

The Person of Jesus Christ

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If there is a promised Saviour, his person claims attention. "Who is he?" is a question of the greatest importance. Manifestly, salvation depends on what he is, as well as on what he does, for what he is able to do depends on what he is.

We are accustomed to say that Christ is God, and that Christ is man, and what we mean is true, but neither statement is perfectly accurate. The second person of the Godhead, apart from his assumption of human nature, is not the Christ; nor is the Son of man, apart from his union with the divine nature, the Christ. The only-begotten Son of God dwelt in the bosom of the Father from eternity, but he was not the Christ till by his incarnation he became the Son of man. A union of divinity and humanity was essential to the constitution of the person of the Christ. It follows, therefore, that the Christ is God-man. Divinity and humanity are united in him, but they are not blended.

Humanity is not deified, and divinity is not humanized. This is plainly impossible. Divinity cannot take into its essence anything finite, and the human is finite. Humanity cannot be so absorbed in Deity as to become part of it. The two natures must ever remain distinct, while the person of Christ formed by their union will ever be one and indivisible. That he has two natures in one person is true, and must ever be true, of the Messiah.

The union of the two natures is confessedly mysterious, but the doctrine is not on this account to be rejected. Its rejection for this reason would be strangely inconsistent in men who cannot understand the union of matter and spirit in their own persons. So far as we know, there are no two things more diverse than matter and spirit. The point of contact between the two is not only invisible, but the manner of contact defies comprehension. The fact however, of the union between soul and body in the person of every man, is unquestionable. To doubt it would awaken a suspicion of lunacy.

While, then, we can neither deny nor comprehend the complexity of men's persons, we must accept as true what the Scriptures teach concerning the person of Christ. Divine and human elements belong to it. The explanation of this fact is given when we are told that the Word, who in the beginning "was with God," and who "was God," "was made flesh and dwelt among" men. There was on his part a voluntary incarnation, for the incarnation pertained to the second person of the Godhead, and not to the first or the third.

It is not, therefore, strictly proper to say, without qualification, that the divine nature became incarnate, for this would imply the incarnation of all the persons of the Godhead. It is better to say that the divine nature in the second person of the Trinity—or, better still, that the second person himself—became incarnate. The act of incarnation was his, and the result of the act was the manifestation of God in the flesh. I do not mean by this language that the incarnation was not approved by the Father and the Holy Spirit—far from it—but that it was the personal act of the only-begotten Son of God. He it was who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor" (II Cor. 8:9), and "made himself of no reputation." (Phil. 2:7)

There have been various false views of the humanity of Christ. To only two of these views will I refer. It was supposed by some at an early day, perhaps in the latter part of the apostolic age, that Christ was not in reality a man, but that he only assumed the appearance of a man. Whether this opinion grew out of the difficulty of believing that a Divine Being assumed human nature, or out of an unwillingness to believe that Jesus really suffered and died, it is useless to inquire. It seems almost certain that John intended to meet and refute this heresy when he wrote as follows: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life." (I John 1:1)

There seems to be a striking gradation in the proofs given of the possession of a human body. First, we have hearing, then seeing as more convincing than hearing. Next, looking upon, intently contemplating, as more satisfactory than seeing, and lastly, handling, as rendering the proof complete. Jesus was really a man. He called himself a man when he said to the Jews, "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God." (John 8:40) There is additional proof of his humanity in these words: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." (Heb. 2:14) We could not be taught more clearly than in this verse that the Son of God assumed the nature of those he came to redeem. He partook of their "flesh and blood."

The other false view, which also deserves most decided condemnation, is that Christ had no human soul. It is supposed by the advocates of this theory that the Word in becoming flesh took a human body only into union with himself. The necessity of a human soul is denied, and is thought to be superseded by what is called a "divine soul." Hence, in passages in which the soul of Jesus is referred to, it is said that his "divine soul" is meant. It would perhaps be difficult for them to say just what they mean by a "divine soul." Whether they make a distinction between this "divine soul" and Christ's proper divinity, I will not undertake to say. If they do, they seem to attribute to the person of Christ an element not strictly divine or human. If they do not, it is needless to use the words at all, for the term "divinity" or the phrase "divine nature" would answer every purpose. I imagine that some obscurity rests on the views of those who refer to Christ's "divine soul," and they would perhaps find it impossible to dispel the obscurity. It is surely not our business to attempt it.

To prove that Jesus had a human soul it is only necessary to prove him a man. This surely is not difficult, for he was pleased to call himself "Son of man." If the phrase "Son of God" indicates that Jesus was divine, the phrase "Son of man" indicates that he was human. Isaiah prophesied of him as "a man of sorrows," and God by the mouth of Zechariah said, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 13:7) I have shown already, by reference to John 8:40, that Jesus called himself a man. Paul says, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." (I Cor. 15:47) "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (I Tim. 2:5) Language cannot more plainly declare that Christ is a man.

But the advocates of the theory I am opposing will admit this. They say without hesitation that Christ is a man. They suppose that his assumption of a human body made him a man. This I deny, and to present the matter in a clear light it is proper to ascertain what man is, what the term "man" means. We cannot do better than to go back to the first use of the word: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." (Gen. 1:26, 27) This language cannot refer to a bodily image, for God is a Spirit. The reference must be to man's rational, spiritual nature.

The formation of man's body is described as follows: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." Gen. 2:7. In view of these passages of the divine word it is evident that spirit and matter both enter into the constitution of the person of man. The union of the two elements is so essential, that without it there cannot be a man. That is, a rational spirit or soul is not of itself a man, and no form of matter is of itself a man. In proof of this I need only say that when a man is dying we call him a man till he is dead—not after he is dead. We then speak of the disembodied spirit, but we do not apply to it the

term "man." We talk about the corpse, but we call it "body," not "man." Why these forms of expression? They grow out of the universal belief that the union of soul and body is so essential to a man, that when it is dissolved the term "man" cannot be properly applied to either of the severed parts.

Now, the bearing of all this on the point under consideration is obvious. For, if Jesus Christ did not possess a soul as well as a body, he was not a man. The union of a body with his divine nature would not make him a man. In such a union the more important element of humanity would be absent, for there would be no human soul. There must be the union of a human body and a human soul to constitute Jesus a man, and then there must be the union of his humanity with his divinity to constitute him the Christ. Nor are we for a moment to suppose that he has two personalities. He has two natures, but one person.

The view now presented supplies the only basis for a rational interpretation of certain passages of Scripture. For example, it is said, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52) It is evident that increase of wisdom referred to his soul, while increase of stature had reference to his body. The term "wisdom" cannot be applied to the material part of man. Shall I ask whether the divine nature in Christ was capable of degrees in wisdom? He who answers affirmatively must have low views of divinity, but those whose theory I deny must answer affirmatively or not at all. They are shut up to affirmation or silence, and if they preserve silence, it is because it is too startling to a firm.

In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. 27:38) No words could more fully express the fact that the emotional nature of Jesus was excited to the highest degree of intensity. It was his soul that was sorrowful, and it was his human soul, because he was a man. That the soul of Christ, like the souls of men was capable of separation from his body, appears from these words: "He hath poured out his soul unto death." (Isa. 53:12) Should it be said that "soul" here means life, the import of the passage would not be materially changed. For when the life is poured forth death occurs, because the soul leaves the body. The soul of Jesus left his body at death, as does the soul of every man in the dying hour; and therefore the only reasonable view of the matter is that the soul of Jesus was a human soul.

The Deity of Christ having been proved in another place, his humanity is, if I mistake not, demonstrated in this chapter. Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Mary. The statement of this fact suggests that, by virtue of the constitution of his person, he possesses all needful mediatorial qualifications.

"Great is the mystery of godliness;" and to many it seems a mystery that we can say of Christ's one person what is true, but which is not true of both of his natures. His one person is more frequently referred to than his two natures. Whatever is true of his person is true of one of his natures. If this were not so, the element of truth would be wanting entirely. We learn from the Scriptures that Christ hungered, thirsted, slept, and wept. This is true of his person, and true of his human nature. He hungered as a man, thirsted as a man, slept as a man, and wept as a man. But these things cannot be affirmed of his divine nature. We dare not say that he hungered, thirsted, slept, and wept as God. This would not be true. On the other hand, it is true of the person of Christ and true of his divine nature that he withered the fruitless fig tree, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, cast out demons, and raised Lazarus from the dead. These things, however, if affirmed of his human nature, would not be true. Does anyone question the accuracy of these statements?

