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The Predestinarian Business Office
% Grady E. Dearman
206 Opal Drive
Laurel, MS 39440

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Grady E. Dearman
206 Opal Drive
Laurel, MS 39440

Woodrow W. Hudson
208 Fredrick Street
Bastrop, LA 71220

Stanley C. Phillips
Route 4, Box 157
Quitman, MS 39355

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**THE PREACHER SOUGHT...
ACCEPTABLE WORDS**

By S.C. Phillips

“And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.” — Ecclesiastes 12: 9, 10.

Many of us who were reared in Arminian religious environments were unconsciously indoctrinated into religious terminologies consistent with free will concepts. Neither the concepts nor terminologies are “acceptable words” of divine revelation. Our forceful rejection of freewill concepts was necessitated by the experimental revelation of free grace in Christ Jesus, and consistency of expressive terminology therewith relieved us of many freewill expressions. Nevertheless, the finding “out acceptable words” — Scriptural terms — was much more gradual and difficult than the blessed revelation of the truth of free grace doctrine. There are some words remaining in the vocabulary of all of us which are incongruent with the revelation of truth and which tend to be supportive of free will concepts. The design of this article is to create an awareness of those Arminian expressions used by free grace believers who were called out of Mystery Babylon. These words are offensive in a believer’s ear, and the hearer is often gracefully reluctant to make “a man an offender for a word.” (Isa. 29:21) Certainly a free grace minister should be wary of these inconsistent words and seek, as did the preacher in Ecclesiastes, to “find out acceptable words” consistent with sound doctrine and experience. To continue to use Arminian (freewill) terms is likely to reinforce the freewill concepts we all utterly detest!

One, of the first freewill words brought to our attention was the word “accept” in the context of “accepting Christ as your Saviour.” It is totally void of Scriptural support and contrary to both doctrinal and experimental revelation. This word is rejected and abhorred by all free grace ministers and believers. But what of the Arminian expression “God *wants* you to do” this or that? “Want” implies a deficiency of something in the one “wanting” it. This is adequate for the freewill concept of an ever-failing, frustrated, and feeble god; but it certainly cannot be applied to the sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe. “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven *and* earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though *He needed anything*, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things...(Acts 17: 24-25) Again He says, “For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.” (Psa. 50: 10-12) No! our God does not want! He wills, He desires, He purposes; and He commands — but He does not want.

Another word used too often by free grace ministers in the Arminian connotation is the word “saved.” This word is, of course, a Biblical word. We do not object to the word if used in its Scriptural meaning, but we do object to its being used in its freewill application. “When I was saved,” “The Lord saved me” (in the limited sense of regeneration only) are examples of the freewill application. One may ask, “What is wrong with this?” It limits salvation to one aspect of this divine work; and salvation is no more limited Biblically than is predestination. As used by freewillers, it applies to that specific time and act when *they* made their nominal profession and commitment to a

religious organization. As used loosely by Calvinists, it refers to either regeneration and/or conversion. Since many Calvinists (especially Gospel regenerationists) do not seem to know the differences between regeneration and conversion, how they apply it is hard to ascertain. But in any case, salvation is much larger than either of these experiences even when combined.

Quite often the expression “I am saved” is used in the absence of, or dis. regard to, the soul’s experiences under the gracious tutelage of the Holy Spirit’s powerful operations. When the Spirit refines the individual, weaning him from his natural self-righteousness, self. confidence, and self-dependence, He oftentimes withdraws His *manifest* presence from him. This work is performed to cause the soul to “give all diligence to make” its “calling and election sure.” It is a sanctifying work to establish the soul’s dependence upon, and recognition of, the sovereignty of God’s free grace in an experimental and personal salvation. It is also a continuous, or sometimes intermittent, work manifested in measured degrees for the growth and maturity of the soul. In this way the individual will “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 3:18) in an experimental acquaintance with Him.

During such a time of refining, the whole question of one’s relationship and standing before God is brought into review. Most people are aware of John Newton’s lines in the hymn “Amazing Grace.” But how many are knowledgeable of his feelings echoed in these lines:

“‘Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thoughts;
Do I love the Lord or no
-Am I His or am I not?”

And what of the soul’s experience expressed in these words:

“I am a stranger here below,
And what I am ‘tis hard to know.
I am so vile, so full of sin,
I fear that I’m not born again.”

Or what of these precious lines of an inspired song,

“By night on my bed I sought Him
Whom my soul loveth:
I sought Him, but I found Him not.”
- Song of Solomon 3:1.

Again,
“I opened to my Beloved; but my Beloved
had withdrawn Himself, and was *gone*: my
soul failed when He spake: I sought Him, but
He gave me no answer.”

— Song of Solomon 5:6

Do these lines sound experimentally consistent with your experience? If yes, then may I ask do they sound more consistent with freewill self-confidence, or with free grace concepts of the Spirit’s operations? Could the writers *boast* of knowing “I am saved” in reference to regeneration in their moments of darkness? And more important — Are these your experiences?

There are three cardinal graces which the apostle place in this order: “Faith, hope, and charity.” In these moments of darkness, it is the operation of hope which sustains the child of God until assurance is restored; yet this doctrine, so often used in the Scriptures and by old writers, is perhaps the most neglected of all by evangelical Calvinists.

One of the first Scriptures a free grace believer finds so precious to his soul is that which is written in II Tim. 9, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now *made manifest* by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished

death and hath brought life and immortality *to light* through the Gospel.” Regardless of the different interpretations given this text, it is evident that the apostle placed “hath saved” in the past tense and prior to the words “and called us.” This calling, regardless of how applied, is predicated upon the “hath saved us.” Is this “saved” meant to be expressive of conversion? I do not believe so, for conversion is identified in the phrase “and hath brought life and immortality *to light* through the Gospel” in verse 10. We see then that salvation commences *before* our calling by the Spirit or conversion through the Gospel. Peter extends salvation through a much longer period of experiences when he says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy *hath begotten us again* unto a *lively hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *to an inheritance* incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven for you*, who are kept by the power of God through faith *unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*” (I Peter 1:3-5) When one says he is “saved”, does he mean he has arrived at the inheritance in that “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time?” Of course not.

When you notice that Predestinarian Old School Baptists never say they *know* they are saved, you may consider that, as a people, they use the word *salvation* in a far more comprehensive way than our *calling*, *conversion*, or *sanctification*. We are forced by experience and Scripture to reject the narrow use of the Arminian concept.

To our ears the Arminian usage, even when voiced by new Calvinistic free grace brethren, resounds as boastful as the arrogance of unsanctified natural religionists. To us, it appears that one should express more precisely what he means, rather than leave it to his hearers to apply it in tolerance of him. If one is referring to regeneration, then do so; if

to conversion, say so; if to justification, use the term; if to sanctification, state it; but do not be upset if one is confused by what he hears if it is not stated Biblically to begin with. When the word is applied so generally, the hearer is left without an evidence that the speaker has experienced the refining operation of the Spirit in sanctification; or knows that righteousness is imputed; that conversion is not the same thing as regeneration, etc.

