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*"...The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Timothy 3:15*

# The Resurrection of Jesus Proves Him to Be the Son of God

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*"He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." (Matt. 28:6)*

The chief design of all the providences of God recorded in the Old Testament was to prepare the way and open the door for the appearance of the Redeemer upon earth. The Lord often suffered his church to be in great distress, and allowed often a long rope to the enemy to boast of their wise schemes in trampling his cause in the world. At the commencement of an engagement, victory often seemed to be on the enemy's side; but when the field was cleared of the smoke and mist, the God of Israel was always above them. If Jehovah suffers his people to be besieged between Pihiroth and Baalsephon, he will miraculously raise the siege, by dividing the Red Sea with a rod, that the children of Israel might go through the midst of the sea on dry ground, and the waters a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.

If he will suffer a host of armed men to come to arrest the Prophet Elisha, he will send thousands of horses and flaming chariots, so that the mountains are covered with them; the enemies are struck with blindness, and they are taken prisoners by the Prophet. If the great and powerful Goliath of Gath is suffered to come between the two armies, roaring like a lion, until the rocks echo with his voice, God will raise up the stripling David, with his five stones, to conquer him, and take off his head. If the true worshippers of the living God are suffered to be cast into the fiery furnace, and the lion's den, to gratify pride and vain glory, the Lord was above them; for he quenched the violence of the fire, and the mouths of the lions he stopped.

But when the Messiah was slain and buried, the enemies boasted more than ever in their crafty schemes; and of all the hard engagements of redemption, this was the hardest of them all; but wherein the enemies prided-the most, he was above them; for he completely defeated their most sanguine expectation. If there were none of the friends of Jesus on earth that had courage sufficient to preach his resurrection on the

morning he rose from the dead, a preacher came from the heavenly world, to publish the joyful and all important truth, He is not here, for he is risen.

We would call your serious attention to consider:

- I. The all important truth delivered by this heavenly preacher.

II. His majestic and glorious appearance; yet his tender, mild mode of address to his hearers.

**I. Let us attend to the important doctrine contained in the text.**

The preacher was the angel, the doctrine he delivered with the resurrection of Christ. The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, seven times swifter than lightning, straight on the new grave in Joseph's garden, calling upon no one for the key, but in a moment rolled off the stone, and sat upon it, and made it his pulpit, from whence he preached the doctrine of the resurrection to the women.

We are not informed which of the angels he was, whether he was Gabriel or not, the Ambassador between the court of heaven and the church on earth. After the Messiah, the great Ambassador of the covenant came down and ascended up to heaven, and the Holy Spirit assumed the office of a Messenger between heaven and earth, the ministration of angels has not been so conspicuous since.

**His doctrine was the resurrection of the Son of God.**

Pointing to the grave he said—he is not here—he is risen—he is gone from this cave victoriously. The moment he turned in the grave when he awoke, and began taking off his shroud, or grave dress, the sound of the earthquake was heard in the heaven of heavens.

It appears from the records of the evangelist Luke that two angels in shining garments appeared unto the women, who were so perplexed about the stone being rolled away, and the body of the Lord Jesus not found. The angels said to the women:

“Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words.” (Luke 24:5-8)

Here is the testimony of two credible witnesses; a sufficient number to attest the truth declared; who testified nothing, but what they had personally seen and known to be the truth, and delivered it in a plain simple language that it could not be misunderstood.

While the women went to inform their brethren, the disciples of Jesus, of what they had heard and seen;—behold, some of the watchmen came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were

done,—and what was done?—What can be the testimony of these enemies of Christ respecting his resurrection? That an angel, whose countenance was like lightning, and his garments white as snow, descended from heaven, and rolled the stone from the door, and sat upon it; and terrified them so that they became as dead men. To confirm the above testimonies Jesus Christ appeared unto many after his resurrection, who are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem. How he was slain and hanged on a tree, and how God raised him up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to the disciples, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead; whom he commanded to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.

“To them he showed himself alive often after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3) Here we may observe, that he appeared to them that knew him best, to their full satisfaction, that the Lord was risen indeed. And he not only appeared to the apostles, but to more than five hundred brethren at once. (1 Cor. 15:6)

We have an account of his appearing at ten or eleven different times, so that those who had seen him had sufficient opportunities to know assuredly it was Jesus of Nazareth that was crucified by the Jews, was the very identical person that appeared so many times unto them. He conversed with them repeatedly, and brought to their recollection what he had said unto them before his death; he showed them his hands and feet, commanding them to examine and feel him. It was therefore with great power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

In a few weeks after the resurrection of our adorable Saviour, the testimony of the Apostles respecting it was cordially received, and firmly believed by many thousands, not in any desert part of the world, but in Jerusalem where he had been crucified.

**The Holy Spirit also is a witness of his resurrection.** So that our faith in this doctrine is founded on a divine foundation. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. (1 John 5:9) And the Apostles went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following. (Mark 16:20) How nobly the Apostle Peter argued on this subject when he said to the Jews:

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” (Acts 2:22-24)

Divine power was evidently manifested in the resurrection of Christ from the dead; the apostle calls it the exceeding greatness of his power.

**The resurrection of the Redeemer is sometimes attributed to the Father**, who as the Lawgiver had arrested and imprisoned him as the surety of poor sinners, wherein he manifested his hatred to sin, and his love to them. In writing to the Galatians, Paul calls himself an apostle, (not of men neither by man,) but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. (Gal. 1:1) And in writing to the Romans he says, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. (Rom. 6:4) The God of peace opened the prison door for him to come forth, proving thereby that the sinner's debt was cancelled, divine justice satisfied, and the law of God honored.

***Let us pity the poor deist, despise his weak reasoning and vain philosophy, and direct him to the death, the burial, and the resurrection of the judge of the world, before whose tribunal he must soon appear!***

**The resurrection of Christ is also attributed to the Son himself**, and that in reference to the merits of his sacrifice—the blood of the everlasting covenant; and in reference to the power he possessed to lay down his life and take it again. (John 10:18)

**And sometimes it is attributed to the Holy Spirit.** He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1:4)

As the Lord of life and death, Jesus took a full possession of the whole territory of death. He destroyed him who had the power of death, and snatched his iron rod from his hand. He crossed the Dead Sea, opened the gates of death,—and made an open passage through the cape of death to the Pacific Ocean on the other side, till the tops of the beautiful mountains of immortality are to be seen through the spying glass of the Gospel,—which the wise men of this world ever failed in contriving a glass, by which they could spy out the borders of the land of promise.

**The resurrection of Christ was the life of his people and of his cause in the world at that time.** All the disciples had hung their harps on the willows, by the rivers of Belial which had overflowed all the meadows of Christianity. When Jesus arose from the dead, the tops of the hills are discovered and the meadows coming in sight, and his cause again encircled by the bow of the covenant. How it must have cheered the drooping spirits, and dried up the flowing tears of the weeping disciples; to see their beloved Lord alive again from the dead, and to hear his gracious words, while yet in sight of Calvary and the new grave, "Peace be unto you," (John 20:26) "Because I live ye shall live also." (John 14:19)

Christ rose from the dead with such heavenly Majesty and glory that terrified his enemies. Alexander the Great and Caesar terrified many men, and demolished many strong and fortified cities, but they could not shake the earth with all their power and grandeur; but the Son of God was above them. He shook the earth to its foundations in dying, and in rising again from the grave his language in the earthquake was — “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all

ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” (Isa. 45:22). It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain; (Isa. 40:22) and all the inhabitants thereof, Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate, are as grasshoppers before him. It is he that bringeth princes

to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Their stock shall not take root in the earth; and he shall also blow upon them, all the powers of men and devils, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things that bringeth out their host by number. He calleth them all by names, (Ps. 147:4) like the leader of an army calling them to the parade, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power not one faileth.

**The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an infallible proof of the truth and reality of the Christian religion.** Pilate wrote the title of Christ in three languages on the cross — and many have written well on the truth of the Scriptures, and the reality of Christianity; but the writings of the invisible hand of the eternal power in raising up Jesus from the dead decides the controversy forever, and affords an ample and sure foundation for the faith and hope of all. If anyone asks, whether the Christian religion is from heaven or from men, or from hell, let him go to the new grave of Joseph of Arimathea, and behold the founder of Christianity, rising from the tomb the third day, according to the Scriptures.

Let him see the writings written there, by the finger of God, such as no one else in heaven, or earth, or hell could write, but himself. Caiaphas' feast of joy is turned to mourning, lamentation and woe; and the true Christian is fully persuaded of the safety of his condition, while by faith, he is eating the flesh, and drinking the blood from the true sacrifice, and living, not to himself, but to God. The almighty power that can raise the dead is engaged on his behalf; the eternal God his refuge; the God manifested in the flesh—the Founder of Christianity the foundation of his hope. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. (John 11:25)

Let us pity the poor deist, despise his weak reasoning and vain philosophy, and direct him to the death, the burial, and the resurrection of the judge of the world, before whose tribunal he must soon appear! Upon these three pillars the Christian religion is founded, and all that is necessary to make a man happy, to elevate him to the highest point of dignity, and to enable him to meet death without fear, may be fully derived from the above excellent, all important and well authenticated facts.

If Christ is not risen from the dead, Christianity must unavoidably fall; but if Christ is risen indeed, the Christian religion is of God. This is the ground on which the apostle Paul stood when he was disputing with the Greeks, the Epicureans and the Stoics, the Areopagus, the Athenians and the Dogmatists of Corinth:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15:1-4)

The fact was then proved—thousands believed, and even the Sadducees could not deny it. Even the enemies of Christ and Christianity are sometimes constrained to speak the truth. “I find no fault in this man,” was the testimony of Pilate. (Luke 23:4) “Have thou nothing to do with that just man,” said the Governor's wife. (Matt. 27:19) Herod, upon the most mature deliberation of the subject, thought that there was nothing in him worthy of death. “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,” was the language of Judas. (Matt. 27:4)

Pilate writing to Tiberius, the Emperor of Rome, said, that Jesus being raised from the dead, many believed him to be

God. The Senators of Rome, upon this testimony, expressed no doubt of his being risen from the dead; the question with them was, whether he should be admitted as one of the gods of Rome, which was overruled by divine providence, for he that is higher than the heavens, brighter in glory, and greater in power and majesty than all the heavenly mansions, and all their illustrious inhabitants, was not to be compared with the dumb idols of the Roman Empire.

The resurrection of the Son of God is, not only an infallible proof of the truth of Christianity — a sure and true testimony that the gospel is from heaven — and that he that believeth it, shall never be confounded — but it is represented as being powerful — it is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. This is like a river overflowing the banks of language.

