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#### DUTY FAITH By S. C. Phillips

An Article in *The Sovereign Grace Message* (July, 1982) on “Calminians” (a term describing a mixture of Calvinism and Arminianism) states in part: “Hardshellism and Arminianism are informed by the same basic principle. They both believe that ability limits responsibility. The hardshell with this principle denies duty faith and duty repentance of natural men under the hearing of the gospel. He believes that because the natural man does not have the ability to truly believe the gospel, in repentance from those things which are contrary to this faith, that he does not have the responsibility to.”

Where the author gained such an opinion of the cause of our objection to duty faith, we do not know. In no way do we believe that man’s inability destroys his responsibility. We only question what standard constitutes the basis for man’s responsibility, the extent and limitations thereof, and who sets the standard by which all men shall be judged upon failure of compliance.

Rather than allow dead-letter Calvinists use subtlety of argument to advance their duty-faith by telling others what we believe, we propose to speak for ourselves in this article.

The accommodation of Arminian natural religion with Calvinism is a strange hybrid. Many inconsistencies are found in this mixture, and one of the strangest is that of duty faith.

Historically, it had its rise in Andrew 25 Fuller’s Calvinistic humanism, which attempted to “make God’s *universal invitations to sinners*” an “honest” invitation. Thus, in its first introduction, it was applied toward making Gospel precepts to be the “duty” of all men to believe, repent, and embrace the Gospel obligations of the new covenant. And, it supposed, that the *failure* of sinners to do so would then be the cause of

their just condemnation. We read a great deal about “Christ dying for all the sins of all mankind, except for the sin of unbelief.” There is no Scriptural support for this premise, since nowhere can a text be cited that Christ died only for some of the sins of sinners, leaving the remainder unatoned. If such were the case, we would have an insurmountable problem in finding an answer for such unatoned sins! Only the Catholic purgatory would supply a substitute for them, which, (even in that system), would be insufficient.

Today, duty faith has evolved into two major branches. Among Arminians, and with some free grace Calvinists, it applies only to the Fullerite concept mentioned above. However, among some Primitive Baptists, (and some Baptist Bride groups of Calvinist ministers) it is now applied to the elect who earn blessings by obedience to duty faith (as with some Primitive Baptists); or to earning special rewards in heaven and in the Baptist church by faithful observance of one’s duty, (as with some Baptist Briders). Both concepts are element of freewillism based upon a system of works. They deny the effectual working of the indwelling Spirit within the saint. And both are attempts to stir people up to push beyond sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. We fear that the motivation springs from a recognition that too many members among these congregations may show too little evidence of a work of grace, or the ministers expect more of them than grace requires. So if grace is not seen to be working effectually in them, then perhaps duty will (at least) move them to act as if grace were working. That would “appear” to supply more unity of witness among those mixed congregations. But whatever the motive, duty faith is a vile motive for worshiping the God who deserves worship from a heart full of adoration and love.

#### I. Duty faith *unto salvation*:

As mentioned earlier, the view that it is the duty of all mankind to repent and believe *unto salvation* was developed by Andrew Fuller among Baptists. According to his followers, unbelief was the only sin not covered by the atonement of Christ.

Those who oppose this view do so on the basis of the revelation of God respecting salvation by grace alone, and the just condemnation of the wicked. All free grace believers — including duty-faith men — believe that God elected His people in Christ before the foundation of the world, and that election was not conditioned upon anything done by them meritoriously. (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 9:11, and II Tim. 1:9). Those believing in unconditional election are aware that if *some* of Adam’s offspring were chosen, then *others* were not. They believe that Christ died for all the sins of the elect, and thus judicially saved them from condemnation. They *do not* believe that He shed His blood for the sins of those whom He foreknew would *never* be embraced in His covenant blessings.

If one believes that Christ died only for the elect, then upon what basis does one believe that God expects, or purposes, the *non-elect* to repent and believe *unto salvation*? *Must* the universality of fallen man believe that Christ died for them, when in fact the Biblical record is that He did not? Is it, then, a “duty” of the non-elect to believe that Christ died for them, when He did not; and shall these be punished in hell for not believing a lie? “Ah,” one may say, “that destroys man’s responsibility!” Does it? Where has God ever made man responsible to believe a lie?

Many Fullerites and former Fullerites, when faced with the above objection immediately charge their opponents with being “anti-evangelical,” “hypercalvinists,” or “antinomian.” But, since when should Andrew Fuller be allowed to define “antinomianism,” seeing that he is the father

of the worst brand of freelivers yet! This writer has been asked on many occasions, “Do you believe in preaching the Gospel to sinners?” He reads a steady diet of “Hardshells do not believe in preaching the Gospel to sinners!” We cannot answer for all those who (like us) oppose “duty faith unto salvation,” but our ministers and churches fully believe in preaching the Gospel indiscriminately to all manner of men. But, we cannot apply grace covenant promises indiscriminately, for God has not given them promiscuously. The application of the Gospel promises is strictly God’s exclusive work. It must be that way, for He has never given us the Lamb’s Book of Life with the names of those He has written therein. WE ARE TO CALL UPON SINNERS TO REPENT, BUT WE HAVE NO AUTHORITY TO CALL UPON THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS HYPOCRITE TO DO SO. In the parable of the hundred sheep, our Lord went into the wilderness to seek AND to SAVE that *one* “which is lost,” and took it home; but *left* the “ninety and nine *just* persons which *need no repentance*” in “the wilderness.” (Luke 15:3-7) By His own testimony, He “came not to call *the righteous*, but *sinners to repentance*.” (Matt. 9:13) Are His servants greater than their Lord? Are they required to call those whom their Master refused to call? Equally important, are those self-righteous souls who need no repentance obligated to repent and believe *unto salvation* in the absence of a felt need to do so? We find no such Scriptural injunction. If He has not enjoined it upon the non-elect, then by what authority are they “duty-bound” to repent and to believe unto salvation?

The called and qualified ministers of God are to preach the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the severity of God’s judgments, the terrors of His impeccable law, the justice of God, the mercies of God, the provisions of grace, and to call upon men everywhere to repent and

believe in Christ — but they must not, yea, dare not attempt to extend the law or the Gospel beyond the limits set by God Himself. It is well to keep in mind that ... we are unto God (not man) a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to *the one* we are the savour of death unto death; and to *the other* the savour of life unto life. *And who is sufficient for these things?* For we are not *as many*, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” (II Cor. 2:15-17)

The condemnation of the wicked rests upon a deeper foundation than unbelief. Paul went to great extent to prove that it rested upon Adam’s disobedience and the imputation of his transgression upon them. For he said, “Wherefore, as by *one man* sin entered in the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. (For until the law *sin was in the world*: but sin is *not imputed* when there is no law). Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.” (Rom. 5:12-14) What, then, were those individuals required to believe, or what commandments were they enjoined to perform, from Adam to Moses? Sin WAS in the world and the consequence of sin — death — reigned even then. Were they required to repent and believe *unto salvation*? If so, by what law?