Do you know the difference by experience between being “spiritually minded” and “carnally minded”? The Arminian assumes the “carnally minded” in Romans 8:6 are the unregenerate, and the “spiritual minded” are those who have, as they believe it, “made their choice of Jesus”. Free grace believers by experience know this is error, for they are made often to mourn their own carnal-mindedness. When they are not spiritually minded, doubts, fears, distress of soul, and many spiritual afflictions crowd in upon their souls. They cannot, in truthfulness, say in those times that they *know* they are saved. Yet millions of freewillers — perhaps as high as one hundred percent of them — *know* they are saved. This being the case, how can we assume that we have experienced something more lasting, more precious, more lively, than the dead faith of an unconverted Arminian? How can they be so wrong on every doctrine of the most holy faith, and correct on the important experimental knowledge of hope and assurance? That alone should alert a free grace believer to a subtle error held by them, and give “all diligence to make” their “calling and election sure.” And how can we do that if it is already, and continuously sure with us at all times? Of what value is that admonition to God’s children if the neglect of it is expected and common with the household of faith? Certainly the above admonition is of no profit to the dead!

We have saved the worst phrase for the

last. We often hear of “God’s people missing blessings.” This is a direct affront to the immutability of God; to the covenant mercies of God; to the promises of God; to the sovereignty of God; and betrays a serious ignorance of both the experiences of the saints and the proper use of the English language!

If you missed something, that something was no blessing! A blessing is a “thing conducive to happiness or welfare.” It is a benefit bestowed and received. And to argue that God has blessing stored up for someone and that he can in anywise *miss them* is to deny the wisdom, foreknowledge, grace and almighty power of God. In other words, they do not believe in the sovereignty of God, even if they profess to believe in the so-called “five points of Calvinism.” They have, in their concept, predicated God’s grace upon a conditional response in the creature, thus making works the condition for the bestowal of the grace of God, and thereby overthrowing the doctrine of free grace.

Paul made it clear that all blessings are *already given us* in Christ when He said, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath blessed us* with *all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ:” (Eph. 1:3) If we be chosen in Christ, then how can we *miss* any of all these spiritual blessings with which we were blessed in Christ before the world began? And since He has already blessed us with them in Christ, what shall He then do with them if we somehow frustrate the wisdom and purpose of God? (I speak foolishly, to answer the fool according to his folly).

One of the great differences between the Old School Baptists and the New School Baptists throughout the past one hundred and fifty years has been the carefulness of our people not to emulate the Fullerites in dragging people down to mourners benches and drumming up decisions. Yet, with this horrible new theory of *missing and gaining*

blessings, even many Primitive Baptists are now making *appeals* to get members. They dare not (yet) go so far as to exhort the people to “give your hearts to Jesus” as the Missionaries; but rather they call upon their hearers to “Come on down and *let God fulfill His purpose in you*” — as if the creature can defeat the *eternal* purpose of Almighty God! That appeal, based upon earning blessings and loosing blessings, is more obnoxious to a hearing ear than the simplistic appeal of the evangelical Arminian! How can a puny worm of the dust help or hinder the God of heaven “fulfill His purpose”? God not only “ruleth in the army of heaven” but also “and the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, nor say unto Him, What doeth Thou.”

Brethren, we have not written the above to ridicule anyone, nor to offend. Rather, we hope that the reader will reflect on these things and so choose “acceptable words” in our speaking.

BUT THOU O LORD ART A SHIELD FOR ME

By Robert Fekete, Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Dear Brethren:

I have been blessed of the Lord lately to have sweet fellowship in His presence; to eat with the King of glory at His table; to rest upon the dear Lord’s breast; and to hear the turtle dove singing in the land once more. Yes, my song is “*But Thou O Lord art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of mine head.*” Indeed He lifts up the poor and the needy out of the dunghill. There were many times I felt the fiery darts of Satan saying to my soul “There is no help for him in God” and they of the world lay silently behind me mocking “Aha! aha! he has fallen down forever!”

But for the mercies of the Lord we are not consumed and His compassion fails not. I feel

much like crippled Mephibosheth, lame on both feet. I have nothing to offer my Lord, no works, help or deeds. Helpless, weak and a worthless servant, yet the King in His mercies bids me eat at His table. Oh how unsearchable and past finding out is His love! This I know, for how can I understand His compassion and love toward such a miserable worthless sinner as myself.

Of all the carnal joys, worldly pleasures (which are at best temporary) or all the world could offer, they don’t compare to one day, yes, one hour of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I can now say as Hannah, “My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord:” and “He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; *for by strength shall no man prevail.*”

My heart has been thinking much of you all of late. I sometimes have been made to cry on my bed that I may see you all again; also to lie in remorse and sorrow of my foolishness in times past when I could have visited you.

Your issue of *The Predestinarian* is one of the best I’ve read, in that it has answered much of our needs. I have personally been meditating much on “sanctification” and on “hope and faith”; thus, sanctification by Gilbert Beebe and “hope and Assurance” by W.W. Hudson comforted me. The letter by James Osbourn to J. C. Philpot expressed all our feelings.

It is perilous times and the Lord it seems is purging the floor. The antichrist surrounds us mixing doctrines of men and silly Jewish fables within the true church. There does seem very few worshippers of the truth left in the land. Yes, just a remnant. Therefore we need to be very much watchful. We at one time thought we stood alone much like Elijah under the tree; saying, Is there any of God’s people left? Yet He raised up to our knowledge that the Lord has hidden a people

who worship in spirit and truth. I thank my God I know you all.

The Lord has been giving me a mind and heart to be able to sit and write on His Holy word. They have opened up giving me much comfort and pleasure. It is no longer a struggle or task. His commandments are no longer grievous to keep. His words drop down from heaven as a sweet smelling spring rain. A light has broken forth in a dark and desolate land again.

I had been meditating on Haggai 2:9, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former.” In times past it was left closed in a mystery. But in one hour the Lord revealed to my heart the glory of the Lord — how the Lord compared as ten thousand fold greater than the glory of the law. It seemed so clear and beautiful.

We were meeting and it happened Brother Palazzo asked about this verse: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” This also in time past remained shut up. Yes indeed, He shutteth and no man openeth and openeth and no man shutteth. Jesus Christ holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

I will, the Lord willing, give you some thoughts on the above verse. I hope you and others may find it some comfort as a healing for the wounds of sin, a drink from the fountain of life, and bread for your hunger towards the heavenly Manna, Jesus Christ. Yet my words are nothing and as vanity without the power of His Spirit.

After meditating on I Cor. 10:13 for a while I found it of great comfort to my sin-weary soul. They of the religious world believe it to mean that God will let one go so far, then prevent one from sinning. They say that although many temptations surround us, the Holy Spirit is with us and we will not sin.

Then you ask them do they believe they sin, and their reply is, Well, maybe I just think of evil thoughts, but I would never do any really wicked sins. For God shall not suffer one to be tempted to the point that one will sin; and He will make a way to escape. Thus they boast in their sinlessness and spotless nature — we can not sin any more, they say. This they call grace and the sovereignty of God.

But nothing could be further from the truth, for it is the doctrine of devils. For the devil leads the world to believe they are strong, safe and sinless.

There is no such doctrine as “little sins.” The saints of experimental grace know their trespasses and that every transgression is greatly wicked. “Know ye not a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Our fleshly old nature can and will never be sinless or spotless. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit in-corruption.”

Note this important point. There is no difference between temptation and the actual physical act of transgression in their fleshly origin. I say this because there are some, whether ignorantly or purposely, who separate temptation from sinning. In the book of James it says, “But every man *is tempted* when he is drawn away *of his own lust* and enticed. Then when *lust hath conceived* it bringeth forth *sin*; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.” Thus we see the origin of both heart-sins and actual transgressions are the same.

