

Why Baptists Preach Doctrine

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The pastor of a church of another faith in my town once said to me, "If you Baptists would not preach so much of your doctrine you would get along a lot better and grow a lot faster." The poor fellow had not stopped to think that his church in the town had an average Sunday School attendance at half of what they once had when the population of the town was half what it is now.

It did not seem to have dawned upon him that where he sprinkled about eight people during the year, in addition to the babies he had sprinkled, our church that same year had baptized a few under one hundred who professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. He did not know that, of twenty-eight college students baptized into the membership of our church that year, fourteen of them had come from membership in churches of other faiths with a number coming from his own church.

A pastor of a church of another faith said to me one day, "If you will notice, you will find that Baptists grow where poverty and ignorance abound." I recall that it was said of Jesus, "And the common people heard him gladly." (Mark 12:17)

But, now to the question: "Why do Baptist Preach Doctrine?"

I. We preach it because we have nothing else worthwhile to preach.

What do we mean by "doctrine?" The word "doctrine" is used some forty-eight times in the New Testament. It simply means, "that which is taught," "teachings," "precepts." A "teacher" in the New Testament is one who teaches concerning the things of God, and the duties of man. Jesus, in using the word "teacher" as applying to Himself, used it as the one who showed men the way of salvation.

The word is used of those who in the religious assemblies of Christians undertook the work of teaching, with the special assistance of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:28ff; Eph. 4:11; Acts 13:1; James. 3:1). One can claim the assistance of the Holy Spirit only so long as he teaches or preaches that which the Holy Spirit can approve.

If God calls one to teach or preach, He calls that person to teach or preach what He wants taught. When Jesus, the master Teacher, was teaching in the temple as recorded in John 7, some said He is a good man, while others said He deceives the people. Some marvelled, saying "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

Jesus said "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." (John 7:16) Now if Jesus who is the very Son of God said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me," how much more should I say, "The doctrine which I preach is not mine, but His that sent me!"

I repeat that we preach doctrine because we have nothing else worthwhile to preach.

II. We preach doctrine because we are commanded to preach it.

Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:13f "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine ... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in so doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." (1 Tim. 6:3-5)

Now, according to Paul, who would you say is responsible for strife, railings, etc.? Paul places the blame on those who refuse to teach the Word. How does Paul classify those who insist that we do not preach the doctrines? He calls them proud, ignorant, destitute of the truth. What should be our attitude toward such, according to Paul? He urges us to withdraw ourselves from such. They insist that we forget our differences, give no attention to doctrines and walk together. I prefer to listen to Paul on such matters.

Paul said to the young preacher, Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

And as fully as I believe John 3:16 was inspired of the Holy Spirit, do I believe the words of Paul in 2 Tim. 4:3-4 were inspired of the Spirit when he said, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Again, Paul in speaking to Titus (1:9) concerning the duties and qualifications of the bishop, or preacher, said, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Are we to preach to please men or to please God? Peter understood we were to preach to please God.

I repeat we are to preach doctrine because God commands us to preach it. When God commands, that should close our ears to all appeals to do it otherwise.

III. We preach doctrine because we believe it and because we believe it does make a difference what one believes.

In spite of the common idea that it makes no difference what one believes just so he is sincere, we believe it does make a difference. Here are some of the statements we commonly hear which are false.

"Everybody has a right to believe what he wants to believe."

These are some of the deceitful arguments the devil has in playing down convictions and in leading people to belittle the Word of God.

What about the statement, "We are all working for the same place!?" Of course, they mean heaven when they speak of place. But Baptists are not working to go to heaven. We are working because God has made it possible for us to go to

heaven by grace through faith in the saving power of His Son. Any who are working in order that they may go to heaven and are not depending solely on the shed blood of Jesus Christ are not going to heaven. It is simply one of the statements Satan has popularized in order to deceive souls, lead them astray, weaken the cause of Jesus Christ and send souls to eternal destruction.

What about the statements, "Everybody has a right to believe what he wants to believe! Every man has a right to his own opinion!"? I do not have a right to discount or deny the Word of God. I have no right to believe that which is false when I can know the truth. I have no right to put my opinion up against the infallible mind of God.

I dare not be egotistical enough to say that it makes no difference what God thinks or says. Or that my thoughts and opinions are as good as His. I dare not say that God has no thoughts on these matters or that He has had nothing to say about them. Or, if He has, that my opinions are worth as much as His.

No word of God is unimportant and no word of God can be innocently ignored. Nowhere does God say or even imply that it makes no difference about a divine command. If we ignore it or change it we do at our own risk. Some people will admit that it does make a difference what one believes in every realm except the one where it makes the most difference — the realm of the spiritual.

They call us narrow, bigots, selfish, etc., because we have convictions and stand by them. The man who dies rather than surrender one star in his country's flag is called a hero and a monument is built to his memory, but the person who refuses to surrender some of the principles in the Word of God is called a narrow-hearted bigot. Who is the bigot? It is the one who claims he has the right to change or reject the Word of God and set up his own word or opinion in its stead.

IV. We preach what we believe because we know we must give account to God for our stewardship of the message.

What God has asked us to do, He expects us to do. For what He expects us to do, we will have to give account to Him for not doing.

He has given us one gospel. He expects us to preach that and none other. There is no other. In Paul's letter to the church at Galatia he said,

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9).

Baptists believe there is one gospel — the message which includes the doctrine of the virgin birth of our Lord; His sinless life; His substitutionary death for our sins; His bodily resurrection from the tomb; His glorious ascension from Olivet; His reigning at the right hand of God where He intercedes for us, and His glorious return. The gospel includes the doctrine of the new birth as He taught it. If any of this is left out we have no gospel — no good news.

As we believe there is one gospel, we believe there is one depository for that gospel — the church of the Lord Jesus Christ — and we believe there is one accounting. We must give account for what we believe and preach — not to any council of churches or other ecclesiastical body, not to any Pope or self-appointed overlord; but we must give account to God.



Paul's Instructions to the Churches Regarding Teachers

J. R. Graves

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

How did Paul regard, and how did he teach the churches he planted, to regard teachers of false doctrine?—How did he instruct the early Christians and churches to treat them?—Associate with, or withdraw from, and avoid them?—Can it be supposed that they invited them into their pulpits, and to the Lord's Supper, though those teachers belonged to the church at Jerusalem?