We have heard it was the “moral law, or a higher law,” and for years believed it ourself. But, we have no record of a moral law being given from Adam to Noah, nor from Noah to Abraham. But, we find the law, or covenant, of circumcision given to Abraham, and to *his seed* - but it included no other. And what about the law given to Moses for Israel? We can not find it given to any except Israel. Hence, we ask: What *legal duties* are required

where there is no law or covenant?

One may say, “But today, the law and the Gospel has been given.” This is true — but still the question stands: to whom are they given? The law was given to Israel. Was the Gospel kingdom also given them? Jesus said relative to Israel in His day when the disciples inquired why He spoke in parables to the masses: “... Because it is given *unto you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but *to them it is not given*. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.” (Matt. 13:11) We understand that the disciples were the ones “*who hath*” and would be given more; and the Jews were the ones who “*hath not*” and the law, which they did have, (or seemed to have) would be taken from them.

What then does natural man in his natural state have enjoined upon him to perform? Our answer is, whatever God enjoined upon him in providence in the light of nature or reason, or directly by word of commandment. And, this is done *individually*, seeing that collectively (as a people) the Gentiles have no covenant. The Biblical record abounds with instances to prove that God commands individuals. We will select a few instances to illustrate and to clarify the position we are defending.

The Zidonians were not Jews, but Phoenicians. God spoke to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, “Arise, get thee to Zarephath which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, *I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee*.” (I Kings 17:9) Now, the Lord commanded this Gentile woman to do something, which in nature she could not do — feed the prophet — for she had no meal. Now, does this inability destroy her responsibility to obey God and feed the prophet? Of course not! But the performance of this command is totally out of her creature

power. Her responsibility can only be accomplished by free UNMERITED GRACE! What duties and obligations did she now have? Did she have any by Israel’s law, such as tithing? No. Did she have any by the Gospel of Christ? No. What then? To feed the prophet as God commanded her! And God Himself provided the meal (ability) for them both!

Do we need to speak at length of Abram whom God called, saying, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee”? (Gen. 12:1) What law in Ur of the Chaldees was he under? What covenant obligations and duties did he rest under at the time of this call? Paul answers for us saying, we say that *faith* was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.” (Romans 4:9-13). “And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after (Abraham), cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” (Gal. 3:17) And so then, Abraham who was justified before the law, and before Christ came, was justified by faith in a covenant that was confirmed before God in Christ before the foundation of the world. What then were his covenant duties and obligations? To believe God! But, were any others of that generation so obligated to believe that God also would give them a seed in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed? Were any others required to receive the sign of that covenant by being circumcised and having their male offspring circumcised the eighth day? Of course not!

Athens was a Gentile city-state. Paul visited it and saw their idolatries, and even an altar with the inscription: “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.” This text is suppose to be the bastion of the duty-faith universal

invitation to believe *unto salvation*. (Note that we have repeatedly italicized the words *unto salvation*.) But is this the case? Look carefully at Acts 17:22-31. In the text we find both a very broad application, and a specifically limited one *unto salvation*. It is an absolute predestinarian (not freewill) text, for we read of God who “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and *hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;*” (vs. 26) We see a *limited* application in the next verse which says, “that they should seek the Lord, *if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us:*” (vs. 27)

Now notice the *broad* application: “Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. And the times of *this ignorance* God winked at; but *now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:* because He hath appointed a day, in which He will *judge the world* in righteousness by that Man whom *He hath ordained;* whereof He hath given assurance unto *all men* in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” (vss. 29-31). Of which repentance is the apostle speaking? Repentance unto salvation, or repentance from idolatry? Which is his subject? Idolatry! What “stirred” Paul’s spirit to speak of repentance? “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to *idolatry.*” (vs. 16) What was the *ignorance* that God once winked at? Certainly not covenant transgressions! but at *idolatry*. Finally, did he command that they believe in Christ *unto salvation*? Not one word! Yet, what was the *effect* of the message? “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, *some mocked;* and others said, *we will hear thee again* of this matter ---- howbeit *certain men gave unto him, and believed...*” (vss 32-34)

We often see the same three classes of people under a Gospel message. Those who believe are those “who haply *feel after Him, and find Him.*” But the apostle required no duty-faith of any present to believe that Christ died for them all, nor did he give “an invitation” to a single one of them! He preached consistently what he knew by experience, i.e., that salvation was exclusively of the Lord and not of the preacher or the hearer! Since Paul was sent of God and was moved in his spirit because of their idolatry, those who believed *not* were duty bound to repent from their *idolatry*, and for this they will be condemned. But for them to believe that Christ died for them (when He did not) was not an obligation under which they had been placed. They were obligated to believe the record that God “hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained,” and to believe the record “that He hath raised Him from the dead.” But we find no covenant promise given them, and hence no covenant obligation required of them.

In spite of the fact that Paul gave no “Gospel appeal”, or invitation,” did he not indeed preach to sinners? Yes, he did: “among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.” (vs.34) Did he preach indiscriminately to all manner of men? Yes, “to some who mocked,” to others who said “we will hear thee again” and to the “certain men” and woman who “believed.”

II. Duty-faith unto time-salvation, or “Christian Duty.”

The heading above will be strange to most of our readers. There are no books or literature in the records of our forefathers which use the term or concept. It is a new theory, first recorded at the turn of this century, and the founders of it have only recently passed from the scene.

In religious disputes, extremes beget

extremes and sometimes the extremes merge. So it is with this one. It was the result of men who concluded that the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God over all things somehow made God the author of sin. Modern warfare led to the development of new theories designed to refute and to stamp out this “imaginary evil.” The opponents of a sovereign God, fearful that predestination would encourage men to ungodly deportment, *limited* the sovereignty of God (in their own thoughts). Concluding that His sovereignty was too broad, they at first limited it to His spiritual kingdom only. However, within two decades, (by the 1930’s) the theological problems within that boundary were too great. So, the younger ministers limited it still further. His sovereignty now, they reasoned, extended *only* to election, to some individuals predestinated to heaven, to calling, to justification, and to glorification. But still problems persisted. As it now has evolved, His sovereignty is limited to election, to Holy Spirit regeneration, (this one now is also being denied) and to glorification. We are reasonably confident that we know where it will end before the century is out — the Missionaries followed the same theological process from Calvinism to Pelagianism too!

Within all that modification, the first issue was a fear that free grace would result in ungodly deportment. Today, the theory above has arrived at the very thing feared. According to the present view, God elected and predestinated His people — not unto salvation — but to heaven and immortal glory. The general tone of that misguided ministry is that one need never repent, believe, or even hear of Christ, never perform any good works, never follow Christ, or believe anything other than that there is a Higher Power (somewhere) that ought to be worshiped ( a tree or black stone —Kaaba — will do, so we have heard some preach); and still they can be God’s “poor little disobedient children” and who

will have “eternal salvation” and finally will be housed in heaven and immortal glory. But what of all the other aspects of God’s work in the saints? They classify them as “duties” which they “ought” to perform. If they do, they are rewarded with joy in the “good old church” — theirs, of course — and if not, they “miss the blessings of their time salvation,” but will still be saved in heaven. And this theory, far more than absolute predestination coupled with effectual grace, tends to ungodliness. As honorable christian deportment falters, duty-faith is pressed more and more in hope of motivating church members to at least act like christians!