Is it not clear one is tempted because of his own lust? Thus without lust there is no temptation. Likewise if there is no temptation there would be no lust. The latter is possible only if one locks himself in a closet for the rest of his life. It is also possible for they of the world, because they know not what temptation, lust, or sin is. My point: in our carnal, wicked, fleshly nature, there is no separating temptation and transgression.

Then some may say, how is it then that

Christ was tempted yet without sin? Are we not as Christ now that we are born again? Oh, yes indeed, we do have a new nature: the nature of Jesus Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit. But we also have our old corruptible, fleshly nature. These two fight against each other. As it is written, “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, perfect, holy and incorruptible. He who was God took upon Him the nature of the seed of Abraham. He was subject to the infirmities of the flesh: hunger, thirst, and weariness. In His flesh He was tempted like as we are yet without sin. For He who was God had no evil lust, therefore He could not sin. In Jesus Christ it is valid to separate temptation from lust and sin. (**Ed. note:** Christ’s temptation was not from within, but from without, by the devil. We believe it is an anthropomorphism — God speaking in a form for man’s understanding — and expressing an experience common to His people also.) In us who still retain the first Adam in our nature it is not possible to separate temptation from lust. Suffice it to say, Jesus Christ was tempted *yet without sin* and — that we are tempted yet *with sin*.

If there is any who say they are tempted without sinning, then let him cast the first stone.

What is meant by falling into temptation? As it is written, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” Now the world falls into many temptations yet they cannot count it all joy. The so-called religious world of Arminians, legal workers, and dead letter Calvinists fall into divers temptations, yet they can not count it all joy. This verse is meant for sensible sinners, weaklings, beggars, fallen down saints of which I tell you, I am the chiefest. The verse does not mean to be glad because you sin. No! the

saints who have fallen into temptation know that sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. The reply of a tempted sinner is, “I have sinned against the Lord.” — and, “Keep me from sin that it grieve me not.”

The difference between God’s children and the children of the devil is not that they do not sin as the religious world teaches. The difference is that they feel and know how it is to fall into temptation and transgression. The falling into temptation is when the waters of the wrath of God go over our heads. When we cry “In the day of trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted.” the spirituality of the law works in our members bringing us down as transgressors of the law of God. Our mouths are shut up in silence. For temptation has overcome us. We lie in utter misery, as in the belly of hell. There is no hope in ourselves, we are clean gone into the way of the wicked. We are emptied as weaklings, poor, destitute and evil. This, dear brethren, is known as falling into temptation. The world will never experience, truly in their hearts, the falling into temptation as God’s children

There may be some here now as they read, who have fallen into a temptation. But, dear brethren, count it all joy for though it brings no comfort or rest and joy at the present, yet it will, when it has worked its perfect work, bring forth joy. For it says, “Knowing that tribulation worketh patience and patience, experience and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed.” Also it works that we may be entire and perfect, wanting nothing. This dear reader, is the working and result of falling into temptation; for God’s promises are not to the self-righteous, but unto sinners. Therefore, count it all joy when you have fallen into temptation, “for it works in us a far greater reward” than the self-boasting religious world who say they have not sinned in temptation.

This reward we have who have fallen into

temptation, that we may be succoured or helped. The Greek word “succoured” means “to run to the aid of those who cry for help.” O, how wonderful and joyful it is to be helped by our Lord Jesus Christ! Yet only they, who have sinned when tempted, can receive of the help of the Lord.

The poor tempted sinner in his affliction cries out: How is it God has made a way for me to escape — for I am doomed by reason of my sins that plague me like a dark cloud?

Now to the self-willed and strong who have not “sinned”, there is no way out, for their doom is sure. Their end is everlasting death and destruction. They “are condemned already.” (John 3:18). The wrath of God shall consume them as fire, and the holiness and glory of the Lord shall eat at them as does a worm.

But to us who have felt the bottomless pit of our wicked hearts: to us who have felt the trouble caused by falling into temptation, there is a way out: it is the glorious, perfect, and finished work of Jesus Christ. It is His blood shed for the remission of sins. He deserves all the glory, honor and praise. This new song we sing “Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”. This is the only way of escape: through the blood of Jesus (already secured to them who mourn and cry in their sins) from the foundation of the world. We have been predestinated according to the pleasure of His will, being made accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

God’s dear children are often under the weight of temptation. They know what it is to die because of sin. “For the sting of death is sin.” Die we must, many times, to be brought to the grave, yes, many times. To be perplexed, yes, many times. To be cast down, yes, many times. To be brought down to the

dung-hill, yes, many times. But He will with the temptation also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it. Yea, the Lord will come again and again with healing in His wings. He will come in all His glory and splendor to give rest to the troubled; life and truth to the perplexed; and a lifting hand to the cast down soul. The light of the Lord shall shine again. We shall drink from the streams of the river that makes glad the city of God. We shall feast at the table of the heavenly food from God. Tears and joy shall run down to the feet of Jesus.

The above teaches us that it is of the excellency of the power of God and not of us poor, fallen down, sin-weary, and tempted sinners; for, it is all of his grace. The hope that maketh not ashamed is. for us, a way’ of escape that we may be able to bear it. For through tribulation, temptation and experience we learn that Jesus Christ is the only way of escape, our only hope. Yet, by hope, are we able to bear with patience our own wretched conditions. This I leave with you, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord bath promised to them that love him.”

May the Lord of all grace keep you in His arms and grant to you the crown of life. He will, arid has, endured and has conquered sin, death and the grave. Nothing, not man, Satan, temptation nor death shall keep us from our appointed home. Thanks, glory, and praise to the Lamb that was slain — Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world; that is the world of His elect. — Feb. 10, 1983.

WORDS OF COMFORT FOR A “FEW”

By Elder John M. Watson, M.D.

(**Note:** Elder John M. Watson was born in 1798. He was a frontier doctor and ordained minister of the Gospel among the Old School

Baptists. He is most famous as the founder of the Medical Department of the University of Nashville, Tennessee, where he practiced medicine, and taught obstetrics, and went forth on the weekends in service of the churches. In 1867, He published a collection of his writings in defense of the Old School Baptists entitled *The Old Baptist Test*. This article is his first chapter in defense of the “few” in the Text: “For many are called, but few chosen.”)

As these topics will be fully discussed, I will at once quote some explanatory texts of Scripture in regard to them: “*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*” “*Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.*” Matt. 7:13,14.

Will only a few be saved? is still a question which often comes up painfully in the Christian’s heart in view of the many great religious inconsistencies of our times. Did we have the privilege, as did the Apostle, of asking the Saviour, “*Lord are there few that be saved?*” The answer doubtless would be the same; at least in words of similar import. The Christian entertains this question, not merely from curiosity, but also with a solemn restraint to answer it as did the Saviour; besides it excites in his heart another question of the most profound personal interest: “Am I one of the few?” The popular religious inconsistencies of the times in which we live constrain us often to examine and prove ourselves by the *divine* standard; by which only a *few* are found to be real Christians. (II Cor. 13:5).