Let us examine the subject more minutely. Where can we see the exceeding greatness of his power? Is it in the creation of the world, in fixing the seven stars and Orion, in the strength of the Behemoth, or in the power of the Leviathan? No. Is it in drowning Pharaoh and his host, in pulling down Nebuchadnezzar like Lucifer from the political firmament? No, no; but it is that power which he wrought in Christ, when? In healing the sick and casting out devils? No, it was when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. (Eph. 1:22)

Also the resurrection of Christ has a powerful effect on the resurrection of the souls of men from the death of trespasses and sins. It is the same power that raised Christ from the dead that quickeneth them; and the life which is given them is of the same nature, as the life which Christ had laid down and taken up again.—The life of faith by which the saints live, is a spring of water that flows from the resurrection, and shall never dry; or a spark that descended from the sun of the resurrection that can never be quenched.

Finally we might observe that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus has an effect on the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, as the same power that raised him will raise them. Thy dead men shall live together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the

dead. The bodies of the saints shall raise on the likeness of their head. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15:42-44) "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality...Death is swallowed up in victory," (1 Cor. 15:53, 54) and the saints exclaiming, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victor? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:55, 57)

Ever since the fall in Eden mankind are born to die. They eat and drink, sleep and awake out of sleep to die. Death is before us; it stands between us and happiness. The Son of God created the world to die therein; he was born in Bethlehem to die on Calvary; he was made tinder the law that he should be bound to die; and he lived thirty three years without sin that he might die for the sins of men. But on the morning of the resurrection, he went before death, and left the monster behind him. "I that was dead and am alive" is the chorus today. All that believe in him, shall triumph over death in the morning of the general resurrection, and leave it at an infinite distance behind them, and it shall never, no, never be able to overtake them.

The spiritual operations on the minds of the saints sometimes run on ahead before death. We believe, love and hope to live. We eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man. We attend to the means of grace, as praying, sing praises, and follow the Lamb to live. Though we have not left the death of the body behind us as yet. We look forward with some degree of confidence to that happy period when we shall put on immortality when we also, like our glorious head, shall go before and leave death far behind us, never to fear falling into the hands of the tyrant any more.

I recollect reading in the works of Flavel something like the following: "That the souls of the saints in heaven have a strong inclination to be united to their bodies that they left behind them in the world, on the face of the waters of death, and that they are anxiously expecting their arrival with the tide of the resurrection, to meet them in the harbour of immortality."

Our vile bodies shall be changed and fashioned like the glorious body of Christ. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)

While in this world the motions of sin are working in our members, but in the resurrection the whole spirit, soul and body shall be blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the seeds of afflictions and death shall be left behind in the grave.

Moses shall no longer be slow of speech, Jacob no longer lame, Job and Lazarus shall be troubled no longer with sore boils, and Timothy shall complain no more of a weak stomach. The glory of the body of Christ is far above our present conceptions, but we know that when he was transfigured on Mount Tabor, that his face shined like the sun in its meridian brightness, and that such was the excellent glory then manifested, that his raiment was white as the light; and those that awake to everlasting life shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

I recollect that I promised to notice:

II. The majestic and glorious appearance of the angel; yet his tender and affectionate mode of address to his Wearers. But we must hasten to conclude.

***While in this world the motions of sin are working in our members, but in the resurrection the whole spirit, soul and body shall be blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ***

The day on which the angel preached his sermon was the third day—the first day of the week,—the most notable of all the days of the earth,—the day on which the second Adam appeared with the

keys of hell and of death, the feast day of the Jubilee of the redeemed. The stone that was on our Saviour's grave was the angel's pulpit, from which he preached the resurrection to few pious women of Galilee. How astonishing! The angel making death's castle door his throne or seat of honor, to preach to the daughters of Salem.

The preacher's garment was white as snow, and his countenance like the lightning which terrified the watchmen so that they fell to the ground, and became us dead men. This was the first preacher after the battle of Calvary, but the preacher with the white raiment and lightning countenance had to preach only once, and that to a few women. Peter, the fisherman of the Sea of Galilee, was the preacher in the great assembly on the Day of Pentecost, when men of sixteen languages were hearing, and five thousand of them converted to God.

The angel, though clad with heavenly majesty and glory, was yet very meek and affectionate in his address to the women. Having delivered the doctrine of the resurrection, Fear not, says the heavenly messenger,—fear not to-day,

for I know that ye are seeking Jesus.— If you only knew the importance of the work that was completely finished today, you would neither fear the world, death, nor the grave. This is the most joyful day that Jesus hath seen since he was born in Bethlehem. He realizes this day fulness of joy. Let hell and its allied powers tremble; the Jubilee of Jesus and his friends has commenced today.

The angel calls our blessed Redeemer, “Jesus, which was crucified.” (Matt. 28:5) Men generally receive their titles from some exploits they have made. Why did not the angel pay, ye are seeking Jesus who created the world?—who dwelt in the fiery bush?—and gave the law to the children of Israel on Sinai?—that would have been true.—But Jesus' character is higher in the estimation of angels on account of what he has done on the cross than all the works of Creation and Providence, for the angels are ever looking with the greatest astonishment, and most profound reverence upon the wonders of the cross.

Who would not pity those men who call themselves Philosophers, who take a vast deal more delight to dig in the lead mines opened by Plato and others, than in searching for imperishable gold, invaluable pearls, and precious stones, which Prophets and Apostles, and millions more have sought arid found, that would make them also eternally rich.

The angel said, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matt. 28:6) Who is this Lord? The God of Israel himself, whose majestic train filled the temple,—who was born of a virgin,—laid in a manger.—immersed in Jordan,—and who was buried in Joseph's new grave,—but is risen today for the justification of sinners. Go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and behold he goeth before you into Galilee; and then shall ye see him, lo! I have told you. (Matt. 28:7)

My hearers, listen for a moment! Hear this; go quickly!—the King's business requires haste. You that know the Lord make haste, go quickly,—and tell to sinners round what a dear Saviour you have found; tell them that you have found the Messiah, the true and promised Messiah, to whom Moses and the Prophets bear record, which is being interpreted the Christ, the anointed of the Father; the way, the truth and the life; the only saviour of lost, and perishing

sinners; who died on the cross for our sins, and is risen again for our justification. Sinners, the religion of Christ requires haste. Do you ever intend to repent of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow the Lord through evil and good report?

O, do not halt between two opinions! Procrastination is dangerous. Go quickly to Jesus—believe in him—trust in him—and rely upon him, and his righteousness alone, as the ground of your acceptance before God.

Time swiftly glides away, and you will soon be swallowed up in eternity. May the Lord have mercy upon you, and stir you up, and raise you out of that state of carelessness; and grant you faith-and repentance, that you might repent and believe the gospel. It is my delight to invite you to Christ, but I feel more pleasure and more confidence to pray God on your behalf. I have begged of you, I have entreated for the sake of everything that is valuable, and I have compelled you by all the arguments that I could find, and you are yet in your sins.

***It is my fixed determination by the assistance of divine grace to pray for you; and who can tell, that although I cannot prevail with you, but I might prevail with God, to have mercy on your souls, and make you wise unto salvation.***

You are eating sin like bread, and drinking iniquity like water—you are holding fast deceit, and refuse to let it go. You are travelling the downward road to hell as fast as time can carry you. But I have not yet given you up in despair, for though I cannot succeed in persuading you to flee from the

wrath to come, yet I am resolved to persevere in prayer to God for you, while I have breath. It is my fixed determination by the assistance of divine grace to pray for you; and who can tell, that although I cannot prevail with you, but I might prevail with God, to have mercy on your souls, and make you wise unto salvation, while the day of grace lasteth, for now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation; if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation. (Heb. 3:15)

Come guilty souls and flee away.  
To Christ and heal your wounds:  
This is the welcome gospel day,  
Wherein free grace abounds.



# God is a Spirit

J. L. Dagg

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

**B**y our external senses we obtain knowledge of properties which belong to a class of substances called matter, such as extension, solidity or impenetrability, divisibility, figure, color.

By consciousness, we have knowledge of our own thoughts and feelings, and these we ascribe to a substance, called mind, which is capable of perceiving, remembering, comparing, judging, reasoning, and willing. The distinction between these two classes of substances is recognised in the judgments of all men. We never attribute thought to fire, air, earth, or water; and we never conceive of mind as round or square, black or white.

The properties which we discover in our own minds, we attribute to the minds of others; and we readily conceive the existence of these properties in beings of a different order. The term spirit is used to denote an immaterial and intelligent substance, or being; one which is without the peculiar properties of matter, and possesses properties analogous to those of the human mind. In this sense, God is a spirit. He is not extended, solid, and divisible, like a rock, a tree, or a human body, but thinks and wills in a manner free from all imperfection.

The texts of Scripture which directly teach the spirituality of God are few. It may be inferred from Isaiah 31:3: "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." The foundation of the parallelism, in this passage, is that God is a spirit. It may be inferred, also, from the language of Scripture, in which God is called the Father of spirits: "We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9)

A father and his children possess a common nature, and, as the fathers of our flesh, are flesh, so the Father of our spirits is spirit. There is one passage which teaches the doctrine expressly, "God is a Spirit." (John 4:24) and this would be sufficient to prove it, if it were taught nowhere else.

It is no objection to the doctrine of God's spirituality, that bodily parts, as hands, feet, eyes, &c., are ascribed to him. These are manifestly mere accommodations of language, because we have no words more suitable to express the operations of the divine mind. If it were inadmissible to speak of God's eyes, because he has not material organs of vision, as we have, it would also be inadmissible to speak of God's seeing, because he does not see by means of material light, as we do, or to speak of God's thinking, because his thoughts are not as our thoughts.

The practical use of this doctrine is taught by Christ: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." In offering him homage, it is not sufficient to come before him with a bonded knee, or a prostrate body, but our minds, our spiritual nature, must render the homage, or it will be unacceptable to him.

***God is a spirit. He is not extended, solid, and divisible, like a rock, a tree, or a human body, but thinks and wills in a manner free from all imperfection.***

The spirituality of God is the foundation of the second commandment in the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not make unto thee

any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." (Ex. 20:4, 5)

The reason assigned for this commandment is that the Israelites saw no form when God manifested his presence to them at Mount Sinai:

"And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.

"And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye

corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth." (Deut. 4:12-18)

He appeared to them in cloud and fire. A pillar of cloud and fire went before the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, as a token of the divine presence. (Ex. 13:21) This token appeared at the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple built and dedicated by Solomon. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. We are not to understand from these things that God is either cloud or fire. These are material and not spiritual substances.

As what is purely spiritual cannot be perceived by our bodily senses, God was pleased to employ these material symbols to give a sensible demonstration of his presence. For the same reason, he sometimes presented himself in human form.

In all these material manifestations of himself, which are recorded in the Old Testament, there is reason to believe that it was the second person in the Godhead, who thus exhibited himself; the same that afterwards appeared in human flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ. He is called the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Lord's presence, and yet he is called Jehovah, and the reverence due to Jehovah is claimed for him.