The other branch of duty-faith is found wide-spread among free grace Baptist churches presently coming from the Arminian groups. The duty-faith of these did not spring from the controversies within the church, but is a hangover from the modern convention Baptists’ freewillism. Nor is it nearly as bad as the above.

Simply put, they believe that one can be a born-again christian without sanctification of the truth. In other-words, while they agree that Arminianism is heresy, yet they believe the preaching of freewillism can regenerate a soul. They must make some kind of accommodation for this inconsistency; therefore, they hold that a free grace Baptist church, organized by some particular formula (they have not yet achieved unity as to what formula is proper) is the Bride of Christ. The Bride of Christ must be a former Arminian Baptist church, having a Calvinistic creed, and reorganized, or reconstituted as a New Testament Baptist Church by direct authority of another Sovereign Grace Baptist Church having Arminian Missionary baptism. Those who are faithful in the Baptist Bride Church will be married to the Bridegroom. All others will be “attendants” at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Within the framework of this needful faithfulness, christian duties per-

formed earn rewards in heaven, which the unfaithful will not receive, and they will also be left out of the marriage. However, these unfaithful servants, like those “disobedient children who miss their time salvation, will still be in heaven — somewhere. Since these unfaithful ones will be “attendants,” then heaven to them is a glorified earthy place still requiring works of some manner. To be faithful enough to be in the Bride, one desiring this high position must tithe, support missionaries, and be regular in their church attendance; and refrain from doing things the preacher considers unchristian-like — usually the same things Arminians hold.

This writer has been associated with both of these groups, and this is the best he can do to explain the *general*, and dominant views. In neither case should the reader extend the above views to all within these groups. There are various differences within them, but the above particular views are the ones we have in mind as we continue to discuss the subject: duty-faith.

We have raised the question of what law natural man is under; and what covenant obligations were duty-bound for him to perform. Now, let us consider the question in another light. We have pointed out that individually he is under whatever commandment God gives to him.

The apostle says that “for as many as have sinned *without the law* shall also perish *without the law*: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the *hearers* of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which *have not the law* do by *nature the things contained in the law*, these, *having not the law*, are a law unto themselves: which shew the *work* of the law” — not the law itself — “*written in hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or excusing one another;) in the day when God

shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.” (Rom. 2:12-16)

So there is a work of the law found among Gentiles who “have not the law.” It is this work of the law, rather than duty-faith, which spiritual Israelites delight it with effectual grace. Paul labored with the Jewish believers in Rome over circumcision and again reaches for proof among the Gentile believers among them, saying, “And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the *letter* and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is *outward* in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one *inwardly*; and circumcision is *that of the heart, in the spirit*, and not in the letter; whose *praise is not of men, but of God.*” (Rom. 2:27-29)

There are Jews resting legally under a covenant law, to whom the law is dead. There are Gentiles who have no law-covenant. There are Jews and Gentiles who have the *work of the law* in their hearts. It is in this we find the mark or sign of spiritual circumcision, which is our comfort and joy; for it is the work which the letter of the law never could perform!

Now where this work of the law is found, there is a covenant. Where there is a covenant, there are covenant obligations which extend only to the covenanted people. Is the following example a covenant for us who by grace believe? You be the judge: “For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when *I will make a new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and *I regarded them not*, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord;” (Heb. 8:8-10) Let us

pause here to correct an objection. It is argued by duty-faith men that this new covenant is to be made with the Israelis in some latter day, yet to come. Why, then, does Paul, writing to a Gentile church apply it to them? “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” (what law?), being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessings of Abraham might *come on the Gentiles* through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man’s covenant” (which this covenant is not), “yet if it be confirmed, no man *disannulleth, or addeth thereto*. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, *as of many*; but as of one, And to thy Seed, *which is Christ*. And this I say, that the covenant that was *confirmed before IN CHRIST*, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, *cannot disannul*, that it should make the promises of none effect.” (Gal. 3:13-17) Now “this” covenant, the “new” covenant, embraces Gentiles, and the Israel in the text is *spiritual Israel* — NOT national Israel.

Whatever obligations, or duties, are found in this covenant are enjoined upon the parties thereof: so let us search them out. Here is that covenant: “*I will put My laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man and his neighbor, and every man his brother, Saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*” (Heb. 8:10-12).

What are the provisions of this covenant? On God’s part, what will He do for the covenanted participants? (1) Put His laws in their minds; (2) Write His laws in their hearts; (3) Be a God unto them; (4) Have mercy on

their unrighteousness; and (5) Not remember their sins and iniquities any more. What all is embraced on their part? (1) Be unto Him a people; (2) Refrain from teaching every man, his neighbor, and his brother to know the Lord (a proscription). As you can readily see, this certainly is NOT a *works covenant*! It is purely free grace! Now talk about duties and obligations and you can grasp the meaning of Christ’s words in Luke 17:10, “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all things which are commanded you, say, We are *unprofitable servants*: we have done that which was *our duty to do.*” And until one does all the commandments and then goes on to do more than commanded, such have done their duty. Until then, they are unprofitable servants only. Who is bound most by this covenant? God or man? Under the old covenant, the provisions thereof covered *four books* of the first five! And it was a burden, of which Peter testified, “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a *yoke upon the neck of the disciples*, which neither our fathers nor we *were able to bear*?” (Acts 15:10) Consider the context of Peter’s remarks and see what he and James and the other apostles enjoined upon the Gentile believers: “Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.” (Acts 15: 19.21) That, dear reader, is all of the law which was enjoined upon believers! And that isn’t enough for duty-faith men. In fact, they ignore even this. The same argument stands as well today as then relative to shackling a poor disciple under a duty-faith system of works. It failed before because of the weakness of man; and for the same cause it shall ever fail. Because of free grace flowing from the love of God, He took the

hard part (to man) of the covenant obligations upon Himself. He will put the law in their minds thus assuring them that His law will not be forgotten; and through the powerful and effectual operation of the Spirit dwelling within, He keeps them in remembrance before Him in love. It is free grace! He writes His law upon their hearts, and by the same operation of the Spirit causes them to love and to delight in those laws; to feel them; to have a higher morality than law-duty can ever hope to attain. It is free grace! He, and none other, will be their God, and by the gracious work of the Spirit they worship Him in love and adoration and praise. It is free grace! He will have mercy on their unrighteousness, and by His blessed Spirit they will ever be feeling the sweet pardoning love and repentance flowing from godly sorrow wrought within. It is free grace! He will not remember their sins and iniquities, which He laid upon His Darling Son and extracted the ultimate demand of holy justice and the penalty of the broken law, and gives peace like a river unto them. It is free grace! He made sure that He kept within His own hands the divine instruction, or introduction of Himself to His people; for they shall not teach every man to know Him, for “to know Him is life eternal”, which no man can pass on to another. He is our prophet, priest, and king. He made sure that He kept within His own grasp the faithfulness to this covenant, for they *could not* keep it. They have the easier part — being a mere recipient thereof! To worship Him and refrain from the arrogance of attempting to make believers, or sheep, out of reprobates and goats. This, too, is free grace!

