



Volume 21, Number 5 May 2015

"...The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I Timothy 3:15

Infant Baptism is an Evil because it Contradicts Justification by Faith __

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he doctrines upon which infant baptism rests, and the great fundamental principle of justification by faith, are in irreconcilable contradiction. They are throughout, the antagonists of each other. To them both, no church, nor individual, can consistently adhere. One or the other must, sooner or later, be abandoned. Their opposite characters indicate this result, and the history of the church, primitive, popish, and protestant, evinces that it is inevitable. Let the doctrines in question be separately stated, and compared.

The great fundamental principle of justification by faith is taught in the Word of God in terms perfectly full and explicit. We are, says an apostle, "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood...to declare...his righteousness for the remission of sins...that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3:24-26)

And "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) Justification is the act of God by which he declares a man just and righteous. The justified are accepted, and approved, as if they had never sinned. This is an act of God's own free and sovereign grace, and therefore necessarily irrespective of any works or worthiness on the part of the justified. It is by faith, not as a meritorious agency to procure justification, but as the medium through which it is bestowed.

We are not justified for faith, as if it were of itself a sufficient righteousness, since faith no more than works can constitute such righteousness, but by faith through grace. "It is of faith, that it might be by grace;" faith being characterized by a peculiarity which

harmonizes with grace, and which looks not to itself, but to Christ for righteousness and salvation. This, briefly, is justification by faith, as taught in the Word of God.

How shall we ascertain the doctrines of infant baptism? They are not made known to us in the Bible. Revelation is silent on that whole subject. We must, of course, rely upon the statements of Protestant Pedobaptists for our authority. With

Papists, I have at present nothing to do. Dr. Wall is more definite on this topic than any other writer now before me. He says: "Most of the Pedobaptists go no further than St. Austin does. They hold that God by his Spirit, does, at the time of baptism, seal and apply to the infant that is there dedicated to him, the promises of the covenant of which he is capable, viz.: adoption, pardon of sins, [and] translation from the state of nature to that of grace." (*Hist. Inf. Bap.*, vol. ii, p. 148)

The doctrines upon which infant baptism rests teach, therefore, that in that ordinance the child receives adoption, pardon, and translation into the state of grace, and of course, that he receives justification! Davenant, the Bishop of Salisbury, thus speaks on this subject: "The justification, regeneration, and adoption of little children baptized, confers upon them a state of salvation." (Letters to Dr. Ward, p. 25)

Archbishop Usher writes thus: "The branches of this reconciliation [received by infants in their baptism] are justification, and adoption." (*Brief Method*, &c.)

So teach all the other divines, and all the protestant Confessions of Faith and Catechisms. Infants are therefore, according to this doctrine, justified before God in baptism.

Let now the great principle of justification by faith and the doctrines of infant baptism be compared. If you are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, through grace, you are not justified by baptism, either in infancy, or at any other time, and if you are justified by baptism, then you are not justified by faith. This conclusion is perfectly plain. These doctrines are therefore as opposite as darkness and light. They emphatically contradict and falsify each other.

Justification by faith, I have said, is a fundamental doctrine of the gospel. It is vital. It is "the faith once delivered to the saints." (Jude 3) No system from which it is excluded can ever be justly regarded as embodying the religion of Christ. It was taught by the apostles, and early ministers, constantly, forcibly, emphatically. It was cherished by the primitive churches as a priceless truth. How can we account for its abandonment by the professed followers of Jesus Christ?

There is, I answer, an inherent tendency in human nature, renewed though it may be, to pass from the substance to the forms of religion. The transition is so easy that it can only be prevented by perpetual vigilance. The influence of this propensity the early churches did not very long escape. Among the first of the corruptions they admitted and embraced, was the undue importance which became attached to religious ceremonials. They gradually exalted the rites above the doctrines of Christianity, while both were perverted and misapplied.

Baptism, especially, was imagined to possess great and peculiar virtues. Thus justification through grace by faith was ultimately displaced by justification through grace by baptism. Popery was the result, the doctrine of which, on this subject, is thus expressed by the Council of Trent: "Justification is by means of the sacraments, either originally infused into us, or subsequently increased, or when lost, again restored." (Concil. Trid., Sess. vii., decret. Sacram., apud Moehler, p. 279) Thus the Christian world was plunged into darkness, which remained unbroken for a thousand years.

But justification by faith was restored at the Reformation. Noble efforts to give back to men this truth had previously been made by Tindall, and Wycliffe, and Huss, and others, but they all fell martyrs to their benevolent designs. All the denominations that then sprang out of popery, did not agree as to the details of religion; hence their separate organizations. But they all concurred in the doctrine of justification by faith, whether Lutheran, Calvinist, or Episcopalian. They each embodied it fully in their separate Confessions, and other standards.

And strange as it may appear, they also embodied in the same symbols, that opposite and contradictory system, infant baptism. Why they did this will more fully appear hereafter. I now speak of facts only. I am not attempting to account for them. Thus they threw together conflicting elements, which, as they had before done, gradually destroyed the blessings which had been gained. To the sublimest truths they united the rankest corruption. To the gospel of Christ they chained the main supports of Popery, ignorance, and worldly conformity. These facts are most readily demonstrated by reference to the standards themselves.