To make the matter plainer, if possible, I may say that the same principle is illustrated in men every day. Should it be said of a man, that he is tall, or corpulent, or sick, everyone would know that the body was meant. The declaration would be accepted as true of the man in his physical nature, but not in his mental nature. Should it be said of a man, that he is wise or ignorant, sad or joyful, the truth of the statement would be granted in its relation to man's mental constitution, but its truth would be denied in its application to the body, because the body is not wise, ignorant, sad, or joyful. It may be said of every man that he is mortal, and also that he is immortal. Two expressions cannot be more contradictory than these, but they are both true. How? Both true in relation to man—the one in relation to his body, the other in relation to his soul.

Thus it is concerning Christ. All that the Scriptures say of him is true as to his person, but it does not follow that it is true of both his natures. Nor should we anxiously concern ourselves about the matter. It is safe for us to believe that what the Scriptures say of Christ as to his person is true, even though we may be utterly unable in many things to discriminate between the emotions and operations of his divinity and his humanity.

We read, for example, as follows: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6) In pondering these sublime words we know that the being described is the God-man, the Christ, and we know from other scriptures that Christ was born, that he died, that he was buried, that he rose from the dead, that he ascended to heaven, and that he is making intercession for us at the right hand of God. Infinite value must attach to all the acts and sufferings of such a being in the room of guilty men.

I close by quoting the following from a very able theologian now living, and who, I trust, will live for many years to come:

"Thus have we seen, in the review of the Scripture teachings as to the doctrine of the suffering Christ, that in the possession of an unchanged and proper divine nature, and a complete human nature, Christ suffered on our behalf. The Sufferer was God and was man. Yet it was not God that suffered, but he that is God, being also man, suffered in his human nature. As the same person, however, was united with both natures, and as that person was the Son of God, so we may say that the Son of God suffered.

"This, however, is the suffering of a divine person, not of the divine nature, and of that person, otherwise incapable of suffering, through the assumption of human nature. If, therefore, called upon to give expression to the Scripture statement upon this whole subject, we may express it thus: There is one God in three persons, distinct in personality, but undividedly and unchangeably the same in essence and nature.

"We may speak of a divine person, but not of a divine nature; we must say the divine nature. A divine person may therefore become incarnate, and yet the incarnation be not of the whole Godhead, for the persons are distinct; but the divine nature cannot, because, as common to all, its incarnation would be that of the whole Godhead.

"It was a person of this Godhead, the Son, the Word, who so united to himself human nature as to become in that nature a man. In this union he assumed all that constitutes a man. The fact that he had no other personality than such as had always subsisted in the divine nature does not make him an impersonal man. It only forbids the idea of an additional personality exclusively in the human nature. This human nature was assumed, because necessary to the work of salvation, it being impossible that a being only divine could undergo the experience necessary to redeem man. In its assumption the divine nature of Christ was wholly unchanged, and the human nature still remained purely human. The nature of personality, however, allows a most vital union of the two natures in his own person.

"Thus uniting in himself God and man, Christ suffered. There was here, therefore, no participation of the divine nature in the suffering. Such participation would involve actual suffering of that nature. But there was this connection of God, even of the undivided divine essence, that he who thus suffered subsists eternally and essentially in that essence, and is God. Yet, intimate as is the connection of the two natures, they are not merged in each other, nor does either of them lose its separate conscious existence or the possession of those peculiarities which make the one divine and the other human.

"It is one person, truly God and truly man—as much God as though not man, as much man as though not God. The human can add nothing to the divine, except that it gives to the person that is divine the means of suffering for, and sympathizing with, us. The divine adds to the human only that it gives to him that is thus man that dignity and glory and power which enables him to perform the work of salvation, and to give to that work inestimable value." *Baptist Quarterly*, vol. iv. pp. 409-411.



All Men Are Born Under the Just Condemnation of God

J. L. Dagg

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All men are born under the just condemnation of God. (Ps. 7:11; Mark 16:16; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5, 6; 5:12-21) The depravity of mankind unfits them for the favor and enjoyment of God, and that separation from him, in which the death of the soul consists, would be the necessary result, even if no declaration to that effect were made by the Supreme Judge.

But this sentence has been declared. The voice of Providence loudly declares it. The pain with which our first breath is drawn; the sickness and suffering which attend on the cradle; the sorrows and toils of our best years; the infirmities of age; and lastly death, which, if it does not terminate our course earlier, after threatening us at every step, and keeping us all our life-time in bondage, finally triumphs over us.

All these proclaim, in language not to be misunderstood, that we are under the displeasure of God. The curse of God rests on the very ground that we tread, and his wrath is poured out on our race in the wars, famines, and pestilence, with which the nations are often visited. The sentence is pronounced by the voice of conscience within us, which is to us as the voice of God: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." (1 John 3:20)

God speaks in his holy Word, proclaiming the sentence: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. 3:10) "What things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. 3:19) The view which is here presented of man's condition, relates not merely to his transgressions, but to his natural state. Hence it is said, "And were by nature, the children of wrath." (Eph. 2:3)

These manifestations of God's displeasure are of early date, commencing with the first woes of mankind. They may be traced to the first sentence pronounced on our guilty parents, when they were expelled from Eden. Paul has explained that we were all included in this sentence, and this is the proper date of our condemnation. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Rom 5:18) From that hour, the descendants of Adam, their habitation, their employments, and their enjoyments, have all been under the curse. Blessings have indeed been poured out in rich profusion on our guilty race, but our very basket and store have been cursed, and the cup of mercies has been mingled with bitterness. The forbearance and long-suffering of God are manifested, but the hand of his wrath is uplifted.

The condemnation under which we are born is just. It is God's sentence, and all his judgments are righteous. It is not unusual for those who are condemned by human laws, to complain of their sentence, and we show our want of reconciliation to the justice of God, by our hard thoughts of God, when we either suffer or fear his displeasure against us.

Our rebellious hearts deny the justice of our condemnation, on the ground that God made us, and not we ourselves. If he did not create our souls directly with depraved propensities, he brought them into being, in circumstances which made their depravity certain. He gave us existence at his own pleasure, and over the circumstances of our origin we had no manner of control. It is therefore unjust, says the carnal heart, to condemn and punish us, for the sinful propensities which we bring with us into the world, or for the sinful deeds which naturally and necessarily proceed from them.

In this manner, we are prone to transfer the blame of our iniquities from ourselves to our Maker. So did Adam, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," (Gen. 3:12) and so do all his descendants. Everyone is probably conscious that such reasonings have at some time had a place in his mind, and that it is difficult to exclude them wholly. On this account, they need a full and sober examination.

A consideration which ought to silence our accusing thoughts of God is that however much we may condemn him, we do not thereby acquit ourselves. If we admit that Adam would not have eaten the forbidden fruit had not God given him a wife, and if we even admit that God was to blame for giving him a wife who might become his tempter, still this does not exculpate Adam. His wife was certainly to blame for tempting him, and yet the guilt of his transgression is not the less on that account.

Every agent is responsible for himself. Distributive justice which gives to every man his due has no other rule, and can have no other. Human courts do not excuse culprits because of the corrupting influences which have led them to violate the law. The law takes direct cognizance of the agent and his deed. This accords with the common sense of mankind. So divine justice condemns the wicked man, and cannot do otherwise than condemn him, however he may have become wicked, and whoever else may be to blame for his being so. This principle we should hold fast in all our reasonings on that subject.

A difficulty in holding fast the principle just laid down, and applying it steadily to the case, arises from the circumstance that the Judge by whom we are condemned is also our Creator. To free our thoughts from embarrassment on this account, let us suppose the case were otherwise. Let us imagine that, after "the Sons of God had shouted for joy," (Job 38:7) at seeing the foundations of the earth laid, and its finished surface covered with verdure and beauty, the Most High was pleased to appoint one of this joyful choir to the honorable service of populating this new world, and to confer on him creative power for this purpose.

Let us imagine that, just as this chosen agent was proceeding to execute his commission, he conceived the thought of making himself the god of the world he was about to people, and for this purpose filled it with unholy inhabitants, willing to join him in rebellion against the Supreme Ruler. This case, though merely imaginary, will serve to test the principle under consideration; and the question which it presents for adjudication is, how, according to the rule of eternal and immutable justice, ought this world of rebels to be treated?

Perhaps it will be said that the agent who abused the creative power conferred on him ought to be punished, and that the creatures that he had brought into being ought to be annihilated. But this is not the plea which is set up for the human race. The plea which the sons of Adam present before the Judge of the earth is not that we ought to be annihilated, but that we ought not to be condemned and punished. This new order of creatures might object to annihilation, and think themselves as much entitled to life and impunity as we do. They might say that annihilation is only a scheme to get the question out of court, and to free the Judge from difficulty, but they might insist on right and claim, as they were created immortal by the commission granted to him by whom they were made, they have a right to immortality. And that this immortality, since their depravity is natural to them, ought to be free from all punishment.