"...but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1: 7, 8)

"I would they were cut off which trouble you." (Gal. 5:12)

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us...And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. (2 Thess. 3:6, 14)

"It is affirmed that our position as Landmark Baptists, of non-association with the teachers of acknowledged and dangerous heresies ministerially, and the non-recognition of their societies ecclesiastically, is contrary to the teachings of Scripture."

This charge is most persistently, made by those Baptists who advocate and practice affiliations with Pedobaptists and Campbellites, and recognize their ordinations and immersions, and, by such misrepresentations, they prejudice us in the eyes of our own brethren and the world, as bigots and sectaries.

Now, I propose to show the reader that the Scriptures are not more opposed to Ranterism, or infant baptism, than it is to association with those ministers and teachers who teach things contrary to what the apostles taught, and that no one feature more characterized Baptist churches, from the fourth to the eighteenth centuries, than their refusal to recognize, in any way, the teachers of acknowledged heresies, and those organizations claiming to be churches, yet, in their estimation, human societies, and apostate from the truth. This charge must be the offspring of the most willing ignorance, or unprincipled opposition to truth and consistency.

1. WHAT ARE THE TEACHINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES?

This much will be admitted by all Baptists, that our churches are scriptural church organizations. If so, they alone constitute the visible kingdom of Christ, which is the antitype of the kingdom of Israel, in the Old Testament.

Paul and Peter distinctly affirm this (Heb. 12 and 1 Pet. 2:9) and the teachings of the type should find a fulfillment in the antitype. What were those teachings? God of all nations selected but one to be unto him "a peculiar treasure above all people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation," and he straightway commanded them that they should not affiliate with the nations around them in their religious rites and ceremonies, neither "walk in the manners of the nations."

For, by so doing, they would render themselves idolaters, since the worship of those nations was purely human, and corrupted the religion which he had given them. The churches composing the antitype must, therefore, keep themselves separate and distinct from all human organizations and societies claiming to be churches, and, in no way, affiliate with them or their teachers, or recognize their rites and ceremonies, which are human inventions, and by so doing admit they are

divine, and thus make themselves idolaters. This is the teaching of the type, and upon it the apostles base their earnest exhortations to the churches:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," etc. (1 Pet. 2: 9).

But teachers of false doctrine abounded in Paul's day, for the mystery of iniquity had already commenced working in his day, and, let us mark how he taught the churches to regard everyone who preached contrary to the doctrine he had taught them. By his teachings, the charge of our opposers must be tested, and our own practice as Baptists determined, whatever may have been the practice of our historical ancestors.

It should be borne in mind that these teachers, who subverted the faith of many by their false doctrines, were not heathens, nor infidels, nor heads of alien and formidable organizations, set up in direct opposition to the churches of Christ, as all Pedobaptist and Campbellite societies are, but what made it more delicate and difficult to fix relations and determine the character of the intercourse, they were Baptists—influential members of the church at Jerusalem, and of churches which he himself had planted.

They did not teach the churches to substitute sprinkling for the act Christ enjoined, nor to baptize infants, nor that baptism is "the law of pardon," nor "a seal and sacrament essential to salvation," and thus subvert the gospel of Christ, and make the law of God of none effect by their traditions; but these teachers did it quite as, effectually, and far more plausibly, and, if charity should be extended to false teachers, it should have been to those whom Paul antagonized.

Those teachers, like Pedobaptists, taught that the covenant made with Abraham was binding upon Gentiles, as well as Jews—was the covenant of Grace—and, therefore, unless all were circumcised, and kept the law, as well as the requirements of the gospel, they could not be saved. There were many thousands of these Judaized brethren in the church at Jerusalem, even after that church with the apostles and elders had answered the question sent up by the church at Antioch, that the Gentiles were free from the law of circumcision, for teachers from Jerusalem had troubled this church with this doctrine:

"And certain men, which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses. ye can not be saved." (Acts 15:10)

And when this question was raised in the church at Jerusalem, the record reads:

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed [i. e., in Christ, and were members], saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the laws of Moses " (v. 5).

Paul, in his letter to the churches at Galatia, thus speaks of these brethren:

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise..." (Gal. 2:4-7)

And in this language he taught these churches to regard them and their teachings:

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed....I would they were cut off who trouble you"—[excluded from the church, which it was not in Paul's power to accomplish, but he could wish and advise it.] (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:12)

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.... Christ is become of no effect unto you...Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. (Gal. 5:2, 4, 7-9)

And there was another element in this doctrine that made it popular, besides that of its being held and taught by those metropolitan ministers, who came down from Jerusalem and taught them to despise Paul, which Baptists of this age should notice.

Let Paul state it: "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; ONLY LEST THEY SHOULD SUFFER PERSECUTION FOR THE CROSS OF CHRIST...And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased." (Gal. 5: 12, 11)

Thousands and tens of thousands would be "Old Landmark Baptists" today were it not for the overweening desire "to make a fair show in the flesh," and to avoid the odium and persecution that the consistent advocacy and practice of Baptist principles would bring upon them. Every strict, consistent, faithful Baptist knows, full well, that the days of persecution have not passed, and they know, like Paul, something of the "perils among false brethren."

I must be allowed to add that the above language of Paul ought to settle the question concerning intercommunion among the apostolic churches. Many of them, like the church at Jerusalem, were corrupted by these false teachers whom Paul calls "leaven," and he specifically commands the church at Corinth to purge out all leaven that the feast might be kept pure.

To the church at Corinth he wrote thus:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers [these brethren were not aware that they were the ministers of Satan] also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. 11: 13-15)

Can it be that God ever allowed a true child of his to live and die in the service of Satan? Those who teach doctrines that subvert the gospel, Paul declares to be the ministers of Satan, and that their end will be answerable to such a service! Was he uncharitable? Not only Paul's usefulness and happiness were measurably destroyed, but his very life was put in peril by these false brethren. (2 Cor. 11:13-16, 26)

To the 'church at Philippi he wrote thus: " For many walk, of whom I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction." (Phil. 3: 18)

2. HOW DID HE INSTRUCT THE CHURCHES TO TREAT THESE FALSE TEACHERS, THOUGH PROFESSED CHRISTIANS AND BRETHREN?

Did he exhort them to be liberal, and very charitable, and associate with them as brethren beloved? And did he advise Timothy and other ministers to affiliate with them, invite them into their houses to teach their people, as so many of our prominent ministers now do?

