, how do Baptist churches of today accord with the principles of freedom held by apostolic churches? The answer is they hold these principles still, just as they held them in the first century. They hold that it is their duty and obligation to preach the gospel to all the world, but they seek to force no one to accept it. They believe that every man has the individual right to settle for himself the question of his relation to God. Consequently, they believe that infant baptism is a sin against God and against little children, in that it forces a religious rite upon a helpless child and takes from it the privilege of obeying Christ for itself.

Baptists put neither priest, ordinance, nor anything else between the individual and God. They hold that every person can, through Jesus Christ, approach God and deal with Him for himself. In church relations the same voluntary principle holds good. No high ecclesiastic forces churches into measures. No set of ecclesiastics run the churches' affairs for them, and force acceptance of the leaders they choose for the people. Baptist people govern themselves, and each church determines the measure and kind of cooperation that it will engage in with other bodies and organizations.

To Baptists, union of church and state is an unspeakable evil, and one that they have never been a party to. They have through the ages suffered cruel imprisonments, punishments, and even martyrdom at the hands of other peoples because, forsooth, peoples of other faiths, through the civil powers, wielded the sword of coercion and persecution.

Let us now take a glance at other denominations and observe their attitude on this point. Catholics give the individual no personal prerogative. The Church holds the soul of the individual and can by excommunication destroy all hope for eternity. The history of the Catholic Church is one that reeks with blood. Through long periods Catholicism was the state religion, and so fiercely did it persecute that dissenters were forced to hide in the "dens and caves of the earth." I need only mention the massacre of the Huguenots in which hundreds of people were butchered, or the horrors of the Inquisition, in which devilish ingenuity devised every torture with which to afflict Baptists and others who held dissenting religious views. I write these lines from Brazil, where on every side is to be seen the evidences of Catholic intolerance. Just last week news came of how Catholics broke up services that were being held by Baptists in the town of Bom Jardim, a few miles away.

Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists stand with the Catholics in abridging the freedom of the individual conscience because of their practice of infant baptism. "Campbellites place an ordinance between the sinner and the Savior, and thereby forbid his unlimited approach to God." Episcopalians in England derive their support from the government and Baptists are forced to pay to support a church in which they do not believe. Dr. John Clifford, a noted Baptist preacher, went to jail time and time again because of his refusal to pay to help support the Episcopalian Church. Lutherans have united with the state and have used their power to persecute. For instance, Henry Crant, Justice Mueller, and John Peisker, Baptists, were beheaded in Jena, in 1536; by the Lutherans. Among their announced views was the doctrine that all infants are saved without baptism. (See McArthur's *Why I Am A Baptist*) Presbyterians have consented to the unholy alliance of Church and state and have persecuted also. The part that John Calvin, the founder of Presbyterianism, had in burning Servetus, the Anabaptist, at the stake is too well known to mention in detail. Congregationalists persecuted by means of civil power in the early colonial days in America. Clark, Holmes and Crandall, Baptist leaders, were fined, imprisoned and publicly whipped in Boston. On asking what law of God or man he (Clark) had broken, Endicott replied to Clark, "You have denied infant baptism and deserve death."

And I may add that persecution of Baptists does not all belong to the past. In almost every place today where Baptists stand for the whole Bible and preach their doctrines, they meet with persecution. They are called "narrow," "bigoted," and are pointed at with scorn. Many times, because their beliefs do not permit them to engage in all sorts of union movements and programs, they are bitterly criticized. In my own ministry I have in one instance had my church boycotted by the members of other denominations because I preached the New Testament teachings concerning the ordinances. The forms of persecution are not the same as in days gone by, but persecution that is none the less real is often resorted to by those who do not espouse the purely voluntary principle of the New Testament and Baptists.

Another characteristic of the churches of Christ in apostolic times was their REVERENCE FOR THE SCRIPTURES AND THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD GIVEN TO THEM THROUGH INSPIRED MEN. To them the Word of God, whether contained in the Old Testament or delivered through the mouth or by pen of inspired men, was sufficient.