Now, the Judge might for wise reasons not choose to evade the responsibility of adjudicating the case. What, then, would the righteous sentence be? Even to annihilate them against their will, would be a punishment that ought not to be inflicted, if they plead not guilty, because depravity is natural, can be sustained. The plea before an earthly judge would not stand a moment. Who could bear that a criminal should be acquitted and turned loose on the community, because he was born wicked, had grown up wicked, and it was as natural for him to commit theft, murder, and all manner of crimes, as it was to breathe? Such a plea, which the justice of men will not admit, the justice of God will not admit. The new order of creatures must be treated as they deserve, and Infinite Wisdom, instead of annihilating them, must adopt some other expedient, to counteract the diabolical intentions of the agent that created them.

The case which has been supposed is not so wholly imaginary as at first view it may have appeared. Though it is not true that an angel of light was commissioned to create a population for the earth, something else was done which, for all the purposes of the present discussion, amounts to the same. Adam and Eve, while yet in innocence, were commissioned to procreate a race of immortals that should people the new world. This power, Satan, ambitious of divine honor, availed himself of to make himself the god of the world.

By temptation he gained over the first pair to his design, and so completely is the procreating power with which they were invested, turned to his account, that the offspring of it are called the "children of the devil." (I John 3:10; John 8:44) So complete is his control of them, that he is called "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience," (Eph. 2:2) and they "are taken captive by him at his will;" (II Tim. 2:26) and the death which comes on them for disobedience is attributed

to his power, "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." (Heb. 2:14) The imaginary case, therefore, is substantially our own, and, if rebellion against God, subserviency to Satan, and confederacy with him to overthrow the government of the King Eternal, cannot be justified at the tribunal of divine justice, we are verily guilty, and justly condemned.

But our accusing thoughts of God are suppressed with difficulty. We have seen that the whole world is guilty before him, and yet every mouth is not stopped. We still entertain hard thoughts, and vent hard words against him, and the thing formed says to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? (Rom. 9: 20) Of such impiety it becomes us to beware. We should feel that our depravity is our own, however we came by it, and that it renders us wholly unfit for the society and enjoyments of the holy place where God dwells, and for his favor, service, and communion; and that it ought to be loathsome in our own view, and must be so in the view of the holy God.

If our own hearts condemn it, we shall be ready to admit, without complaint, that God also condemns it. And what can we say against God in the matter? What wrong has he done? His distributive justice does no wrong in treating the unholy according to their character. If he has done any wrong, it must relate to the department of public justice, which, as formerly explained, seeks the greatest good, and is the same as universal benevolence. Now, who will say that God's plan will not produce the greatest good? Who is wiser and better than God, to teach him a preferable way?

When Satan gained his conquest over our first parents, God could have confined him at once in the pit, and inflicted on him the full torment yet in store for him, and he might have annihilated the whole race of man in the original pair. This would have terminated the difficulty by an act of power, but who will affirm that it would have been wisest or best? God would have appeared disappointed and defeated. Distributive justice would have appeared relieved rather than developed. Satan triumphed by artifice, and God has chosen to defeat him by the counsel of his wisdom. Satan exalted himself to dominion over the world; God chose to overcome him, not by power, but by humiliation. Satan gained his success by means of the first Adam; God, in the second Adam, bruised the serpent's head. Satan, by his success, gained the power of death; God, by death, the death of Jesus Christ, has destroyed him and his power. (Heb. 2:14)

Who will dare affirm that God's way is not best? It becomes us to feel assured, whatever darkness may yet remain on this subject, that God would not have given up his Son to free us from condemnation, if that condemnation had not been just, and that he would not have made so great a gift, so costly a sacrifice, if the scheme had not been worthy of his infinite wisdom. Or if some other, by which the sacrifice might have been spared, would have been preferable.

When the question has been settled, and the principle established, that men may be held responsible for their own sins, without inquiring how they became sinners, a difficulty still remains as to the date of the condemnation under which we all lie, and the ground of the original sentence. When the mind becomes perplexed with subtle reasonings, it is well to keep facts steadily in view, and to hold fast the plain testimony of inspired truth. It is expressly said, in the unerring Word, "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" and again, "The judgment was by one [offence] to condemnation." (Rom. 5:16, 18) It is here clearly taught that one judgment, one sentence, included all men, and that this judgment was made up and the sentence pronounced on one offence of one man.

With this express teaching of Scripture facts agree. The indications of God's displeasure against the race are not postponed until each individual has been born into the world. Every mother is not carried back to Eden before she brings forth a son, that he may, in his own person, receive the sentence of condemnation, be denied access to the tree of life, driven from the garden of delights, and doomed to sorrow, toil, and death. Whatever our reasonings may say on the subject, it is fully ascertained to be the will of God, before an individual is born into the world that when born, he shall be in the condition in which the curse left the father of the race.

The Bible, and the voice of Nature, speak alike on this point, and if our reasonings say that the Author of Nature and the Bible has done wrong, we should suspect that we have erred in our inferences, or in the premises from which they are drawn. And if it could be shown that a separate sentence is pronounced on each individual as he comes into the world, his condition would be no better. Being depraved by nature, we are "by nature children of wrath." (Eph. 2:3) Wrath is still our inheritance, and if the antiquity of the sentence which appointed it be admitted, the measure of that wrath is not thereby increased, nor the endurance of it made earlier. As to these results, the question is one of no importance whatever. Its

relation, as exhibited in Scripture, to the doctrine of justification by the obedience of Christ, constitutes its chief claim to our careful consideration.

The sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," (Gen 3:19) was pronounced on Adam in the singular number; yet he appears to stand under this sentence as the representative of his descendants, on all of whom the sentence takes effect. So Eve was addressed in the singular number, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;" (Gen. 3:16) but she stood, in this sentence, as the representative of all her daughters, on whom this penalty falls. As the natural parents, Adam and Eve stood together as the head of the race, but there was a peculiar sense in which that headship pertained to Adam. Though Eve was first in the transgression, it is not said by one woman, but "by one man sin entered into the world." (Rom 5:12) The judgment was not by the two offences of the two natural parents of the race, but by the one offence of the one man, the previous offence of the woman being left out of the account.

In this headship Adam is contrasted with Christ, being called "the figure of him that was to come." (Rom 5:14) This comparison is further brought to view in I Cor. 15:45, 47, where Christ is called the second Adam; and in verse 22, where it is said, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." On Adam, who was first formed, the responsibility of peopling the new world with a race of holy immortals specially rested, and, though Satan artfully directed his first assault against the woman, his scheme would have failed had not Adam been gained over to his interest. This divinely appointed headship of Adam made his disobedience the turning point on which the future condition of his posterity depended, and Paul takes occasion from this to illustrate the dependence of believers on the obedience of the second Adam, for justification and life.

To this view it is objected, that, according to the principles of justice, the guilt of one man cannot be transferred to another, and no man can be justly condemned for that of which' it is impossible for him to repent. No man living can repent of Adam's sin, and the guilt of Adam's sin cannot justly be imputed to any other person.

What are here so confidently assumed as axioms may well be called in question. We must believe the Scriptures, when they say, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53:6) "He bore our sin in his own body on the tree." (I Pet. 2:24) And we know that men cannot repent of deeds which they have wholly forgotten, and yet they are responsible for them. But there is a much shorter way of getting at this question, than by a tedious examination of these assumed axioms. No man understands that the guilt of Adam was transferred. It still remained his, and was closely and inseparably bound about him. But everyone knows that there may be union and confederacy in crime.

In commercial affairs, if twenty men owe one hundred dollars, each may pay five dollars, and the obligation of the whole will be cancelled. But in morals, if twenty subjects confederate to assassinate their king, each one is guilty of the whole crime, because each one has the full intention of it. Only one of the band may plunge the dagger to the monarch's heart, but his crime may be justly imputed to them all, though his guilt may not be transferred to another. Now, we may inquire whether such union does not exist between Adam and his descendants, as justifies the imputation of his sin to them, or in other words, shows it to be in accordance with justice. Paul, in comparing Adam and Christ as public heads, has in the fifth chapter of Romans, pointed out disagreements as well as agreements.