To the church at Rome he wrote:

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

And, alas! How successfully do they do it in this age! Can a Baptist possibly misapprehend this language? Will our churches refuse to listen to so earnest an entreaty? Then let them heed the emphatic command of Paul to the church at Thessalonica:

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. ... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." (2 Thess. 3:6, 14)

Do Pedobaptists and Campbellites teach the doctrine that Paul taught, and walk according to his teachings? And if it is "withdrawing from and putting them to shame" to invite them into our pulpits, to preach, as ministers of Christ, to our people, and associate with them in "Evangelical Pastors' Meetings," "Evangelical Alliances," and "Young Men's Christian Associations?"

Brother, you may treat this question lightly at your peril; for Christ has said: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38)

That I have not an improper construction upon these Scriptures, the testimony of A. Barnes and Adam Clark will convince all Pedobaptists upon Paul's advice to Timothy (5: 22):

"He was not to invest one with the holy office who was a wicked man, era heretic; for this would be to sanction his wickedness and error. If we ordain a man to the office of the ministry, who is known to be living in sin [disobedience to the commands of Christ is sin], or to cherish dangerous error, we become the patrons of the sin, and of the heresy. We lend to it the sanction of our approbation, and give to it whatever currency it may acquire from the reputation which we may have," etc.

Now every thoughtful reader will see the principle is all the same whether we are personally instrumental in putting a man, whom we know to be living in the sin of disobedience, or who is a heretic, into the ministry, or whether we sanction and entourage his being in it, we equally indorse his errors and make ourselves partakers of his sin. It matters not one whit whether we engage him to preach for us once, or one hundred times, or continually, as our pastor, we cannot divide a principle. If it would be right in us to introduce him into our pulpit to preach once, it would be just as right for us to employ him to preach for us always.

Adam Clark says on v. 22: "To help him forward, or sanction him in it, is to partake of his sins."

Will any one presume to deny that we do sanction a heretic's being in the ministry, and "help him forward in it," when we invite him to preach and attend upon his ministry?

Mr. Clark says on 2 John 1: 10: For if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house; neither bid him God-speed."

"He that acts toward him as if be considered him a Christian brother, and sound in the faith, puts it in his power to deceive others by thus apparently accrediting his ministry. No sound Christian should countenance any man as a gospel minister who holds and preaches erroneous doctrines."

Do not Pedobaptists and Campbellites hold and preach erroneous and dangerous doctrines? I can prove it by themselves. The Presbyterian and Campbellite will affirm that the Methodists do. The Methodists and Campbellites will agree that the Presbyterians do; and both Presbyterians and Methodists stoutly declare that the Campbellites do; and all Baptists know that they all do. But hear Mr. Clark further, and then show what he says to your Methodist friends, who think you are too strict and bigoted:

"Nor can any Christian *attend the ministry of such* teachers without being criminal in the sight of God. He who attends their ministry is, in effect, bidding them *God-speed*, no matter whether such belong to the *established church*, or to any congregation of dissenters front it." [Italics his]

Barnes quotes and indorses this view, and says: "It is as applicable now as then."

This is farther than many Landmarkers have generally gone, but I believe it is the true ground upon which we all ought to stand undeviatingly. Does not our crowding their places of worship constantly with our families apparently accredit and sanction their ministry, and encourage them in their work? Let every Baptist settle this with his own conscience before his God. We must not bid them God-speed, or we become upholders of their errors and partakers of their sin.

How the early churches understood the instructions of the apostles with respect to those who "taught contrary to the apostles' doctrine," we learn from Prof. Curtis' statement, who examined the history of those times upon this point, and is undoubted authority. He says:

"In former ages of the church—that is, from the close of the second century downwards until heathenism was obliterated—it was generally supposed by almost all, that Christian fellowship, or communion, consisted chiefly in praying together. Christians would never unite in saying, 'Our Father, who art in heaven;' would not even pray in the same house of worship, with those whom they did not consider orthodox Christians. Heathens, unbelievers, HERETICS, persons suspended, or excommunicated...and members of other sects, were admitted to hear the Psalmody, and reading of the Scriptures, and the discourses, but were invariably excluded from the building before the prayers of the church were offered." (Curtis on Com., p. 80)

This testimony establishes beyond controversy three facts:

1. That any practice looking toward "open communion" at the Lord's Table received no countenance in those early ages.
2. That there certainly could have been no "pulpit communion," no exchange of "ministerial courtesies,"—as the exchange of pulpits, inter-preachings between the orthodox ministers of those ages and the teachers of manifest heresies, even though the latter belonged to orthodox churches—as the false teachers in Paul's day did—much less when they belonged to opposing sects.
3. That the orthodox ministers and churches in those ages certainly held no "union meetings", did not labor together in public worship, or co-operate in the preaching of the gospel and promoting the spread of Christianity generally with those ministers and members who preached, or held, doctrines contrary to the teachings of Christ, and, therefore, subversive of it. How could two consistently walk or work together unless they were agreed? And, from the teachings of the apostles, the early Christians understood that they did, by their act of worshipping, even in prayer together, say to the world that they were in fellowship with their doctrine and religion.

Who will say, with the teachings of the apostles and the facts of history before their eyes, that the apostolic churches and the orthodox churches of the earliest ages downwards, were not "Old Landmarkers" of the strictest sort? Let the candid Christian reader decide between us and those "liberal" brethren, who say that we are trying to bring in new customs and ways of our own invention, unsustained by the Word of God, and unknown to the Baptists of the earliest ages.

CONCLUSION

I. It would have been in open violation of Paul's instruction, for the primitive churches to have invited all members of other sister churches, to participate with them in the celebration of the Supper, since all those "false teachers," "ministers of Satan," "enemies of the cross of Christ," "subverters of the gospel", "leaven" —the very characters he commanded them to "withdraw from," "avoid," "have no company with," "not to eat," belonged to Baptist churches. There could have been no intercommunion among Baptist churches in Paul's day, or association in preaching the gospel, or in gospel work, with teachers of false doctrine.