Christians of those days did not butcher the Old Testament as do the Modernists of our day, who parcel it out into bits and call this part a portion of the "J" document, this other a part of the "E" document, and so on. To them the Old Testament did not merely contain a revelation from God; it was the revelation. The teachings of the apostles they received as authoritative.

Here again we distinguish the likeness between Baptist churches of today and the churches of the early times. To Baptists, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament constitute the final authority on all matters of belief and practice. The great doctrine that constitutes the bedrock upon which all of their other doctrines are laid is this: "The Bible, the Bible alone, is our only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice." As one has aptly put it, "if you can't find it in the Bible, it isn't Baptist doctrine; if it is Baptist doctrine you can find it in the Bible."

Baptists believe that each individual has the right to read and interpret the Scriptures for himself. They do not believe in studying and interpreting in the light of someone's comments, as do Christian Scientists, who study in the light of Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health," or Russellites, who interpret by the aid of Pastor Russell's "Bible Studies," or Catholics, who, when they read the Bible at all, read the imperfectly translated Douay version, in the light of the Church's interpretations appended to each page in the form of "notes."

Baptists believe that the Bible says what it means and means what it says, and that it is so written as to be understood by the common people. They do not believe that it is right to seek to justify a practice by a set of regulations drawn up by fallible men. Consequently, that a thing is found in a "Discipline" or "Catechism" adds little weight to it, for them. But while these things are true, it is also true that Baptists have always been willing to state their beliefs. This they have done repeatedly in the form of "Confessions of Faith." These confessions merely place before the world their interpretation of what the Bible teaches on fundamental matters. They are not binding creeds forced upon all Baptist bodies, for each church has the privilege of making its own statement of belief.

What is the attitude of other denominations toward the Bible? It is not the Baptist attitude; else there would not be the division that exists today. Much is said today about church union, and Baptists are often blamed for the schismatic condition of Christendom. But it can be truly said that Baptists are ready to unite with those of other faiths at any time that they are willing for union to be consummated upon the principle of absolute adherence to the New Testament.

The Catholic view, for instance, is the exact opposite of the Baptist. Catholics believe in the Pope as the source of doctrine, and they hold he is infallible in his decisions. On this point we have the statement of Cardinal Gibbons as follows: "When a dispute arises in the Church regarding the sense of Scripture, the subject is referred to the Pope for final adjudication...He pronounces judgment, and his sentence is final, irrevocable, and infallible." Again, in the same book (*Faith of Our Fathers*), he says: "The Scriptures can never serve as a complete rule of faith and a complete guide to heaven independent of an authorized, living interpreter."

Other denominations occupy positions between the Baptists and the Catholics. The Lutheran, Episcopal and Methodist churches are vested with legislative powers ample to allow them to fix doctrine and legislative conduct for the particular congregations and for individuals. As we have already seen, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church is vested with supreme power in matters affecting doctrine and polity.

There is yet another thing that was considered fundamental among New Testament churches, and that was what has been termed, THE COMPETENCY OF THE SOUL, UNDER GOD, IN RELIGION." "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God," is the teaching of Paul. Every soul was deemed competent to deal with God without the interference of human priests or mediaries. Absolute freedom of conscience was allowed, and coercion was never resorted to, in matters pertaining to religion, as has already been pointed out. In this we find Baptists to be strictly apostolical. Baptists believe that man, as man, has the capacity to know God, and tinder the power of the Holy Spirit to do God's will. "This competency of

the soul under God," as one writer puts it, "is at once exclusive and inclusive. It excludes all human interference, all proxy in religion, all ideals of priestly or episcopal intervention.

Religion is a matter between the individual soul and God. It includes all the rights of an absolute democracy, and constitutes every believer his own priest and king." It might not be out of place just here to quote Dr. E. Y. Mullins on this point. He says:

"The Biblical significance of the Baptists is the right of private interpretation and obedience to the Scriptures. The significance of the Baptists in relation to the individual is soul freedom. The ecclesiastical significance of the Baptists is a regenerated church membership and the equality and priest-hood of believers. The political significance of the Baptists is the separation of the church and state. All of these grow naturally and of necessity out of the doctrine of the competency of the soul in religion."