No, my brethren, there is no reward system based upon what man can or ought to do for the Lord. The law of God which is written in the mind and heart of such as are brought into the covenant are the living statutes of God’s kingdom. What is written in their hearts is perfect and in complete

harmony with all Scripture and with the holiness of God. All admonitions, exhortations, and injunctions of the Gospel are predicated upon the implantation of that law “after the inward man,” and causes the quickened child of God to “delight in the law after the inward man.” (Rom. 7:21-22)

That new covenant law — the law of the Gospel — is activated by the commandment of God through the Spirit unto obedience and compliance. As Paul stated: “For I” (who said “as concerning the law, was blameless) “was alive without the law once.” — When was a Jew ever without the law of Moses! — “but when the *commandment came*, sin revived, and I died. And the *commandment*, which was *ordained to life*, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the *commandment*, deceived me, and by it slew me.” (Rom. 7:9-11) It is by this same commandment that we love God and love one another. (I John 2:3-4; 4:21)

None of the above makes us careless “hearers” only, nor tends to antinomianism. Powerful words we need, and powerful words we have, to perform good works: “For we are HIS WORKMANSHIP, created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS, which God HATH BEFORE ORDAINED that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10) I say those are powerful irresistible words, for we are *ordained* unto good works; and these good works are the *work of the law in us; and God never left that up to us* willy-nilly. When we groan for the removal of sin, God “hath *wrought us* for the selfsame thing,” (II Cor. 5:5) and “it is God which *worketh in you* both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13) He makes us “vessels of mercy” to “the end that He may stablish your hearts *unblameable in holiness* before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.” (I Thess. 2:13) There is no “chance” of failure in this for we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of

Christ. It is all free grace; not duty-faith! And ALL the blessings of that covenant of grace were given ALL the saints, equally, in heavenly places in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:1-6)

The reward of all the saints is a crown of life, which is Christ their all in all. The reward is not a higher position which was merited by duty, nor any conditioned upon creature works or faithfulness. If one is not in the Bride of Christ in that great day, he is shut out forever. There will be no door-keepers, cooks, and bottle-washers as “attendants” at that supper! There will be no big “I’s” and little “You’s”; no “holier than thou” elements. There are none in the true church below and certainly will not be in that church above. Matt. 11:7-10 is a discourse upon the unique office of John the Baptist. It is regret-able that verse is taken from the context by some to defend the indefensible. Christ states that none born of women are greater than John the Baptist. The “least” in the kingdom of heaven are not born of women, but born from above, of the Spirit. Further our Lord speaks to the disciples at *that time* and tells them that he that *is* least in the kingdom of heaven (on earth in the very presence of the King of that kingdom) *is* greater (as Spirit is greater than flesh) than John the Baptist. Christ’s statement at the beginning of the 11th verse is relative, i.e. comparing those born of women, but the latter part of the verse simply displays the ascendancy of the Spirit over the flesh — even *before* the glory is revealed as to what we “*shall be.*”

John 3:25.36 is a record of John the Baptist who is here speaking *as* the law and the prophets. The law and the prophets “rejoiced” at the “voice” of the Bridegroom — His words were spirit, and truth, and life. The law rejoiced because He magnified the law..., the prophets rejoiced because they were vindicated. His words were now written, not upon stone, but engraved upon the hearts of

His subjects. The law (as given by God through Moses) thundered from heaven to the earth. But, the Lawgiver from Zion speaks of heavenly things (to those who have ears to hear) to those who are made to sit together with Him in “the heavenlies” ... yes, even Abraham, and Isaac and all the prophets (including John the Baptist) shall sit down in the kingdom of God. (luke 13:28-30)

John the Baptist culminated the witness of the “law and the prophets” and just as they served to the end of watching over the Bride, so to, he was a “friend of the Bridegroom” — not an “attendant”. The role of the friend of the Bridegroom was to espouse the Bride to the Groom. So ALL God called and qualified ministers are the same, for Paul wrote: “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I HAVE ESPOUSED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, that I may PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST.” Thus, the failure to understand the role of Gospel ministers toward the members of the Body of Christ; or to understand the role of John the Baptist as a friend of the Bridegroom — or even what that office was — has led to the whole body of concepts termed “The Baptist Bride” and the conditional scheme of future heavenly blessings as a reward of debt for works done misguidedly in the flesh.

Those who were BLESSED WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST will still find them there; and those who were not will not be there to miss any. For salvation is by free grace — all of it; and not of works — none of it; neither in time or in eternity; neither in the church below, or in the church above. “Salvation is of the Lord.” (Jonah 2:9) “Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and He shall bring forth the Headstone thereof with shouting, crying, Grace, grace unto it.” (Zech. 4:7) To elect Israel of old, it was declared: “Thy Maker is thine Husband; the Lord of hosts is

His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called.” (Isa. 54:5) Where there is a husband, there must be a bride; where there is no bride, there can be no husband. There is but one husband and one bride.

### “YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE”

By W.W.Hudson

“*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*” Gal. 5:4

John Gill’s exposition of this text states the following: “Gal. 5:4: ‘Christ is become of no effect unto you’ — Or ye are abolished from Christ — or Christ is abolished unto you; for by their seeking for justification by their own works, it was all one to them as if there was no Christ, and no righteousness in Him, and no salvation by Him; they had nothing to do with Him, nor He with them:

“Whosoever of you are justified by the law,” — That is, who sought to be justified by their obedience to the law, or who thought they were, and trusted in themselves that they were righteous; for otherwise, by the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified:

“Ye are fallen from grace” — That is, either from that grace which they professed to have; for there might be some in these churches, as in others, who were only *nominal Christians*, and formal professors; who had declared they saw themselves lost and undone sinners, destitute of a righteousness, and professed to believe in Christ alone for righteousness and strength, but now trusted in themselves, and in the works of the law: or, from the scheme of grace in the whole of man’s salvation, which will admit of no mixture of works; either it is one or the other, it cannot be both; wherefore by their taking on the side of works, they

showed that they had entirely dropped the scheme of grace: or else from the Gospel of the grace of God, from whence they were removed, through the influence of false teachers; particularly the doctrine of free justification by the grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ: which was entirely set aside by their seeking to be justified by the works of the law; and from this they might be said to be fallen, who were on such a bottom.” (Quoted from: Dr. Gill’s *Commentary*, Vol. VI, page 402)

Notice that Gill used the expression: “they entirely dropped the scheme of grace.” Could we say it this way: Since they sought to be justified by their own works, then they had fallen from the doctrine of grace, or from the teachings and instructions of Jesus Christ? They did not have any use for Christ since they desired to go back under the law.

The doctrine they were taught was given them by the revelation of Jesus Christ. “But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not of man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Gal. 1:11-12) The foundation of this doctrine was revealed by the Spirit of God to His people in due time. “But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (I Cor. 2:10) As we think of the word “reveal”, we notice the Scripture: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will *reveal* Him.” (Matt. 11:27) The only way to know the Lord is by revelation, and this must be given by the Spirit of God!