II. It is as unscriptural and as sinful in this age for us, as for Baptists in that age, to violate these plain instructions. Verily, those who do so, God will judge.



Prophecies and Expectations Regarding The Baptist

William C. Duncan

From *The Life, Character and Acts of John The Baptist*, 1853

As the last great prophet of the old covenant exhibits to us many other peculiarities in the circumstances of his appearance which differ widely from those of the other prophets, so also is he the only one among them all who was announced to the people by a special pronunciatory prophecy, by which he was, as it were, legitimated. Since the prophets had been silent during so long a period, the expectation of such an one as John and the remembrance of what was to be his peculiar character, had, it may easily be imagined, almost entirely disappeared from among the nation.

The olden time had passed away, and the new was not qualified to estimate at their full value the honors and rights of the prophet; and on this account it was quite necessary that a special divine declaration should indicate the appearance of the last of the prophets, who was to be separated by so great a lapse of time from his predecessors, and should keep alive among the people an expectation of his coming.

Independently of this, the fulfillment of the prophecy respecting the Baptist was intended to be, on account of the close connection of this event of national interest with the coming of the Messiah, a sign and a proof of the approaching fulfillment of those other important Messianic promises. In order that, by means of this notable occurrence, the unbelieving might be convinced of the truth of God's Word, and that believers, having their attention drawn to the significance of the times, might prepare themselves to receive the Lord in a becoming manner. On this account, it would seem, then, must Malachi, with whom the brilliant series of the prophets was brought to a close, have made mention, at the end of his prophecy (4: 5, 6), of the forerunner who was to prepare the way of the Lord.

It may, indeed, be doubted, at first thought, whether that prophecy really refers to John ; for the forerunner there mentioned is to precede the great and terrible day of the Lord, and to arouse the people to repentance (of which repentance, it may be remarked, only a single individualizing lineament is there drawn, namely, the re-establishment of unity in families, which, naturally, cannot exist apart from other happy influences, but is mentioned in that connection as one only among the blessings which were to flow from the universal re-establishment of love and friendship, and, therefore, of an entirely new spirit among men), in order that the Lord might not be compelled, on his coming, to destroy the whole land as one accursed and obnoxious to condemnation.

Now the first appearance of Christ was by no means a coming to judgment, and, in particular, it was not a grand and fear-inspiring advent. The reference in this passage of Malachi appears, therefore, to pertain rather to the second, yet future, advent of the Messiah, and to the precursor then to be expected. It is to be noted, however, on the one hand, that there is no precise distinction to be recognized in any part of the Old Testament between these two appearances of Christ. Events which to the spiritual eye appear perspectively near to the view, are conceived and represented as actually connected; and hence we find the Messiah described in the prophets, now as a powerful and fear-inspiring king, now as a lowly and despised servant of God; and his appearance spoken of, now as a day of terror and revolution, now as drawing near amid a calm and cheerful peace.

What can only be spiritually understood of his first coming, and is literally perceptible externally in his second, is conceived of as unfolding itself in a single and undivided appearance. It must be observed, on the other hand, that there actually exists so intimate a connection between the first and the second advent of Christ, with respect to the judgment, that the two might have been very suitably united and treated as one by Malachi. Whoever does not believe upon the coming Saviour, is already condemned by him, and receives his punishment without delay; he who hails him with joy, is justified, and his reward tarries not. The judgment begins with the first appearance of Christ, though it may be not at all visible to the bodily eye; and, so far, this first appearance may with justice be called the great and terrible day of the Lord. One must

here, as everywhere in the prophets, understand well how to separate the moral drapery and ornament in which they are clothed, from the spiritual contents of the prophetic representations.

Even after this difficulty in the prophecy of Malachi has been removed, there yet remains another; for the promised forerunner is called Elijah (without doubt, because he, like the great Tishbite Elijah, should arouse a race which had become perverted and had fallen away from God to repentance, and should work in the spirit and with the power of Elijah, Luke 1:17). And yet John denies expressly that he is the promised Elias (John 1:21). This passage would in truth be very difficult to understand did we not possess in other parts of the New Testament a complete explanation, according to which John is really intended in this prophecy of Malachi's; from which circumstance we are obliged to conclude that John answered his interrogators in the negative in an altogether peculiar sense.

In the very announcement of the birth of the Baptist by the angel (Luke 1:17), we find a most pointed reference to the passage in Malachi, and one which throws light upon the question now under consideration. He is here spoken of as one who shall go before the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elias" from which we are allowed, if we feel so inclined, to draw the conclusion that Malachi in his prophecy means that a man like Elias, and not Elias in person, should be the precursor of the Messiah. According to this entirely legitimate explanation, the forerunner is called Elias in this passage of Malachi just as in other prophecies the Messiah is called David, in which there is evidently no thought of the personal re-appearance of that monarch (Jer. 30:9., Ezek. 34:23, Hos. 3:5). In this sense may Christ's declaration that John was the expected Elias (Matt. 11:14; 17:12) be understood, though, it may be, as we shall see further on, that it is to be taken in a somewhat different and higher acceptation.

Furthermore, Mark introduces the passage as a proof that John's appearance was made in accordance with the intention of God (1:2); he cites it, indeed, as if it stood in Isaiah, but this inexactness arose probably from the fact that the passage of a similar bearing which follows in Mark, was borrowed from Isaiah, and the evangelist wished to make use of the former, whether conscious at the time or not of its different connection, as an introduction to and commentary upon the latter. Be this as it may, no difference results in the main point under consideration.

Finally, we have the positive explanation of Christ himself (Matt. 11:10), that John is the one to whom the passage refers; and, in Matt. 17:10 ff., and Mark 9: 11 ff., he speaks in such a way of the promised Elias, that, as Matthew says, his disciples understood him to designate John as that individual.

After the brilliant transfiguration which took place upon the mount, the glorification of Jesus, his disciples, who, relying on the passage in Malachi, supposed that now, since Elias had again appeared, the glory of the Lord of which Malachi speaks, must openly reveal itself,—asked him, in substance, the following question: "How stands the case now with that prophetic declaration which the scribes have ever in their mouths, that the proof that Jesus cannot be the true Messiah is the fact that Elias must first precede the royal advent?" They expected that Jesus would answer them: "Yes, now have you seen Elias, and now too will be revealed the fullness of the glory of the Son of God."