And now let us take a brief look at other denominations and note their attitude in this matter. Everyone who is at all familiar with the Catholic position will admit very readily that it is in direct antithesis to the Baptist doctrine of the competency of the soul. Underlying the whole scheme of Roman Catholicism is the idea of the incompetency of the soul. This is seen in the auricular confession, the denial of the right of private interpretation of the Bible, infant baptism, the priestly monopoly of the elements necessary to the "communion" and numerous other things.

Protestantism is a mixture of the Baptist and Catholic positions. A quotation from Dr. M. P. Hunt (*The Baptist Faith*) will make this clear. He writes as follows:

"In many things the Protestant world is now with the Baptists, but in some things it still clings to the rags of Catholicism, as for instance, in episcopacy, infant baptism, and baptismal regeneration. They are all unscriptural, and first saw light in the Catholic Church, and were nourished by its unscriptural conception of the incompetency of the soul in religion. In holding to the doctrine of justification by faith, the Protestant world is at that point one with the Baptists, while in baptizing their children into the church in unconscious infancy they are one with the Catholics. In the matter of civil and religious liberty, the Protestant world in America is now in full sympathy with the Baptist position, while those churches that have the episcopal form of government get the same from the Catholics. Take the 'Disciples,' who are less than a hundred years old, and they are one with the Baptists in the matter of believer's baptism; but at the same time, one with the Catholics in holding baptism to be essential to salvation."

Other characteristics of the apostolic churches could be taken up and their identity with Baptist characteristics established. But surely enough has already been said to demonstrate that Baptists are apostolical as regards their faith and practice. One who reads the New Testament cannot help but see the doctrinal identity of Baptists today with the churches of the New Testament. Dr. A. T. Robertson has said: "Give a man a New Testament and a good working conscience, and a Baptist is the sure result." Instances are on record where several denominations have been seeking to get into their church a new convert, and, as a rule, whenever it is announced that the individual is making a study of the New Testament, and will let that guide him, it is generally conceded that the Baptists have won.

If I wished to take the space I could go on at length and tell of I. N. Yohannan, a Persian, converted under the preaching of a Presbyterian missionary, but who, upon reading the New Testament, came from Persia to New York to get Baptist baptism. I could tell the story of John G. Oncken and his family in Hamburg, Germany. They, becoming believers and being without ecclesiastical guides, shut themselves up to a study of the New Testament with this result: A BAPTIST CHURCH! I could tell of Judson and Rice, who were sent to the foreign field by another denomination, on the voyage studied the New Testament and arrived on their field with convictions that led them to join a Baptist church, even though it meant for them to renounce the support of those who had sent them. I could tell of how in the state of Parahyba, Brazil, men were converted wider the preaching of a Presbyterian missionary and were wade Baptists in belief by reading the New Testament. They sent to the city where I now reside (Pernambuco) for a Baptist preacher to come and baptize them.



Arnold of Brescia

J. Newton Brown

From the book, *Memorials of Baptist Martyrs*, 1854

Seven hundred years, seven hundred years,
 Since Truth and Rome together strove;
 Since Heaven beheld Italia's tears,
 And ARNOLD spoke the words we love
 He spoke;—and Italy arose,
 Thrilled by her prophet's voice of flame;
 Religion triumphed o'er her foes,
 And Freedom sung her ARNOLD'S name
 But ah, the Martyr's voice was hushed,
 His ashes strewed the Tiber's flood;
 Truth, Freedom, Right, by Power were crushed,
 And Rome was drunk with holy blood!

J. N. Brown

About the year 1137, a reformer appeared in Italy, who proved himself a powerful opponent to the Church of Rome; and who, in fortitude and zeal, was inferior to no one bearing that name, while in talents and learning he excelled most.

This was Arnold, of Brescia; a man remarkable for force of piety and austerity of manners. In early life he had traveled into France, and studied under the renowned Peter Abelard. On leaving this school, he returned into Italy, assumed the habit of a monk, and began to propagate his opinions in the streets of Brescia, where he soon gained attention. He especially directed his zeal against the wealth and luxury of the Roman clergy, and his noble eloquence soon roused the inhabitants of Brescia, who revered him as the Apostle of religious liberty, and rose in rebellion against the tyranny of the bishops.