In the first place, I shall show that the Confessions of all the Protestant sects embody the doctrine of justification by faith. The Augsburg Confession is the symbol of Lutheranism. Its fourth article is in the following words: "They teach also that

men cannot be justified before God by their own efforts, merits, or works, but are justified freely through Christ by faith, and are received into favor, and enjoy the remission of sins, through Christ, who by his death presented a satisfaction for sin." (Cox's *Melancthon*)

In full agreement with this is the Westminster Confession, which doctrinally is embraced by all classes of Calvinists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Independents, and others:

"Those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting, and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they resting on him as their righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God. Faith thus received, and resting on Christ, and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification." (West. Conf., ch. ii., sects. 1, 2)

The doctrine of the Episcopal Church in all its sects is contained in the eleventh of the Thirty-Nine Articles, in the following language: "We are accounted righteous before God only-for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our works or deservings. Therefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

Of the doctrine of the Methodist church in all its departments, the "Articles of Religion," in the *Discipline*, is the symbol. Their ninth article speaks thus: "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for any of our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

These are the principal Confessions of Faith of all the Protestant sects, and we have now seen their teaching on this subject. If they are to be believed, we are justified before God, not by our own efforts, merits, or worthiness, not by anything done by us, or in us, not of course by baptism, or by any other act of obedience whatever, but alone through grace by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. How great, how vital, how evangelical, how infinitely important this truth! Who could have supposed that they would have inserted in each one of these very formularies any principle directly and plainly contradicting that already so fully and elaborately stated? Yet they did so. Infant baptism finds a place there, sustained by all the doctrines with which Popery had surrounded it. For proof in the premises we retrace these several Confessions.

The Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran Church is as follows: "They teach concerning baptism that it is necessary to salvation, because by baptism the grace of God is offered. Infants are to be baptized, who being brought to God, by baptism, are received into his favor." (Aug. Confess. Art. ix)

The Westminster Confession says:—" Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life." (*Conf.*, ch. xxviii, sect. 1) "By the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred." (*Conf.*, ch. xxviii, sect. 6)

The Thirty-Nine Articles teach thus:

"Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and .a mark of difference wherein Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth, whereby as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly, are engrafted into the church. The promise of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed...The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable to the institution of Christ." (*Thirty-Nine Art.*, 27)

The Methodist Articles of Religion speak as follows: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized, but is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church." (Discip., Art. of Relig., xvii)

Thus we have the teachings of all these Confessions on baptism. The summary may be embraced in a few words. Lutherans declare that baptism is necessary to salvation, and that by it infants are received into the favor of God, and saved. Presbyterians, with all their kindred sects, maintain that baptism is to the child a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his engrafting into Christ, of regeneration, and of the remission of sins, and that all these are by baptism not only offered to the child, but really exhibited and conferred upon him.

And Episcopalians and Methodists affirm that by baptism the new birth, the forgiveness of sins, and adoption, are all to the child, visibly signed and sealed. The child therefore in baptism, is pardoned of sin, is regenerated, is adopted, is received into the church, received into the favor of God, and saved.

All this certainly involves justification, or the declaring the person innocent of crime. These Confessions teach, therefore, the justification of the sinner by baptism. Consequently on the doctrine of justification by faith, and the doctrines upon which they rest infant baptism, the Confessions, each and all of them, plainly, palpably, unmistakably contradict themselves.

If you are justified, pardoned, and saved through grace by faith, and not by works, merit, or obedience of any kind, then you cannot be justified, pardoned, and saved by baptism. But it may be objected that infants are not capable of faith. Neither therefore, I answer, are they capable of baptism. They are saved by grace through Christ, and without baptism. Is baptism necessary to their salvation? God forbid. Why then baptize them, since the act is without authority, and without benefit? And especially why teach that baptism gives them pardon, regeneration, adoption, and salvation?

Do I deal unjustly with these several sects when I thus represent them as in collision with themselves? Their inconsistencies on this point have been noticed and condemned by others as well as Baptists. Moehler, a Catholic priest, and recently Professor of Divinity in Munich, one of the most eminent Roman Catholic scholars of the age, says:

"At the commencement of the Reformation, Luther and Melancthon evinced on the matter the most decided opposition to the Catholic Church; and the internal ground of their opposition lay entirely in their one-sided conception of the justification of man before God. Hereby especially the communication of really sanctifying graces by means of the sacraments was thrown into the background, nay even totally called in question.

"The highest point to which they could rise was the one-sided view of the sacraments considered as pledges of the truth of the divine promises for the forgiveness of sins. The sacraments accordingly were to have no other destination than to make the faithful receiver assured that his debt of sins was remitted, and to console and quiet him.

"So mean a conception of the sacraments necessarily led to the view that they operate only through faith in the divine promise of the forgiveness of sins. It was only in course of the disputes with the fanatics, as Luther called them, or with the Sacramentarians, that the reformers of Wittenberg approximated again to the doctrine of the [Papal] church. Already the Confession of Augsburg expresses itself, though indefinitely enough, yet still in a manner to enable Catholics to declare themselves tolerably satisfied with it.

"By degrees the Lutherans [and all other Protestants] again adopted the entire notion of the *opus operatum*, although they continue even down to the present day to protest against it.