Our Lord, however, whose object it was to show them more and more the necessity of his sufferings and death, of which he had already spoken, replied to the following effect:

"It is true that Elias shall come first and bring all into readiness for the reign of Christ, but how can you reconcile with this view yet other expressions of Scripture which declare that Christ must suffer and be treated with contumely? If these expressions are consonant with the truth, as cannot be denied, and if Christ must undergo many sufferings, another Elias different from him, whom you expect as the precursor of his royalty, must appear, or rather, Elias must appear in different form from what you anticipate; and, in fact, he has already actually appeared, and has suffered and died as the type of his master."

In giving this representation, Jesus evidently had reference to the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist.

On examining the words Of Christ, it cannot escape our notice that he does not expressly assert that John is the Elias promised in Malachi, but on the contrary, he appears to admit some difference between the two, notwithstanding their

general resemblance. This difference he expresses yet more distinctly in another passage (Matt. 11:14), where he declares indeed that John is Elias, but adds the limitation, "if ye will receive it."

The identity of the two persons, therefore, is not here unconditionally asserted, but only in a certain aspect of the case; so that we are not constrained to believe that they were one and the same, but may admit it or not, as may seem to us more probable. The question now presents itself, how are we to explain the circumstance that, though the passage in Malachi has an evident reference to John, as Christ himself acknowledged, he does not, nevertheless, declare in express terms that John was Elias? And the additional circumstance that John, for his part, altogether denies the reference.

We must here revert to what has been already remarked respecting the character of prophecy in general and of this prophecy in particular. Malachi did not distinguish between the two appearances of Christ, but conceiving of the two as one, he has represented it as being preceded by the forerunner. The question then arises, whether, if the two advents be united, the prophecy alludes only to a precursor of the first, or also to one of the second appearance.

We have, in fact, no ground to deny the latter supposition. Nay, since the first coming of Christ is in a certain sense only a type of his second and yet future coming, we have rather reason to expect that a forerunner will in like manner usher in the future advent, under circumstances more remarkable, it is probable, than those amid which the first precursor appeared. In accordance with this view, John the Baptist constituted only a partial and typical fulfillment of this prophecy regarding Elias; but it must be left undecided whether this Elias shall be really the Tishbite raised again to life, or only a prophet like him.

If this hypothesis be received as the truth, we can easily explain why Christ referred to John as Elias only in a limited sense,—because, in fact, a yet more perfect Elias was to be expected; and why John himself replied so pointedly in the negative when he was asked whether he was Elias because he knew full well that this prophecy was fulfilled in him, though really, only partially, and that he was by no means the true Elias; though we are not to conclude from this, what cannot be true, that John thought of Christ's second coming.

The Baptist, however, gave no additional explanation of the sense in which he responded to the question in the negative because it would have been, on the one hand, something altogether foreign from his earnest straightforward prophetic character, to which a brief yes and no were appropriate, to enter upon expositions of this kind, and because, on the other hand, such was the object which they sought who put the interrogatory, that he deemed them unworthy of any further explanation.

The Pharisees evidently intended to assure themselves, as soon as possible, of the forerunner of a Messiah accommodated to their fleshly way of thinking, to draw him over to their side that he might secretly play into their hands; and hoped by means of this examination to win him over to their interest. In order to prevent them from instituting such a formal examination of his claims as a prophet, John must have abruptly responded in the negative. But he had also an altogether special reason for giving them a distinct denial, and this was the fact that an expectation was probably entertained by the people, as seems to be proved also by the questions put to Christ by his disciples, an expectation based on the passage in Malachi, which they understood in its most literal sense, that the Tishbite would actually appear in person as one who had arisen from the dead

If the question were put to him in this sense, he must likewise have responded, as he did, in the negative. Those who had been impelled to him from a feeling of their internal necessities, did not on their part suffer themselves to be dispirited by this denial, since the positive explanation of his calling, by the Baptist, in accordance with another passage of the Old Testament, which we have yet to examine more closely, knit them more firmly into his companionship.

In any event, the following truths are firmly established by our examination of the passage in Malachi: It really refers to John, and is fulfilled, though not completely, in him; and the forerunner must be conceived of as preceding the first advent of Christ, not only because the mention of his coming in the prophecy is general, but because, in particular, the passage is unquestionably referred to John in the New Testament, and the name Elias is conferred upon him, with, however, as has been seen, a not insignificant limitation. We have, accordingly, in these verses of Malachi, a direct prophecy, if not of the person of John, at least of his office as the precursor of Christ, and in the comparison between him and the Tishbite Elijah we have an indication of his personal character and of the relation in which he stood to his time.

We have, moreover, a positive explanation of John's respecting himself and his calling (John 1:23), which, in like manner, refers us back to a prophetic passage in the Old Testament. The same passage, Isa. 40:3-5, is employed by the three evangelists, in the beginning of their respective narratives (Matt. 3:3; Luke 3:4-6; Mark 1:3), as a proof not only of the propriety, but also of the necessity, of the Baptist's appearance. In the place in question the subject is the deliverance of Israel from great trouble. Jehovah announces to his people an end of sufferings, and sends a messenger before him in order to prepare a way for him who was soon to appear as a deliverer, and to make ready for his advent. Without doubt, the prophet, in this passage, speaks himself as this ambassador and messenger, who is, in this and the following discourses, to proclaim and prepare a way for the coming of the Lord.

Neither the Baptist nor the evangelists mean to assert that the forerunner there alluded to is actually identical with John though Matthew seems to declare it when he says: "this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias," etc.; while Mark ("as it is written in the prophets") and Luke ("as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias") would evidently only indicate by the citation the necessity of the advent of John. Matthew, however, only intends to say that this John is the complete realization of that forerunner spoken of in Isaiah, which latter can only be regarded as the type of the former, just as the advent of the Lord in Israel, there described, is only an image of his advent in the flesh. So conceived as a type, this passage is peculiarly applicable in the connection in which it stands in the evangelists.