The Romish Church took alarm at his bold attacks, and in a Council condemned him to perpetual silence.

Arnold now left Italy, and found an asylum in the Swiss canton of Zurich. Here he began his system of reform, which was never more needed. For a while he was successful, converting even the Pope's Legate; but the influence of the famous Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, made it necessary for him to leave the canton.

The bold man now conceived the plan and hazarded the desperate experiment of visiting Rome, and fixing the standard of reform in the very heart of the capital. In this measure he so far succeeded as to win over the Senate and effect a popular change of the government. The Pontiff struggled hard to maintain his ascendancy, but at length sunk under the pressure.

Eugenius III withdrew from Rome, and Arnold, taking advantage of his absence, impressed on the people the necessity of setting bounds to clerical authority. Arnold's sentiments were influential among the people, and on a few of the clergy. But not being prepared for freedom, they carried their measures to an extreme, abused the clergy, and burnt their property.

They required all ecclesiastics to swear allegiance to the new constitution. "Arnold," says Gibbon, "presumed to quote the declaration of Christ that his kingdom was not of this world. The abbots, the bishops, and the Pope himself, must renounce their state, or their salvation."

At length, in 1155, the Pope laid an interdict on the city. As the sword was no weapon in Arnold's panoply, the noble champion retired to Tuscany. There he was seized, brought back to Rome, condemned, crucified, and burnt. His ashes were thrown into the Tiber.

The clergy triumphed in his death, and with his ashes, it was thought, that his sect was dispersed. Yet his noble spirit of religious freedom did not die, but was cherished with his memory in the hearts of reforming spirits in future generations, such as Wickliffe, Huss, and their compeers. And even his immediate followers did not become extinct, for the ARNOLDISTS are often met with in ecclesiastical history as a body who were worthy of his name, and of our high respect.

Many very decisive facts show Arnold to have been a Baptist. Bernard accuses his followers of mocking at infant baptism. Evervinus, in Germany, also says, "The Arnoldists condemn the [Catholic] sacraments, particularly baptism, which they administer only to the adult; alleging that place, whoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved."

And, in a word, Arnold himself was formally condemned by the Lateran Council for rejecting infant baptism.



Private Offences:

Three Steps in the Settlement of Private Difficulties ---

A. W. Chambliss

From *The Baptist Preacher*, 1846. Part 2 of 3

Part II. The imperative duty of the aggressor, demands our attention. "If he repent,"

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him: lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (Matt. 5:23-26)

Such is the language of the divine law, with regard to the offender: and by it we are forcibly reminded, that God looks with displacency upon all the quarrels and contentions—upon all the bickerings and animosities of men, especially of Christian men; nay, that he regards them with the most implacable and sovereign abhorrence. They are a species of wickedness upon which he looks, only with the most irreconcilable hatred. What, though men may praise thy bravery and stout-heartedness—thy manhood and dexterity in all the bloody transactions of street pugilism, or the more cool and deliberate crime of dueling? In the estimation of the deity, "he that hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Wherefore, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and all evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice." (1 John 3:15; Eph. 4:31)

From hence, it is also apparent, that God takes greater delight in the peace of his children, than in all their sacrifices. "God is love," by way of distinction; and he demands love, as an indispensable desideratum in his creatures. Besides this, all gifts and graces—all attainments and qualifications—all deeds and sacrifices, are less than nothing and vanity. What, though we

spake in all the tongues of men, and were eloquent in the dialects of angels? What, though we looked through the dark vista of future ages, and comprehended the sublime mysteries of providence and grace, as the simple elements of the nursery? What, though we possessed faith that could dislodge mountains from their solid base, and plunge them headlong to the boiling deep? What, though all our stores were impoverished to feed the poor, and our bodies offered a burning sacrifice upon the martyr's consecrated altar? If destitute of love, we were poor—we were base in the sight of God. "To love our neighbor as ourselves, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." "Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity. There the Lord commands the blessing, even life forever more." (1 Cor. 13 1-3; Mark 12: 33; Ps. 133:1-3)

Yet again, the divine rule before us makes it the imperative duty of the transgressor to seek the speediest possible reconciliation with his aggrieved brother. Love is reflective, and binds equally upon him who is to be loved, as upon him who should love. If we are bound to love our neighbor, he is not less bound so to act that we can love him. As the eye is organized to admire beauty, and to loath its opposite; so, the soul, which is competent to love that which is amiable and excellent, is utterly incapable of loving that which is perverse and hateful.