"Thus in course of time no important difference [in the premises] inherent in the nature of things, could be pointed out" between Catholics and Protestants. (Symbolism, pp. 282-285)

This testimony from an enemy is true. Still, Protestants of all classes in their sermons and their conversations from the pulpit and the press continue to protest that they do not attribute to baptism any justifying or saving power. And do they

not? I have fairly recited the very words of their Confessions of Faith! Do they believe these Confessions? Let us turn to some of their standard writers, and see how they express themselves on this subject.

Henry, the distinguished Presbyterian commentator, says (among which, of course, must be embraced justification):

"The gospel contains not only a doctrine, but a covenant, and by baptism we are brought into that covenant. Baptism wrests the keys of the heart out of the hand of the strong man armed, that the possession may be surrendered to him whose right it is. The water of baptism is designed for our cleansing from the spots and defilements of the flesh. In baptism our names are engraven upon the breastplate of the High Priest. This, then, is the efficacy of baptism; it is putting the child's name into the gospel grant. We are baptized into Christ's death, that is, God doth in that ordinance seal, confirm, and make over to us, all the benefits of the death of Christ." (*Treat. on Bapt.*)

Professor Charles Hodge, one of the Theological Instructors at Princeton, says: "We are baptized in order that we should die with him, [Christ] i. e., that we should be united to him in his death, and partakers of his benefits. This baptism unto repentance, Matt. 3:11, is baptism in order to repentance; baptism unto the remission of sins, Mark 1:4, that remission of sins may be obtained." (Comm. on Rom. vi., 8)

Bishop Bedell says: "This I yield to my Lord of Sarum most willingly, that the justification, and adoption which children have in baptism is not *univoce* [univocally] the same with that which adults have. And this I likewise do yield to you, that it is *vera solutio reatus*, et veraciter, et in rei veritate performed in all the like emphatical forms, etc." (Letters to Dr. Ward, Letter 161)

Bishop Burnet says: "Here, then, is the inward effect of baptism; it is a death to sin, and a new life in Christ." and "We are not only baptized into one body, but also saved by baptism." (*Expos. Thirty-Nine Arts.*, pp. 896, 898)

The Episcopal Catechism affirms that the child is by his "baptism, made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

These are the expositions of standard writers among Pedobaptists themselves, of all classes, explanatory of the efficacy of baptism as taught in their Confessions. They effectually shield me from the charge of misrepresentation, and at the same time evince that their doctrine is such, in the language of Moehler, as "to enable Catholics to declare themselves tolerably satisfied with it."

They inculcate, as do their Confessions, justification by faith, and also justification by baptism. Thus they contradict in one place what they teach in another. But Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists, do not surely believe these baptismal doctrines! Many of them, I admit, earnestly deny it! Gladly would we credit their disavowals. But we take up their standards, catechisms, and writers of authority, and there, word for word, are the passages I have recited, and much, very much more of the same character.

They deny that they believe their doctrines, and yet they continue to publish them to the world as expressing truly their faith. From the pulpit and from the press they disclaim and repudiate them, but when called to the sacred altar, in their vows of office, they solemnly declare before God and men, that they do believe them "ex animo!" [sincerely; from the heart].

What now shall we say? They deny; they affirm; they again deny; and again affirm! The same contradictions which so strikingly mark their Confessions and Catechisms; we find pervading all their teachings, and practice! I lament these facts, but they are so natural to their position, that from them there seems to be, without changing their ecclesiastical relations, no way of escape.

We now turn to consider briefly, the results of the condition of things submitted. They are evil, and evil only. Look over the Protestant Christian world as it exists at the present moment, and you will find that infant baptism is again rapidly expelling, as it did in early times, the doctrine of justification by faith from the churches.

Among the Lutherans of Germany, the Calvinists in continental Europe, the Episcopalians in England, and others—I speak of them as communities—the baptism of infants is observed with the utmost carefulness, but justification by faith has no practical influence whatever. It is still in their Confessions, but it has been banished from their pulpits, from their hearts, and from the faith of their people. Justification by faith they receive from the Bible. Infant baptism and its accompanying doctrines, they receive from Popery. The former is of God. The latter is of men. They cannot continue to exist together.

All those churches, now regarded as evangelical, will, sooner or later, give up justification by faith, or they will give up infant baptism. What has been will be again. "Coming events cast their shadows before." Justification by faith from one direction, and the doctrines of infant baptism from the other, like opposing currents in the ocean, meet and form a whirlpool, in which no church exposed to its violence can long survive.

We have now seen the doctrine of justification by faith, and the principles of infant baptism, and contrasting them, have found that they are wholly contradictory and irreconcilable. We have seen that it was infant baptism mainly, which expelled the doctrine of justification by faith from the early churches, and brought on Popery, by which the world was shrouded in darkness for a thousand years. We have seen through what providential agency this great doctrine was restored, and how it became the central principle of the Reformation. We have seen that though justification by faith is embodied in all the Protestant Confessions, Catechisms, and other formularies, it is placed in them side by side with infant baptism, and its doctrines, and that, as elsewhere, they reciprocally contradict, refute, and nullify each other.