As the coming of the Lord spoken of in the prophet, was now realized in its highest sense, so must the coming of the forerunner be also realized in its relative highest sense, and, therefore, John could with entire correctness declare that in him was fulfilled the prophecy contained in the passage under consideration. The passage, therefore, must be classed among those to which a double application may be assigned, primarily, events near at hand, but secondarily to others yet, at the time of the prophecy, far removed in the future,—the former being, so to speak, typical of the former.

So must the citation be explained, unless we have recourse to the not very satisfactory expedient of "accommodation," and paraphrase with the "later Commentators" alluded to by Bloomfield (on John 1:23), "What the prophet (namely, Isa. 4:3) there says, holds good of me; you will find there, what will be a sufficient description of my person and office." The original historical reference is evidently such as has been stated. Alford, however, remarks: "The primary and literal application of this prophecy to the return from captivity is very doubtful. If it ever had such an application, we may safely say that its predictions were so imperfectly and sparingly fulfilled in that return, or anything which followed it, that we are necessarily directed onward to its greater fulfillment—the announcement of the kingdom of Christ."

How it happened that all three evangelists made use of this citation, is easily explicable when we consider this evident connection between that prophecy and the appearance of the Baptist. It had, no doubt, become customary in the regular and almost stereotyped narratives of the life and acts of Christ while upon earth, which were circulated in the churches, to introduce the history of the ministry of John with this citation, and hence we find it in the same connection in all three evangelists. The evangelists, however, have only the third verse from Isaiah in common, while John also refers only this one to himself, and it is clear that this indicates most strikingly and most concisely the relation of the Baptist to Christ.

Luke alone adds the fourth and the fifth verse (the last only in part), which contain a further description of the office of the forerunner, and a promise of the approaching glory of God; and which are quite applicable to John's case, though not so much so as verse three. Luke, also, with spiritual freedom changes the citation, in order to make it suitable to the object for which he introduces it. He leaves out, for example, the words, "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed;" without doubt, because Christ had as yet appeared only in humility, and not in glory.

On the other hand, the following, "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" was with him the chief reason of introducing the citation; for the condition of beholding this salvation is that a road be broken up into the heart, in order to render easy and finally to allow, the entrance of the Lord into the soul. To open up just such a road had John the Baptist come as the forerunner of Christ.

Upon this passage in Isaiah—which, on account of its being typical, could have been, and was, recognized as prophetic only by its fulfillment—the Jews appear not to have grounded any expectation of a forerunner, but only upon the altogether direct prophecy of Malachi. For this reason, those among the nation whose hearts were hardened to every holy impression, understood not what John meant when he referred to the passage, and were unequal to the task of finding out

the drift of his words. While on the contrary, those whose souls were susceptible obtained by means of the same explanation, a clear insight into the peculiar character and vocation of the Baptist.

Finally, we have yet to examine another expectation which, as it appears, many among the Jews entertained at the coming of John ; and which they exhibited when they asked of him whether he was "the prophet" (John 1:21). It will, perhaps, be difficult to ascertain at the present time, precisely who it was they supposed "the prophet" to be.

The supposition that Jeremiah is there called simply "the prophet" and that from this circumstance he was afterwards so distinguished by the nation, is incapable of being proved; and, moreover, that Matthew appears to have had a conception of Jeremiah's returning alive among the people (16:14) cannot be adduced in favor of the hypothesis, for such a return, according to the ideas of those whom Matthew introduces as the speakers, is possible also to the other prophets ; and, to conclude the whole, it can be proved in no case that Jeremiah was ever actually spoken of among the people as simply "the prophet."

We must, perhaps, go back in preference to the promise of Moses (Deut. 18:15): "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." This promise, it is true, was referred by the Jews at a very early period to the Messiah (cp. John 6:14; Acts 3:22; 7:37), but interpreters were never entirely certain that a prophets-different from the Messiah is not here meant (cp. John prenucciatory 7:40).

At least, it seems to have been thought worthwhile by those who interrogated John, when he answered their query respecting his being the Messiah in the negative, to inquire of him, in a second question, whether another prophet than the Messiah is announced by Moses, and whether he was that particular prophet. Here also were they foiled in their object by John, and since they, under the influence of their perverted fleshly expectations regarding the Messiah, and, in a similar manner, regarding his precursor, knew not what to think of his reply, they requested him to give a positive explanation of his meaning. The explanation which they desired was given by the Baptist in words which, to their dull understandings, were as unintelligible as his former replies.

The conceptions, therefore, which John had respecting himself, his calling, and the position which had been assigned him by the express declaration of the Old Testament, were clear and decided, as we shall show hereafter when an appropriate opportunity presents itself; whilst, on the other hand, the ideas of the Jews respecting him vacillated in uncertainty, now to this side and now to that, according as their Messianic expectations and their insight into the Old Testament were more or less perverted.



The Beast and the Coming Union of All the World's Religions ---

Art Sadlier
From *Sound the Trumpet*, January 2015

We are standing on the threshold of the Day of the Lord also referred to as the tribulation period.

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (Revelation 13:1).

In this verse we are introduced to a king and a kingdom which will dominate the world during the tribulation period. They are both called a beast, one is a man and the other is a kingdom. The raging restless sea represents the peoples of the earth. During this time the people of the earth will be like a raging restless sea. The ten horns on his head represent ten rulers of the revived Roman Empire that Daniel tells us about in Daniel chapter 2 and chapter 7.

In verse 2 of Revelation 13, we discover where his power comes from, "...and the dragon (Satan) gave him power, and his seat, and great authority." This man is indwelt by and controlled by Satan.

In verse four we see Satan actually being worshipped as the one who controls the beast, whom John calls the antichrist in his epistles. "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" This is Satan's attempt to fulfil his longstanding desire to replace the God as the ruler of this world. That desire also includes being worshipped by the people of the world. This is the point that Satan has been striving to reach for some 6,000 years. This is the climax of Satan's ambition.

David Hunt stated,

"The media has so conditioned our minds that the very word instantly conjures up the image of a sinister man who exudes evil from every pore. But Hollywood caricatures play into the hands of the real Antichrist, since no suspicion will rest upon this one whose admirable qualities so well conceal his dark designs. When the time has come for his surprising world takeover, precipitated by an unprecedented global crisis, he will be hailed as the world's savior—and so he will appear to be."