The whole responsibility of enmity and strife with an innocent man, is, therefore, thrown upon the guilty. With whatever displeasure the divine being be, holds the breach, it rests alone upon the transgressor: and increases with every fruitless effort to bring him to repentance. He is held amenable for all the evil consequences of the alienation. If sinners are hardened in their sins—if languishment in religion—if dishonor to the name of God, ensue from hence, it is all charged to his account: and will form a part of the fearful reckoning to which he will be summoned in the last day. This was evidently the sentiment of the Psalmist. "If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me, let the enemy persecute my soul and take it: yea, let him tread down my life in the earth, and lay mine honor in the dust." (Ps. 7:4-5) Thus also, "whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house." (Prov. 17:13)

Here is the reason of that fearful sentence, "Woe to the world because of offences. It must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." (Math. 18:7) It is this view of the subject that invests with such alarming emphasis the words of our Lord, "agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him: lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, Jesus Christ, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, death, and thou be cast into the prison of hell. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou halt paid the uttermost farthing,"—till the last particle of the damage thou hast occasioned has been fully restored. It is the awful responsibility thus devolved upon the transgressor that clothes with eternal sacredness and authority, the command, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath." (Eph. 4:26)

The rule laid down for offenders is, "first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift:" and it binds alike upon all, without respect to place, to age, to rank, to condition, to color, or to any other accident of life. No man dare pray, nor any man dare sleep in the face of this law. It stands like flaming sword of the cherubim between us and our pillow, and between us and the altar of grace. He that goes to the place of prayer with an unrepented sin, invites Satan to his communion; and he that carries it to his pillow, invites a fiend to his chamber.

The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the prince and the peasant, the white man and the black, are equally placed under its restrictions. It is as stringent upon the muster, towards his humblest slave, as upon any part of the creation of God. Yes, we repeat it, if the master give unjustifiable offence to the person, feelings, or character of his veriest menial, he is as imperatively bound to render him suitable satisfaction, as he would be to offer it to the President of these United States. Nay, farther, "it were better for him, that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were plunged into the bottomless deep, than that he should offend one of these little ones, that believe in Jesus, and yet refuse him satisfaction." (Math. 18:6)

Tell us not of the distinctions of this world. We know they exist; and we know also, that they are worldly, and will perish with the world. In eternity, when men stand in the presence of Him, with whom there is no respect of persons, if will avail nothing to speak of worldly relations and distinctions. The only question that will concern us in that hour, will be, "how far did you give to every man that which was just and equal?" If the divine law shall have been the directory to our feet, happy! unspeakably happy shall it be for us. If not, alas! alas!

The scriptural condition of reconciliation with an aggrieved brother is repentance: and it has the sanction of reason and common justice. In pecuniary transactions, the courts of equity provide an indemnity for the sufferer. Thus the universal sense of mankind determines what is right in our mutual intercourse, and decrees in favor of the injured person. But does not the principle apply equally to moral, as to pecuniary injuries? Is the law of righteousness less provident of the person, feelings, or reputation of the aggrieved; than it is of his paltry and perishable gold? Surely not.

Let us transfer the case to ourselves. Let us suppose that we ourselves are the scandalized. What would we that the offender should do? Had we suffered the wrong at his hands, would not our sense of right demand ample satisfaction? It is thus, that heaven has placed within our own breast, a monitor that pleads the cause of him whom our waywardness has injured: and ere we can refuse repentance for the wrong we have committed, violence must be done to our own moral sense. Nor yet is this all.

The universal excuse, "that it is the duty of the offender to make the first approach, and confess his fault," is evidence that justice demands an equivalent for the transgression we have committed. This plea is urged by all men. We ourselves make it, when pressed to a speedy settlement of our disputes. It is the voice of reason, and so distinct are its whispers, that multitudes almost fancy it is written with God's own hand, in golden capitals on the pages of the sacred volume. No, sirs, it is the voice of reason, speaking from the fleshy tables of the heart, to every transgressor, saying, "go to thy offended brother, saying, I repent."