A created angel is not entitled to this name or this honour, but they both belong to the Son of God, the Angel of the Covenant, who, after his incarnation, was God manifest in the flesh. This opinion is confirmed by the teachings of the New Testament: "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18)

Of the Father, Jesus says, "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." (John 5:37) And he said to his disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) A comparison of these passages may satisfy us, that all the manifestations of the deity to human senses,

whether visible or audible, were made in the person of the Son, or Word of God.

The spirituality of God contradicts the pantheistic notion that the universe is God. The universe is not spirit. In its material fabric, intelligence is displayed, but this intelligence does not belong to the material fabric itself, for matter cannot think or know.

To present our religious devotions to the universe is an idolatry no less degrading than that of the most stupid of the heathen nations. They worship sticks and stones, but this philosophy clothes every clod of earth with divinity, and entitles it to our worship.

The heathen render divine honors to a few men whom, for extraordinary merit, they enroll among the gods, but this notion directs our worship to every man, and to every beast of the field. It is a notion perfectly adapted to crush the outflowings of the devotional heart as they rise to the one indivisible spiritual intelligence to whom alone divine worship is due.

The notion that God is the Soul of the universe may not be liable to precisely the same objection. But what does the proposition mean? The only sense in which we can possibly understand that God is the Soul of the universe, is that he sustains a relation to the universe analogous to that which the human soul sustains to the body with which it is connected. But how extensive is this analogy?

The soul did not create the matter of which the body is made, nor did it form the skilfully wrought parts of the wonderful machinery, or contrive their mysterious movements, which it studies with admiration, and comprehends only in very small part. The soul exercises but a very limited control over the body. The muscles of voluntary motion are under its command, and move at its will, and in this fact we may discover a faint analogy to the operation of Him, who worketh all things after the counsel of His will, and in whom every creature lives, moves, and has its being.

An analogy so meager as this is not sufficient to justify the metaphorical language in which the proposition is stated.



# The Pædobaptists

W. T. Beeby

From *The Anabaptists of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*, 1837

All authentic historical accounts agree in showing that the spirit of Antichrist manifested itself soon after the second century, and that various corruptions began then to appear among the churches, particularly in the dominant church of Rome.

Wherever the baneful influence of that church existed, corrupt principles and practice followed, either gradually or suddenly through persecution.

It will have been observed by the reader from what has been stated, that so long as the first Christians in England were left to themselves, they had not departed from the primitive practice and spiritual meaning of the initiatory ordinance of Baptism; but when the church of Rome sent forth its emissaries accompanied by brute force, the ordinance was corrupted, as respects the subjects and the import; the mode of baptism however was still retained; for neither pouring nor sprinkling appear to have become a common practice (not even in the Roman church) until after the Reformation.

It is therefore to the reformed churches, that the honour of this further corruption is to be mainly ascribed! And what is most remarkable, it is now contended for by a church that in its prescribed public service, ordered by the King, its head, and authorised by the Parliament, makes no mention of sprinkling, but commands its priests to dip the subjects; excepting only in cases where 'weakness will not admit, and then to pour the water over them; neither of which commands do any of its priests now observe!

May we not with propriety ask, can any reasonable conscientious Christian require any further argument to convince him who is right and who is wrong, who is consistent, and who is inconsistent, the Baptist or the Pædobaptist?

It is worthy the reader's particular notice that when the church of Rome extinguished to a considerable degree the light of truth in Britain in the sixth century, the Almighty Ruler of the universe in his Divine Providence caused that

truth to be kept alive by a people, a remnant "of whom the world was not worthy," and of whom some account has been given in the early pages of this pamphlet ; who, like the British Christians, having followed, the examples of the apostles, were in consequence about the same period persecuted by the Romish church.

The learned Dr. Allix, in his *History of the Churches of Piedmont*, gives this account:

"For 300 years or more, the bishop of Rome attempted to subjugate the church of Milan under his jurisdiction; and at last the interest of Rome grew too potent for the church of Milan, planted by one of the disciples, insomuch that the bishop and the people, rather than own their jurisdiction, retired to the valleys of Lucerne and Angrogne, and thence were called Vallenses, Wallenses, or the people in the valleys."

In this spot and neighbourhood they continued for several centuries.

"In 1200, these people, in the province of Albigeois, in Languedoc, from whence they were called Albigenses, stood upon their defence. Upon which Philip Augustus, warring against them, drove them into Bohemia and Savoy; and several fled into England. The crusade against them is said to consist of 500,000 men." (Note in *Rapin's Hist. of England*)

Walter Lollard, an eminent Waldensian, came to England, A.D. 1315, where he and John Wickliffe had numerous followers, known by the name of Wickliffites and Lollards; these revived the light of truth in Britain, having the same sentiments with respect to baptism as the Waldenses, the first British Christians, and the successors of the apostles. Some of these "began to separate from the Church of Rome as early as the year 1389, (consequently preceded Luther in the struggle for reform) and to appoint priests from amongst themselves to perform divine service after their way." (Ivimey's *History of the English Baptists*, 1 vol. p. 59 and 68)

**May we not with propriety ask, can any reasonable conscientious Christian require any further argument to convince him who is right and who is wrong, who is consistent, and who is inconsistent, the Baptist or the Pædobaptist?**

In 1617, Luther first opposed the Pope, and after a long struggle; the Reformation was established in many parts of Germany, in Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, France, Scotland, and England; in the last, during the reign of Henry the Eighth. This state of things, no doubt, stirred up the wrath of the Papal power, and the Waldenses were about this time most cruelly persecuted, and nearly exterminated by massacre.

Even after this period, it is well known, that the Papal influence was so great in England, that there was a long struggle between Papists and Protestants, and that in consequence, the latter, when ascendant, were so impregnated with the same spirit of intolerance, that nonconformists suffered much.

Considerable numbers holding the sentiments of the Baptists, continued, however, to exist in England from the period mentioned; and in 1689, it appears, had several meetinghouses in London and other places; and as the insurrection of the German Anabaptists took place shortly before this, those whom it has suited have ascribed their origin to that sect, not taking the trouble to trace their history further back.

Having thus given a brief sketch of the history of the Baptists, it is unnecessary for the purposes contemplated by this tract, to continue the account further forward, as those who may now be interested in knowing more about Baptists, will find much more ample information in the works enumerated at the end. But what has been stated, it is hoped, may serve to show that the Baptists of the nineteenth century have the authority of Scripture, the example of the apostles, and of their faithful followers, for their principles and practice, in a much stronger sense than many (and we might without presumption say, any) other Christian churches. For what church, holding different principles, and following a different practice, can produce the same historical evidence, like learned authors' opinions, and above all, Scripture, to warrant their practice or their doctrines with equally clear demonstration?

The circumstance of infant baptism, or sprinkling, having been practised within a few hundred years after Christ, cannot reasonably be admitted as an evidence of equal weight, in opposition to the acknowledged fact, that adults only are mentioned in Scripture, and can be proved to have been the subjects of baptism previous to the period up to which the sprinkling or baptism of children can be traced; the more especially, since the spiritual meaning of the emblem of baptism is only discernible in a believer.

The fact also of the rise of popery, and many other corruptions in the Christian church, about the same period as that of the introduction of the practice of baptizing children, might be sufficient to arouse the attention of any sincere Christian to the possible impropriety and inconsistency of such a custom.

EUSEBIUS, the bishop of Cæsarea, the great historian of ecclesiastical antiquity, referring to the Christians of the age which immediately preceded his own, thus describes their lamentable state: "Through too much liberty they grew negligent and slothful, envying and reproaching one another; waging, as it were, civil wars among themselves, bishops quarrelling with bishops, and the people divided into parties.

Hypocrisy and deceit were grown to the highest pitch of wickedness. They were become so insensible as not so much as to think of appeasing the divine anger, but like Atheists, they thought the world destitute of any providential government or care, and thus added one crime to another. The bishops themselves had thrown off all concern about religion; were perpetually contending with one another, and did nothing but quarrel with and threaten, and envy, and hate one another; they were full of ambition, and tyrannically used their power."

CYPRIAN, afterwards bishop of Carthage, drew a similar picture of the state of the church, when the persecution broke out under Decius, in the year 249. "It must be owned and confessed," says he, "that the outrageous and heavy calamity, which hath almost devoured our flock, and continues to devour it to this day, hath happened to us because of our sins, since we keep not the way of the Lord, nor observe his heavenly commands, which were designed to lead us to salvation. Christ our Lord fulfilled the will of the Father; but we neglect the will of Christ. Our principal study is to get money and estates. We follow after pride. We are at leisure for nothing but emulation and quarrelling, and have neglected the simplicity of the faith. We have renounced this world in words only, and not in deed. Every one studies to please himself and to displease others."

Here then is evidence of the corrupt state of the Christian church at the very period when the first mention of infant baptism is made; a deviation from the apostles' practice, the more easily accounted for, since, as Cyprian says, "they kept not the way of the Lord, nor observed his heavenly commands, which were designed to lead to salvation," and that the same state of things continued and increased is obvious from the history of the subsequent times; for:

“When Constantine the Roman emperor declared himself a Christian, early in the fourth century, he lavished his imperial treasure on the bishop of the then predominant sect, and exercised his power against their opponents. The consequences of these proceedings were such as might be expected.

“Worldly men coveted and obtained the highest offices in the Christian church, and regulated its doctrine and its worship by worldly principles. To make Christianity more palatable to pagan neighbours, many of their customs were borrowed as Christian rites. Judaism having much in it adapted to dazzle the imagination, many Levitical institutions were incorporated with the simple religion of Jesus.”

And to this period we may perhaps be able to trace the argument, that because children by the old law were commanded to be circumcised, it is therefore maintained that they ought to be baptized; though the new law expressly showeth that it is not the outward ceremony of baptism or washing of the body, nor the mere circumcision of the flesh, but the circumcision and purification of the heart from inherent as well as wilful sin that is necessary.

Because the Jews imagined that on account of the observance of the outward form of circumcision, they thereby entitled themselves to be not only considered but actually admitted into the covenant as the seed of faithful Abraham, for this reason (with others) therefore, that they might not deceive themselves, was the baptism of believers ordained. For the clear scriptural requisite for baptism is, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." (Acts 8:37)

From the historic evidences adduced, the reader will have observed that:

1. The baptism of persons professing to believe the gospel of Christ has divine authority, and is supported by every example of this ordinance recorded in Scripture, where the persons baptized are described.
2. There is no intimation of any infant baptism, either by John or the apostles of Christ, nor any trace of the practice having begun to be introduced, until the third century, but clear evidence that believers were the subjects, and immersion the mode of baptism during the time of, also immediately and for a considerable period after, the apostles.