Death comes from the disobedience of the one, and life from the obedience of the other, and in Rom. 6: 23, he teaches that there is an important difference as to the mode in which these results follow. Death is wages, a thing deserved; life is a gift. The benefits of righteousness and life, received from Christ, are by faith; and "It is of faith, that it might be by grace." (Rom. 4:16) The condemnation and death, which are from Adam, are not gratuitous and arbitrary, but come on us justly. We inquire, then, whether there is such a connection between Adam and his descendants, as renders the imputation of his sin to them, an act of justice:

1. There is a moral union between Adam and his descendants. His disobedience unfurled the banner of rebellion, and we all rally around it. We approve the deed of our father, and take arms in maintaining the war against heaven, which his disobedience proclaimed. He is the chief in this conspiracy of treason, but we are all accessories. As to the outward act, the eating of the forbidden fruit, we did not commit it, but regarding it as a declaration of independence and revolt, we have made it our own, and it may be as justly set to our account, as if we had personally committed the deed. In this view, if we cannot, strictly speaking, repent of Adam's sin, we may most

cordially disapprove the whole revolt from God, in which our race is engaged; may most bitterly regret that it was ever commenced; and may take guilt and shame to ourselves in deep humiliation before God that we have been engaged in it. With such feelings pervading our hearts, the doctrine that Adam's sin is imputed to us, will not be rejected as inconsistent with justice. If we cannot, strictly speaking, repent of it, we may at least take the guilt of it to ourselves, in a sense which perfectly accords with the feelings of true penitence, and when the Holy Spirit has taught us to impute it to ourselves, we shall not complain that God imputes it.

2. There is a natural union between Adam and his descendants. He is their natural parent, and because of this relation, they inherit a depraved nature. Our moral union with him renders our condemnation just, from the moment we possess separate existence, because of our personal depravity, and our natural union with him rendered it proper, that our condemnation should be included in the general sentence.

3. There is a federal union between Adam and his descendants. We have before seen that a covenant, not in the common, but the Scripture sense of the term, was made with Adam. This covenant, this arrangement or constitution of things, made the future character and condition of his descendants dependent on his obedience. He was, in this respect, their federal head. Some maintain that the covenant with Adam was the covenant of nature, and that there was no federal headship, different from the natural headship which belonged to him as the first parent. Happily for us, a decision of this question is not indispensable to our present discussion. The natural and moral union which we have already considered, is a just ground for the divine sentence against the whole race, in the person of their first parent, but a further examination of this question may be conducive to a better understanding of the subject.

Since nature is not something different from God operating, it cannot be of much importance to determine how much of the transaction with Adam was natural, and how much beyond the proper province of nature. The revelation of God's will in the garden was as much above nature, as the subsequent revelation from Sinai, and so also was the judgment pronounced after the transgression. But the including of children with their parents, in the penalty inflicted for the sins of their parents, is seen in the providence of God, both in ordinary and extraordinary dispensations. Everyone knows that poverty and suffering are brought on children by the intemperance and other crimes of their parents.

The evils of war, famine, and pestilence, judgments inflicted for the sins of men, fall on children as well as their parents. In the deluge, and the burning of Sodom, children were destroyed with their parents. On this point, the word of God agrees with his providence. We are sometimes jealous for the Lord's reputation, and are afraid to speak of his visiting the sins of parents on their children, but we are more cautious than the Lord himself. He proclaimed from Sinai, with his own voice, and recorded in stone with his own finger, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Ex. 20:5) And when he showed his glory to Moses, and proclaimed his name, instead of being jealous to conceal this fact, he was jealous rather to make it known: "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. (Ex. 34:7)

God's solemn declarations on this point not only explain his providence, but in the most impressive manner exhibit the great responsibility of parents. To bring an immortal into being, and to form his character for time and eternity, is a responsibility most momentous. This responsibility devolves on men, and it is proper they should feel it. To awaken them to a sense of it, God addresses them in the solemn language which has been quoted.

While the Scriptures stir up parents to a sense of their responsibility, they leave to children no pretext with which to cover their iniquities. Some have said, "The Lord's ways are not equal. Our fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Ezek. 18:2) To these complainers God said, "Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4) This is not a law repealing the Decalogue, but is to be explained in harmony with it. The sins of parents affect both the character and the condition of their children, and for all this they are responsible, but the condition of the children is not worse than their character, and therefore the Lord's ways are equal, and their complaints against him groundless.

The case of Adam differed from that of all fathers since. These may transmit peculiar tempers and propensities, and may influence their children by instruction and example, but they cannot bring them into the world free from the depravity and

condemnation which the transgression of Adam brings upon them. But, though the responsibility on Adam was greater, it is still true, as in the other cases that his descendants are responsible for themselves, and not one of them will suffer beyond the demerit of his personal character. Such is the union between Adam and his descendants, that depravity and condemnation pass from him to them, not separately, but as one inheritance. His sin, for which they suffer, is their own as well as his, and it is imputed to them because it belongs to them — is justly theirs.

After all the explanations that have been made, it may be that our hearts still accuse God, and secretly say that, had we been in his stead, we would have dealt more kindly with the human race than he has done. These accusations of God, he hears. These most secret whispers of the heart, he fully understands. What impiety does he see therein! That we, who know so little of his ways, should presume to be wiser or better than he, is daring impiety, and if nothing else will convince us that we deserve the wrath of God, let this impiety suffice. Let us accuse no more, but lay our hands on our mouths, and in deep silence before him, confess our guilt.



Baptists and the Equality of Christ's Disciples

John Quincy Adams

From *Baptists: The Only Thorough Religious Reformers*, 1854

"One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matt. 23:8

One of the most inveterate sins of fallen humanity is pride. Man thirsts for power. He loves to be elevated above his fellows, and to occupy a position of acknowledged superiority. He delights to be clothed with a little brief authority, which will enable him to look on all around him as his inferiors. It is the working of this spirit of arrogance and assumption that has created so many grades among men, both in the world and the church.

The disciples of Christ were infected with this spirit. They had imbibed it from the Jewish rabbis—the Scribes and Pharisees. They thirsted for the possession of such a degree of power and authority, as would entitle them to dictate to and rule over their brethren. Hence we find them frequently disputing who should be the greatest. Christ invariably rebuked this spirit on every occasion of its manifestation. He taught them humility. He showed them that the principles of His Gospel were opposed to all such sentiments of pride, and that instead of favoring the arrogant wishes of depraved humanity, it was designed to convert mankind into a universal brotherhood, all possessing equal rights, acknowledging but one Head, one Superior, one Master, even Himself. He taught that His church was to be an association of brethren, all its members subject to one law, and all amenable to one tribunal, the voice of the church.

But how sadly has the teaching of Christ on this subject been perverted, and the professedly Christian church, instead of presenting to us the beautiful picture of a band of brethren, meeting together on the broad platform of equality, exhibits an array of gradations in authority, which vies with the most despotic governments of the world. Priestly arrogance and ministerial assumption of authority is exhibited on almost every hand, in both the Protestant and Papal churches and from the class leader to the mitred bishop— from the ruling elder to the triple-crowned Pope there is in violation of Christ's declaration: "One is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

Reform here is needed; and I announce therefore, as the Fourth Feature of the Reform in which Baptists are engaged, The Establishment of the Equality of Christ's Disciples.

I. It will devolve on me to show, in the first place, that such equality does not generally exist. In Romish and Protestant churches there is no recognition of equality among professed disciples of Christ. I suppose I need not stop to prove this assertion in reference to Romanism. All acknowledge that there are grades of power, both temporal and ecclesiastical, in that church. Even her most devoted adherents will not deny it. On the contrary, they admit and defend it.

Let us, then, turn to the Protestant churches. And first, we will notice the Episcopal. Does this church recognize equality among her members? We reply, No! She has distinct and separate grades; and not only is the ministry above the laity, but there are three grades in the ministry: deacons, priests, and bishops. In England, the bishops of this church, by virtue of their office, are clothed with temporal power. They are peers of the realm—that is, nobles of the land. The archbishop of Canterbury, has the appointment of all the bishops, and is the highest nobleman of England. The archbishops hold authority over all the bishops.

The bishops hold authority over all the churches, and inferior clergy, in their respective dioceses. They appoint ministers to their charges; they suspend, degrade and excommunicate them. In America there are no archbishops. But the bishops, though possessing no civil power—on account of our republican institutions—have the same ecclesiastical power as those in England. The church has no voice in her government. In the Triennial Convention, the bishops form a separate house distinct and superior to the clergy and laity. The appropriate language of the bishops in England would be: "One is our Master, the archbishop, and all we are lords;" while in England and America there is no recognition of the equality taught by Christ.

But let us look again at the Presbyterian church. Does equality reign here? Do all her members stand on the broad even platform of the Gospel? Can they say, "One is our Master, even Christ?" Let them answer for themselves. Both in their Confession of Faith and Form of Government, we find that the government rests not in the hands of the church, but in the session, presbytery, synod and General Assembly. These bodies attend to all the business of the church. An individual church has no power to act in the reception of members, the exclusion of members, the calling or dismissing of a pastor, or any other act of government which Christ has committed to his church. Other masters are recognized besides Him.