You will, however, understand something more by repentance, than a simple asking of pardon. We doubt not, that pardon may be sought in the true spirit, and with all the accompaniments of ingenuous repentance. But what we intend is, that this is not always the case. There is such a thing as asking pardon out of mere compliment; and more to save our character for good breeding, than to regain the friendship which has been rudely forfeited. It may be done where no sin is recognized—no evil is felt—no crime is deplored: where there is an evident unconcern, if not a fiendish gratification, at the throes and throbbing of an injured heart.

Who has not witnessed an instance of it, with a preface after this style: "Truly, my brother, you and I are a good deal alike—weak brethren. I had not thought that a man of your pretensions would have noticed such little things—that such trifles would have occasioned you so great pain. But since it is so, I ask your pardon." Is there in all this, the first emotion of true repentance? Does it contain a particle of that noble generosity which disdains to tread upon a worm, and which "honoreth them that fear the Lord?"

Do we sincerely lament an injury, which we can intentionally aggravate, with the very petition of pardon? Suppose he is a weak brother. Is that a reason why we may insult him with the epithet of "Racy?" Suppose the offence was a trifle. So much the better reason why a magnanimous Christian should not have committed it, and why, if he has done so, he should repent of it.

The truth is, no act is unimportant—no act can be considered a trifle, which may fray the silken cord that binds Christian hearts in one. Nothing is a small matter, which tends to alienate the affections of a brother; nor do we envy that man his sentiments of love, who can sport with the wounds he has inflicted on the humblest child of God. Love is a delicately sensitive plant, and indigenous only to warm climates. It chills to the root under the cold north wind's breath. Pining, disease and death are its inevitable fate, under the pale and sickly influence of carelessness, taunting and contempt. The rudeness of the wild boar of the woods crushes all its fondly twining branches in the dust. Insulted love modestly bows assent of pardon to him who asks it with a jeer, and retires alone to its cloister to weep. "O my God, draw me not away with the wicked, nor with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their heads." "They speak vanity, every one with his neighbor: with flattering lips and a double heart do they speak." (Ps. 28:3; 12:2)

Ingenuous repentance implies a meek reception of reproof. To rebuke with all long suffering and authority, is a divine command. Nor is the manner of receiving reproof, less definitely described. "He that hateth reproof is brutish." (Prov. 12:1) "He that hateth reproof sinneth." (Prov. 10:17) Shall we do wrong, and then refuse to be told of it? Shall we fly into a rage, and fret against him whom God sends to us for our good. Grant that all the mildness and gentleness that could be desired may not be employed. Grant, too, that we are not to blame, to the full extent with which we are charged.

Full many a year of hard and cruel servitude was entailed upon the refractory Jew, who replied to the friendly rebuke of Moses, "who made thee a judge and ruler over us?" When the timely admonition of Abigail threw a check upon David's passion, he blest God that sent her—he blest her counsel—and he blest her person. (1 Sam. 25:32-3) "Let the righteous smite me," said the Psalmist, "it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (Ps. 141:5)

Confession of fault enters into all true notions of repentance: and by this we mean, a full, free and hearty acknowledgment of our sins. Who does not know that there is such a thing as confession after the manner of some men paying their debts? Parleying and postponing as long as possible—then reducing the amount—and finally surrendering the balance with grudging and reluctant hands. A thousand imaginary and probable offsets must be investigated—a thousand accessory grievances must be supposed and weighed—a thousand concessions and promises must be extorted: and at length the whole affair is wound up, involved in more inextricable difficulties than when the adjustment was first commenced!