Daniel tells us that he will come on the scene as an unknown. The office of this coming dictator has now been setup. It will be the newly created office of President of the EU. He will come on the scene at a time of crisis and lead the European federation to great heights of power and world-wide influence.

Today the EU is one of the leading economic powers in the world. However it is facing a crisis and is in danger of economic collapse, in danger of the collapse of the Euro and political disintegration. That would appear to be the exact scenario that will prepare the Europeans for the appearance Antichrist and for the yielding of national sovereignty for the common good and the solving of vexing problems.

The Second Beast

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:12).

Antichrist's program will be a program of religion and he will have an associate who will be the leader of a new world religion. This leader is called in scripture the false prophet or the second beast.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, (he pretends to be Christ the Lamb of God) and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (Revelation 13:11-14).

The popes have always claimed to be Christ's representative on earth and I suggest that the present pope is positioning himself to fill the role of the second beast.

Pope Francis is rapidly gaining great influence and stature in the world. He is posing himself as a mediator in the affairs of nations. For example he mediated in the reconciliation between the USA and Cuba, etc. He is stirring hope and excitement in both the secular and religious world. He is being hailed as the man to bring change to the church and to the world. He is taking firm control of the church and has put the Cardinals on notice that great changes are coming to the church. He has been laying the groundwork for the doors of the church to be opened to the whole world.

Someday the whole world will walk through those open doors. That will be the point at which the harlot church explodes upon the world. He has made great strides in bringing both evangelicals and mainline protestant churches into a looming union.

The great peace initiative of the coming antichrist has already begun and is gaining momentum in the world of politics, religion and among educators. There is a drive to solve the problems of terrorism and social turmoil. Antichrist must bring the world together in peace and harmony and unity to facilitate his efforts to seize control.

There is a drive to make the world a melting pot where all are melded together as one homogenous, mindless group of robots which can easily be controlled. That is the climate in which antichrist can control the world.

What global leaders and “peacemakers” do not understand is that the reason there is terrorism, murder, and cruelty to others is because of sin in the heart of man. As the world seeks out answers and solutions to global issues, they move further and further away from the only solution – Jesus Christ.

Why do we say further away from Him? Because the answer they come up with is to eliminate any and all “extremism.” This is another way of saying remove those who say their religion is the only true religion. So what happens; Islamic extremists (fundamentalists) are lumped together with Christian fundamentalists. And now, it becomes wrong to stand for the Christian faith and say that Christ is the only way to God, this is extremism in their estimation and it brings disunity.

The problem with this is that the on the one hand, Islam promotes violence, Mohamad said, kill the infidels. On the other hand, biblical Christianity promotes love, peace, gentleness (the fruits of the Spirit as described in Galatians and love your enemies is required in Matthew) and finding salvation and eternal life through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That is quite a contrast!

Rick Warren is promoting the elimination of all forms of fundamentalism. Warren predicts that, “Fundamentalism, of all varieties, will be one of the big enemies of the 21st century. Muslim fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism, Jewish fundamentalism, secular fundamentalism, they’re all motivated by fear, fear of each other.” Rick Warren has made himself the enemy of Christian fundamentalism.

But Christian fundamentalism and Jewish fundamentalism do not promote violence. Christian fundamentalism promotes the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If something that calls itself Christianity (such as the Roman Catholic Church during the inquisitions) is promoting violence, then it is not true Christianity.

How sad to realize that one of the church’s most popular and influential pastors would suggest that we lump Islamic terrorists with Christian believers.

In 2011, Lighthouse Trails wrote a report entitled “Eye-Witness Account: Global Peace Forum at Saddleback with Rick Warren and Tony Blair Raises Serious Questions about Global Peace Plan.”

In that report, it was stated by both Warren and Blair that the only way a global peace could happen on planet earth in the future would be for all faiths to work together and do good together. The audience at the forum appeared to be mesmerized and awe-struck as they were wooed with discussion on faith, good works, democracy, and coming together. Beneath the vernacular, however, was another story.

At the 4th Ministerial meeting of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) in New York on 27 September 2013, GCTF Co-Chairs announced that a core group of government and non-government partners from different regions are planning to establish the first-ever public-private global fund to support local, grass-roots efforts to counter violent extremism in all of

its forms. It is anticipated that the fund will raise more than \$200 million over the next ten years to support local community initiatives that counter radicalization and extremism. (Read Christian Fundamentalism)

"The work that my organization does, and the work of many others, is about not just the uprooting of terrorism, but the uprooting of the thinking and philosophy behind it. I believe there is no answer to this problem that doesn't start and continue with the importance of educating our young people. So, that in a world in which people are pushed ever closer together, they learn to live with each other with mutual tolerance and respect." The above statement sounds good until you consider the implications.

Tony Blair stated in the UK Guardian, "Religious difference, not ideology, will fuel this century's epic battles" That battle will reach its climax in the tribulation period as multitudes of tribulation saints are martyred for being out of step with the program of antichrist.

So Blair and Warren believe the hope of society is to eliminate religious differences. That is the philosophy behind all of the persecution of Christians over the long centuries of the dark ages. It is also the philosophy that will be at the heart of the coming world church, called the harlot or the great whore by John in Revelation 17. We are already seeing this in the neutralism of the new evangelical church.

Blair stated, "Terrorism is a transnational and global problem frequently driven by local forces. While military, intelligence and law enforcement operations can help address the threat these groups pose, to succeed in the long-term, we must reduce their ability to recruit at the local level." That is a call to eliminate all groups that do not conform to the societal norms, in particular fundamental Christians.

Tony Blair stated, "We have to be prepared to take the security measures necessary for our immediate protection. . . .The answer is to promote views that are open-minded and tolerant towards those who are different, and to fight the formal, informal and internet propagation of closed-minded intolerance." (Read: persecution of religious groups who do not conform to societal norms)

Of course, this is absurd as true born-again believers in Christ are not prone to violence. What Tony Blair and other leaders are really calling for is a world where those who say Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation are silenced. If you don't believe that, consider what Blair's comrade, Rick Warren said about Christian fundamentalists (meaning those who adhere to biblical doctrine). This is a repeat of the above statement by Warren.