The Lord directed Paul to mention the foundation when these words were inspired: “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” (I Cor. 2:2)

Dear Reader, do you believe that all who Christ died for will be saved? If not, then He failed in this work, did He not? Or, do you believe that salvation is a partnership between man and God? If that be true, then man has the right to praise himself for performing the deeds, would he not? Also, the Lord would not receive the praise, one hundred percent, would He?

As we consider the foundation, we think of this Scripture: ----- Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” (Rev. 1:5) This is Jesus Christ, who is our salvation, and we have much to rejoice and to praise Him because salvation is not by the deeds of the law, or any condition that we have to perform, because we are not able to do anything spiritually to merit the favor of the Lord. This is why it is of grace.

Notice how Paul rebuked the brethren in Galatians 3:1-3: “O foolish Galatians, who have BEWITCHED you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT, ARE YE NOW MADE PERFECT BY THE FLESH?” They were tempted to leave the doctrines of grace and go back to the works of the law to merit their salvation or blessings.

Briefly, we may think of this Scripture in this way: “Whosoever of you are justified by the law: ye are fallen from grace” — They had departed from the doctrines of grace and were attempting to mix the grace of God with the works of man. Do we not see the same situation in the world of religion today?

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” Some have taken this expression out of the context (“ye are fallen from grace”) and used it in their doctrine to advocate that some of God’s people can fall

away and be cast into hell.

Do the Scriptures teach that a child of God may fall away and finally be lost? Is that any comfort to a poor sinner who desires the presence of the Lord to direct him in the way to travel? I believe that the Scriptures teach that all of the children of God will dwell in the kingdom of God and not one will be missing. “ALL that the Father GIVETH ME SHALL come to me; and him that cometh to Me I will IN NO WISE CAST OUT.” (John 6:37) Notice the expression “all that the Father giveth Me”... This has reference to those who are the body of Christ. These are spoken of as the “chosen,” the “elect,” the “sheep,” the “bride of Christ,” or the “children of God.” “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” (Eph 5:30) The meaning of John 6:37 is that all the children of God will believe in Christ in due time, and none of them will be “cast out.”

How about those who were and are “ordained to eternal life”? (Acts 13:48) Will any fail to inherit heaven and everlasting glory? “... as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” (Acts 13:48) “In whom also we have obtained an INHERITANCE, being predestinated according to the PURPOSE of Him who WORKETH ALL THINGS after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL.” (Eph. 1:10)

And again, “And I give unto THEM eternal life; and they SHALL NEVER PERISH, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which GAVE THEM ME, is greater than all; and NO MAN IS ABLE to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” (John 10:28-29) God the Father GAVE the sheep to Jesus and they CANNOT be plucked out of His hands, nor His Father’s hand. This means that they will NEVER fall away, and be cast into hell. Many speak of “being saved” when they are not “saved” unless they keep themselves so. But we believe that God’s people are both “saved” and “safe.” Being saved, but not safe in His

hand cannot be a comfortable nor God-honoring position.

A child of God may fall into many things for a while, or temporally, as David did, and as Peter when he denied Christ three times, but both were blessed with repentance and perseverance. They were KEPT by the power of God through faith, (I Peter 1:5) as all those who are begotten unto a lively hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“The steps of a good man are ORDERED BY THE LORD: and He delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be UTTERLY CAST DOWN; for the Lord UPHOLDETH him with His hand.” (Psa. 37:23,24) This Scripture shows clearly that the children of God may fall for awhile, yet they will never be cast down into hell. Why? The Lord Himself upholds them and this is given by the inspired Word of God and not from my private views. Notice the expression: “shall not be utterly cast down.” What does it mean? Do you believe it means not to be cast into hell?

“IF HIS CHILDREN forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments: If they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I VISIT THEIR TRANSGRESSION WITH THE ROD, and their iniquity WITH STRIPES Nevertheless My lovingkindness WILL I NOT UTTERLY TAKE FROM HIM, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I NOT break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips.” (Psa. 89:30-34) This Scripture shows that God chastises His people who stray off, but the Lord never takes His loving kindness from them. Is not this proof, or evidence, that all His people will inherit heaven? What of the expression: “My covenant will I not break”? The covenant would be broken if just one given to Christ would miss heaven, whom God beforehand had ordained to eternal life. “...Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the

world.” (Matt. 25:34)

“Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” (Matt. 18:14) Do you believe that the Lord is able to accomplish His will?

“For it is *impossible* for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made par-takers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, TO RENEW THEM AGAIN to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.” (Heb. 6:4,6) In reading these Scriptures, please notice the expression, “it is impossible”. This proves that it is *impossible* for a child of God to finally fall away and be later restored again. Many who profess to believe in falling from grace still expect that if one falls away, he can still be restored to life again. The text proves this impossible, or that one can be cast into hell for whom Christ died.

Are the children of God KEPT by their own power? If not, how are they kept? “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (I Pet. 1:5) If a child of God is KEPT by the power of God, and falls away and goes to destruction, then how strong is the power of God? If God is not able, or willing, to keep His people whom He loves, can we have confidence in the power of God? If we do not have confidence in the Lord, then we cannot truly trust nor believe in Him.

Who are the ones who really trust in the Lord? It is the poor, helpless sinner who realizes that he cannot keep himself and desires the Almighty God of all power to bless him with His manifest presence.

Finally, the text says that whosoever are justified BY THE LAW are fallen from grace. Are any justified by the law? If none are, then none are fallen from grace. What saith the

Scripture? “Knowing that a man is NOT JUSTIFIED by the works of the law, but by the FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be JUSTIFIED BY THE FAITH OF CHRIST, and NOT by the works of the law: for by the WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED.” (Gal. 2:16) “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” We must speak truly where the Bible speaks, and be silent in those things whereof it is silent. The Bible is silent upon a doctrine of final falling of God’s elect people. The rest will certainly fall, being not kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

#### NOTICES

Please check your address label for the expiration of your subscription. Our renewals are not coming in as we hope, and this places a financial burden upon us to continue them. If you know of others who love the truth of free grace, please send us their addresses or a sub.

#### ORIGINS OF ASSOCIATIONS, CORRESPONDANCES, AND STATE CONVENTIONS

(**Note:** We have searched for years for the origins of associations, correspondences, and state conventions. Recently we discovered the original document in the Baptist Library at Rochester, New York which first set forth the plan of union which resulted in these extra-scriptural innovations. We have italicized the portions we wish the reader to specifically take note. We have been asked often of our views of these things, and our answer is: They are unscriptural and of recent human origin. If they had a usefulness in the frontier past, they are certainly now a great plague dividing the household of faith. — S.C.P.)

#### MATERIALS

toward a history of the American Baptist  
By Morgan Edwards, A.M.