Here is one of the fatal causes of that lamentable destitution of brotherly confidence and affection, which at present so universally afflicts the Christian world. We are cursed with a spirit of moral and religious dishonesty in the churches. Under the pretense of confession, men actually cover their sins! Men disown their debts under the show of paying them! Under the pretense of giving to every man that which is just and equal, they in reality defraud them out of half their dues! Can there be in such conduct, the first sentiment of true repentance? Is it possible that honest pretense can comport with such religious smuggling?" "Whoso covereth his sin shall not prosper." (Prov. 28:13)

In pecuniary transactions, the principle of balancing accounts may be correct; because, there the indebtedness of every man is determined in view of the amount of dues and offsets in his favor. This, however, is not true in morals and religion. Here the action, and the whole of every action, must be considered separately, distinctly, and independently of every other. There is no such thing as compounding and abstracting, as adding and dividing, in moral conduct.

There is no such thing as half crime, or the fourth of a fault. The line has either been crossed, or it has not—the mark has been missed, or it has not. If it has not, it is nothing. If it has, it is transgression—it is sin. Nor can it be made more or less, by similar conduct in another. There may be circumstantial differences in us, affecting the enormity of crime: but no train of circumstances can render sin anything less than sin. Completeness enters into its very existence. The fault—the entire fault—without concealment—without dissembling—without disguising—without excusing—without balancing, must be freely and frankly acknowledged. If there have been mutual faults, each must confess—each must repent—each must be forgiven. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another." "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin, shall find mercy." (James 5:16; Prov. 28:13)

Another leading and indispensable feature of genuine repentance is restitution. Every sin involves two things, first, the act, and secondly, the evils of the act: and repentance is a sorrowful recognition of the act, to such an extent, and in such a degree, as that we shall be disinclined to repeat it, on the one hand, and on the other, we shall be disposed, as far as possible, to repair the damage of the past. In Scripture style, it is to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well,"—to "break off from thy sins by righteousness,"—to "turn, saying, I repent." This definition is equally true of our sins against a fellow-man, as of those which refer directly to the deity.

The private offence of one consists in chicanery, extortion, fraudulent over-reaching, of the unjust retention of the honest dues of another: whereby he suffers great pecuniary detriment. A second has injured the reputation of his brother, by opprobrious [offensive, deceitful] epithets, calumnious charges, or defamatory insinuation. A third has inflicted a personal wound upon his fellow man. In all such cases, repentance is to deplore the act, and, as far as lies in us, to indemnify the sufferer for the injury we have occasioned; and we firmly incline to the opinion that nothing short of this can be considered, or ought to be received, as repentance. What does it avail, to say to him whom our fraudulency has impoverished, or our prevarication, falsehood, or passion, has more than impoverished, "we are sorry," while we refuse to touch the burden under which he groans with the tip of the finger? It may be justly replied, "How much are you sorry? Are you sorry the whole amount of the damage? If so, repair it, and remove the cause of sorrow."

The maxim has already become universal, that "the retainer of stolen goods; knowing them to be stolen, is equally guilty with the thief:" and we beg you to consider, whether the principle does not apply to everything which has been unjustly

taken away, and is still retained. It is not the article, nor the person of the retainer, that constitutes the crime. It is the act of retention. Nor is it material to the argument in morals, whether the goods were stolen, or obtained by other dishonest means. If the original act of attainment was morally dishonest and wrong, no length of time in which they are held, nor any plea upon which we hold them, can sanctify it and make it honest wealth. The same is true also of defamation. If the good name of another, which to him is above the price of rubies, has been rudely and unjustly taken away, the enormity of the crime rises with every successive moment of its retention; nor can there be any repentance for the act, which is thus virtually repeated and persisted in, so long as we refuse to repair the damage which he has suffered at our hands.

Sure we are that such was not the repentance of Zacchaeus. "And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold." (Luke 19:8) Nor was it the repentance of even the despicable Judas. " Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood; and he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and went and hanged himself." (Math. 27:3-5)

But, not to detain you with farther specifications, especially, since in what we have stated everything is included that can be demanded, in order to the forgiveness of private offences, allow us, by way of recapitulation, to impress upon your minds the principles we have here illustrated. What have we said? We have shown that God looks with the most profound and sovereign displeasure upon all the quarrels and contentions of men—that he estimates the peace of his children more highly than he does their most splendid and magnificent sacrifices—that he holds the aggressor amenable for all the evils of enmity and disfellowship with an innocent man—that reason, religion and common justice demand of him repentance as the first act of his hands—that in this duty is especially included, a meek reception of reproof, a full and frank confession of fault, and an honest reparation of the damages occasioned, as far as possible.