We have seen, in the history of Protestantism, the practical results of uniting these conflicting elements, and have found that they cannot exist together, but that the destruction of this fundamental doctrine is the inevitable result of maintaining infant baptism. And we have seen that the tendency of all the other protestant sects is in the same direction, and that they also, must ultimately abandon practically, if not professedly, either justification by faith, or infant baptism, with the principles upon which it is maintained, and defended. It is now demonstrated fully, that the doctrines, upon which infant baptism rests, contradict the great fundamental principle of justification by faith. It is therefore, in all its bearings and influences, an alarming and most disastrous evil.



The Law

From The Pulpit Cyclopedia, 1851

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Galatians 3:10)

desire on this occasion, to place before you one complete view of the law of God, that we may understand distinctly how we stand connected with it, and the great end it should answer in our experience. Correct views of the law are indispensable to a right understanding of the gospel, and a just knowledge of both is essential to our comfort and salvation. We ask then:

I. WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BY THE LAW? Sometimes the term signifies the divine Word, the revealed truths of the Holy Scriptures, &c. Sometimes the whole of the Mosaic dispensation, but in our text we understand it signifying the moral law — A law which God wrote upon the hearts and consciences of our first parents, and which was afterwards written upon the tables of stone on Sinai, and which Jesus has summed up in two great commandments, Matthew 22:37, &c. Every duty to God and to men is included in these.

II. WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF THIS LAW? A summary of this is given by the great apostle, Romans 7:12. It is holy, the reflection of God's holy mind. Just, that is, based on rectitude; not unreasonable, but equitable between man and God, and

man and man. Good, that is, benevolent, having a kind aspect to those for whom it legislates, and production of their happiness.

- **III. WHO ARE UNDER ITS AUTHORITY?** All mankind. It is the law of God for the human family, and for each person and for everyone. None are above it—none are beneath it. It is the law of the Creator of everyone. The law of the Benefactor, &c., of everyone. The law of the great Judge, &c., of everyone.
- **IV. WHAT IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF DISOBEDIENCE?** God's curse. That is, every disobedient person is under God's displeasure and wrath, and exposed to eternal death. And this curse extends to every transgressor, and for every act of transgression. One sin involves the soul beneath this curse. We ask,
- **V. WHAT REMEDY DOES THE LAW PROVIDE FOR TRANSGRESSORS?** Our text contains none, and the law of God recognizes none,—it cannot relax its claims,—it cannot allow of one violation it cannot clear one transgressor. It will not be satisfied with repentance; floods of tears avail nothing. It refers to its purity, &c., and demands satisfaction. It is not met by reformation. It says, Pay me what thou owest! The law is inexorable. It blesses the obedient, but curses the sinner.
- VI. CAN ANY ONE THEN BE SAVED BY THE LAW? We reply, no, not one. For this reason, there is none righteous, &c. All have sinned, &c. Every man then is condemned by the law, and not one can have any hope from it. We ask then,

VII. WHAT END THE LAW IS DESIGNED TO ANSWER?

- 1. By it we see what are the just claims of God. Here we behold the extensive and perfect obedience he requires.
- 2. By it we are brought under conviction of sin. By the law is the knowledge of sin; see Romans 7:9. That is, living without the law there was no impression of evil, no sense of guilt. But when the commandment of God came with power to the conscience, and I saw its just demands, then my sin revived. I saw myself guilty, and exposed to death. All my former hopes at once expired.
- 3. By the law, all self-righteousness is to be destroyed. A consciousness of its demands, and our disobedience, clearly show us, that by the deeds of the law no living flesh can be justified. As a criminal by referring to the statute book, would only read his sentence, so by the law, we read our exposedness to death, and must at once perceive that from the works of the law there is not the least hope of salvation.
- 4. The hue is to be our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. To instruct us as to our duty, our guilt, our peril, our helplessness, and our need of a Saviour. So that when we exclaim, "O wretched man that I am," (Rom. 7:24) &c., This then refers us to Christ, who alone can save us from the curse of the law, Romans 8:3, "For what the law could not do," &c. Here then we have a door of hope,—not on Sinai, but Zion,—not from the law, but the gospel,—not from Moses, but Jesus. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, &c., Galatians 3:13. An interest in Christ saves us from all the consequences of sin, both in this life, and that which is to come. From present condemnation—"There is therefore no condemnation," (Rom. 8:1) &c. And from endless wrath—"The gift of God is eternal life," (Rom 6:23) &c.

APPLICATION

1. How do you stand connected with the law? Some perhaps are alive in their own indifference, &c. to it. Never felt their sins to be a burden, &c. What will you do when the law flashes across your souls in death or judgment? Others may be seeking heaven by the deeds of the law. How foolish and fruitless! One sin condemns, and binds over to eternal death. Others I trust are convicted of sin. The law has revived it, &c., and they exclaim in sorrow before God,

"Guilty I stand before thy face, On me I feel thy wrath abide, 'Tis just, the sentence should take place: 'Tis just, but oh, thy Son has died! Many of you, I trust, are rejoicing in Christ's free and justifying grace. Being justified by faith, &c. (Eph. 2:8-10)

- 2. Learn how God alone is glorified in our salvation, He has provided for us the Redeemer. "...when in the fulness of the times was come, God sent forth his Son," (Gal. 4:4) &c.
- 3. Let his love and mercy be exalted. (Isa. 30:18)
- 4. Let all our hopes rest continually on the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 2:10)

The Authority to Baptize

Norman H. Wells From *The Church That Jesus Loved*, 1973 (Chapter 22)

rom the very beginning of my Christian life I was taught that the four basic requirements of Scriptural baptism were:

- 1. Proper Candidate
- 2. Proper Motive
- 3. Proper Mode
- 4. Proper Administrator

After I was called to preach and attended the seminary I found these same four requirements were taught as constituting Scriptural baptism. In my own private study this conviction has deepened over the years. The only candidate for Scriptural baptism is a born again believer.