The blessed doctrine of election generally exasperates the “carnal mind”; and still more indeed when the great truth is proclaimed in it, that only *a few are chosen!* (Matt. 20:16; 22:14). Neither our judgment nor feelings are to be relied on here: we must submit to the teaching of the Lord, and acknowledge the

revealed truth, *that few there be that find the narrow way!* This Bible history of the “few chosen,” like their remarkable history since the closing of the canon of the Holy Scriptures, teaches us that they who were Jews *inwardly* were few compared to the many who were Jews only *outwardly*; the latter for numbers are compared to the sands of the sea, and the former to a *remnant!* (Rom. 9:27)

Church history, when read by those who have an eye to contradistinguish the “few chosen” from the “many” who are only called externally, teaches us also that there are few who are Christians *inwardly*, compared to the many who are Christians only *outwardly*. How many more alas! pertain to another gospel than those who belong to the true one. How few were saved between Abel and Noah. between Noah and Abraham, between Abraham and Christ, between Christ and the full development of Anti-Christ. between the decline of Anti-Christ, through the Reformation and the present time. During these periods multitudes of outward worshippers existed; and since the day of Christ and the Apostles, their history has been much more fully written than that of the Lords few hidden ones. Their history would abound in names and acts of which we have no accounts.

The statement that Anti-Christ declined through the Reformation is more significant than the reader may probably suppose. That the Reformation, as it is emphatically termed, was not as many suppose, the re-establishment of true Gospel principles and usages; but on the contrary it was a mere reformation of popery and Anti-Christian powers, which to the world at that time was a great blessing. Amidst all this outward reformation the “few chosen” were hidden, unappreciated and unrecognized as such by those who then became Protestants. They were too “few” to be heeded by the

multitudes; too “foolish” for the “many” to be taught by; too “base” for those in high places to associate with, and too “ignorant” to be regarded by the many positive perverters of that day. They had too few of the “mighty” and the “noble” to have been acknowledged and received into the great arena of early Protestantism, when the mighty ones of that day, in conjunction with all that was carnally wise, mighty and noble, were engaged, under the auspices of kings, universities, principalities and powers to reform popery. This they did, and for which we feel thankful. But the Gospel needed no reformation, neither in its doctrine nor ordinances; and there were in those days a “chosen few” unto whom it was made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Their full history has not been written, but enough to let us know that they suffered much persecution, both from Catholics and Protestants. So that we may readily conclude they have been greatly slandered and misrepresented by most historians. Besides, we are constrained to admit that they were *few* in number; but strong, strong even unto death in their principles and usages. Their sufferings, blood and martyrdoms, constitute their chief history, while one here and there comes into sublime personal prominence, nobly contending against the multitudes, or firmly expiring amidst flames or cruel tortures!

They were “unknown” in a religious sense, but well known in other respects, especially as the uncompromising opponents of the prevailing heresies of their respective times. Religiously, they were God’s hidden ones, known and sanctified by Him, but were “strangers” in that sense to a blind and persecuting world. (II Cor. 6:9) Their enemies, doubtless, took greater liberties in opposing, persecuting or destroying them on account of their number being so small. They were so few, so scattered, and so little regarded, that the many in their religious

blindness supposed that they were doing “God service” to destroy them and their principles. (John 16:2)

Thus we may see that heresies gain strength by the approval of the many; and their authors and propagators derive carnal comfort and support from the multitudes that hear, approve and sustain. But the true believer does not derive spiritual assurance, comfort nor strength from such carnal sources; these must come from the word of God established in his heart by the Holy Spirit. On the contrary they may discourage, embarrass and weaken his faith in the very things which as a believer he is bound to accept; for instance the great truth, that *“many be called, but few chosen.”* He may even make a great mistake here by regarding as discouragements the very things which constitute his chief characteristics as one of the chosen few. And he may want to go along with the many, but the promises are to the few; may prefer associating with the wise men after the flesh, with the mighty and the noble, but there are few such among the Lord’s people.

These unscriptural desires of the flesh are injuring us at this very time; (and it is us at this time also. -Ed.) there are some who do not refer these things to the word of God as they should; hence they do not understand why so few believe the great revealed truths of the Gospel, while there are so many professors of Christianity who deride and oppose them. The very remarkable manner in which the Lord has, in all ages and countries, preserved His chosen few, assures us that we should have no less confidence in our cause committed to a few, than if it had been committed to the multitudes. The heresies and conduct of the many outward Christians show most fearfully that few only are chosen, as plainly as did the idolatries and ways of those who were Jews only outwardly show that only a few comparatively were Jews inwardly.

(Matt. 23:28; Rom. 2:28). Therefore we are not to judge of our state, faith or practice, by the number who may agree with us; for had those who were Jews inwardly in this manner, they would have been greatly discouraged; and so might have been Christ's disciples, and all true Christians since. (Note: The original text appears in an error. It seems it should read "might NOT have been Christ's disciples, etc. — Ed.)

Reader, observe, if you are discouraged on account of your lot being cast with a "few" only, that all Christians are called to walk in the narrow way, and that there be "few that find it;" it is far better to be among the "few" who have, in the light of grace, found the narrow way, than among the "many" who are pursuing the broad way. Our human feelings dispose us to entertain too much confidence in numbers; our sense of safety in number is human, while our feelings of safety with a "few" is of faith and of the Lord. How much better to feel safe in God than in hosts of men. These are also under His *divine control, and cannot pass*, in their opposition to His chosen "few" the *bounds of His permissive Providence*. Well might the Apostle exclaim: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

A false religion generally has the fleshly prestige of numbers ever operating in its favor, in the estimation of the "carnally minded." This was the case in the days of Noah, of the patriarchs, of the prophets, of Christ and His Apostles, of primitive Christians, and of medieval ones. And who dares to say that this great and solemn truth does not come up fearfully prominent in our own times? The religious carnalite would not have stood in these relations with Noah, the patriarchs, nor Christ and His Apostles, but, like Judas, would have betrayed their cause.

Though we may be tempted and perplexed about there being so few on our

side, yet I ask most significantly, who of us would be willing to have been one of the "many" opposed to Noah? One of the "many" in the times of the Saviour and His disciples? One of the "many" in the early days of Christianity? Or one of the "many" in any age or country?

With much meaning, I ask how can one of the "few" go to the "many" will of necessity have to leave the "narrow way," and go into the "broad way." He will have to quit the light of revealed truth, and go under the shade of human traditions. (!) To get with the "many" he will have to go in at a gate which *he* can open and shut. (Rev. 3:7) All who will go with the "many," Must go in at the *wide gate* (Matt. 7:13) of human experiences.

The Pedo-Baptists have tried to convert the narrow way into a broad one; the Arminians to make the "strait gate" a wide one; and the man of sin assayed to make them world-wide! But I ask, with no little force of inquiry, who can make that broad which God has made "narrow?" Who can make that wide which God has made "strait?" "Strait is the gate," and who can enlarge, open or shut it? "Narrow is the way," and who can widen or alter it? "Few there be that find it," and who can add to their number? To attempt to do these things would be worse folly than to essay to widen the ocean and multiply the stars of heaven. And yet Arminianism, in its carnal blindness, is constantly engaged in a vain effort to perform these very things!

Reader, with which will you go? With the "few" or the "many?" If you are of the world, you will *go with the many*," if of the chosen of God, *with the "few"*. (I John 4:5) Let the history of the past reconcile us to the company of even "two or three," since that number is not despised by Christ, but has promise of His presence in their social worship. Unfortunately there is nothing in our day, in "another gospel," more fascinating than the charm of numbers to the carnally minded,

their respectability, their wealth, their popular influence, and many carnal availabilities, which exercise often an undue influence over the minds of the “few,” who should look at these things under Scriptural lights.