***The baptism of persons professing to believe the gospel of Christ has divine authority, and is supported by every example of this ordinance recorded in Scripture, where the persons baptized are described.***

3. That infant baptism is first mentioned (and then as an innovation upon the practice of the apostles) at the very time when, as history records, the Roman churches had become, in various respects, most corrupt and worldly.

4. That those Christian communities which were beyond the influence of the Roman church (as the English and the Waldenses), adhered to the primitive practice for many centuries after the Roman churches had departed from the simplicity of the Christian faith.

5. What the Scriptures teach respecting the spiritual design of baptism, is incompatible and irreconcilable with the administration of it to infants, and hence infant baptism is incompatible with the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom.

6. All the evidence the Scriptures afford, in reference to the mode of baptism, as in the sense of the command, the places of administration, the circumstances attending it, and the allusion to it in the apostolic epistles all go to establish the practice of immersion.

7. Immersion was, by known historical fact, the general practice of all Christendom for full thirteen hundred years after Christ.

Before closing these pages, I cannot refrain from saying a word or two to those who still practise infant baptism, or sprinkling.

I know that there are some who candidly admit—and I have reason to think there are others who, although they do not avow, do believe that the Baptists "are right," but they consider the mode, the time, and indeed the ordinance itself, as non-essential.

To which I say, if non-essential, why not omit the observance, rather than deviate from that which is right? The same reason might be assigned for any corruption in or for the non-observance of the other ordinance. The latter might be made an occasion for feasting, as in the time of the apostles, but you would not certainly countenance such a corruption because the ordinance itself is not essential to salvation.

If the one is an institution that should be kept strictly and purely as an emblem of the broken body, sufferings, and death of our Redeemer, so ought the other, which is equally an emblem of his burial and resurrection; as also of our death unto sin, and rising anew unto righteousness. If we may, by our practice, obscure and nullify the intention of the one, so may we also that of the other with equal propriety, and no more guilt.

I would ask, what was the intention of these ordinances, but to keep up the remembrance in our minds, and the impression upon our hearts, of those great events, those important facts? If, then, we destroy the emblematical figure of these ordinances, we assist in effacing the recollection and the impression that was intended to be kept alive.

Suppose that a large portion of the members of your community were now to attempt to bring about an immediate alteration in the manner of observing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper—say to administer it to infants only—who is there that would not be indignant at the very idea—that would not see at once that it was a profanation, a subversion of the original intention of a sacred institution—the pure observance of which was a moral obligation—and that such an alteration would, in effect, deprive those of a spiritual benefit for whom it was intended, because they only could understand its meaning; and would render it an useless unmeaning ceremony to those unconscious beings to whom it was administered?

This would be quite as consistent, quite as proper, as the other, for this is precisely the perversion, the desecration that has taken place in the ordinance of baptism, and the only reason its equal profanity does not strike the conscience as vividly is because the prejudices of education and habit have accustomed the mind of many to regard the one ordinance as less sacred, and therefore less imperative than the other.

One body of Christians generally (for as might be expected, where there is error all are not of one mind) regards the ceremony of sprinkling infants in the light of a dedicatory act on the part of the parents; they disclaim all pretension to any spiritual influence in consequence, or to the child's participating in the ceremony, or deriving any direct immediate benefit or privilege therefrom; and yet this is called baptism!

Some say they consider the ceremony as simply a symbol of the necessity of regeneration—of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. Others regard it as a sign or seal of the child's admission into the new covenant, and as

the offspring of Christian parents to the immunities and privileges attending such connection. (But what are these? Where are they described in Scripture?)

To Pædobaptists entertaining the first notion, I would say, who required this at your hands? Do you find any instance of such a dedication in the New Testament? Are you Jews, or are you Christians? Are you under the old or under the new dispensation? Do you find that baptism was administered to unconscious and unaccountable infants for the benefit of the parents that they might become more sensible of the duties that devolve upon them—or, with the view to a remote benefit accruing to the children from the discharge of those duties?

Of the second, I would ask, where is the resemblance between your ceremony and that of Christ's baptism? How does sprinkling a few drops of water on a child's face typify the necessity of regeneration in an accountable being? An unconscious infant is not better for the purpose than would be an inanimate figure.

And if such a construction could be in your opinion deduced from such a ceremony, can you at the same time show that the examples of baptism and language relating thereto of Scripture, bear you out in that construction? If such was the mode, the intention, the construction, the practice of Christ and his apostles, is it not extraordinary that there should be no examples of infants being then so baptized for the benefit of the spectators? For such a baptism, not being for the benefit of the parents, as such, or of the unconscious child, can only be attended to (and query at whose instance?) for the benefit of any persons who perchance may be present!

If such was the intention of the appointment, it is most marvellous that there is not a single instance of a similar observance recorded in Scripture, as having taken place for the benefit of the multitudes to whom the gospel was preached.

If you regard it as a sign or seal of the admission of the child into the new covenant, what do you mean by such declaration? Do you disclaim all pretension to any divine influence upon the child as the result of this ceremony, and yet say, at the same time, that it is a sign or symbol of its initiation, introduction, or reception into the visible church of Christ? If so, allow me to ask upon what ground? Where is your example, your authority, for the introduction of an unbeliever into the Christian church?

Luke 18:16, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," and other passages mentioning the

baptism of households, are often quoted as warrants for the observance; but it is hardly necessary to say, that these very passages, instead of justifying, afford evidence that the practice is unjustifiable.

With respect to the passage quoted, no mention is made of baptism, but in the preceding verse it is stated, that the children were brought to Jesus, that he might simply "touch" them, for which those who brought them were rebuked by the disciples; thus affording them satisfactory proof that these were not brought to be baptized, and that it was not the practice of our Saviour to baptize little children. Otherwise the disciples, instead of rebuking, would have encouraged their approach.

As to the term "households," three are mentioned as being baptized; one of those households, it is stated, believed in God; and another, that they "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints;" and of the third, that of Lydia, since no mention is made of her having either infant children or a husband, it must be concluded that she was a single woman at the head of a business, and that her servants formed her household; for it is stated, that Paul and Silas "entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." (Acts 16:40) Now surely none of these could be considered sufficient authority for a practice which has nothing better to support it.

If then you have no example in Scripture, and can point out no similarity between your outward ceremony and its spiritual meaning, and that of the ordinance as prescribed by our Saviour, and practised by his apostles, you surely have some reason to fear that you are not fulfilling your Lord's commands. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20)

Other Pædobaptists declare in their creed that any act of worship without faith is sin, but since baptism is professedly with them the act of, and for the immediate benefit of, the unconscious babe, they get someone to believe for it! And when this is done, the minister declares, "This child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church!" It is quite unnecessary to ask those who know anything of the Scriptures, where there is an example for such a proceeding—for such a declaration—for such a

conclusion? Or, where is the resemblance between such a baptism and that instituted by our Lord?

It is worthy of observation, how those who diverge from the straight path of truth become involved in difficulty, for it is strange that two bodies of Christians, observing the same practice, should have such opposite notions of the fundamental principle intended to be inculcated by, and the parts the persons engaged are to perform in, the ceremony. One sees that baptism is intended for the benefit of the subject baptized, upon a profession of faith; for "whatever is not of faith is sin;" but as an infant cannot exercise faith, it is evident therefore that infant baptism is wrong; to endeavour therefore to appear consistent, and make that which is wrong look as though it were right, the more inconsistent practice of faith by proxy is added to the other.

The other, seeing the inconsistency of such a proceeding, discards the idea of participation or consciousness on the part of the subject baptized. Also, the benefit intended to

***Baptism is intended for the benefit of the subject baptized, upon a profession of faith; for "whatever is not of faith is sin;" but as an infant cannot exercise faith, it is evident therefore that infant baptism is wrong.***

be conveyed by the founder of the institution to the baptized person, by his admission to the privileges of his visible church, on a profession of faith in his merits, therefore substitutes an equally erroneous and more unmeaning ceremony, viz, instead of baptism, (that is, immersion) on a profession of faith from the subject, it is unwillingly sprinkled, without any profession,

said to be baptized, and to have received the sign or seal of its forcible (because it is unconsenting) admission into—what?—not the Church of Christ because it does not and cannot partake of its privileges.

I would therefore entreat those who practice Infant Baptism to consider seriously whether they are not adhering to and countenancing a profanation of what is most sacred, which, if true, they cannot hope will be regarded with indifference by Him who instituted the ordinance; not only on account of their non-fulfilment of his commands, but because this erroneous substitute for it tends to mislead and eternally ruin immortal souls.

For such a practice one a very real sense induces them to believe something has been done for them, which has made them heirs of heaven; thereby tempting them to neglect seeking their own salvation, leading them to believe they are already regenerate. And, on the other hand, it causes them to regard his holy ordinance, which was instituted to elucidate and impress upon their minds

the necessity of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, as a non-essential, unimportant, unmeaning ceremony.

Surely this was not the intention of the infinitely wise, and holy, and gracious Founder of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And it would be well for themselves, and well for others, if all who practise Infant Baptism, would seriously, devoutly, and uninfluenced by prejudice, (pride, or false shame, in acknowledging they have been so long in error, or have so long neglected to look into the matter) examine the subject by the standard of Divine truth, the Word of God that they may satisfy themselves that they are not aiding the great adversary of souls, by mystifying and darkening an important doctrine of the Gospel.

The simple questions necessary to arrive at a right judgment appear to be these:

1. Were not the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper instituted to impress upon our minds, and keep alive the great doctrines of the Gospel? Viz:

I. The necessity of repentance, or a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, in newness of life.

II. Salvation through the merits and sufferings of Christ, on whom we live, and to whom we look for the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, to create within us new hearts and right minds.

2. Which mode of observing these ordinances, now in practice, typifies most clearly these doctrines, and is best supported by the examples and spiritual instruction of Scripture?

3. Ought we to shut our eyes to that which bears in it both external and internal evidence of being right, to seek for some forced resemblance to a practice in fashion, in order to uphold it.

Let it not be supposed that because the inquiry has been made, by what authority you assume to yourselves the power and right of admitting unbelievers to the blessings of the new covenant? And because it is maintained that there is no example for the admission of infants (who necessarily are unbelievers) to the privileges of the Christian church that therefore, Baptists think infants dying such are

eternally lost. Far from it! The writer is certain that every Baptist would consider it to be defamatory of the rich, the free, the infinite love and mercy of God to imagine such a thing; the language of Scripture throughout is opposed to such an idea. For although our children are by nature born in sin and shaped in iniquity, yet such is the fulness of, and the rich provision made in the Gospel through the merits and the atonement of the blessed Redeemer that we may confidently rely, that his blood has paid the penalty of original sin for all those who have not wilfully transgressed; for where there is not the knowledge of the law there can be no transgression, "for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

We may therefore trust in the declaration of the Lord, by his prophet Ezekiel, that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son;" (Ezek. 18:20) and of our Saviour as to little children, that "for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:14) To believe that salvation depends upon infant baptism (as do some), is to believe that myriads of infant souls from the beginning to the end of the gospel dispensation have been left by an infinitely wise and merciful God to be saved or lost by the act or neglect of man in sprinkling a little water upon them, which they call baptism - a most erroneous papistical doctrine, derogatory to the character of the Almighty, and ruinously injurious to the human race!