1770

#### ADVERTISEMENT

The compiler of the ensuing little volume and eleven more on the same subject would, no doubt, have kept his volumes to himself had not the *motives* which induced him to compile induced him also to publish. The motive to the first was, a desire to know the american Baptists; the motive to the other was, an equal desire to make them known one to another; and the *grand motive* to both is, a solicitude *to unite them together and to settle some useful means of intercourse and familiarity between their churches*, whereof there are on this continent about 300 including the german Baptists. By the said *union* is meant *an union of individuals* into churches so that no baptized believers abide loose and scattered (like the stones of the sanctuary in the book of Lamentations) as is now the case in some places; also, *an union of those churches and of other churches* (independent old Baptists) which have hitherto stood by themselves *into associations in proper vicinities*, which associations may be *multiplied so as to have one in every province*; (state) and likewise, *an union of those associations* (like that of Ketokton and Warren) *to the association of Philadelphia*, which, from its situation, *must ever be central to the whole*. By the forementioned means of intercourse are to be understood, *letters and messengers* from the churches to their respective associations, and from those *associations to their common center* (Philadelphia); and from the center back to the associations, and thence to the churches, and so to individuals. These means will not only be useful for receiving and returning intelligence, mutual advice, help &c., but also for “knitting together” the several parts of the

visible Baptist church on this continent, as the parts of the natural body are by “joints and bands”. Gal. 2:19 This *project* is not a new one, but was begun in the year 1765 when the churches to the west of Philadelphia formed themselves into an association at Ketokton in Virginia (today a Primitive Baptist association — Ed.); and was furthered in 1767 when the churches to the east of Philadelphia did the same at Warren in Rhode Island government, both adopting the philadelphian *plan* and engaging to use the means of union and intercourse before described. The thing is practicable, as appears by five years trial; and withal, most beneficial, as might be proved by variety of examples. What remains is only to *perfect what has been* begun. In order to which the following things have been judged requisite:

1. That the association of Philadelphia be *embodied by charter*; (This ties it with the state — Ed.) and that *one person* from every provincial association be made a *member of that chartered body*.

2. That an *able preacher* be *appointed to visit all the churches in the character and office of an Evangelist*; and a *sufficient fund* raised to defray his expenses. Such a fund was *set on foot* in Philadelphia in 1766, and is increasing every year.

3. That the nature of associations among the Baptists be made public. Something of the kind was attempted in 1769 under the title of *The Sentiments and Plan of the Warren Association*; wherein it is shown that they are *only advisory councils*, disclaiming all jurisdiction and power and every thing else which may clash with the rights of particular churches or those of private judgment; and herein they differ from all assemblies of the kind known by the same or other names.

4. That all the Baptists churches *from Nova Scotia to Georgia* be made sufficiently known one to another; for it hath been found by experience that a want of this kind of

knowledge hath much *retarded the proposed design*. To remedy which (as hinted before) is the end of publishing the following little volumes. And it is presumed the publication will be found adequate to the design; and will also preserve some anecdotes, chronologies and facts which otherwise would have perished with the loose papers from which many were taken, or with the death of ancient people who communicated others from memory. The publisher well knows that the work wants all the apologies he can make both for it, and the price. As to the last he only takes leave to observe that he has not struck off many copies, but just enough to furnish every baptist church with a few. Had he intended to sell to every one that would buy he would have enlarged the edition and so have reduced the price. If the books should not be valuable they will be scarce. As to apologies for the work itself he will not attempt any, being firmly of opinion that if he should lose any reputation by it he cannot lose it in a better way than in endeavouring to promote the baptist interest; which, in his judgment, is the interest of Christ above any in christendom. Whoever finds fault with the performance will thereby intimate that he is able to supply its defects and correct its errors; and if he will do both or either the author would be well pleased should every reader be a faultfinder.

5. Lastly, that the terms of the *proposed union* should be so *general* as not to preclude *any baptist church of fair character, though DIFFERING from others in unessential points of FAITH and order. Practicing believer's-baptism is our denominating article*. If this be taken away we shall differ from the *Independents in no point whatsoever*. And the one thing which distinguishes us from every sect of christians, and made, and keeps us a separate and distinct body of people is, one would think, a sufficient ground of *union among ourselves*,

excepting only where this “truth is held in unrighteousness”.

#### Editor’s Comments

Morgan Edwards was often the moderator of the Philadelphia Association. This association is famous for having been the first Baptist association, organized in 1707 in Philadelphia. It was one of its elders who set up the Ketocton association, which was the first in Virginia in 1765. It set the example for the Warren in Rhode Island in 1767, and these three first began the chain of correspondence.

The Philadelphia diligently followed the above plan of union. It led the way in trapping independent churches into forming associations according to its plan, until few independent churches remained. The chain of correspondence had been built by 1813 when the Philadelphia set up the Baptist Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions. Using the chain of correspondence, it gathered the minutes of all associations of Baptists, of all kinds of them, to communicate the urgent call for missions in 1814. By 1820, it had begun setting up the state Baptist conventions, which resulted in the formation of the Southern Baptists and Northern (American) Baptist Conventions. But by this time, it was clearly leading the way for ecumenicalism and Arminianism causing the rupture in its extra-scriptural structure in the Great Baptist Separation.

With the Great Baptist Separation, those churches which wished to retain the old, and Scriptural, form of church government and doctrine, withdrew from them.

These churches were termed “Old School” in opposition to those following the plan, who were denominated the “New School” or “Missionary” Baptists. In the Black Rock Convention of Predestinarian or Particular Baptists’, all the innovations of the New School Plan was disfellowshipped

except associations and the correspondence. These two innovations remained to plague the churches until the present day in most parts of the country.

For the past half-century, God has been pulling these two innovations up by the roots among Old School Baptists, and separating free grace churches from among the New School Baptists in large numbers. In this separating, it seems strange that churches will still hold on to the innovations that destroy their peace, meddle into their affairs, and attempt in every way to compromise or appease the leaders of that system rather than hold to independence accorded them by the great Head of the Church. In many places already, churches have become defunct and no longer exist because they were more ready to hold to that evil than preserve their own union and peace.

On the other hand, those coming out of the Missionary Plan, which embraced those who *did not* “preclude any baptist church of fair character, though differing from others in unessential points of faith and order” but “practicing believer’s-baptism” as the “denominating article” have and are attempting to build a new denomination while claiming that they are the true church of Christ. They know, without doubt, that their origins lie in Arminian will-worship, and their baptism is contrary to the Gospel of free grace which they now love and proclaim. Yet they seem satisfied to go on without questioning their free-will baptism, while at the same time insisting that others be rebaptized by them in order to have “New Testament baptism”. In a way, that is not practicing what they preach. That is to expect of others what they do not expect for themselves.

Paragraph 5 in the above articles says “And the one thing which distinguishes us from every sect of christians, and made, and keeps us a separate and distinct body of people is, one would think, a sufficient ground of union

among ourselves.” Let us not give this up today. They wanted to be as all others; we desire to be a “peculiar people” still.