The whole tendency of Presbyterian church government is to exalt the ministry in their authority above the church. Indeed, the ministry belong to a different order. They do not belong to the church as the other members do; they belong to the Presbytery. The church cannot discipline a minister; neither can the session try him; but the presbytery must do it. Lest these assertions should startle any who have never examined the subject, permit me to give a few quotations from printed documents.

The Westminster Confession says:

"The Lord Jesus, as king and head of His church, has therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers. To these officers, the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power, respectively, to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures, and to open it unto penitent sinners as occasion shall require." (*Westminster Confession*, chap. xxx. sec. 1, 2)

(Is it not surprising that a church claiming to be so orthodox as the Presbyterian, should retain in its Confession of Faith, a section tending so directly to bolster up the Romish doctrine of priestly absolution? Suppose an honest inquirer after truth in the Romish church should meet this, in his researches, would he not begin to think, and with good reason, that Presbyterianism and Romanism differ only in name?)

These officers we are told, by the Form of Government; are "Bishops or pastors, ruling elders and deacons." The same Form of Government gives us the character of all the different bodies composed by these officers, for the government of the church. "The church session consists of the pastor or pastors, and ruling elders of a particular congregation;" and "it is expedient, at every meeting of the session, that there be a presiding minister. When, therefore, a church is without a pastor, the moderator of the session shall be either the minister appointed by the presbytery for that purpose, or one invited by the session." Again, we are told that among other things "it is the duty of the session to receive members into the

church, or exclude from the church those who deserve it, and to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the church." (*Form of Government*, sections 1, 4, 6)

The church cannot act in receiving her own members. The session attends to this for her. A majority of the members of the church might be opposed to the reception of an individual, but if the session receive him, he is admitted. On the other hand, a person may fall under the censure of the session, and though all the church beside may esteem him a Christian, the session has power to exclude and excommunicate him. Is this equality? This is more fully exhibited in the *Directory for Worship*.

We are told that when baptized children:

"come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed it is their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's Supper. The years of discretion in young Christians cannot be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the eldership. The officers of the church are the judges of the qualifications of those to be admitted to sealing ordinances, and of the time when it is proper to admit young Christians to them." (*Directory for Worship*, chap. 9, sec. 1, 2)

It is here implied that the church, that is, the inferior members of it, as distinct from the session, is not possessed of sufficient prudence to judge of the qualifications of those who are to be admitted to the Lord's Table with them.

But further, the Presbytery has power over the session and the church. By this body the rights of the church to call and dismiss a pastor are taken away. When a Presbyterian church calls a pastor, the call is not made to him, but to the Presbytery. "The call shall be presented to the Presbytery under whose care the person called shall be; that, if the Presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may be accordingly presented; and no minister or candidate shall receive a call, but through the hands of a Presbytery." (*Form of Government*, chap. xv. sec. 9)

So, also, the minister himself is subject, not to the church, but to the Presbytery. He cannot move without the permission of this body. "No pastor shall be translated from one church to another, nor shall he receive any call for that purpose, but by the permission of the Presbytery." "The Presbytery, on the whole view of the case, shall either continue him in his former charge, or translate him, as they shall deem most for the peace and edification of the church." (*Form of Government*, chap. xvi. sec. 1) It is here implied that the Presbytery is more competent to judge of the affairs of a church, and to decide what is for its good, than the church itself. The church may think it best for their pastor to remove from them, but the Presbytery may think it best for him to stay; the only alternative the church has, is to starve him out, and then let them get another pastor when they can. This system is degrading to freemen, and insulting to Christianity!

Next to the Presbytery, is the Synod, and then the General Assembly. The Session must submit its doings to the Presbytery, the Presbytery to the Synod, and the Synod to the General Assembly. Is this equality?

The Dutch Reformed church is governed in a manner similar to the Presbyterian. The Protestant Methodist is more despotic than either.

Let us turn our attention for a moment to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Shall we find equality here? No; for its very name shows that its government is prelatical. I need not enlarge on this point, for no one, surely, will pretend that there is equality in this church. Its founder expressly disavows any idea of it. He says, in a letter to John Mason, dated Jan. 13, 1790, "As long as I live, the people shall have no share in, choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We are no republicans, and never intend to be. It would be better for those who are so minded to go quietly away." There are more grades in the Methodist Episcopal Church than in any other Protestant community, and anyone who will read the "Discipline," will be convinced of it.

A private member in the church has no voice in the government whatever. Private members are amenable to the class-leader, the class-leader to the preacher—the preacher to the presiding elder—the presiding elder to the bishop. Is this equality? The people have no voice in electing or dismissing their preacher, but must take whoever is sent, and let him go at

the expiration of two years. The preacher has no choice of his field of labor. He must go just where the bishop may please to send him. The degraded and humiliating position of Methodist preachers is beginning to be felt by them keenly. Said one to a Baptist minister, not long since:

"I look and long for the time when there will be something like freedom in the Methodist church. On the last day of Conference, the great day of dispensations, I go to the meeting with my saddle-bags on my arm, having packed up my goods before I left my last place. The Bishop says: 'Brother A., go to such a place.' 'Sir, that is an unhealthy region, and my family is predisposed to the sickness that prevails there. May I not go yonder?' 'Go right along, sir,' says the Bishop; and go I must. I hope it will not always be thus."

The church does not receive or expel either her ministers or members. The circuit preacher has power to expel private members—the quarterly conference to expel local preachers, deacons and elderly—the yearly conference to expel travelling preachers—the general conference to expel bishops. Is this equality? Just read the following question and answer in the *Methodist Discipline*, in reference to the ordination of an elder, and then read the text:

"Will you reverently obey your chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourself to their godly judgments?"

"I will do so, the Lord being my helper."

(*Discipline*, part II. chap. iii. sec. 2)

Chief ministers! Chief minister! Who are they? "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Surely, the language of Christ, and the language of the *Discipline* are very dissimilar. I do not wish to say anything harsh or severe. I simply desire to present facts, that all may judge, whether, in any of these bodies, there is that equality taught by the Saviour. These churches, whose forms of government I have reviewed, compose the great majority of the professedly Christian world. It is evident, then, that such equality as the text teaches does not generally exist.

II. I proceed to show, in the second place, that Baptists seek to establish such equality. The principles of church government in the Baptist denomination are expressed in the text: "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." There is no opportunity for the assumption of authority by a few, if it were desired. All meet on the broad, even platform of equality. The rich and the poor, the minister and people, are all brethren. The pastor is no more; the poorest member is no less, than one of the brethren. Each church, in its collective capacity, transacts its own business, exercises its own discipline, and receives and excludes its own members, subject only to the authority of Christ, and governed only by His Word.

On all questions, every member of the church has an equal right to speak and to vote. There is no authority superior to the church, to reverse its decisions, or to call it to account. The pastor, while he has no superior authority, has equal rights with the rest of his brethren. If called to another field of labor, he is at liberty to go or not without asking leave of a bishop, presbytery, or council. He is perfectly free to act in accordance with his own views of duty, and his own convictions of right.

In a Baptist church there is perfect equality. It could not be otherwise. They recognize the church as a voluntary organization, into which persons enter by their own choice, and whose privileges and benefits all have an equal right to share. Christ has nowhere delegated His authority to a body of arrogant ministers, or prelatical bishops, or blasphemous popes; and Christians have no right to recognize and uphold the assumption of authority by them. It is not a matter of indifference.

To support the assumptions of men, who have arrogated to themselves authority which belongs only to Christ, is to engage with them in rebellion against the one only Master; and where this is done knowingly, such cannot be held guiltless. In laboring, then, to advance Baptist sentiments, we aim to exalt Christ as the supreme and only Lawgiver and Ruler in Zion, in the place of presbyters, and bishops, and councils, and popes, who have usurped his throne.

But some suppose that every church has a right to make its own laws, and to alter these laws to suit times, and circumstances, and places. Now, if the church was a merely human organization, this might be correct reasoning. But all

churches claim to be of divine origin, and to have divine authority for their constitution and government. It is evident therefore that all cannot be right, for God cannot sanction contradictions. Further, if every church has a right to establish its own form of government, then the Romish church has an equal right with any Protestant church to invent and establish one, and no Protestant who takes this ground can consistently say a word against the Papal hierarchy.

And if all are right, then right and wrong are no longer opposites. But all are not right. Christ has taught, in His Word, that the highest authority on earth is the church. Hence, in giving His apostles directions how to proceed in cases of offence, He designates the church as the supreme and final umpire. "Tell it to the church; and if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." (Matt. 18:17)

Tell it to the church; not to the session, or presbytery, or synod, or general assembly, or council, or conference, or bishop, or cardinal, or pope, but to the church; and if he neglect to hear the church—what then? Appeal? No; there is no higher authority to appeal to; for "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." The creation of other tribunals is the result of the arrogance of men who love to "lord it over God's heritage;" (1 Pet. 5:3) and the support of them is owing mainly to the influence of just such men, and their willing dupes. Baptists are willing to be "all brethren;" the ministry have no desire to be exalted to a position of rivalry to the Master, in his church.