Finally, It is often remarked, and with some appearance of vexation, that "the Baptists are so bigoted that they think none can be saved but themselves, therefore they are always bringing forward the subject of Baptism." The first is an ungracious and an untrue assertion, for Baptists do not think so, and in reply to the second assertion, it may be asked, why is offence taken at the subject being agitated if the Baptists are wrong? Do not those who complain betray their own fears, and the weakness of their own case?

The Baptists do not urge the consideration for the sake of making converts to their own opinions as such, but, knowing their principles and practice are right, and will bear the strictest examination, they do not fear to bring them forward, and, as advocating the truth, believe it to be their duty, sincerely desiring that all real Christians, whom they esteem, may unite with them in that which is truth, that they may all, with one heart and one mind, glorify God.



# How the "Fathers" of New England Baptists Regarded Pedobaptists

J. R. Graves

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

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)

"My people have forgotten me; they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths in a way not cast up." (Jer. 18:15)

Having shown in that our fathers from the first to the sixteenth century, in obedience to the divine injunction, withdrew from those who departed from the teachings of Christ, and thus preserved pure churches and a pure faith, I now propose, very briefly, to show that the Baptists of America, from the planting of the first church in Newport, Rhode Island, A. D. 1638 until A. D. 1776 were in faith and practice "Old Landmarkers."

## 1. WHAT WAS THE PRACTICE OF NEW ENGLAND BAPTISTS?

The Puritans who landed from the Mayflower, A. D. 1620, did not come hither with the intent of establishing here a government where the oppressed of all nations would have absolute "FREEDOM TO WORSHIP GOD," but where their own particular creed would be protected and secured against disturbances from all other opposing religious faiths. Therefore, when they framed their laws, they put their creed and the sword into the hands of the magistrates, and made it their highest duty to see that all men, who would enjoy the protection of their laws, should, on peril of estate and life, accept the creed. This was freely acknowledged by them:

"And because they foresaw that this wilderness might be looked upon as a place of liberty, and, therefore, might in time be troubled with erroneous spirits; therefore, they did put one article into the confession of faith, ON PURPOSE, about the duty and power of the magistrate in matters of religion." (Morton's *New Eng. Mem.*, p. 145-6)

Says Dr. Samuel Mather: "The reforming churches, flying from Rome, carried, some of them more, some of them less, all of them some-, thing of Rome with them, especially in that spirit of im-position and persecution,

which has too much cleaved unto them all." (*Apology*, Appendix, p. 149)

**(I.) My first position is, that the Baptists of New England, during this period, could not have affiliated with Pedobaptists had they desired to have done so.**

Of all "erroneous spirits" the Puritans regarded the Anabaptists, as they stigmatized Baptists, as the most pernicious and dangerous to the state, and against them they enacted the most cruel laws. I copy the first one they passed against them:

"Forasmuch as experience hath plentifully and often proved that since the first rising of the Anabaptists, about one hundred years since [a gross, willful, or ignorant misrepresentation], they have been the incendiaries of the Commonwealth, and the infectors of persons in matters of religion, and the troublers of churches in all places where they have been. And that they who have held the baptizing of infants unlawful, have usually held other errors, or heresies, together therewith, though they have (as other heretics used to do) concealed the-same till they spied out a fit advantage and opportunity to vent them, by way of question or scruple.

And, whereas, divers of this kind have, since our coming into New England, appeared amongst ourselves, some whereof (as others before them) denied the ordinance of magistracy, and lawfulness of making war; and others, the lawfulness of magistracy, and their inspection into any breach of the first table; which opinions, if they should be carried out by us, are like to be increased amongst us, and so, must necessarily bring guilt upon us, infection and trouble to the churches, and hazard to the whole Commonwealth.

"It is ordered and agreed that if any person, or persons, within this jurisdiction, shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, or go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the ministration of the ordinance, or shall deny the ordinance of magistracy, or their lawful right and authority to make war, or to punish the outward breaches of the first table, and shall appear to Court willfully and obstinately to continue therein, after due time and means of conviction, every person, or persons, shall he sentenced to banishment." (*Mass. Records*, quoted by Backus, vol. 1, p. 126)

The pages of this book would not suffice to detail all that Baptists suffered in New England from fines, imprisonments, bloody whippings, and banishments from their homes and possessions. A few cases must indicate all:

"In 1644, one Painter, a poor man, turned Baptist, and refused to have his child baptized, and when arraigned for it before the Court, told them that it was in his opinion, an antichristian ordinance. For this he was tied up and whipped. Governor Winthrop declared he was whipped for "reproaching the Lord's ordinance." (Related in Backus, vol. 1, p. 127)

"John Smith, for gathering a church at Weymouth, "contrary to the orders," was fined twenty pounds (\$100) and committed during pleasure of Court.

"Richard .Sylvester, for going with Smith, was disfranchised and fined forty shillings.

"Ambrose Morton, for calling their covenant a human invention, and that their ministers did dethrone Christ and set up themselves, was fined ten pounds (\$50).

"Thomas Makepeace, because of his novel disposition, was informed that we were weary of him unless he reformed.

"John Spur and John Smith were bound in forty pounds to pay twenty pounds the first day of next Court, 1640.

"Their crime was the avowal "that only baptism [i.e. a profession of faith] was the door into the visible church." (Backus)

On July 19, 1651, Messrs. John Clark, pastor of the Baptist church at Newport, O. Holmes, and Crandel, members of the same, upon the request of William Witter, of Lynn, arrived there, he being a brother of the church, who, by reason of his advanced age, could not undertake so great a journey as to visit the church (Newport). He lived about two miles out of town.

The next day, being Sabbath, Mr. Clark concluded to preach in his house. In the midst of the sermon two constables appeared, and arrested them, and carried them away to an ale house first, and then proposed to carry them to the meeting. Mr. Clark replied: "Then we shall be constrained to declare ourselves, that we cannot hold communion with them," i.e., even by appearing in their religious assemblies. "We shall declare our dissent from you both by words and gesture." The constables persisted. Says Mr. Clark: "At my first stepping over the threshold, I unveiled myself, civilly saluted them, and turned into the seat I was appointed to, put on my hat again and sat down, opened my book, and so fell to reading."

***Do we as Baptists declare our dissent from the teachings and ministrations of Pedobaptists and Campbellites when we attend upon their preachings with our families?***

It will be seen that he was not invited up into the pulpit, or even called upon to close by prayer! At the close of the sermon Mr. Clark arose and courteously asked

permission to state why he was there, and why he put on his hat to declare his dissent: "I could not judge that you were gathered together and walk according to the visible order of our Lord."

Some thoughtless Baptists will think this act of Dr. Clark unchristian and discourteous, but he believed that he, in common with all, favored, and by act approved, of the worship he attended; and he knew that he was forbidden, in any way, to bid an unscriptural worship or teacher of error "God-speed," and so, by "gesture," he declared his dissent.

Do we as Baptists declare our dissent from the teachings and ministrations of Pedobaptists and Campbellites when we attend upon their preachings with our families, month after month, and thus aid, by our presence and personal influence, to increase their congregations, and swell their collections to pay their preachers to oppose our faith, and build up societies in our communities to destroy our own churches?

There are many Baptists in the South who give annually far more to support Pedobaptist preachers than their own because they take their families three times a month to such meetings, where the collection is never missed, and only once to their own. There are many places where they would cease preaching altogether for want of congregations and support were it not for the attendance and contributions of Baptists. It is a great thing to be consistent Baptists—like John Clark, Holmes, and those early Baptists of New England were. Who dare, before God, to charge them with inconstancy or inconsistency?

They were committed to prison. Mr. John Spur, then a member of the Baptist church at Newport, was present and relates: "Mr. Cotton, in his sermon, immediately before the Court gave their sentence against Mr. Clark, Holmes, and Crandel affirmed that denying infant baptism would overthrow all, and this was a capital offense; and therefore they were soul-murderers."

They were fined; Mr. Clark twenty pounds (£20), Holmes thirty pounds (£30), and Crandel five pounds (£5), and to remain in prison until their fines be either paid or security given, or else to be "well whipped." Friends, without Mr. Clark's knowledge, paid his fine. When Mr. Holmes was brought forth to receive his stripes, he desired of the magistrates permission to speak, which was refused him, and they (Flint and Norvel) said to the executioner: "Fellow, do thine office."

"He, having removed so much of his garments as would hinder the effect of the scourge, and having fastened him to the post, (This was planted on Boston Commons—the soil of Liberty) seized a three-corded whip, and laid on the blows in a most unmerciful manner. Stroke followed stroke as rapidly as was consistent with effective execution, each blow leading its crimson furrow, or its long blue wale on the sufferer's quivering flesh.

"The only pause which occurred was when the executioner ceased for a moment in order to spit in his hands, so as to take a firmer hold of the handle of the whip to render the strokes more severe. This he did three times." (Banvard)

Ninety stripes! The blood flowed down, filled, and overflowed his shoes and bathed the ground. For weeks after he could only rest upon his knees and elbows. So

lacerated was his body, he could not suffer it to touch the bed.

When released from the post, his brother Spur took him by the hand, and with a joyful countenance, said, "Praised be the Lord!" and walked with him to the prison. For this grievous offense he was arrested and fined by the Pedobaptist Court "forty shillings, or to be whipped."

John Hazel, another of Mr. Holmes' brethren, above three-score, and infirm, had traveled nearly fifty miles to see his beloved brother, also gave him his hand, and said, "Blessed be God." He was likewise arrested, thrown into prison, and fined forty shillings, or to receive ten strokes with a three-corded whip, equal to thirty stripes.

This was the fellowship Protestants had for Baptists in that age.

How Baptists regarded Pedobaptists may be learned from Dr. John Clark's charge to his church. Says C. E. Barrow, of Newport, R.I.:

***One hundred and twenty-seven years after this, we find the Baptists in New England still fined and imprisoned, and the objects of the most disgraceful indignities.***

"He also charges the people to steer clear of both Scylla and Charybdis,—of the opinion of these, on the one hand, who destroyed the purity and spirituality of the church by uniting it with the civil power, and by introducing into it unregenerate material by infant baptism; and of the opinion of those, on the other hand, who denied that there were any visible churches. He would have them avoid both extremes,—not turn to the left side in a visible way of worship, indeed, but such as was neither appointed by Christ, nor yet practiced by those who first trusted in him; nor to the right in no visible way of worship or order at all, either pretending...that the church is now in the wilderness, or that the time of its recovery is not yet," etc. (*Semi-centennial Discourse*, p. 22)

Thus John Clark warned his people against the false order and worship of Pedobaptists on the one hand, and the no order and anarchy of Roger Williams and his party—the Seekers—on the other.