Observe, the powers of “another gospel,” great as they are in one sense, could not survive the reduction of the numbers of its votaries (images of men placed around an image of a god to worship him night and day) to “two or three.” Their costly machinery could not be worked by a “few;” “many” are necessary. In true Gospel fellowship “two or three” can worship together as well as if thousands were present. (Matt. 18:20)

The true Gospel would have utterly failed had it been presented to the world for its approval or rejection according to the natural understanding, judgment and reason of man; but a false gospel may and does prevail in that manner over the judgment and feelings of “many;” while the true Gospel in its hidden power embraces only a “few.” (I Cor. 2:14; 1:23).

I dare not use the word “few” in relation to the people of God, only with quotation marks, indicating thereby that it is NOT of my own in that fearful sense, nor of any man, but of God! How *significant the word is at the present time*, how solemnly true! Whither shall the Christian flee? To the multitudes of nominal professors, or to the chosen “few?” Where will he find the truths and ordinances of the Gospel? Among the “many” or among the “few?” To which do the promises pertain? The “few” are a people saved by the Lord; the “many” strive to save themselves, by means of their own devising.

The former, in the light of grace, find the narrow way, and enter in at the strait gate — a way which lies too profoundly deep in God for mortal vision. Christ is that way, and the Holy Spirit is the light thereof. Many enter in at the wide gate, and go along the broad way guided and sustained by “another gospel” with

all of its *natural* lights and human availabilities. The vaunted history of these we repudiate, and appeal to the broken and imperfect account we have of the Lord’s hidden “few.” But, alas! the mysterious and spiritual things pertaining to them have never been recognized and appreciated by any except those who had eyes to see them, and hearts to understand them, in the light of life. So then we can be heard and understood only by the “few;” while the “many” contend for the things which pertain to the broad way, referring occasionally to the word of God, and by means of cunning craftiness and deceitful handling of it they make out some show of proof. And when plainly refuted by a quotation of revealed truths too strongly in point to be denied, they erroneously contend that the Gospel should have “an expansion of sense and meaning,” or” a prudent and accommodating elasticity,” according, I suppose, to times and circumstances. So thought “certain men” who came down from Judea, and taught some of these accommodating elasticities, saying that men could not be saved, except they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses. In the instance of the Galatians, this principle of expansion of sense and meaning, so much contended for, converted the true into another gospel. The Gospel was revealed and expounded under a pressure of times and circumstances as great as any which have since occurred. And had there been any accommodating elasticity in its truths, the times could certainly have developed it; but on the contrary it was the same Gospel to the Jews, that it was to the Gentiles. Nor did it accommodate itself any more to the times of the second, than it did to the first century, or in any other. Heresies and innovations have their expansions and contractions, but divine truths have not. But men in high places further say that Gospel truths should have only *a prudent* expansion of sense and

meaning. I ask under whose prudence? Under Presbyterian prudence we have an expansion of baptism and ecclesiastical government, which required a good deal of this “accommodating elasticity” contended for; under Methodist prudence we had a wonderful expansion in many forms of Arminianism, which required still greater “accommodating elasticity;” under Campbellite prudence we had some remarkable expansions and contractions, about which I need not now treat. These have made the way broader (Ed. — not really!), and the gate wider, and have become very numerous. Their history has been pretty fully written, and they boast of their numbers as recorded by them. But after all there is a divine depth in the history of the chosen “few,” which no human research can reach. Their history begins most mysteriously profound in Christ before the world began: hence their number is known only to God; not the number which would be made Presbyterian, Methodists, or Campbellites, in time. [Note: — Dr. Watson is replying against the modern missionary zeal of Missionary Baptists” in their glorying in numbers. It is only fair today, to include the Primitive Baptists that have this motivation in their so-called “Gospel appeals” and universal application thereof; as well as any of us seized with a bigoted spirit. It too is “expansive”.] But the number given to Christ by the Father before time; the number chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. But charity constrains us to admit that there may be some of the Lords “few” among all these denominations, who are Christians inwardly, hut wrong externally.

As the way that leadeth unto life is narrow in the true Gospel, and “few” only find it, another gospel with a broad way must be instituted for the “many.” This with many modifications has existed ever since the days of the Galatians. False teachers then brought

in “another gospel,” which has had, in all its changes, all the accommodating elasticity contended for by modern innovators.

This is a very religious world, and the ruler of darkness adapts his religion to all tastes from spiritual wickedness in high places, down to the grossest idolatries.

In the light of Scripture, we shall find Satan at the head of “another gospel” displaying his powers. (II Thess 2:9) We shall see that through his wonderfully devised religious machinery, he can play the part of a Protestant as well as that of a Catholic. If all his little popes in America were put together (which he sometimes essays to do) they would make as great a pope as he has in Italy. His name is and must be Legion in a religious sense. His way is broad, his gate is wide, and his dupes are “many. “The rise of “another gospel” began in the heretical declaration: “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.”

A wrong apprehension of Gospel works and ordinances has from that time to the present kept up “another gospel,” in all ages, with its numerous institutions and corresponding works. Only a “few” have rightly distinguished between the works of the law and those of the Gospel. The “many” have not discerned the great principle in doing them: the works of the law, good as they are, in our imperfect performance of them, can be accepted only on Gospel principles. The Pharisees and Sadducees thought that the baptism of John was a *Legal* ceremony, and therefore demanded baptism of John, not knowing that it would be unprofitable to them, without faith in Christ and repentance towards God. Besides, they claimed a *right* to this ordinance as children of Abraham, not discerning any difference between the children of the flesh, and the children of promise, the chosen “few”.

The notion of the many is, that the Gospel must be strengthened by other

institutions besides those which God has ordained; that a collateral power may be inaugurated in that manner. Being ignorant of the spiritual powers of the true Gospel, and its ordinances, they with great zeal and a fair show in the flesh, devote themselves to another gospel; and are very careful to maintain its interests and crafts, however greatly they may conflict with divine truth. All of which is indispensably necessary for the propagation and maintenance of “another gospel.”

Human institutions, either from Jews or Gentiles, convert the true Gospel into “another gospel.” Paul said they were removed to “another gospel,” because they practiced circumcision, and tried to justify themselves by the works of the law. Hence I ask with much meaning, what shall we say of those who maintain modern institutions, and do the works thereof for justification? Do not all these belong undeniably to “another gospel?” Assuredly. But they retort by saying that they have “many” wise men, “many” rich ones, “many” influential leaders, and “many” of the most respectable persons on their side, while we have only a “few” such; and that altogether we are of but little note or consideration in the world. (Rev. 3:17; I Cor. 1:27)

Every institution of this kind, involves for its establishment, the “higher law” mania, a most impious, anti-Christian principle, which Satan has infused into many minds. Let others speak and write about Protestant institutions as they may, they have been brought into existence by their founders according to an assumed prerogative based on the wicked and absurd notion of a “higher law.” If Papists instituted things according to this principle, how can Protestants institute theirs on any other? Where is the difference *in principle*, I ask, strongly in point, between saying mass for the religious benefit of the unconscious dead, and the Protestant

sprinkling of the infant unconscious of the religious ceremony? As there is no warrant for either in the word of God, they both have been instituted on human authority. What does the Romish mass affect to do for the dead? That which the Bible no where suggests. What does infant sprinkling essay to do? That about which the Bible is certainly silent. What do the Romish levies (tithes) aim at? The raising of a larger revenue than the Bible sanctions. What is the design of missionary societies? To inaugurate a more convenient system of preaching, and a more certain method of getting pay for it, than the New Testament method affords. What do Pedo-baptists aim at? To incorporate more members than the baptism of the Bible will admit of.