The only motive is that the believer may present an outward picture of an inward work of Grace. By his baptism he is able to picture that like as Christ died, was buried and rose again he also by faith in Christ has died and was buried and has risen to walk in the newness of life. The believer is baptized because he is saved, not to get saved.

The only mode of baptism is immersion in water of the believer.

The only proper administrator of baptism is a local, Scriptural Baptist church.

There never has, I suppose, been any real disagreement among fundamental Baptist concerning the first three of these requirements. There is, however, considerable disagreement concerning the fourth. Currently the question of who has the authority to baptize is raging with renewed vigor. It is time, I believe, to restate our position.

We believe that only a real, New Testament, Baptist church has the authority to baptize. If this is denied the question then arises as to who does have the authority — it must be somewhere. Several possible answers are suggested.

First, there are those who state that the matter of a proper authority for baptism is not important. As long as the candidate, motive, and mode are right it doesn't matter who does the baptizing.

Second, there are those who believe that as long as the candidate had a proper understanding his baptism is valid regardless of the administrator.

Third, there are those who state that any church, regardless of creed, can baptize as long as it is by immersion.

Fourth, there are those who believe that any organization calling itself Baptist, regardless of what it believes, can administer Scriptural baptism.

Fifth, there are those who believe an ordained preacher has the authority to baptize.

Sixth, there are those who believe that any Christian has the authority to baptize a believer.

There are probably many variations and combinations of the above stated propositions but I believe basically, at least, they give an accurate presentation of the matter. At first glance it seems like an unsolvable maze of contradicting claims. However it might not be as difficult as it seems. It is as simple as this. I am going to present and prove four arguments that will, I believe, help clear the air.

First, I want to establish that the authority to baptize could not rest in each Christian. This would eliminate number six listed above.

Second, I want to establish that the authority to baptize could not rest in each ordained preacher. This eliminates number five listed above.

Third, I want to establish the fact that the authority to baptize rests in the local church.

Fourth, I want to establish the fact that only one true, local church is in existence, and that it is the true, New Testament Baptist church. This would eliminate numbers one, two, three, and four given above and will establish my argument.

Now, to my first proposition stating that the authority to baptize could not rest in each Christian. Each individual Christian has personal responsibilities that are his and his alone! For instance, each Christian is expected to be baptized and to identify himself with a church. He is expected to lead a clean, separate life, to be a witness, to win souls, to tithe, to pray, to study God's Word, etc. All these are his personal responsibilities that he and he alone must meet. No one else can do them for him — they are his personal responsibilities.

Then there are responsibilities that Christians have collectively — as a church. As a church they are to receive and dispense the tithes and offerings of God's people as God directs. As a church they are to call and ordain pastors and deacons. As a church they are to send out missionaries around the world. As a church they are to exercise discipline. As a church they are to maintain facilities for teaching and preaching. They are to glorify Christ in all ages.

It is ridiculous to think of an individual Christian assuming the responsibilities of the church! Does any Christian have the personal authority to receive the tithes and offerings? Does each Christian call and ordain his own pastor or deacon? Does each Christian have the authority to exercise discipline?

On the other hand, it is just as ridiculous to think of the church assuming the responsibilities of the individual Christian. Can the church do the Christian's praying? His tithing? His studying? His living?

It seems obvious that each Christian has his personal responsibilities involving those things that are individually his and that any business involving Christians collectively is church responsibility.

Into which of these classes does baptism belong? It is ridiculous to think of each Christian assuming to speak for Christian's collectively in accepting, candidates for baptism. This would result in the same wild confusion as if each Christian collected the tithes on his own, administered discipline, etc. This could not be! The authority must rest in the church.

Secondly, we want to establish the fact that the authority to baptize does not rest in each ordained preacher. In establishing this all the arguments given to establish the fact that each individual Christian does not have the authority to baptize can be applied to preachers or deacons. An ordained preacher does not have the authority to receive the tithes and offerings, to administer discipline, call and ordain pastors, etc. Neither does he have the authority to baptize. The duties of the pastor are listed many times, but never is this authority placed in his hands. Thus we see that the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20) could not have been given to individual Christians as such, nor to individual preachers but to each individual church.

Third, I am to establish the fact that the authority to baptize rests in the local church. As we have seen it is impossible for each Christian to speak for Christians collectively. Neither has the authority. Where, then, is the authority? God only left one organization on earth to carry out His work and that is the local church. It is a reasonable thing, after accepting this fact, to understand that this organization, the local church, is the only vehicle on earth that has the authority to speak for Christians collectively. This has to be the organization that possesses the authority to baptize — there is no place else!