Those who would pursue the sickening details of Baptist suffering at the hands of Pedobaptists for the next centuries, I refer to the *History of Baptists*, by Backus, two volumes.

The only instance of affiliation I find for one hundred years after was the case of a "liberal" Baptist, who invited Rev. P. Robbins to preach to his people. This he did January 6th, 1742, and for this act Mr. Robbins was promptly tried and excluded from his Consociation as a disorderly person.

One hundred and twenty-seven years after this, we find the Baptists in New England still fined and imprisoned, and the objects of the most disgraceful indignities. This is related by Backus:

"For two young ministers were called to preach in Pepperell, near forty miles north-westward of Boston, to whom six persons offered themselves as candidates for baptism. Therefore, on June 26th they met in a field by a river side, where prayers were made, and a sermon begun, when the chief officers of the town, with many followers, came and interrupted their worship...

"A dog was carried into the river and plunged in, in evident contempt of our sentiments. A gentleman of the town then invited the Baptists to go and hold their meetings at his house, which was near another river. They accepted it, and so went through with their worship—at the close of which a man was hired, with a bowl of liquor, to go into the river and dip another two or three times over, when also two or three dogs more were plunged; after which three officers of the town came into the house where the Baptist ministers were, and advised them to immediately depart out of that town for their own safety."(Backus, vol. 2, p. 221)

They left, agreeing to meet the candidates at a distant place of water, where the baptism did take place. This was near Boston, in the year 1778; and it is worthy of note that the first meetinghouse Baptists built in Boston was nailed up, and they forbidden to worship in it.

If there can be any doubt in the mind of anyone how the "fathers" of New England Baptists regarded the Puritan Pedobaptists of their day (1770), I copy this from Backus. These Puritans declared to the Court that, "Some [Baptists] have had the effrontery to say that the standing ministry [Congregationalists] is corrupt; ministers themselves unconverted; the churches impure and unholy, admitting unconverted and unsanctified persons into their communion."(vol. 2, p. 158)

Can anyone believe that Baptists would believe this, which they most undoubtedly did, and then, before the world, by affiliating acts recognize these unconverted ministers, and these impure and unholy sects as scriptural churches, and

in every way equal to their own? They certainly did not do it. And are not these charges as true today with respect to all Pedobaptist societies as they were then? And if we walk in the "paths our fathers trod," what ought to be our testimony?

The Warren Association, which last year voted to -exclude the church in Newport, Rhode Island, for its open communion practices, or failure to discipline its pastor and those members who practiced this disorder, is the oldest Association in New England. It was organized in 1767. Three years after, such were the intolerable oppressions of the "standing order," in selling out their lands and homes to pay the tax to support the hiring ministers of the Puritans, that the Association resolved to appeal at once to the King and Council, and appointed a committee to collect grievances.

That committee of leading ministers published the following in the *Boston Post*, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1770, and I publish it: 1. Because it will give the Baptists of this age some idea of what our fathers suffered at the hands of those whom we are now taught to call "evangelical brethren," and "evangelical churches," and "evangelical ministers," and what we would suffer today had our old persecutors only the power; and 2. How our brethren regarded them, not as "Christian brethren" certainly—which they were not—but enemies and persecutors.

"To the Baptists in the province of the Massachusetts Bay, who are, or have been, oppressed in any way on a religious account, it would be needless to tell you that you have long felt the effects of the laws by which the religion of the government in which you live is established. Your purses have felt the burden of ministerial rates; and, when these would not satisfy your enemies, your property has been taken from you and sold for less than half its value.

"These things you cannot forget. You will, therefore, readily hear and attend when you are desired to collect your cases of suffering, and have them well attested; such as the taxes you have paid to build meeting houses, to settle ministers and support them [i. e., for their enemies], with all the time, money, and labor you have lost in waiting on courts, feeing lawyers," etc., etc. (Backus, vol. 2, p. 155)

I add but one more instance of persecution which took place twenty years after the Declaration of Independence:

"Mr. Nathan Underwood [Pedobaptist minister of Harwich] and his collector seized six men, who were

Baptists, on the 1st day of December, 1795, and carried them as far as Yarmouth, where one of them was taken so ill, being old and infirm before, that he saw no way to save his life but to pay the tax and cost [all Baptists were taxed to pay the salaries of Pedobaptist ministers still!]; which he did, and the other five were carried to the prison at Barnstable, where they also paid the money rather than to lie in the cold all winter...

“Their collector went to the house of one of the Baptists when he was not at home, January 8th, 1796, and seized a cow for a tax to said minister, but his wife and daughter came out and took hold of the cow, and his wife promised to pay the money, if her husband would not do it, and they let the cow go, and she went to Mr. Underwood the next day and paid the tax and costs, and took his receipt therefor. Yet four days after, the woman and two daughters, one of whom was not there when the cow was taken, were seized and carried before the authorities, and fined seven dollars for talking to the collector and his aid, and, taking hold of the cow while they had her in possession, so they had to let her go.” —.Backus, vol. 2, p. 551.

This and scores of such like exactions and oppressions took place in New England, in the year 1796.

I close this century of bitter sufferings with the letter that the Warren Association sent to the Philadelphia Association, only six years before the Declaration of Independence:

**LETTER FROM THE WARREN ASSOCIATION, MASSACHUSETTS**

“The laws of this province were never intended to exempt the Baptists from paying toward building and repairing Presbyterian meetinghouses, and making up Presbyterian ministers' salaries; for, besides other insufficiencies, they are all limited; both as to extent and duration. The first law extended only five miles round each Baptist meetinghouse; those without this circle had no relief, neither had they within; for, though it exempted their polls, it left their estates to the mercy of harpies, and their estates went to wreck.

“The Baptists sought a better law, and with great difficulty and waste of time and money obtained it, but this was not universal. It extended not to any

parish until a Presbyterian meetinghouse should be built, and a Presbyterian minister settled there; in consequence of which the Baptists have never been freed from the first and great expenses of their parishes, expenses equal to the current expense of ten or twelve years.

“This is the present case of the people of Ashfield, which is a Baptist settlement. There were but five families of other denominations in the place when the Baptist church was constituted; but those five, and a few more, had lately built a Presbyterian meetinghouse there, and settled an orthodox minister, as they called him; which last cost them £200. To pay for both, they laid a tax on the land; and, as the Baptists are the most numerous, the greatest part fell to their share. The Presbyterians, in April last, demanded the money.

“The Baptists pleaded poverty, alleging that they had been twice driven from their plantations by the Indians last war; that they were but new settlers, and had cleared but a few spots of land, and had not been able to build commodious dwelling houses. Their tyrants would not hear. Then the Baptists pleaded the ingratitude of such conduct; for they had built a fort there at their own expense, and had maintained it

for two years, and so, had protected the interior Presbyterians, as well as their neighbors, who now rose against them; that the Baptists to the westward had raised money to relieve the Presbyterians who had, like them, suffered by the Indians; and that it was cruel to take from them what the Indians had left!

“But nothing touched the hearts of THESE CRUEL PEOPLE. Then the Baptists urged the law of the province, but were soon told that that law extended to no new parish till the meetinghouse and minister were paid for. Then the Baptists petitioned the General Court. Proceedings were stopped till further orders, and the poor people went home rejoicing, thinking their property safe; but had not all got home before said order came, and it was an order for the Presbyterians to proceed. Accordingly, in the month of April, they fell foul on their plantations; and not on skirts and corners, but on the cleared and improved spots; and so, have mangled their estates, and left them hardly any but a wilderness.

***“But, alas, they must leave their all behind! THESE PRESBYTERIANS ARE NOT ONLY SUPERCILIOUS IN POWER, BUT MEAN AND CRUEL IN MASTERY.”***

"They sold the house and garden of one man, and the young orchards, meadows, and cornfields of another; nay, they sold their dead, for they sold their graveyard. The orthodox minister was one of the purchasers. These spots amounted to three hundred and ninety-five acres, and have since been valued at £363, 8s, but were sold for £35, 10s. This was the first payment. Two more are coming, which will not leave them an inch of land at this rate.

"The Baptists waited on the Assembly five times this year for relief, but were not heard under pretense they did no business there. At last the Baptists got together, about a score of the members at Cambridge, and made their complaints known; but in general they were treated very superciliously. One of them spoke to this effect: 'The General Assembly have a right to do what they did, and, if you don't like it, you may quit the place!'

"But, alas, they must leave their all behind! THESE PRESBYTERIANS ARE NOT ONLY SUPERCILIOUS IN POWER, BUT MEAN AND CRUEL IN MASTERY. When they came together to mangle the estates of the Baptists, they diverted themselves with tears and lamentations for the oppressed. One of them, whose name is Welk, stood up to preach a mock sermon on

the occasion; and, among other things, used words to this effect: 'The Baptists, for refusing to pay an orthodox minister, shall be cut in pound pieces, and boiled for their fat to grease the devil's carriage,'" etc.

And yet, in the face of these facts, a Puritan poetess, with the blood of Painter and Holmes flowing before her eyes, and the midwinter prisons filled with Baptists, and the tracks of others leading into the bleak wilderness, into which Christian men were driven by the Puritans, could say:

"Aye, call it holy ground,  
The place where first they trod;  
They have left unstained what there they found—  
Freedom to worship God!"

### CONCLUSION

Let the most prejudiced Anti-Landmark Baptist—The most "liberal" Baptist on the continent—if a Christian man, with the facts of this chapter before him, decide whether the Baptists of New England, from 1638 to 1736, regarded or treated Pedobaptist organizations as Evangelical churches, and their bloodthirsty and cormorant preachers as ministers of the gospel of love and peace. BAPTISTS OF THAT AGE WERE WHAT LANDMARK BAPTISTS ARE IN THIS.



## Islam's Law of Dhimmi

David Cloud  
www.wayoflife.org, January 2016

**U**nder Muslim rule, non-Muslims are called dhimmis and are treated differently than Muslims. Dhimmi means "protected person," but the protection is dubious, to say the least.

According to the Quran, dhimmi especially applies to "People of the Book," referring to Jews and Christians, who were treated somewhat differently than idolaters.

A dhimmi is allowed to live in Muslim territory in exchange for submission and payment of a heavy jizya tax. The Quran says: "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth,

(even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (Quran 9:29).

Exercise of the dhimmi law has varied from place to place and time to time, both in history and at the present. For example, in the late ninth century, Tariqu al-Hakim, the sixth Fatimid caliph in Egypt, required all Christians to wear a four-pound cross around their necks and Jews to wear a four-pound carving of a calf (for having worshiped the golden calf) (Rodney Stark, *God's Battalions*, p. 90).