The missionary Baptist may say, that infant baptism is a part of the Catholic system, but the Pedo-baptist may with as much propriety say that a missionary system based on human authority, is also a part of the ecclesiastical policy of Catholics.

All these manifest the spirit of the “higher law” infatuation and assumed prerogatives based upon it. Why forsooth should the Protestants deny the right of exercising these prerogatives to the Catholic, and then assume them himself? This is truly a dangerous spirit: it exalted itself “above all that is called God” among the Papists, and it remains in part to be seen what it will do among Protestants. (II These. 2:4)

Satan seems to have played out among the Catholics: like some old gambler who was want to cheat by cunningly devised methods, which he had long kept concealed, but which have been seen and exposed, so that he cannot play off his tricks any longer to advantage, then institutes new ones, and tries his hand with a different people. He had according to the spirit of the “higher law” instituted many things among the Papists, by means of which he succeeded wonderfully in perverting every

thing pertaining to the true Gospel. Hence we may infer that his course will be the same *in principle* among Protestants, although the institutions may be different. We know that he has already operated among Protestants as he did among Catholics, *by multiplying human devices and institutions, with their attendant carnalities.* (Note: It is well to remember Dr. Watson was writing in the 1830's. While the Protestants and modern Baptists have not yet attained unification completely with Rome, they are well on the way; and Dr. Watson's hypothesis above is nearly accurate now — one hundred and thirty years later. His views are identical with both Beebe and John Leland's on that subject. — Ed.)

It is true he will not require the Protestant preacher to say mass for the dead: but he often tempts him by a good fee to pronounce eloquent and undeserved eulogies over the dead, and to ascribe virtues to them which they never practiced, and represent them as being saints in heaven in despite of their unbelief and immoral lives! He will not have, like the Papists their priests to forgive sins (?) but he will have them preach for hire! He will not have them attain to the pre-eminence of a cardinal or pope (Oh yes, he has! S.C.P.) but he will allow them to take the title of D.D., Right Reverend, Bishop, etc. He will not have them levy a tax for their pecuniary advantage, (Again, Watson missed it — he has now in various indirect ways!) but he will permit them to raise funds in divers unscriptural ways for their costly maintenance. He does not require them to open a door worldwide for the reception of members, (Oh yes he does, in many World Council bodies!) but he institutes many little entrances by means of which many may *climb up* without going in at the Gospel door. (John 10:1) He does not tempt them to preach works of supererogation, but to preach Arminian works and “perfection” in this life! Nor does he require them like Papists, to withhold the holy Scripture from the people,

but he will have them to assert that the present translation is faulty, and that it should be revised, and its errors corrected! And that some of its doctrinal truths should not be preached to the people?

These modifications, small as they are in some respects, still partake of the “higher law” prerogatives, that of altering the things of the Gospel. Some of these alterations resemble the things of the true Gospel so closely, that were it possible, by means of them, he would “deceive the very elect.”

Many, I fear, are unlike the Apostle Paul: he said he was not ignorant of the devices of Satan. Some seem to have an eye to see them among Papists, but not among Protestants; for they are so well modified and adapted to the tastes of the latter, that “many” approve of them, while there are only a “few” who reject them! There is only one denomination among which the minister can go and declare “all the counsel of God,” and the ordinances of the Gospel as revealed, and repudiate all religious institutions founded on human prerogatives, without incurring loss of character, the charge of folly, and of being behind the times. This is a sad but true commentary on the practical religion of our day.

As a denomination, we have suffered much in the estimation of others by our constant and uncompromising opposition to these unauthorized religious expedients. This opposition, however, is ancient and venerable, and began with the primitive Christians, and we rejoice to know that it has reached our day, even if it be only on the part of a “few,” as a “few” have all the while maintained it. And as their numerous devotees vainly suppose that they constitute the chief means of practical godliness, they know not how any can *maintain good works who oppose them!* The Papists himself, doubtless, thinks that there is no practical Christianity apart from Romish devices!

We do not go about trying to establish

our own righteousness, but prefer that which is of faith. (Rom. 10:3) We do not try to blend grace and works, but regard the latter as a *fruit* of the former. (Rom. 11:6) Nor do we try to make even a fair show in the flesh. (Gal. 6:12) Nor do we teach for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matt. 15:9) Nor do we strive unlawfully. (II Tim. 2:5) Besides, when we give alms, we do not sound a trumpet. (Matt. 6:2) Nor do we seek to please men. (Gal. 1:10) Neither do we aid in building up religious establishments, nor deduce the doctrine of good works from any source, except from the holy Scriptures. (II Tim. 3:16) We aim at no higher temperance than that of the Bible, at no better plan of preaching and being supported than that revealed in the word of God. We cannot fellowship infant baptism nor Church polity founded on human authority. (Col. 2:22) We do not try to gratify “itching ears.” (II Tim. 4:3) We do not suppress any part of the counsel of God. (Acts 20:27) Neither do we try to proselyte, nor popularize our tenets. (Matt. 23:15) Nor do we hire ministers to preach for us. (John 10:12) Nor do we falter under reproaches for the truth’s sake, but prefer them to the consideration of the “many.” (I Cor. 4:3)

Now, were we to do these things, though forbidden in the word of God, and others which I might mention, our denomination would be about as popular as any other; but our non-performances, as just stated, have brought down on us the reproaches of all other denominations. And the most unreasonable one of all is that we are not *practical Christians*, because we do not perform duties which the word of God does not enjoin, but on the contrary forbids.

Of what does practical godliness consist? Surely not in doing the things which the Lord has forbidden, but in doing the things which He has commanded; and in *not doing* those which He has prohibited in His word. So that we have, of all others, the best claim

to practical godliness, which must ever be “the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.” (Titus 1:1) Thus, practical religion consists in performing the duties (sic) which Christ has commanded, and at the same time in not doing the things He has prohibited. Christian duties, when properly performed, have no great outward show or pomp, but are rather hidden in one sense from the unregenerate. Their performance, it is true, may be seen by the natural eye, but their spiritual import is neither understood nor felt. Even the plainly revealed ordinances, in this sense, are hidden in their spirituality from the unborn “again.” (John 3:3; Col. 2:12; I Cor. 11:29; Matt. 6:6) Here, also, in the great affair of practical Christianity, the “few” are contradistinguished from the “many.”

There are “few,” indeed, but what have been entangled in the institutions which have been so agreeable to the “many.” The evil tendencies of these religious societies established on human authority were clearly seen by a “few,” and the results of their operations most faithfully and truthfully foretold. It has been a constant prediction among the Old Order of Baptists for more than thirty years past, that these institutions would eventually do great injury, by breaking and perverting Gospel truths.

The writer can most truthfully say, that he tried again and again to have fellowship for these things, seemingly so expedient, and for those who were so zealously engaged in them, but he could not, and was often tempted to fear that the fault was with himself. But a *sure word of prophecy* has taught him that the fellowship of the saints is in the Gospel, and in the things therein revealed. (Phil. 1:5) And that it is dangerous, both to the Church and nation, to pervert the testimony of the Lord. (Rev. 22:18,19) Reader, are you willing to go along with us, with a “few,” in the “narrow way?” Or had I not better ask you another question: Have you received “an abundance of

grace, and of the gift of righteousness?" If not, I know you will be unwilling to go with us. We have no pleasing flatteries for the hypocrite, no agreeable religious externals for the Pharisee, no perversions of grace for the Arminian, no religious means of climbing up some other way, no fellowship for men's religious devices, no broad way for the "many," no religious carnalities for securing the world's esteem and co-operation.