I do not have the time, space, or inclination at this time, to dispute the idea of a universal, invisible church of which all Christians are members. I am only interested at this writing in the fundamental group who are not contaminated with this damnable heresy! Thus we all understand that when we say the authority to baptize rests in the church we mean the local, visible church because there is no other kind!

The fourth proposition I am to establish is that the true New Testament, local church is a Baptist church. It is just as simple as this. We believe that the church was established in the days of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, that the work of its construction began with the material prepared by John the Baptist and that the gates of hell have not, nor ever shall prevail against it. It lived the day it was established by Christ. It has always continued to live and it lives today. These are today, the people called Baptists.

I would not be so foolish as to deny that there are those who today carry the name Baptist who have long since forfeited their right to this great name. This does not alter the truth.

Certainly we are not saying that only Baptists are saved. Anyone who hears the Gospel, repents, and by faith accepts Jesus Christ as Savior is saved. This does not alter the truth concerning baptism.

The Central Baptist Church has published a tract that I wrote on "Baptism." In this tract, I believe the fact is established that true Scriptural baptism must portray several things. For instance true Scriptural baptism must picture:

- 1. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- 2. The gospel.
- 3. Salvation by grace.
- 4. The results of Salvation in the believer's life.
- Eternal security.

It is our earnest conviction that only true Baptist churches, clinging to the historical Baptist position, are administering Baptism.



The Baptist Pillar Volume 21, No. 5 May 2015

The Islamic State of the Mahdi

Art Sadlier
From Sound the Trumpet, November 2014

A

high-ranking Iranian politician recently stated that he believes the Syrian revolution could be the catalyst for sparking a worldwide conflagration that will usher in an era of Muslim domination of the world.

"One can smell from the crisis in Syria the coming of the end of times and the coming of the last Islamic messiah," said Ruhollah Hosseinian, a member of the Iranian Parliament.

Shiites, whose clerics rule Iran with an iron fist, believe that at the end of times, the 12th Imam, Mahdi, a 9th century prophet, will reappear with Jesus Christ at his side, kill all the infidels and raise the flag of Islam in all four corners of the world.

I believe that this could be a scenario in which Islam would be deceived into believing that the coming Antichrist is their long awaited Mahdi. This would give Antichrist a tremendous reception in the Muslim world.

We know that when Antichrist comes, it will be a time of incredible deception for the whole world. It seems that Islam will receive Antichrist as their Mahdi, or saviour. That Israel will receive him as their Messiah and that Christendom will incredibly, receive him as Jesus Christ.

We read about this deception in 2 Thessalonians 9-11, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

Many analysts believe Iran is seeking nuclear capability to bring on that great conflagration in which they intend to destroy both Israel and America whom they call the great Satan.

Meanwhile the new Islamic State (IS) is caught up in this same deception.

The gruesome video released by the Islamic State (IS) emphasizes that the beheading of Peter Kassig took place in the town of Dabiq, Syria. The town was chosen because of its significance in Islamic end-of-time prophecies about the time when the Mahdi and (the Islamic version of) Jesus will bring victory over those who oppose Sharia.

The Islamic State named its English-language magazine "Dabiq" for the same reason. The group is telling Muslims that it is fulfilling prophecy, enticing them to participate in, what they believe is one of the most important moments in world history.

A secondary message is that Islamic State supporters should not worry about the military superiority of their enemy or the terrorist group's setbacks because they will soon be made victorious with help from the Mahdi, Islam's messianic figure, and Jesus (when he joins Islam, which he will do according to Islamic prophecy).

"Here we are, burying the first American Crusader in Dabiq, eagerly waiting for the remainder of your armies to arrive," says one Islamic State speaker.

Have you wondered why "IS" has sought to provoke an American attack upon them? It seems foolish until you realize that they believe that to provoke such a conflict, even though they would be over matched, would cause the Mahdi to come and intervene and give Islam a great victory in which they would gain the rule over the entire world.

Abu Musab al-Zaraqawi, the former leader of the Islamic State stated, "The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify...until it burns the Crusader armies in Dabig."

Another Islamic State member said to the West, "We are waiting for you in Dabiq."

The statements are a reference to prophecies in the hadith, the collection of sayings and actions attributed to Mohammed, the Holy Prophet of Islam.

One collector of the hadith, Sahih Muslim, states, "The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land at al-A'maq or in Dabiq." The Islamic State refers to President Obama as the "dog of Rome," they are making the case that the U.S. is the modern equivalent of the Roman Empire and American military action in the Middle East is the actualization of this prophecy.

The Brookings Institute points out that the Islamic State immediately presented its capture of Dabiq in April as part of this prophecy. The group's supporters distributed pictures on social media of the seized hilltop with the text of the prophecy.

The following is a quote from an article by Ryan Mauro:

"The Islamic State's beheadings of Peter Kassig and the other Americans are not only justifiable acts of jihad in their opinion. They are also acts designed to provoke an assault on them as prophesized. In their eyes, a U.S. military response is actually desirable, as it fulfills this prophecy.

"The prophecy states that the Romans will arrive at Dabiq and tell all the Muslims to stand aside so that they can fight only those Muslims who took the captives. The Muslims will then unite against the Romans. The Islamic State is hoping that this will come to fruition.