In order more forcibly to exhibit the contrast between Baptists and the other most prominent sects, let us suppose Christ to come again upon earth, and visit the places of worship, in New York City, and preach from this text. See him enter St. Patrick's cathedral. The Archbishop receives Him very graciously, elated with the idea that the claim of Rome to be THE Church is thus sanctioned by the Saviour, and he invites Him to preach. He announces this text, and preaches as He did upon the plains of Judea: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them; but so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." (Mark 10:41-43; Matt. 23:8)

The Archbishop grows uneasy; he reminds the Preacher of the Pope, the Cardinals, the Archbishops, the Bishops, the Father Confessors, the Priests; but the Divine Teacher asserts that these are distinctions which men have made, and reiterates the doctrine of the text—universal equality among his disciples. The Archbishop denounces the Saviour as a heretic, and he is thrust out.

He then winds His way through our great thoroughfare to Trinity Church. Here he is cordially received, for the Episcopal also claims to be THE Church, and here He repeats the sermon. But he is reminded of the Fathers, the Archbishops, the Bishops, the Triennial Convention, the Priests, the Deacons. He pronounces these grades all contrary to His teaching. The Bishop intimates that He is probably a fanatical dissenter, and He is politely handed to the door.

He visits in succession a Presbyterian and a Methodist congregation with the same sermon; in the former He is reminded of the Session, Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly; in the latter, He is cautioned about the "chief ministers;" and the Class-leader, Steward, Preacher, Presiding Elder, Bishop, with their respective powers, are set before Him; and for simply reiterating His own teachings, He is treated as a disturber of the peace, and put out of both places.

See Him now seek a Baptist pulpit. His sermon is just in accordance with their practice. There is nothing among them with which it comes in contact; no grades—none to exercise lordship or authority over them: "For one is their Master, even Christ, and all they are brethren." A sincere "Amen," is the response from every heart, and the world's Redeemer, banished from the Romish and the Protestant churches, finds a refuge and a home in every Baptist congregation.



Blood Before Water

J. R. Graves

From *Old Landmarkism: What Is It?*, 1880

"Into what then were ye baptized?" (Acts 19:3)

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3)

"Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies bathed in pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." (Heb. 10:22, 23)

Christian baptism is not the celebration of a religious rite by modes indifferent; but it is a **specific** act, instituted for the expression of **specific** truths; to be administered by a **specific** body, to persons possessing **specific** qualifications. When one of these properties is wanting, the transaction is null since, unless the ordinances are observed as Christ commanded, they are not obeyed, but perverted.

Now the divine institutor of the rite selected but one word to indicate the act he intended, and that word—*baptizo*—which never had but one meaning when referring to persons, viz., "To dip in, or under water," (*Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon*, sixth and last edition, gives but this one definition.) and, therefore, immersion in water was the act he specifically commanded; by specifying one act, he forbade any other to be done in his name. Having seen that a scriptural church is the only organization he has authorized to administer the act, and only to persons who give satisfactory evidence of being regenerate in heart, it now remains to inquire for the symbolism of the rite.

The Scriptures are clear, in teaching that baptism is for the profession of something on the part of the subject, and that something is the faith of the gospel—the ground on which the soul must rest upon for its salvation. Paul explicitly states this fact. (See Heb. 10:23, above quoted.) That ground is the finished work of Christ, and our participation in it. This we are to profess and set forth in our baptism.

When Paul heard from the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19) that they had not so much as heard of the existence of the Holy Spirit, he asked, with evident astonishment, "Into what then were ye baptized?" He was understood by them to ask what faith they could have professed by their baptism; and they said they were baptized into John's baptism, which evidently means they professed the faith John preached in their baptism. They did not say they had been baptized by John, but their very answer implies they had not. They could not have heard John preach, or been baptized by him, without hearing of, and having experienced, the converting and regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit.

John baptized only those who gave him evidence of having repented toward God, and were exercising faith in Christ soon to appear, and no one could exercise these graces without the influences of the Holy Spirit; and he did distinctly mention the existence and work of the Spirit. These disciples had, doubtless, been immersed by Apollos, a disciple of John, who was preaching in these parts, for he knew nothing but the baptism of John. Now the faith which John preached before Christ came, was not the proper faith to be preached after he came; since he required them to believe that Christ was yet to come, and no one but John was authorized to administer his baptism. There were, therefore, three things unscriptural connected with their case:

1. These persons were unregenerate when they were immersed.
2. They did not profess the proper faith in their baptism.
3. They were not baptized by one having any authority to baptize.

Though they acted conscientiously, and were perfectly satisfied with the act, they were nevertheless unbaptized and Paul, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, baptized them (This case should convince anyone that Dr. Jeter's position is wrong. He holds that if persons have been dipped in water, in the name of the Trinity, and are satisfied with the act, it is valid baptism to them, irrespective of the faith they professed in it, or the moral or ecclesiastical qualifications of the administrator. These had been dipped, and were satisfied with the act. The immersion of a traveling imposter, without the vote of any church, would then be valid baptism).

This has been the authority quoted by Anabaptists in all ages, as well as in this age, to justify them in baptizing those immersed by unscriptural organizations, and those who oppose them are forced to deny that these Ephesian disciples were rebaptized. "But by no rules governing the Greek language can the original be wrested to teach otherwise than that Paul, or one of his companions, baptized these disciples." The English is a faithful translation of the text; and by the laws of the English language, the version cannot be construed to teach otherwise than that Paul laid his hands upon those who were said to be baptized; and it is certain that he did not lay his hands upon those John baptized.

This example is positive instruction to us to re-administer the act where there has been an irregularity. The church at Corinth conscientiously believed it was correctly administering the Lord's Supper; but it was not, but utterly perverting it, and making themselves guilty of the body and blood of Christ. To return, that baptism has been regarded as the profession, on the part of the subject, of the faith of the church baptizing, whether true or false, from the third century and onward—the "catechumens"—those applying for baptism, were required to repeat the creed of the church, and then the question was invariably asked: "Wilt thou be baptized into this faith?"— i. e., Do you desire to profess that you receive, and will hold this faith, and rest your salvation upon it?

Only upon the candidate answering "I will," was baptism administered. When the apostate churches perverted the rite of baptism to "a sacrament" and "seal" of salvation, and gave it to unconscious infants to secure their salvation, they invented sponsors, and godfathers, and godmothers, to answer for the infant.

The Episcopalians retain this custom:

- "Dost thou believe all the articles of the Christian faith as contained in the apostolic creed?"
- (Answer by sponsor for the infant) "I do."
- "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?"
- (Answer by sponsor for the infant) "That is my desire."

Having established the fact that the subject of baptism does not profess any private personal faith he may entertain, but always the faith or creed of the church baptizing him, let us here notice the faith of each of the leading denominations around us; that we may know into what we were baptized —if we have been baptized by them, or expect to be baptized by them.

THE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH (A. D. 313-337)

This, the oldest apostate church existing today, requires all its subjects personally, or by sponsors, to be baptized into this faith, as the ground of salvation:

"We believe that baptism is a sacrament appointed by the Lord, which, except a person receive, he has no communion with Christ; from whose death, burial, and resurrection proceed all the virtue and efficacy of baptism. We are certain, therefore, that both original and actual sins are forgiven to those who are baptized in the manner which our Lord requires in the gospel; and that whoever is washed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is regenerated, cleansed, and sanctified."

There is no mistaking this language. The baptismal rite is God's appointed channel by which he conveys the grace of salvation to the soul, and is therefore called a "sacrament," without which there can be no salvation.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (A. D. 610)

Rome teaches this faith, and requires all baptized in her communion to profess it, viz.:

"Baptism is a sacrament instituted by our Savior to wash away original sin and all those we may have committed; to communicate to mankind the spiritual regeneration and grace of Jesus Christ, and to unite them to the living Head.

"If any man shall say that baptism is not essential to salvation, let him be accursed...In baptism, not only our sins are remitted, but all the punishment of sins and wickedness."... Council of Trent

The faith of these two "churches," that constitute the apostate part of Christendom, from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries, are very similar. The perversion of the primitive faith, touching the ordinance, was by transposition; they put the water before the blood, and made it necessary to reach the blood through the water.

This simple change corrupted the whole gospel, perverted the whole plan of salvation, and made regeneration depend upon the will of men—the priesthood. I ask every Baptist right here to stop and answer this question: Should the most esteemed and influential Baptist church on this continent, from this day, baptize into this faith, and for this purpose, would you vote to receive the baptisms of that church as scriptural and valid? You can decide this.