We can only offer the things which Christ and the Apostles have set forth: Cruel persecutions, fiery trials, unavoidable tribulations, carnal mockings, unmerited dishonor, evil report, imprisonments, scourgings, and death. To be hated by the world, despised by the "worldly wise," to be counted nothing in a religious sense, to be set at nought as a teacher, to be ridiculed as a lay member, are things which the religious carnalite cannot endure. He is all the while looking to this world for his reward; and when his religion conflicts with his temporal interests, he modifies it so, that it may not impair his respectability, his popularity, his character nor fortune; — these, with him, are paramount to all religious principles. He needs must conform in his religion to this world. (I John 4:5)

Truly may we say, as daily we feel, that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. The religion of Christ is not at all adapted to it; but is in direct antagonism to it, just as much as natural things can be in opposition to spiritual things. Nor do we expect the natural man to love the things of Christ.

The spirit that was in Christ exalted Him and His religion above all that is called good and great in *this* world; and the same Blessed Spirit must operate *effectually in the hearts of His followers*, before they can be raised to a state wherein persecutions, worldly hate, trials, sacrifices of worldly interests, and deprivations of carnal enjoyments will be far preferable to honors, riches, and pleasures of

this world.

The Christian may be rich in Christ, though he have no where to lay his head to rest; honorable in Him in despite of the detractions of the "accuser;" happy in Him amidst all the disturbances of this life; and may enjoy the company of a "few," though he be deprived of the society of the "many."

Were Christ to descend personally from heaven to earth, and to declare the same truths, and reveal the same Gospel ordinances, natural men would, notwithstanding all this, continue to hate His truths, and oppose His ways. Their *state* requires something beyond this — *the birth of the spirit*, the very blessing which He has secured for them who were given to Him in the election of the Father.

How forcibly the exhortation comes up: "Be not conformed to this world" Its ways are the ways of death, and its religion, seem it as it may, is of anti-Christ. Let us set our affections on things above, not on things on earth. The things which are above! How shall I speak of them? They constitute the inheritance of the saints, which is pure and undefiled and fadeth not away. In these are the riches of faith. By faith we enjoy them here, and though we have but a foretaste, it is an unfailling earnest of the fulness which is to come. Reader, if you have faith, come and go along with us; if not *seek* it, and may God of His infinite mercy grant it. The way, it is true, is narrow, but Christ is that way, the company is small, but they are a chosen "few." Their full inheritance is not here, but it is reserved for them in heaven. Here we may moan, but there we shall rejoice; here we may be poor, but there we shall be rich; here we may be hated by men, but there we shall be loved by God and angels; here we may have no titles, but there we shall be kings and priests unto God; here we may appear in vile raiment, but there we shall walk in white robes, the garments of Salvation, with a crown of glory on our heads; palms of victory in our hands,

and the eternal hallelujah on our tongues. And may we not begin our praise on earth, and with David say: "Praise ye the Lord!" And with the Levites of old: "Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever: and blessed be Thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessings and praise." Praise Him for His mighty acts: For having chosen us to salvation from the beginning; for having given us grace in Christ before the world began; for having blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Him according to that choice; (Eph 1:3,4) for having predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son; for having called us, for having justified us, and for the hope that He will glorify us, and for having said to the little flock: "*Fear not little flock, for it as your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!*"

NOT RENDERING EVIL FOR EVIL

By W.W. Hudson

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."— I Thess. 5:15

What is the purpose of this exhortation? We must conclude that it was inspired by the Lord, for ---- - holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (II Pet. 1:21) The Scriptures advocate that vengeance belongs to the Lord. (Rom. 12:19) Notice the instructions in Proverbs 24:29: "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work." It is important to remember that the Lord takes care of rendering vengeance and does not leave it in the hands of man. Let us see what the Lord inspired in Romans 2:6: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds." May the Lord impress it upon our minds that this is the *work of Almighty God!*

In connection with this train of thought, let us consider the following words: "Finally. be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love the brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing..." (I Peter 3:8,9)

Notice the words of Jesus in Matt. 5:39: "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" We know that we could not follow those instructions unless the Lord blessed us to that extent. In other words, it is just natural to "strike back" unless the Lord blessed us with the grace to endure those persecutions.

What does all of this amount to? The text forbids us from rendering evil unto evil to any man. Are we hearing witness to the Lord by our conduct that we live in this life? Did Jesus set the example for His people? What does the Scripture say about the example that Jesus set? "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:* Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again: when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously'." (1 Pet. 2:21-23) Dear reader. do you believe these Scriptures tie in with the text? It is wonderful what the Lord blesses us to follow the example that Jesus set. If that is true, then the Lord is blessing us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

May the Lord bless us to carefully consider and meditate upon the following Scriptures: "Recompense to no man for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." The Scriptures advocate in other places that it is good to do that which is acceptable and well pleasing in the sight of the Lord, but notice the wording in this Scripture. Why does it use the expression "provide things honest in the sight of all men?" This is bearing witness to the Lord's name by our

conduct, is it not? “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceable with all men.” Again, this is an exhortation telling us how we should conduct ourselves in our relationship in this world, if the Lord blesses us to that extent. “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:17-21)

“But ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.” What is the meaning of the expression of the text? Our understanding is not to be “two-faced.” We also think of this as a parallel exhortation: Meaning, not only to do that which is right in the sight of the brethren, but also in the sight of all that we have contact with in this life. We have already quoted the Scripture which commands us to *provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

We realize that we could not, of ourselves, follow the instructions in these Scriptures. The Lord must bless us to that extent. Many times the Lord lays out severe trials for us in order to teach us patience. Then we can look back and give thanks to the Lord for bringing us through these tribulations. “My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” (James 1:2, 3; Romans 5:3-5) We know the Scripture advocates that it is through much tribulation that ye enter into the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22).

BUT THAT THEY MIGHT EAT THE PASSOVER

By. Donald Johnson

How incredibly ironic! How amazing that those who delivered the Righteous and

Innocent One to be unjustly condemned to death might be so concerned with not defiling themselves by entering the Judgment Hall! How careful they were to follow their precepts of legal correctness, and maintain a sham of justice that they might kill the Lord of Glory!

Caiaphas, the high priest, the symbolic representative of the Jews, attempting to maintain a semblance of continuity in the laws of Moses, used a prophetic truth to justify killing Jesus by counseling the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people, (John 18:14). How blind he was, that he should wrest such a wonderful truth for such a wicked act.

Notice their purpose: To kill. And yet, in their rage to “crucify Him, crucify Him,” they are so careful to maintain their precept of keeping themselves “undefiled.” No wonder the Blessed Redeemer testified, “You make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within are all manner of uncleanness.”

There are those today who come among the church to “kill”: those who counsel with one another to set a trap to bring false witness, to publish lies, to carry gossip, and to condemn for any “cause” that they might have peace (so-called). It doesn’t matter that they may trample others, interfere in the affairs of the churches and willfully disregard the Scriptures. They will see to it that anyone in their way is put away.

Don’t you believe that the Jewish leaders were jealous of Jesus? That it infuriated them that people might follow Him? They did not rejoice and praise God that the truth was taught by Jesus, that many good works of mercy were performed Does this remind you of things you have seen, or suffered for, among those that call themselves “Old School Baptists?” Man-made tradition is sometimes esteemed greater than a “Thus saith the Lord.” Have you witnessed such ones zealously protect man-made associations, and man-

made fences. Especially do they shield their pride and unholy ideas, advocating that they have some right to a certain fellowship on their own terms. They are something special among the people. And if they perceive that anyone might disagree with them, or the people might enjoy the teaching of another one, their impulse is the same as of old — to kill. Not themselves — no. Caiaphas counseled with others to have Jesus killed, and they counseled to have others do the wicked work.