Warren predicts that fundamentalism, of all varieties, will be "one of the big enemies of the 21st century. Muslim fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism, Jewish fundamentalism, secular fundamentalism – they're all motivated by fear, fear of each other." (Rick Warren, from the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, 2006)

On the other hand Warren is promoting a neutral Christianity and leading it into unity with the Roman Catholic Church and all other religions. In a recent video interview for the Catholic News Service Warren said: "We have far more in common than what divides us." (Referring to Catholicism)

He continued: "When you talk about Pentecostals, charismatics, evangelicals, fundamentalists, Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians ... Well, they would all say we believe in the trinity, we believe in the Bible, we believe in the resurrection, we believe salvation is through Jesus Christ. These are the big issues."

What clearer evidence could we have to demonstrate that Warren is on the leading edge of the drive to bring evangelicals into the coming harlot church of Revelation 17. Accompanying that drive is the intention to isolate and reject Christian Fundamentalists.

A false "Christ" and a false "Christianity" are coming; the Bible predicts it and this coming false Christ will be the antichrist who will hate Israel, the Jews, and Bible-believing Christians. Antagonism toward fundamentalism is already evident in the neutral Christianity that now dominates evangelicalism.

While the world is going to do what it is going to do, how is that many of Christianity's main leaders are falling into step with this world system that will eventually bring about the Antichrist?

Remember what Rick Warren said about the new reformation he is hoping to help bring about, that it can come not just through Christians but through Muslims as well. He calls it a reformation from God. Warren stated, "Who's the man of peace in any village, or it might be a woman of peace who has the most respect, they're open and they're influential? They don't have to be a Christian. In fact, they could be a Muslim, but they're open and they're influential and you work with them to attack the five giants. And that's going to bring the second Reformation." (Rick Warren, May 2005, *Pew Forum on Religion*)

The implication is that the first reformation divided but this second reformation will unite. It will unite not only Protestants and Catholics but all of the religions of the world.

Will you greet me over there, in the joyful harvest home?



All Created Things Are So under God's Control

J. L. Dagg

From *Manual of Theology: A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, 1859

O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? (2 Chron. 20:6)

All created things are so under God's control, that their changes take place according to his purpose. Created things are perpetually operating on each other in the relation of cause and effect. The properties and powers by which they so operate were given to each of them in their creation and are continued in the act of preservation. It follows, therefore, that all created things operate on each other, and produce changes in each other, by the will and power of God. If they are dependent for their existence, they must be, for their properties and powers, and, of consequence, for their operations.

God's control over all events that happen, is abundantly taught in the Scriptures; which represent the wind (Jonah 4:8), the rain (Matt. 5:45), pestilence (Lev. 26:25), plenty (Gen. 27:28), grass (Matt. 6:30), the fowls of the air (Matt. 6:26), the hairs of the head (Matt. 10:30), &c., as objects of his providence.

The Scriptures not only attribute events to the overruling hand of God, but they, represent him as ordering them for the accomplishment of some purpose. The grass grows, that it may give food. (Ps. 104:14) Pestilence is sent that men may be punished for their sins. (2 Sam. 24:15) Joseph was sent into Egypt to preserve much people alive. (Gen. 45:7)

Nor are there a few events only which are so ordered, but it is said, He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The declaration, "All things work together for good," (Rom. 8:28) &c., could not be true, if God's control were not alike extended to all events, causing them all to cooperate in the fulfilment of his purpose.

Some persons are unwilling to attribute to God the care and management of minute and unimportant events. They con-

sider it beneath his dignity to be concerned about such trivial matters. They believe in a General Providence over the affairs of the world, exercised by general laws, but a Particular Providence, exercised over every particular incident of every man's life, enters not into their creed.

But the Scriptures are plain on this subject. The fall of a sparrow is a very trivial event, yet it is affirmed by the teacher from heaven, to be not without our heavenly Father. (Matt. 10:29) If great events happen according to general laws, it is equally true of small ones, and the operation of these laws, in the latter case, must be as well understood, and as perfectly controlled, as in the former.

Moreover, it often happens that very important events depend on others that are in themselves trivial and unimportant. The King of Israel was slain, (1 Kings 22:34) and God's prophecy concerning him was fulfilled, by an arrow shot at a venture. How many very minute circumstances must have concurred in this act! That the arrow was shot at all—that it was then shot—that it was precisely so directed, and with precisely the necessary force—and that it met no obstacle on its way: all these concurred, and all these must have been under the control of Him, in whose hand was the life of the king. As God's greatness permitted him to create the minutest of his works, so it permits him to take care of them, and this care is as easy and undistracting to him, as if his whole energy were directed to the care and benefit of a single man or angel.

The objects of God's Providence are all created things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational. Some of these, as angels and men, are moral agents. All others, viewed as causing change of any kind, may be classed together as natural agents. With reference to this division of the agencies under his control, the government of God may be divided into natural and moral.



British Tribunal Acknowledges Christian's Right to Believe Homosexuality is a Sin ___

David Cloud
From wayoflife.org, July 2015

In ruling against a company that fired an employee for saying that homosexuality is sinful, a London employment tribunal says that Christians have a right to believe this. The tribunal ruled that Sarah Mbyui was wrongly discriminated against when she was fired for telling a lesbian co-worker that her lifestyle is condemned by the Bible. The co-worker instigated the discussion when she asked Miss Mbyui “whether she would be welcomed at church and whether God would approve of her civil partnership and allow her to marry in church” (“Woman fired for answering lesbian’s church question,” *WorldNetDaily*, June 10, 2015). The intolerant attitude against biblical Christianity that is leavening British society is evident in the fact that Mbyui’s company fired her.

But in his ruling, Judge Broughton stated, “The issues in this case arose out of the claimant’s belief that homosexuality is a sin. Such a belief has effectively already been accepted by the higher courts ... as capable of amounting to one that attracts the protection of the Equality Act 2010. It was a genuinely held belief that was more than an opinion or viewpoint and had attained a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance. It is a belief worthy of respect in a democratic society, is not incompatible with human dignity and is not in conflict with the fundamental rights of others.”

As they say in Australia, “Good on you, Judge Broughton, for ruling honestly on the law.”