Sometimes Christian dhimmis have been allowed to keep their churches (but not build new ones or repair old ones),

but they have always been forbidden to evangelize. For a Muslim to declare faith in Christ is apostasy, which is an unforgivable sin and punishable by death under sharia law.

After the Muslims conquered Syria in the seventh century, the dhimmis had to wear special identifying clothing and clip the fronts of their hair. They were not allowed to own weapons, ride on saddles, display crosses or Bibles, or hold public religious ceremonies. They had to take in any Muslim traveler and give him three days' food and lodging (Trifkovic, *The Sword of the Prophet*, p. 105).

Even the most minor infraction of the dhimmi rules "left the door open for the resumption of jihad." In practice, dhimmis have been treated in whatever way the ruling Muslims see fit, and they have had no judicial recourse. They are at the "mercy" of their masters, but history tells us that more often than not, the Muslim masters were like the Babylonians, of whom Jeremiah said, "they are cruel, and have no mercy" (Jer. 6:23).

The dhimmi law is enforced with great rigor today by the Islamic State. The following is a description of what is happening under Islamic State rule in Syria, as told by Christian refugees who fled to Jordan. "Their village was

occupied by rebel forces, who proceeded to announce that they were now under an Islamic emirate and were subject to sharia law. The Christian residents were offered four choices:

- (1) renounce the 'idolatry' of Christianity and convert to Islam;
- (2) pay a heavy tribute (jizya) to the Muslims for the privilege of keeping their heads and their Christian faith;
- (3) be killed; or
- (4) flee for their lives, leaving all their belongings behind.

***In practice, dhimmis have been treated in whatever way the ruling Muslims see fit, and they have had no judicial recourse. They are at the "mercy" of their masters.***

Some Christians were killed, some fled, some tried to pay the jizya and found it too heavy a burden to bear after the rebels kept increasing the amount they had to pay, and some were unable to flee or pay, so they converted to Islam to save themselves. The scenario reported by Syrian refugees is a re-enactment of the historic fate of Christians across the Middle East ("A Conversation with Christian Syrian Refugees," Religious Freedom Coalition, June 1, 2013).

## Polycarp and His Writings

John Stock  
From *The Baptist Magazine*, 1858

Polycarp is the last uninspired writer who is supposed to have enjoyed a personal relationship with the apostles. After him appeared a class of men who were not only post-apostolic in age, but in many respects anti-apostolic in spirit—such as Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, Irenæus, and Clemens Alexandrinus. He, then, who has mastered the writings of Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp, has exhausted the mine of apostolic tradition.

What is known of the history of Polycarp is fraught with deep interest. He was born in Asia Minor, about A.D. 66, and was converted to God when fourteen years old. He was

instructed in the religion of Jesus Christ by Bucolus, the pastor of the church in Smyrna, and during his pastorate was made deacon. That office he filled with great credit, and on the death of Bucolus was chosen bishop or pastor in his place. The year of his call to the episcopate is uncertain. Supposing him to have been about thirty years of age, it must have been A.D. 96. It is generally believed that the apostle John assisted at his ordination. While bishop, Polycarp paid a visit to Anicetus, the bishop of Rome, touching the controversy between the Eastern and Western churches, "*propter quasdam super die Paschæ quæstiones*," concerning the right time of celebrating the festival now designated Easter. He was burned to death because he

would not abjure the faith when he was about 100 years old, A.D. 166. This tragic event took place in Smyrna, the city where he was bishop.

Irenæus, in his epistle to Florinus, speaks thus of Polycarp:

"I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse; and also his entrances, his walks, the complexion of his life, and the form of his body, and his conversations with the people, and his familiar interactions with, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord. How also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. Also about his miracles, his doctrine, all these were told by Polycarp, in consistency with the Holy Scriptures, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the doctrine of salvation" (Eusebius, *Eccl. His.* I. 5, c. 20).

This evidence is conclusive as to Polycarp's personal acquaintance with the apostle John, and others who had seen Christ "in the flesh." Irenæus heard all this from Polycarp's own lips.

We have stated that he was converted to God when about fourteen years old, A.D. 80. This opinion we found on the fact, that when asked, just before his martyrdom, by the proconsul to deny Christ, Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served him;" evidently referring not to the length of his life, but of his Christian profession. Now, if he had been eighty-six years a Christian when he died, and if, as is generally supposed, he died when about a century old, he must have been added to the church at fourteen years of age.

It is uncertain in what year Polycarp visited Anicetus, the Bishop of Rome, respecting the *Quartodeciman Controversy*. The dates assigned by the learned range from 152 to 167. Irenæus, referring to that visit, says:

"And Polycarp, a man who had been instructed by the apostles, and had familiar intercourse with many that had seen Christ, and had also been appointed bishop by the apostles in Asia, in the church at Smyrna; whom we also have seen in our youth, for he lived a long time, and to a very advanced age, when, after a glorious and most distinguished martyrdom, he departed this life. He always taught what he had learned from the apostles, what the church had handed down, and what is the only true doctrine. All the churches bear witness to these things, and those that have been the successors of Polycarp to this time — a witness to the truth much more worthy of credit,

and much more certain, than either Valentine or Marcion, or the rest of those perverse teachers. The same Polycarp, coming to Rome under the episcopate of Anicetus, turned many from the aforesaid heretics to the church of God, proclaiming the one and only true faith that he had received from the apostles, that, viz., which was delivered by the church." (Euseb. *Eccl. H. I.* 4, c. 14).

It appears, however, that Polycarp and Anicetus could not agree on the point in dispute between them, and that they separated without having at all advanced a uniformity of practice upon this matter, between Eastern and Western Christians. Polycarp was, nevertheless, received with profound respect by Anicetus, and frequently officiated in the church of which the latter was bishop.

Polycarp was bishop of the church at Smyrna for about seventy years. His martyrdom is a tale which has often been told, but of which one never wearies. We shall again relate it, omitting all that is manifestly fabulous in the accounts with which we have been furnished.

When the persecution had broken out which terminated the career of this venerable servant of God, and when he knew his enemies were searching for him, he very properly retired from the city, and secreted himself in a farmhouse not very far from it, thus complying with his Lord's command recorded in Matt. 10:23, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." There he lay hid with a few friends, with whom he passed his time in devout conversation and prayer. When he ascertained that his enemies had discovered this retreat, he escaped to another yet farther removed from Smyrna. But his relentless pursuers in a few days discovered him there, and, coming upon him unawares, found him in an upper room resting his aged limbs.

When he found that he was in his enemies' hands, he meekly exclaimed, "The Lord's will be done;" and, advancing to meet his pursuers with a serene countenance, he ordered a table to be spread for their wants, invited them to eat their fill, and requested them at the same time to allow him one hour for undisturbed prayer. After he had poured out his soul before God, he arose and told his apprehenders that he was now prepared to follow them. They placed him upon an ass, and conducted him to the city. On his way he was met by Herod, the officer of the public peace, and his father, Nicetes, who asked him to sit with them in their chariot, and in the blindest manner sought to persuade him to renounce Christianity, by sacrificing to the gods. Finding, however, that they produced no impression upon the mind of

Polycarp, they brutally pitched him out of the chariot, so as severely to injure his thigh. Nothing daunted, however, the good old man calmly rose and went on his way as best he could.

At length he was conducted to the Stadium, where the sacred games and shows were exhibited, and was confronted with Statius Quadratus, the proconsul. There he uttered that memorable saying which has become a proverb in the Church of God. When asked to deny his Lord, he replied, "Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and he has never done me the least wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"

Again and again urged to swear by the genius of Caesar, Polycarp replied, "Listen, while I, with freedom of speech, tell thee I am a Christian."

Finding persuasion and entreaty failing, the proconsul resorted to threats. "Wild beasts have I ready," said he, "to these I will cast thee unless thou repentest."

The holy martyr meekly replied, "Call for them; for to us repentance from better to worse is impossible. But it is honourable to turn from things that are dishonest to those which are just."

Quadratus replied, "If thou despisest the wild beasts, I will cause thee to be consumed by fire unless thou repentest."

Whereupon, Polycarp rejoined, "Thou threatenest me with fire that burns for an hour, and after a time is extinguished; whilst thou art ignorant of the fire reserved for the coming judgment, and for the eternal punishment of the impious! But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt."

Finding all his efforts vain, the proconsul sent the cryer into the middle of the lists to proclaim, three several times, Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian! Whereupon the multitude, both of Jews and Gentiles, loudly demanded his death. After some demur as to the way in which he should be killed, it was resolved to burn him alive.

When the executioners wished to nail Polycarp to the stake, he exclaimed, "Let me die as I am, for He who has given me patience to endure the fire, will also afford me strength to remain in the fire without moving, without your securing me with nails." His request was complied with, and he was simply tied to the stake.

When everything was ready, and the fire was about to be applied, the good old man poured out his soul in prayer to God, that he might be enabled to offer himself an acceptable sacrifice through Jesus Christ. No sooner had he pronounced aloud his Amen, than the fire was kindled, but, whether because it would not burn fiercely enough, or from a desire to abbreviate the tortures of the victim, an executioner was ordered to stab him to the heart. Thus, partly by fire, and partly by the sword, Polycarp was dismissed from his labours and his sorrows, and entered into an eternal and blessed rest.

After his death, the body was carefully reduced to ashes, but his friends gathered together what bones they could find, "deposited them in a suitable place," and celebrated a yearly festival in commemoration of his martyrdom.

Such was the life and such the death of Polycarp. It remains that we should now notice those writings of his which have survived to our day.

But, before we treat of these, we wish to advert to the epistle of the church of which Polycarp was bishop, to the churches of Pontus, giving a detailed account of his martyrdom. Most of the facts which we have related we have gleaned from this source. It is true that the epistle in question mentions many things which savour strongly of the miraculous, not to say fabulous.

But we have no doubt that as to the principal circumstances, the narrative is substantially true, or that it was written soon after Polycarp's death, A.D. 166, for the information of neighbouring churches. Credulity and a superstitious reverence for martyrs and their relics, alas, soon, too soon, appeared in the church, and gave a colouring to everything written on those topics.

Of this epistle Dr. Bennett says:

"A letter from the Christians at Smyrna to the Philippians, which records the martyrdom of Polycarp, is rendered suspicious by a confession, that when it was lost, and almost destroyed by time, it was recovered by a revelation from the departed saint. He is said to have been burnt alive at Smyrna in the year 166, and the stories told of miracles wrought at his death serve only to show the simplicity and truth of the Scriptures in their account of the martyrdom of Stephen." (*Theology of Early Christian Church*, p. 22)

***When asked to deny his Lord, he replied, "Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and he has never done me the least wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"***

Eusebius speaks of it as a production well known in his day, and has incorporated almost the whole of it in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Now he lived only about an age and a half after the writing of it. Neander, too, speaks of the epistle as undoubtedly a genuine production, at least in its leading historical statements, and imitates Eusebius in giving the substance of it in the body of his history. It was read publicly in the Gallican churches as late as the time of Gregory of Tours. Let it, however, be remembered, that, though Polycarp is the subject of this epistle, and it was written by his own church, he is not responsible for its statements. When it was composed he had gone to his rest.