"When the battle begins, according to the prophecy, about one-third of the Muslim forces will flee ("whom Allah will never forgive"), one-third will die as "excellent martyrs" and the remaining one-third will win the battle and then conquer Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey).

"If Islamic State supporters believe this prophecy is about them, then they will not be discouraged by the current U.S. military action, high death tolls and desertions.

"According to the prophecy, what follows this victory in Dabiq and Turkey is the appearance and final defeat of the Islamic version of the Antichrist, called the Dajjal, at the hands of (the Islamic) Jesus."

"IS" believe that their actions are in line with the prophecy of the hadith which states, that "Dabiq will be controlled by the "best" Islamic soldiers from Mecca, Saudi Arabia. They will capture "Romans" (i.e., Americans), which will lead to a foreign attack."

In another quote Mauro says, "If Islamic State supporters believe this prophecy is about them, they will not be discouraged by the current U.S. military action, high death tolls and desertions. They will actually be encouraged by it because they believe it will ultimately bring victory."

This all seems strange to us Westerns, but this theme runs deeply through Islam and it is no more unfathomable to us than the current confusing and brutal acts of "IS."

When we see all this in the light of the stated objective of "IS" to take control of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, and then march to Jerusalem. We have the setup for the war of Psalm 83.

We can clearly see the scenario for this war now forming. It appears that this will take some time to yet unfold. However remember that we are now living in days when situations change very rapidly. I believe we need to be alert to this scenario.

It again appears that American military might is in the way of the unfolding of the end time scenario found in Scripture, including the war of Psalm 83. It would seem that if America is removed or neutralized, "IS" could quickly reach their objectives.

America has plunged into the depths of sin and wickedness and rebellion against God. The American Administration has turned against Israel, and they are allowing Iran to develop nuclear weapons with the expressed purpose of destroying Israel.

The judgment of America seems to be imminent. There has been a steady stream of warnings to America, storms, floods, droughts, tornados, fires and earthquakes. In recent days there have been warnings of cyber-attacks which could bring down the hydro electric grid, an event which would bring an end to America as it is now known.

There have also been alarming reports from the recent security conference in Halifax, reports which declare that America is no longer an impregnable fortress. America is now vulnerable to nuclear attack and we have learned that both Russia and China have greatly increased their nuclear strike capacity. Iran has also been developing intercontinental missiles. Missiles that they do not need to reach Israel, they are intended for America.

Even more alarming is the constant warnings of impending economic collapse. What more fitting judgment could there be on a society that has fallen on its face to worship the gods of materialism?

We have constantly been warning of the coming war of Psalm 83 because we believe it is imminent.

We have been listening to recent reports that Israel must strike Iran to prevent annihilation by a nuclear attack. Reports indicate that such an attack could start a series of major wars that would probably entail the use of nuclear weapons. It could be that the war of Psalm 83 would be a part that conflagration. In such a case the world would be badly shaken and possibly ready for the superman, Antichrist to appear and work his wonders and return peace and prosperity to the world. His peace will probably include world-wide disarmament. His peace would include peace for Israel, a peace that would allow Israel to rebuild the Temple.

That peace would seem tenable because the Palestinians will be decimated in the war of Psalm 83.

I apologize for the speculation involved in some of above; speculation is dangerous in our interpretation of the Word of God. However when you study the prophetic scriptures carefully you sometimes see the shadows of prophetic events on the walls of current events.

We remind you that the rapture of the Church is always an imminent event. We only know for sure that it will take place before the tribulation period begins but it could happen at any moment. Are you ready? Are you saved?

"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Will you be left behind to go into the day of wrath when the body of Christ is caught up in the rapture?



The Baptist Pillar Volume 21, No. 5 May 2015

Releasing the Control of Anxiety _____

Pastor Jeremiah Sargent From *The Plains Baptist Challenger*, 2015

motions play a huge role in our lives—they greatly influence how we think, how we make decisions, and ultimately how we act. At times it seems that our emotions are more detrimental than beneficial, but they are a gift from the Lord. God created us with emotions so that we could enjoy life, relate to other people, and draw closer to Him.

But the problem with our emotions comes when we lose control of them and they begin to control us. A good example of this is the emotion of anger. Anger is not a sin, but uncontrolled anger will certainly lead to sin. Ephesians 4:26-27 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil." This scripture does not condemn anger, but simply teaches us how to respond to it and reminds us that the devil is seeking to gain the advantage in our life.

Unfortunately, many emotions have received a bad label—anger, depression, jealousy, and the one this article will address: anxiety. Anxiety is one of the most prominent emotions people struggle with today. Just look at what is going on around your world—it's hard not to be anxious!

But once again, it is important for us to realize that feeling anxious is not a sin; it IS a sin to continually live in a state of anxiety. Here is the reason why: I Peter 5:7 instructs us to "Cast ALL your care upon him." Philippians 4:6 says "Be careful for NOTHING; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." God has a remedy for anxiety and as His children, we should be looking to His Word for help: II Peter 1:3-4 "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises:"

Victory over anxiety is available to all who believe in the sufficiency of scripture and depend upon the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. We don't have to be labeled with an anxiety disorder!