Did you ever wonder how Caiaphas and the other Jews felt after Jesus died on the cross? Happy? relieved? triumphant? Are there those today who would feel satisfaction that they have in similar manner “killed” another brother?

Beloved, let us make it clear. There is never an occasion where we could ever be justified in killing another, or even fighting with them. Yes, they physically killed Jesus, but, of course, we are referring to the actions of those who attempt to destroy the influence of others by having them put into a position where they may not fellowship among the churches. The motivation for “killing” in any sense is the same — hate and natural jealousy.

What about the brother that does trespass against us? Are we to kill him? Are we to tell others about his trespass? Are we to plot against him with others as to how we may have our revenge? Are we to run to some elder or deacon to find out what they would do? A thousand times no! Read Matthew 18: 15-17.

Beloved, it is evident in recent years among some Old School Baptist churches that many have not been taught what they should do Scripturally. Rather, they have been taught that this is something the associational moderator and his advisers are to handle; or, some other such error. Therefore there has become a predominance of such people among them, and have justified their presence

by contending that “this is the way it has always been.” (Ed. But it hasn’t been) We don’t know why.

Something happened a long time ago. This old elder or deacon fell out with another and a split occurred. How many such splits have been over vital Scriptural matters? How many have been over the jealousy and vain natural emotions of men? How many have been glad that one was “killed” because they disagreed with another’s opinion?

We do not say anything has taken place accidentally, or outside the purpose of God. However, it is very important that we *never, never* use the will and purpose of God (which is secret to us!) to *justify wrong*. God forbid that we ever call “evil good.” It was the will of God that Christ die, but remember, Peter emphatically taught that they took Jesus by “wicked hands and crucified and slew Him,” (Acts 2:23), “and *denied* the Holy One and the Just, and *desired* a murderer to be granted unto you,” “and *killed* the Prince of Life.” (Acts 3:14)

Was Peter praising them for their actions? Did Peter say they were justified in their wickedness because “Jesus was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God?” (Acts 2:23) No! God forbid! This would be the same sinful reasoning of the Jews who winked at falsely accusing Jesus and delivering Him to be unjustly killed; yet could place such great importance upon keeping themselves (the outside of the cup and platter) undefiled, that they might eat the passover — what blindness!

Beloved, one very distinct mark upon those who are blessed with the sealing of the Holy Spirit is their sincere desire to follow and practice what the Scripture teaches. They have a love and respect for the Scripture. They are blessed to desire to yield to the Scripture. They desire to know what saith the Lord — not what saith man. Not what is popular, or customary, but what is right. Not

to condone sin, but to rebuke sin openly, that others may fear. They are blessed to love one another. Their joy is to see and experience the fruits of the Spirit. They detest the works of the flesh. They are not hardened by the truth, but love it and love those others who are of the household of faith.

Jesus taught many times that they sought to kill him for this reason: “because I tell you the truth.” Jesus told Pilate the cause that He came into the world was “that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.” (John 18:37)

Those not blessed with spiritual life to know the truth, hated it and hated Jesus, because He spoke it. In reality He was and is The Truth.

He who professes to know and love the truth, and who hates his brother —is a liar. The truth is not in such a one. Be not deceived, beloved. He that advocates hate, division, strife, back-biting, such are lovers of themselves more than lovers of God. Those that are covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, unthankful, unholy, truce-breakers, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse, and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, *which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (II Tim. 3:13-17).

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are

ravening wolves. Ye shall *know them by their fruits.*” (Matt. 7:15-16) “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” “And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.” Yes, we know we can do nothing of ourselves, therefore He comforts us by saying, “For if our heart condemn us. - .“ Oh, my soul, what a great blessing that we do feel that condemnation of sin, and “God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things,” oh, praise the name of the Almighty, All-knowing God.

“Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.” Beloved, there is a blessed confidence, not in ourselves, nor in any other man, but rather in our covenant God when we are blessed to love in deed and in truth; which, beloved, we are commanded to do — and he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him and He in him.”

Notice how the following Scriptures interpret one another. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” (I John 3:14) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.” (I John 5:2-3) “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” (I John 4:7)

Much more can be determined about a person by what he practices and teaches concerning love and truth, righteousness and godliness; than you can determine by what he teaches about predestination and election. Correct doctrine, or holding out the shingle of Primitive Baptist; or the banner of man-made tradition, cannot substitute for the manifestation and deeds of brotherly love.

Caiaphas knew the *letter* of the Scripture. The Jews knew the outward, or ceremonial

laws, which forbade them to enter the Judgment Hall lest they be defiled, but what were their words and deeds — “Crucify Him, Crucify Him” --“Away with Him” — “We have no king but Caesar” — “But that they might eat the passover.”

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Prov. 14:12) There are those who follow — and then go away —because their motivation is far that which perishes, and is only felt and desired by the flesh: the loaves and fishes.

But, thank God, there were and are a chosen few who have no other place to go. They have been blessed to feel and to know that there is only one source for the “words of eternal life.” These, also, are blessed to wonder and rejoice in the sweet portion in this truth, “obedience is better than sacrifice.” How tenderly and mercifully the Holy Spirit feeds the soul with joy as we rejoice in the truth that God desireth not sacrifice; else would we give it: “Thou delightest not in burnt offering.” “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart.” Our dear brother, Robt. Benny (deceased) quoted that verse and said: “God loves that kind of fellow, and I do too.”

QUOTE FROM DR. JOHN WATSON

“The work of the ministry is a great one, and has respect to the ingathering of *unbrought* ones, as well as the edifying of those already *brought*. The most of our preachers are good sheep feeders, and in that way will often preach more divinity in one sermon than many Arminians do in all the course of their lives! They know how to feed and manage the strong, but are generally bad nurses, indifferent “hunters” and unskilful “fishers.” The “babes, the weak, the sickly,” too often suffer in their hands; and the *unbrought* have no Gospel door opened to

them; they stand without, unbidden, unexhorted and unpersuaded.

Suppose a rich man *was* to make a great feast of meats of marrow and fatness, of milk, of wine well refined on the lees, and of cordials; and were to invite all the families and strangers around to attend. There would be meat and wine for the strong, milk for babes, wine for the weak, and cordials for the sick —nothing would be wanting. But awhile afterwards, another rich man, in imitation of the first, makes a feast, and invites in like manner all the families around him; they come at his bidding, with their children, sick and strangers, but he has provided nothing but meat for all the variety of guest. The adults eat and are satisfied; but the children cry, and there is no milk for them; the weak complain, but there is no wine; the sickly suffer, but there are no cordials; the strangers stand off, and there is no invitation given them!

To continue the illustration — sometimes the meats, wines, milk and cordials are so mixed up in the preparation, that none can eat. I shall not stop to apply, the application can be readily made.

In our day, ministerial jealousy should be a dead issue among us — none of us have enough light left to create envy! Only enough to be pitied. A jealous minister among us must have badly directed emotions. Perhaps such a one has his sight set quite too low! Surely a jealous minister should be pitied if he lust after the gifts among us now. He is surely mentally ill!

Please check your address label for the expiration date. We always desire you remember those who seek the truth of God, and send us their addresses. We send them samples. Thanks. — Ed.