Of Polycarp's own writings we have only one epistle left, addressed to the Philippians. There are, in addition, five supposed fragments of his collected in the *Patres Apostolici*, which contain nothing contrary to sound doctrine; but, on the other hand, some very interesting remarks on Matt. 19:5; 20:23, on the commencement of the Gospel according to St. Mark, on Luke 14:12, and on John 17:4.

Of the value of his epistle the very highest opinion has been expressed by the writers of antiquity. Irenæus calls it an excellent epistle. Eusebius quotes largely from it, and Jerome says that it is a very useful epistle, which to this day is read in the public assembly of Asia (*Conventu Asiæ*). Whether he meant that it was read on the Lord's Day in public worship, or at some periodical ecclesiastical assembly, cannot be determined.

There is internal evidence that Polycarp's epistle was written soon after the martyrdom of Ignatius, A.D. 111, 112; for he speaks of the death of Ignatius as having only just happened, and desires further information concerning it. Some learned men have, indeed, supposed that the passages in question were interpolated to secure greater attention to the epistles of Ignatius, which had been interpolated by the same hand. Wake, as it appears to us, successfully contends for the genuineness of the passages in dispute, and, consequently, for a period immediately subsequent to the martyrdom of Ignatius as the time of the writing of the epistle.

The letter to the Philippians contains fourteen chapters, of which only the first nine and the thirteenth are in the original Greek, the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 14th, are preserved in an ancient Latin version. The whole epistle is thus published in the *Patres Apostolici*.•

We close our paper with a summary of the theology of this venerable servant of our Lord. He quotes frequently, and always reverently, from the Holy Scriptures. Quotations, more or less direct and frequent, are found in his writings,

from Genesis, Psalms, Proverbs, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Acts, the Epistles of Paul to the Romans, the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, the first to the Thessalonians, the first to Timothy. Titus, Hebrews, together with the first Epistle of John, and, most frequently of all, from the first Epistle of Peter.

It is thought that he quotes from two places in the Book of Tobit. The two passages are similar. "Since charity delivers from death," and "For charity delivers from death." The supposed quotation is:—"When ye have the power to do good, do not defer it; since charity delivers from death." We prefer, however, to regard the similarity of language in this case as a mere coincidence, and consider that Polycarp gives us simply his own original sentiment. The spirit of his language is found in 1 Pet. 4:8, and James 5:20, but there is no evidence that he was intentionally quoting from the absurd book of Tobit.

He, like Ignatius and Clement, confirms the historical truthfulness of the great facts on which Christianity rests, such as the incarnation, the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He asserts the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures. He designates them, the oracles of the Lord, "the word delivered to us from the beginning," "the word of righteousness," "the Holy Scriptures." In his first fragment (if, indeed, it be his), he says, that when Adam uttered the words recorded in Gen. 2:24, "*Deus per inspirationem divinam in corde Adam ista verba formavit*,"—"God, by a divine inspiration, formed those words in the heart of Adam;" and the whole fragment seems to imply that this was his view, not merely of the manner in which that particular revelation, but revelation generally, was imparted.

On the person of the Saviour his views were orthodox. In the introduction to his epistle he presents prayer to the Lord Jesus conjointly with the Father, thus: "Mercy and peace be multiplied to you from God Almighty, and from the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." He styles Christ, "*Sempiternus Pontifex Dei Filius, Jesus Christus*,"—"Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest, the Son of God." In his third fragment he says, that "Luke commenced his Gospel as he did, that he might declare the deity of Christ to the Gentiles." He asserts the universal supremacy of Jesus at his Father's right hand; declares that every creature shall worship him; and that he shall come to be the universal Judge.

He asserts the doctrine of salvation by grace, "Knowing that by grace ye are saved, not by works, but by the will of God, through Jesus Christ" (c. 1).

The atonement of our Lord he fully declares:—"He suffered himself to be brought to the death for our sins;" "who bare our sins in his own body upon the tree;" "our eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ;" "be ye saved in the Lord Jesus Christ." In his fifth fragment, on John 17:4, he speaks of Christ's work consummated in the endurance of the cross, as being "the work of human salvation" (*opus salutis humanæ*).

The doctrine of immortality and of a general resurrection of the dead he clearly teaches (c. 2).

We have not discovered, either in his Epistle or in his Fragments, a testimony on the personality and work of the Holy Spirit. But in his last prayer at the stake, as recorded in the epistle of the church at Smyrna, he emphatically recognises both: "The resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Spirit " "with Christ, to thee, and to the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and for ever," Amen" (c. 14).

Polycarp abounds in beautiful Christian precepts. Holiness of heart and life he earnestly recommends. And in a style truly apostolical he has a word of exhortation for persons of different ages and stations, for husbands and wives, for widows and maidens, for young and old, for elders and deacons.

He expresses his compassion and sorrow for Valens and his wife, both of whom had fallen into sin, and had thus subjected themselves to excommunication. Valens had been a presbyter of the church. Polycarp beseeches the Philippians to seek the restoration of both.

"Very much, therefore, my brethren, am I sorry for him and for his wife; to whom may the Lord give a true repentance. And be ye, too, prudent in this matter, and do not think of such as enemies, but restore them as suffering and erring members, that ye may save your whole body. For doing this, ye edify yourselves" (c. 11).

The above passage clearly shows that the discipline of the church, in excommunication and restoration, even when a presbyter was the offender, was then administered by the whole church.

There is most assuredly no recognition of the episcopal system in Polycarp's remains. The only orders of clergy that he mentions are those of the presbyter and the deacon. He does not so much as once use the term *Episcopos*, but

invariably employs the title *Presbuteros* when speaking of the pastor of a Christian church:

Polycarp, and the elders who are with him, to the Church of God dwelling at Philippi." In his exhortations to the ministers of the church at Philippi, he only addresses himself to deacons and elders. "In like manner let the deacons be blameless in the sight of his righteousness, as deacons of God and of Christ, and not of men," &c. "And let the presbyters be compassionate with all mercy, converting those who have wandered, seeking after those who are weak, not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor." Of the excommunicated Valens he says, "Who was formerly a presbyter among you." And again: "Wherefore it is fit to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and the deacons, as to God and to Christ" (c. 5).

One thing is clear, that in Polycarp's day, or at least when he wrote to the Philippians, there was no distinction between the presbyter and the *episcopos*, both names being applied to the pastors of churches. Polycarp is himself styled by the church at Smyrna, in their circular epistle, "a truly apostolical and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the

Catholic Church at Smyrna." But he himself has not used the term in any of his preserved writings. If he had used it, it must have been as the ecclesiastical synonym of *presbuteros*; for, *presbuteros* he has used as the synonym of *episcopos*.

***There is most assuredly no recognition of the episcopal system in Polycarp's remains. The only orders of clergy that he mentions are those of the presbyter and the deacon.***

We cannot close this paper without observing how much we have been charmed with the godly simplicity of the spirit and style of Polycarp, as contrasted with the bombast and prelatial pride apparent in the spurious epistles of Ignatius. In the latter we seem to hear the footstep of antichrist in very many sentences;—visions of the great apostasy are at once called up, and we cannot help exclaiming, The germ of that mischief is here!

But when reading Polycarp's simple and Christian sentences, we are led back in our reflections, and are cheered to find that in his pages we have much of the spirit of that "disciple whom Jesus loved." The past times of Christ and his apostles live again in the writings of Polycarp, but the coming times of a Leo and a Hildebrand are mirrored and prophesied from the epistles which have been so long ascribed to Ignatius, but which Cureton has proved to be the productions of a later age.

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# An Important Announcement To Our Readers

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It is with a mixture of sadness and joy that we announce to our readers, who may not be aware, that the *Baptist Pillar's* Editor, Pastor John Reaves, Sr., went home to be with our Lord on February 8, 2016, after having fought another brave battle with cancer that had been in remission for almost 10 years.

This publication came into existence as the result of Pastor Reaves' strong belief that modern day Baptists were at risk of losing sight of true Baptist doctrine, beliefs and history. He wanted to contend for the faith once delivered by making available historic Baptist teachings to all Baptists, and especially to young Baptist preachers, Baptist missionaries and Baptist lay members.

Pastor Reaves' vision was that, in order to fight against all the forms of modern apostasy, Baptists must remain instructed in and committed to the core tenets of our faith, practice, history and doctrine. But where could people find out more about true Baptist teachings? As for himself, he had an extensive personal library with many rare historical Baptist books, but he realized the same was not possible for the average Baptist. This was the context from which *The Baptist Pillar* originated.

What started out as a bi-monthly printed newsletter in 1992 eventually made its way onto the Internet in 1997, and then to [www.baptistpillar.com](http://www.baptistpillar.com) from where we have been publishing new articles on a monthly basis since 2011.

And throughout all that time, Pastor Reaves remained firm in his conviction of remaining true to biblical Baptist doctrine, teachings, principles and history. Not only did he strive for this through this local church ministry, but also in pastoring our local congregation, and at the many

conferences and churches he preached at throughout the US.

Pastor Reaves was passionate about his relationship with his Lord and Saviour. He was fervent in his devotion to being faithful to the Word of God, both in his preaching and his personal Christian testimony. He was particularly dedicated in studying the Bible throughout his ministry, and from this he was led into action to preach and teach for Bible truth and against doctrinal errors of all kinds. He ensured throughout all these years that this publication continued to publish a wide range of articles from a variety of trustworthy, faithful sources. He was always particularly fond of Bro. E. L. Bynum's writings from *The Plains Baptist Challenger*, and considered him with the highest regard as both a fellow pastor and a friend.

So, you may ask, "With the passing of Pastor Reaves, what will happen to *The Baptist Pillar*?" Last summer, as he began to set things in order, Pastor Reaves made it very clear from the pulpit that he wanted Bible Baptist Church to continue publishing *The Baptist Pillar* after his passing. Through the support and prayers of our local church and those who support this ministry, the team that puts together this monthly publication is determined to continue with the work that Pastor Reaves started and oversaw. But more than this, we are not simply content to maintain the status quo, but will seek to improve and grow this publication as the Lord leads.

Thank you to all our regular and occasional readers who have supported *The Baptist Pillar* for all these years. We covet your prayers at this time.

Please feel free to continue to contact us by email at [bpillar@baptistpillar.com](mailto:bpillar@baptistpillar.com).