CAMPBELLITE DESIGN OF BAPTISM

Compare the above with the faith into which Campbellites baptize their converts. They baptize for the remission of sins. What do they mean by the expression? Mr. Campbell, the originator of the sect, is certainly qualified to explain:

In, and by the act of immersion, as soon as our bodies are put under the water, at that very instant all our former or old sins are all washed away."—*Christian Baptist*, p. 100

"Immersion is the means divinely appointed for the actual enjoyment of the first and greatest blessings." — *Millennial Harbinger*.

"Remission of sins cannot be enjoyed by any person before immersion."

"Belief of this testimony is what impelled us into the water, knowing that the efficacy of his blood is to be communicated to our consciences in the way which God has, pleased to appoint; we stagger not at the promise, but flee to the sacred ordinance [water of baptism] which brought the blood of Jesus in contact with our consciences. WITHOUT KNOWING AND BELIEVING THIS, IMMERSION IS AS A BLASTER NUT-THE SHELL IS THERE, BUT THE KERNEL IS WANTING." —*Christian Baptist*, p. 521.

The reader can see for himself that Campbellites baptize into the self-same faith the Catholics do. He, if possible, more strongly emphasizes the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. He asserts, with all the force he can give his language, that the sinner can only come to Christ through the water; that he can only reach the blood of Christ by being immersed into the water; and he elsewhere affirms that immersion and regeneration are terms meaning the same thing. Campbellites, therefore, unite with the apostate teachers of Christianity in placing water before blood; thus bringing an unpardoned, unregenerated sinner to water baptism, as a sacrament of salvation. Can a church of Christ indorse this pernicious doctrine, by receiving those baptized by Catholics and Campbellites as scripturally baptized?

There are three vital features lacking in their immersions:

1. They have not the scriptural authority—their societies not being churches.
2. The subjects are confessedly unpardoned and unregenerate when they come to the water; and,
3. The faith which they profess in the act is not the faith of the gospel.

The Protestant Episcopal Church baptizes into this faith: viz., in the catechism the subject is taught to say, there are two sacraments as generally necessary to salvation—i.e., baptism and the supper of the Lord.

At his confirmation he is required to answer thus to the question: "Who gave you this name?"

Answer: "My sponsors in baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

All who are baptized in this "church," come to the water as sinners, unpardoned and unregenerate, in order to receive pardon, and regeneration, and salvation. The teachings of the prayer book abundantly sustain this.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Many come to us immersed by these societies, but are they baptized? Let the question be asked, Into what is every Methodist baptized? To save space I will state that the office for the baptism of both infants and adults in the *Discipline*, is copied, almost verbatim, from the *Book of Common Prayer* used by the Episcopalians; and, touching the efficacy of baptism in the case of infants, Wesley, the father of the system, who copied the office from the *Book of Common Prayer*, is competent to explain.

"It is certain that our church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again, and it is allowed [no Methodist ever disputed it in Wesley's day] that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition."—*Wesley's Works*, vol. 1, p. 405.

Now, into what do Methodists baptize adults?

"By baptism, we who are by nature children of wrath, are made the children of God." In all ages the outward baptism is a means of the inward...By water, then, as a means—the water of baptism—we are regenerated or born again.—*Wesley's Works*, vol. 6, sec. 4.

I might quote pages of similar teachings; and lest someone should say this is not what Methodists now teach, I ask, Do they not still use the office prescribed in the *Discipline*, and pray the same prayers at baptism, as they did in Wesley's day? The last Methodist Conference that met in Memphis, in an official report, decided that for Methodists to require a profession of regeneration before baptism is an evil! I quote a paragraph:

"Baptism, too, has been unnecessarily deferred, not only in case of children, but sometimes postponed to an indefinite period in the case of adults. The practice of requiring a public profession of regeneration before baptism has resulted in evil, and that the design of the sacrament is perverted, and the people encouraged to expect the divine blessing without the use of means [i.e., baptism]. We call attention to these evils that we may seek diligently to remove them."—Copied from *Western Methodist*.

This is sufficient. To teach and practice that a sinner can be regenerated without water baptism, as a means, is an evil in the estimation of the Methodist conference today. No regenerated person can be baptized according to the "Methodist Discipline." Every adult, without exception, is required to confess himself unregenerate, and unpardoned, and that he comes to baptism to obtain these blessings. Every song prepared to be sung at their baptism teaches the same thing.

Now, can a Baptist with the teachings of God's Word before him, endorse such baptisms as valid, and the design scriptural, by receiving them? That Baptist must know that immersion would be worse than null, if administered by Baptist churches for such a purpose. The subject would profess a false and pernicious faith in his baptism. There are three vital defects in immersions administered by Methodists:

1. There is the lack of any church authority—Methodist societies are not churches of Christ, and therefore cannot baptize.

2. The lack of qualification on the part of the subject—he confesses him- or herself unregenerate, and that he seeks it in the act.
3. The design is unscriptural the faith— it requires to be professed, as shown above, false and pernicious.

THE PRESBYTERIAN FAITH REQUIRED TO BE PROFESSED

By referring to "Shorter Catechism" we find this:

"Q.—What is a sacrament?

"A.—A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein [i.e., in the receiving of which] by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, SEALED AND APPLIED to believers."

Now the covenant of grace is worthless to anyone, unless it is sealed and applied to him. Therefore, unless the sacrament is received, none of the benefits of Christ's death can be enjoyed by any one. This is clear. Now, what ordinances are sacraments?

"A.—The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's Sapper.

"Q.—What is baptism?

"A.—Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost to be a sign and seal, of engrafting into himself of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life."*
—S. Catechism,

(*This is a palpable misrepresentation. For Christ commanded to dip in or under water; and Christ himself was immersed into the river Jordan; and John said: I, indeed, baptize you in—*en*, not *meta* with—water.)

In these extracts it is clearly taught that baptism is a sacrament—i.e., a rite by which the benefits of arises death are applied; and also, a seal, by which they are made sure—confirmed to those receiving. Of course, if the benefits of Christ's death—i.e., regeneration, justification, pardon and adoption—are applied in and by baptism, it cannot be supposed the subject possesses them before baptism; and, therefore, none but unregenerate and unpardoned persons can be baptized, in accordance with the Presbyterian design of baptism. It is substantially the same as the Catholics and Campbellites—to make one a Christian and child of God. **WATER is put BEFORE BLOOD.**

An immersion or baptism by this sect would be marked by the same three vital defects with that of the Catholics—i.e., no scriptural authority—for Presbyterian societies are not churches, an unscriptural subject, and an unscriptural design; and Baptist churches cannot recognize them as valid by receiving them without renouncing their own as unscriptural; for, of two contradictory propositions, if one be true, the other must be false.

BAPTIST FAITH PROFESSED IN BAPTISM

Our historical ancestors, the Anabaptists, A. D. 1120, five hundred years before a Protestant sect existed, or Luther or Calvin had been born, taught this concerning the above doctrine of regeneration by baptism, in a little work defining Antichrist:

"A third work of Antichrist consists in this, that he attributes the regeneration of the Holy Ghost unto the mere external act, baptizing infants into that faith, teaching that thereby baptism and regeneration must be had; on which principle he bestows orders, and, indeed, grounds all his Christianity, which is contrary to the word of the Holy Scriptures."

Can it be that Baptists of this age, instead of protesting against, will approve and endorse the teachings and act as scriptural, by receiving them? Those old Baptists held the faith concerning baptism that we profess to teach. From fourteen articles of faith they put forth I copy:

ARTICLE 7—We believe in the ordinance of baptism. The water is the visible external, which represents to us that, which by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us, viz., the renovation of our mind and the mortification of our members through faith of Jesus Christ; and by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing and declaring our faith and change of life."

Christ was our great exemplar as well as teacher, and he not only indicated by his example how we should be baptized, but at the very water's edge he declared the true design of baptism. He declared that his own was "to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt 3:15) We know he came to earth to work out a righteousness for his people, to satisfy the infinite claims of Divine justice. This he could not accomplish literally, by being baptized, else he might have ascended in a chariot of glory to the right hand of his Father when he came up out of the water. But he did fulfill all righteousness, in some sense, and it must have been fulfilled figuratively.