### SIMPLICITY

By I.K. of Abingdon, 1841

*“The Lord preserveth the simple”.*  
- Psalm 116:6

I do not understand merely by this simplicity any lack of understanding. Far from it. “Be ye wise as serpents” is the effectual admonition of Christ in the soul as regards both ministers and saints. And “wisdom is *justified* of her *children*.” For the saints are the light of the world, which character any lack of understanding would not be the fulfillment of. In fact, Christ is our wisdom. “To God only wise be glory.” And Christ is God. Therefore, wherever Christ is in the heart there wisdom, like a beautiful root, is gradually striking all its fibres throughout the whole soul. As it is written, “rooted in love.” And he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, only wise. And, says Job, “The root of the matter” (blessed by God) “is in me.” I understand, therefore, by “simplicity”, the first elements, *unmixed*, of all *manifested* good, viz., regeneration, and the subsequent renewing of the Holy Spirit, all short of which is a *made-up* religion, and is quackery and trash altogether as respecteth salvation. (II Cor. 1:12)

It is remarkable that the eye of a serpent and of a dove are so alike. The serpent’s wisdom and the dove’s harmlessness are blended in the saint; either of which characteristics will cut off many. For will not the penetrating and dreadful glance of the serpent wither the silliness of false and dead doctrine, of ignorance, and error in every way? And will not the harmlessness of the dove shrink like the sensitive leaf from the baneful touch of craft?

Thus the justification of Christ a’ wisdom in the supernatural and alluminated soul is eminently a high and very excellent thing. And that justification manifested in the soul is *primarily* couched, I believe, in the garb of this blessed simplicity. For, in fact, this simplicity is no more nor less than a “single eye”. Mark, now, the promises to the single eye! Surely wisdom and harmlessness are conjoined in it; surely the flaming penetration of the serpent, and the blandness anti timid incapacity for all harm of the loving dove are united in the “single eye”! If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of Light.” Now mark that. And what is singleness but simplicity? And what is light spiritually but the divine nature? For God is light. Thus, wherever there is this divine excellence of simplicity, there is “the root of the” whole “matter”, as seeds and buds in the stupendous and universal works of God contain within themselves all that fructifying futurity bids to burst forth into greater expansion.. And a “good man”, therefore, for his part, cannot but admire this virtue of simplicity as being *no mixture*, and as containing the stamina of all true godliness. Therefore, a virtue it is with a witness. For it issues direct from the Fountain of Life. (Prov. 4:23) A man, thus, must be a partaker of the “incorruptible seed” *before* ever he can grow *subsequently* as a “branch” manifested in the Living Vine. There must be the nucleus of a beginning before there can be the enlargement of a future advance. Thus you find simplicity set at the very head of all. (II Cor. 1:12) And I believe where the beginning is not right it will all drop through, like a heavy man on a lath and plaster flooring not properly finished. Down he goes, and down he must go; for there is not substance enough to hold him up. “Salt is good, but if the salt have lost its savour, it is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out.” Well might Christ say, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” For if a man is not

a true branch in Christ the Living Vine, and if a man is not thus really sprung from incorruptible seed, (I Pet. 1:23) what is his branch-like relationship nominally to Christ? Hear! "He is cast forth and is withered; and men" (dead churches and empty professors, as Huntington says) "gather them and cast them into the fire", (of falsehood in one way or the other) "and they are burned", (in this life having no moisture, and in the world to come in hell fire).

This simplicity or single eye, therefore, is like the most excellent seed-corn, and with advantageous and good land for it to be sown in, with duly progressing and propitious seasons, there certainly will be a crop, and a harvest too, and the tiller thereof shall be satisfied. For though winter and the night cover with frosty snows and lonesome darkness both fields, seed, and also fruit, yet there is the embryo or promise sure during the long winter previous; and the live-long nights hinder not, yea, rather (in the inscrutable wisdom of Providence) fructify and enrich the whole forthcoming harvest-gatherings. Thus we read of "the treasures of darkness." And thus, who will charge God with folly in having made winter? But it is acknowledged that winter seasons on our souls are bleak and drear, and that every leaf is stripped away. So spiritually the winter of trial and the dismays of darkness try God's people to the quick. They search the very vitals. And floods also deluge and hide everything at times. "O" say some, "we never get into such places as these. The cooing of the turtle, and the bright shining sun, and the level and smooth tracks of 'all-faith' are our happy lot." I question that word "happy", and rather say of such as I told a friend lately, that *notional* free-grace men and sun-shiny *head-Calvinists* slip through the gilded trap-door of their easy religion down into an endless hell. Thus you will hear the chirping of these twittering *notional Calvinists* everywhere, more and more, for the

*form* without the power, the image without the breath, and the vessel without any seas to sail on, these are promised; for "in the last days perilous times shall come", in which there shall be the "form" (not of mere morality or a medley of doctrine, but) of Calvinism's "godliness" and truth, while the power, experience, and the vital and inward operations, feelingly, thereof are denied. (II Tim. 3:1, etc.)

Thus Paul never could get into this easy path of always-sunshiny and unwinterly religion. We are told that he got into well nigh black despair, as we read at length in II Cor. 1:8, etc. Says he, "We would not have you ignorant of our *trouble* which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure above strength, insomuch so that we despaired even of *life*." "Ah!" says some, "that means the life of his body." Indeed! Why, the life of his body he did not care much for. He hazarded his bodily life for the name of Christ; "neither count I my (bodily) life dear unto me", says he. But this despairing of life, as above, means that he was shaken as to his interest and religion altogether. And, pray, was not David tried about his interest when he fled from Absalom? And, pray, was not Asaph tried about his interest when he refused to be comforted, and said, "Is His mercy clean gone forever?" And Jeremiah, when he said to God in that bold and impassioned language, "Wilt Thou be altogether as a *liar* unto me?" as if, *questionably*, God's promises had failed to him for evermore? And, pray, did not Christ, in the very agonies of hell and death, cry out, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The withdrawal of the divine presence from a living soul is a great water-flood. Hart (with all his great experience) says in aftertimes of himself, in one of his hymns,

"I scarce perceive a glimpse of hope."

But notional and head-Calvinists are wicked

and unquickened men. They have none of these changes, “for who that is dead can feel?”

Paul, therefore, as we read, (II Cor. 1:9, etc.) when he got into his great dismay, and “despaired of life”, and thought that the biting frost of God’s most heavy trial had manifested, by its piercing and tremendous force, that life (without which every thing else was nought) was not in him, says, after his deliverance, that his rejoicing is this; yea, that in the testimony of his conscience he had, and was possessed of this “simplicity” of which we are speaking. “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in *simplicity* and godly sincerity, not with *fleshly wisdom*, but by the *grace of God* we have had our conversation,” or profession of Christ. He thus, you see, is led to put simplicity before either godly sincerity or un-fleshly wisdom, or even the grace of God. And why? Because the grace of God is only a general term; and un-fleshly wisdom is only a general term; and even godly sincerity is rather the stream than the fountain; and do the branches bear the root, or the root the branches? (Rom 11:18) But as for this simplicity it is the primary spot of absolute realities, or regeneration and the Spirit’s renewings; and Paul, therefore, puts it as the very spring and head of all *manifested* good, and so does the Psalmist, for he says, as I have quoted, “the Lord preserveth the simple.” And, pray, what is he preserved unto but eternal salvation? “Kept and preserved by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” (I Pet. 1:5; Jude 1)

Again; I believe this simplicity is spoken of by Isaiah, when he says, “not only that the Lord shall be for a diadem of beauty to the residue of His people”; but, says he also, “for strength to them that,” (in examining whether they be in the faith) “turn the battle to the gate.” And here God, according to His promise, must be for our “strength”, in discernment, for this gate is regeneration

conjoinedly with the renewings; this gate is a single eye, or simplicity; this gate is the incorruptible seed partaken of; (II Pet. 1:4) this gate is as the germ of all good. Without this I shall only be “as a bowing wall and a tottering fence”; without this, however high in profession and a fair show, I am only a tree without roots, a sepulchre that appears not, and the winds will come and blow down that tree; without this simplicity of supernatural wisdom and harmlessness, though I have got, as I or others think, however much knowledge, I am only “a thing” (or instrument) “not having life”, I should only be a timbrel, pipe, or bassoon. And plenty of such bassoons there are, for there are plenty of *glorious knowledge folks* whom I question if they are anything better than flutes or fifes, not having life, but only to make a din.