THE CAUSE OF ANXIETY

Most psychological diagnoses list worry as the primary cause for anxiety, but according to the Word of God, anxiety is rooted in fear. In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us on three occasions to "take no thought"— meaning "don't be anxious or fearful; I will take care of you." In theory, many believe that God will take care of them, but fear keeps them from releasing full control of their life to the Lord. Notice that before Jesus told us to "take no thought", He addressed the issue of control: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." There is only room for one master!

Anxiety is born out of our own fears—a fear of not being in control, a fear of feeling vulnerable, a fear of being rejected by others and a fear of not knowing what our future holds. These fears pull us away from the peace that Christ offers and sends us down the road of anxiety.

Until we release control of our life to the Lord, we will not be released from anxiety. Every day we must lay our fears at His Throne (Hebrews 4:16) and deliberately leave them there. When we don't deal with anxiety this way, it takes up long-term residency within us and causes all sorts of emotional, physical, and spiritual problems.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF ANXIETY

Proverbs 25:28 offers a good description of what happens when we allow anxiety to control our life: "He that hath no rule

over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." Anxiety breaks us down and leaves us with a huge list of problems:

PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

Our body reacts to anxiety. According to medical research, people who allow anxiety to control them will often experience headaches, back pain, upset stomach, shortness of breath, difficulty sleeping, elevated blood pressure, muscle tension, and fatigue. When Jesus described the end days, He spoke about the physical effects of anxiety: Luke 21:26 "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth:" Many physical symptoms are connected to anxiety.

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Since anxiety is an emotion, it often negatively impacts other emotions. That is why many who allow anxiety to control them will experience feelings of dread, worry, nervousness, stress, depression, hopelessness, and overwhelming thoughts. Psychologists label these emotional responses as disorders (separation disorder, OCD, social phobia disorder, claustrophobia), but readily admit that the root cause is anxiety.

Remember how the Prophet Elijah's emotional state changed after hearing that Jezebel planned to kill him? On Mount Carmel he experienced the emotions of boldness, confidence, joy, and peace. Why? Because Elijah knew God was in control. But once he allowed anxiety is dominate his mind, he asked God to kill him. Anxiety and control are two sides of one coin. When we can't control something, we worry about it, but when we hand God the controls, our emotions rest easy.

SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS

The most damaging aspect of anxiety is what it does to our spiritual life. Those who are dominated by it often struggle in their walk with the Lord. Prayer and Bible reading become sporadic, church services are no longer a priority, guilt overwhelms the mind, selfish desires increase, and even a spirit of anger towards other Christians and God begins to grow. In the New Testament, the word "care" means "to be distracted or pulled apart." Anxiety distracts us from our high calling and steals the fruit of peace and joy. It is impossible to walk intimately with Christ when anxiety is pulling you in a different direction. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3)

God is not the author of anxiety and anxiety does not fit our identity as followers of Christ. II Timothy 1:7 reminds us that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." If you are battling with anxiety, let the Lord remove it from your life and replace it with His truth and the promises of His Word. Trust me, you will feel much better!

THE CURE FOR ANXIETY

With so much at stake, it is foolish to give in to anxiety or seek a quick, temporary fix. So what should you do? Thankfully the Bible has the answer! Philippians 4:5-9 provides us with a remedy for anxiety and it is a little more than just telling God all about your fears or praying that you won't be overwhelmed with worry. When you carefully study this passage, you will notice three commands:

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF

Verse 5 says "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." The word "moderation" implies "self-restraint." Stop making excuses for your anxiety; stop playing the victim! Take responsibility for how you are responding to the difficult situations in your life and determine to make a change. In this verse, the Apostle Paul gives us some great motivators for change:

"Unto all men"—Do you want others to view you as a fearful, anxious person?

"The Lord is at hand"—Is this how you would like to live your last day on earth?

Change begins with you—only you can determine to cast down anxiety and bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

GIVE CONTROL OF YOURSELF TO THE LORD

Verses 6 and 7 instruct us to "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Which God are you going serve: the idol of anxiety or the God of the Bible? This may sound shocking to us, after all, we don't consider anxiety to be an idol (it's not made of wood or stone!) But anxiety becomes an idol when we allow it to control our thoughts, our decisions, and our actions. A true worshipper of God will obey His command and He says "Be careful (anxious) for nothing." You must choose:

Who will be your Master? God or anxiety? - Matthew 5:24

Which Master will you magnify? God or anxiety? - I Kings 18:26-39

Which Master will comfort you? God or anxiety? - II Corinthians 2:3-7

The words of Joshua come to mind: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." God will not take control of your emotions until you give Him the controls.

TRUST AND OBEY THE WORD OF GOD

Verses 8 and 9 show us how to keep anxiety at bay: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." The Christian life is a life of discipline—we must discipline ourselves to follow God's Word every day. Start by obeying verses 8 and 9.

Remove the wrong influences from your life—thinking on and involving yourself in the wrong things will only intensify to your anxiety. Follow and meditate on the "whatsoever things."

Remain faithful to the house of God—forsaking times of worship, preaching, and fellowship are detrimental to your spiritual life and will only cause more anxiety. God has something for you every time you attend church.

Rely on the promises of God—when God says He will do something, He will do it! If He said that He will bless you with peace then believe Him.

Remember, no one has to live in a state of anxiety. It is a dark, dreadful place to be. Freedom and peace await those who will give their fears and worries to God and leave them in His hands.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28)