He painted before their eyes the three great acts by which he did fulfill the all righteousness the law required:

1. He must sink in death.
2. Be buried.
3. Rise again from the dead.

These acts, prefigured in his baptism, he prefigured his crucifixion, his burial, and his resurrection. Paul taught that Christian baptism represented the crucifixion of Christ (Gal. 3:1), and Christ, referring to his coming crucifixion, called it a baptism—immersion (Luke 12:50). Paul also declares that three acts constitute the whole gospel, by which we are saved, if we rightly apprehend and believe:

1. How that Christ died for our sins;
2. That he was buried;
3. That he rose again the third day. (I Cor. 15:1-5)

Christ, then, in a lively figure, set before the eyes of all his sacrificial work—the gospel of our salvation—and he has made it the duty of every disciple of his to do the same. And is it too much for Christ to require us to represent these great acts of his redemptive work, and profess our own personal faith in them, for our own salvation, as we are about to enter his church? The soul, redeemed by his precious blood, will rejoice to do it, despite the sneers of an ungodly world, and the opposition of modern priests and Pharisees.

This is the baptism Christ instituted for his church, and he forbade it to recognize or receive any other. In this design we see it is—

BLOOD BEFORE WATER

By this simple test human societies, and all counterfeit churches, can be easily distinguished from the churches of Christ, viz., in the former, water is put before blood, and the church before Christ; in the latter Christ is put before the church, and blood before water. Reader, how do they stand in your faith, and which came first in your baptism, blood or water?

CONCLUSIONS

1. Where there is no scriptural baptism, there are no scriptural churches of Christ, no scriptural ordinations, no scriptural ministers, no scriptural ordinances. Dr. N. L. Rice, Presbyterian, admits this—"No baptism, no church."
2. If immersion be the act which Christ exemplified in his own baptism, and commanded for baptism, then Pedobaptist societies are without baptism, and, consequently, are not churches, and are without scriptural ministers or scriptural ordinances.
3. If baptism is not a "seal," nor the law of pardon, nor a "sacrament" of salvation, but an act by which we profess the saving faith we possess, and in which we symbolize the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, then it must be admitted that Baptists, alone, truly baptize, and the immersions of other denominations are in no sense baptisms, and should not be endorsed as valid.



Every Bible-Believing Baptist Should Belong to an Independent Baptist Church _____

Norman H. Wells

From *The Church That Jesus Loved*, 1973 (Chapter 14)

What is wrong with an organized Convention, Association or Fellowship of Baptist Churches? SUCH AN ORGANIZATION IS UNSCRIPTURAL! The only organization established and commissioned in the New Testament is the local church. There is not one mention or hint of any other organization. If God had intended for churches to organize themselves into bigger organizations surely He would have given some indication of this in the New Testament.

Search the Bible! A Baptist is supposed to believe and abide by a "thus saith the Lord." By what authority are Conventions, Associations, Fellowships, etc. organized? ONE THING IS SURE ... IT IS NOT BIBLE AUTHORITY. ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS CONVENTIONS, ASSOCIATIONS, FELLOWSHIPS, ETC., ROB GOD OF HIS GLORY.

Man has never been satisfied with God's way. Man has never been satisfied with God's way of salvation because it emphasizes man's helplessness and God's greatness. Man seeks to change God's way of salvation so that it will glorify man. This kind of effort robs God of His glory. Man has never been satisfied with God's plan of living by faith. He seeks to change it so his own efforts and works are emphasized. This robs God of His glory. Man has never been satisfied with God's church and has tried to build something bigger that would glorify man.

The Scripture says, "Unto him be GLORY IN THE CHURCH by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (Eph. 3:21) THIS IS THE WAY THAT GOD HAS CHOSEN TO BE GLORIFIED. NO OTHER ORGANIZATION CAN ASSUME THIS RESPONSIBILITY. If other organizations are built to carry on the work of the Lord then God is robbed of His glory.

MAN-MADE ORGANIZATIONS GLORIFY MAN. Take any organization of Baptist churches you please and give them an honest look. It will be seen that this statement is true. MAN-MADE ORGANIZATIONS PRODUCE COMPROMISE.

Compromise! This is one of the great evils of man-made organizations of Baptist churches. In order to keep unity in the organization each church has to practice compromise! Churches within the organization that drift away from distinctive Baptist doctrines cannot be censored. Pastors cannot raise their voice in protest to laxity in Baptist principles and doctrines. Nothing must be done to bring any disruption to the organization. Finally ... anything goes! Everything is tolerated for the sake of the organization. Sound Baptist Churches find themselves identified with the worldliness, modernism, false doctrine, etc., that exists in other churches and helpless to do anything about it!

THESE GROUPS STRIVE TO PRODUCE GREATER LOYALTY TO THE ORGANIZATION THAN TO THE LOCAL CHURCH. Again we challenge you to look at any organized group of Baptist churches and see if this is not true. In some it may not be as advanced as others but it is true in every one. THE ORGANIZATION COMES FIRST... THE CHURCH SECOND! A pastor that would challenge the organization can be belittled before his own people!

The organization is held up as the only hope of the world. The church is just a minor part. PEOPLE ARE INDOCTRINATED TO BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE A GREATER RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ORGANIZATION THAN TO THE CHURCH. Organizational schools, youth camps, etc. are used to instill into the young a greater loyalty to the organization than to the church.

THESE ORGANIZATIONS TAKE THE GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITIES FROM THE CHURCH AND PLACE THEM IN MAN-MADE ORGANIZATIONS. The organization controls the indoctrinating of the young people. The organization controls the worldwide missionary responsibility. This responsibility is taken from the church and placed in the mission board of the organization. The ownership of schools, mission stations, papers, homes for aged, orphanages, etc., is placed in the

organization. The church, instead of being the sovereign, democratic, body that God intended, becomes merely one little voice in a bigger organization that God never authorized.

THESE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ALWAYS FAILED! The pages of religious history are littered with the wreckage of these man-made organizations. Every one of them follows the same path that step by step leads them to compromise. The amount of organization needed always increases. The bigger the organization, the less important the churches are. The end result is always the same, compromise, apostasy, formality, and finally oblivion! THESE ORGANIZATIONS ALWAYS FAIL...ONLY THE CHURCH LIVES ON! The promise of God is in the church.

CHRISTIANS AND CHURCHES LEARN TO RELY UPON THE ORGANIZATION RATHER THAN UPON GOD. Actually, although surely not deliberately, the Christian and the church are taught to put their trust in the organization rather than in God. THIS IS NOT TOO DIFFICULT TO DO BECAUSE TO BE A PART OF ANY SUCH ORGANIZATION IS TO SAY THAT THE WAY GOD HAS SET DOWN IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED.

GENERALLY, TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH ONE OF THESE GROUPS OF ORGANIZED BAPTISTS LEADS TO BEING IDENTIFIED WITH EVEN LARGER GROUPS; SOMETIMES THEY ARE NOT EVEN BAPTIST. The average layman is not kept informed as to the intricate movements and finances of the organizational machinery. Sometimes they are kept unaware that they are part of such an unscriptural, man-made group!

THESE ORGANIZATIONS WILL EVENTUALLY STEREO-TYPE THEIR PREACHERS AND ROB THEM OF THEIR INDIVIDUALITY AND INITIATIVE. One of the greatest evils of these organizations is the Idea that THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS. Invariably they will point at their numbers and finances as justification for the unscriptural, man-made machinery.

GREAT CROWDS AND LARGE NUMBERS CAN INDICATE A NUMBER OF THINGS. They could indicate a lack of preaching on sin, judgment and hell. They could indicate a lack of preaching on separation or Christians. They could indicate a substitution of some kind of easy decision for genuine repentance and faith. They could indicate a compromising position on great Bible truths. They could indicate that the church has a good program of entertainment that is attracting the carnal and lost.

Numbers can be an indication of success ... but not always! Now, let us look at the other side!

WHAT IS AN INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH? An independent Baptist church believes that the only organization given in the New Testament is the local church. They believe that God has given the church as the means of accomplishing His purpose in this age. An independent Baptist church, therefore, does not affiliate or identify themselves with any organized Convention, Association or Fellowship. An independent Baptist church sends forth its missionaries by the authority of the church and not through an unscriptural Mission Board. These missionaries are supported directly by the churches. An independent Baptist church cooperates with other Baptist churches in missions, schools, etc. but does so on a voluntary basis and without any unscriptural organization binding the churches together. An independent Baptist church refuses to compromise the historical Baptist doctrines for the sake of popular appeal. An independent Baptist church has to rely upon God and give Him all the glory. True Baptists love the church that Jesus loved and will I not have this love and loyalty switched to some man-made organization.

An independent Baptist church denounces sin and apostasy wherever it is found. Its voice is not silenced by loyalty to some outside organization. An independent Baptist church is not dictated to nor influenced by any head or headquarters except Jesus Christ.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT EVERY BIBLE-BELIEVING BAPTIST JOIN AN INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH? This would bring revival! It would be a return to God! It would bring honor and glory to the name of our God! It would be a return to God's Word and God's Way! WE WILL BE YIELDING OURSELVES TO GOD...FOLLOWING HIS MESSAGE AND HIS METHOD.