And now, before God, and before the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, I charge every one of you who hath trespassed against his brother, that ye arise at once, and go to him, saying, "I repent." Let not your petulancy and ill-nature refuse the rebukes of affection. Let not your pride and obstinacy decline a full and hearty acknowledgment. Let not your perverseness and avarice withhold a suitable satisfaction for all the damages he hath suffered at your hands. By the terrors of the divine vengeance—by the inexorable wrath of the offended Lamb of God —by the value of the deathless spirit—by the unquenchable flames of hell—by the writhings of the pit—by the horrors of everlasting banishment from hope, from peace, from pardon and from God, we charge you to repent of that wrong, and put a speedy end to these disputes. Sleep not upon this sin, lest thou die and be damned. Go not with it to the throne of grace, lest the fire of consuming wrath burst forth and envelop thee.

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Let not the sun go down upon this feud. Tarry not a moment. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him: lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

Next Month: Part III. The second and last duty of the offended remains to be considered, "If he repent, forgive him."



"Mysticism takes many forms. It is the humanist following his heart. It is the secular rocker understanding that "music is a spiritual thing of its own" (Jimi Hendrix). It is the Christian rocker seeking to experience "the presence" of God. It is the charismatic yielding to the "flow of the Spirit" and refusing to "put God in a box." It is Timothy Leary seeking enlightenment through LSD. It is the Catholic or evangelical contemplative seeking God in the silence. It is the New Ager channeling spirits. It is the Buddhist seeking Nirvana through the five-fold path. It is the Hindu pursuing unity with God through yoga. It is the psychology student seeking to perfect his self-esteem by practicing unconditional forgiveness."

David Cloud, from *The God of End-Time Mysticism*, 2011

The Responsibility of Young Men

Robert W. Cushman

From *The Baptist Pulpit of the United States*, Joseph Belcher, D.D., Ed., 1853

You are not merely to be pitied in yielding to temptation, but you are to be blamed. You are not simply unfortunate, but you are guilty. The instances of ruin by temptation in a Christian community, without a conviction of wrong, if such exist at all, are very rare. We would present to you, therefore, the consideration, that you are responsible for your actions; and, consequently, if you yield to temptation, you will be called to answer for it to God.

A temptation cannot deprive you of your freedom. Its assault is not on your liberty, but your choice. It deals not blows, but pleas. However strong the influences it brings to bear upon you, it directs them upon your will. You cannot be overcome without your consent. The key of your citadel is in your own hands. The enemy cannot enter but by the gate, and that opened from within.

Temptations, moreover, like poisonous plants, have their localities; and tempters, their haunts like beasts of prey. And, if you know your temperament or weakness to be such that you cannot pass through them with safety, you have the means of security by keeping out of their way. If, then, you expose yourself, when you know your danger, you are a transgressor, and God will bring you into judgment for it.

The temptation of intoxicating drinks, for example, may be too strong for you. Then keep out of the way of them. Have nothing to do with strong drink. Touch not; taste not; handle not. Look not upon the wine when it giveth its color in the cup. Keep away from the places where intoxicating drinks are sold, and shun the companionship of those who frequent them. If you will do this, you will be safe. But if you will not do it, but will expose yourself when you know your danger, you are guilty; and, if you fall, you are a victim self-immolated; and you go into eternity as a breaker of the law which says, "Thou shalt do no murder," with the folly as well as the guilt of one that dies by his own hand.

For known and voluntary transgression of the laws of God there is a retribution beyond the evils it brings in the present life.

"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10)

"He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

And this seat of judgment, and this day appointed, are beyond the grave. "For it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

The reception of the things done in the body, therefore, at that judgment-seat, must be something beyond what is suffered by the body, or by the soul while in the body, To that day, then, my young friends—to its righteous decisions, and its unavoidable retributions—let me entreat you to turn your eye whenever temptation is spreading its lures before you ; and your ear to the impressive warning that has been given forth from that dread authority before which you must appear, which bids you beware that you be innocent, while it wishes you happy.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things GOD WILL BRING THEE INTO JUDGMENT."