Thus knowledge, alas! is all in vain. As for “knowledge, it shall vanish away”. (I Cor. 13:8) Thousands of times have I questioned over and over again whether my poor religion is anything better than dead letter-knowledge, for a man may know all mysteries and yet be nothing. This I call “turning the battle to the gate,” and a sharp battle and turning it is! This is not sheltering ourselves under the cuckoo—note of “grace” a general term in the mouth of thousands of hypocrites and “things not having life”. But it is turning the battle to the gate; and a strait gate with a vengeance it is to be manifested to us *internally* as ours thus! Am I regenerate? Am I sure of it? What says my conscience? Am I simple? Am I harmless and wise, a child of God without rebuke by the twofold testimony of my conscience, and the Spirit of God indwelling there? And also, does the parliament at the gate, does the congregation of God’s regenerate children set *their seal* to my religion? for wisdom is eventually justified by all her children. This is simplicity, I verily believe. The glorious manifestive root and life of the whole matter is this. This is the manifestive door and way;

if any man enter in here he shall be saved. And I believe there are hundreds of blessed ones standing without, while the boldfaced dead doctrinalist rushes in. But God resisteth the proud, and sendeth them all repulse-stung empty away; and blessed is every Israelite that has this simplicity, and is “without guile”, for the Lord Himself tells us to “behold” all such, and not those who love the wages of unrighteousness in letter-arrogance. Selected from *The Gospel Standard*.

### **NOTICE TO READERS**

Many of our subscribers are so situated that they have no place to assemble under free grace ministries. We invite all such who have a mind and heart to visit with us, to do so when our churches assemble at New Home Church, Sept. 9,10,11. The meeting house is located 13 miles east of Quitman, Mississippi on highway 18 east. We believe you will find yourself very welcome, and hopefully enjoy the free grace messages.

### **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST**

By Newton Peters, 1887

(Newton Peters of Portland, Indiana was an often correspondant to the household of faith through the Signs of The Times. In the Great Baptist Separation, he cast his lot to remain with the Old School Party, and throughout his long ministry held forth the doctrines of free grace in a very sweet manner, which manner endeared him to the churches.

We have omitted the personal salutations from the article for the sake of brevity.)

I understand that the eyes of the Lord are ever over His people, and that He will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way for their escape. If the saint's lot

seems hard, it is to be remembered that the Lord and Master was tempted in all points like unto His brethren; which temptation was not laid upon Him because of His sins, but because of the transgressions of those that were His enemies, lovers of wickedness, who deserved the death that was laid upon Him, by which death they were liberated. And now who is able to ascribe praise that is in any way worthy of this deliverance?

Dear brethren, I am many times not able to realize the beauty of the truth contained in the Scriptures, especially in the third chapter of Romans, where Paul so pointedly and positively sets forth that there are none that doeth good; that they all have gone out of the way. Everything that was wicked he declared they were guilty of. How then could any one have a hope based upon natural purity? Even the heirs of salvation cannot have a ray of hope in anything that pertains to man, or any merit seemingly due to good men; for Paul tells them of their total depravity in a law sense, and that they were guilty of all that was possible for mankind to be guilty of. Then he turns and tells us where the hope of the children of God rests, and says, “For what the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.”

We can begin to see a purpose, which those that had the law were ignorant of. They thought the law was given that they might have life by the righteousness which was of the law; but when it begins to be manifest to them that by the law is the knowledge of sin, and that the law was added because of transgressions, and that it entered that the offense might abound, they must see that righteousness could not be by the law. It was then learned that the law could not make the comers thereunto perfect; for the law condemned, and by it was the knowledge of sin. Paul summed up the wickedness of both Jew and Gentile, and said, “By the deeds of

the law shall no flesh be justified. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest.”

A new theme is brought forth, one of which they, before Paul had declared it to them, were ignorant, although it was witnessed by the law and the prophets. The *righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ* is unto all and upon all that believe. (**Ed. note:** We wish to make a note that this righteousness is by the *faith of Jesus Christ* — not our faith in Him. In this understanding most Predestinarian Baptists differ with other Calvinists, who believe it is by their faith) “Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare *His righteousness for the remission of sins* that are past, through the forbearance of God.” No doubt it was surprising to both Jew and Gentile for Paul to declare Christ’s righteousness, “that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth.” Then Paul says, “Boasting is excluded;” not by works, but by the law of faith. “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised. So it is here made known to the children of God that after they have been enabled to view themselves as worthy of death, and mourn because of their sins, Christ only can be just in the justifying of them that believe.

Paul told the Ephesian brethren that they had been quickened, who were dead in sins, and had in times past walked according to the course of this world. He shows that they were an erring people. But while they were in that condition, entirely unworthy of the least of God’s favors, he declares God’s goodness toward His disobedient children, and says, “But God, who is rich in mercy — Dear brethren, our God is rich in mercy - and for

His great love wherewith He hath loved us, *even when we were dead* in sins, He hath quickened us together *with* Christ. Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? “If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” When we were enemies, and without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Yea, it was in due time, when hope was gone. God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, having saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not taking into consideration our works, but His wonderful love and mercy, which was given us in Christ before the world began. Therefore blessed are they to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works; being saved by grace, through faith, and not of themselves, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.

Brethren, it seems I have hardly begun this glorious subject, but you will tire of reading a thing you know so much better than I can ever write it. I hope this will be satisfactory, without intruding upon the brethren Beebe; for matter better calculated to comfort and edify the readers of the Signs than anything I could write should be printed for the welfare of the brotherhood. The true shepherds of Zion alone can feed the flock.

Your unworthy brother, if one at all,  
Newton Peters  
(Selected from the *SIGNS*, Sept, 1887)

## IN DEFENCE OF LITTLE FAITH

By William Huntington

All the household of faith are not blessed with full assurance; and it is as evident that the life, power, spirit, and exercise of faith, are not at the command, nor at the disposal of

man; and it is as plain that the old man and the new one, grace and corruption, faith with her fruits, unbelief with her doubts, do dwell in a child of God at one and the same time. There is, in the best of men, a law in the members warring against the law of the mind. And it is clear that assurance belongs to the law of faith and love in the mind; and it is as plain that unbelief is part of the law in the members; and so you will find it when you come to be tried, unless you are one of those who are perfect in the *flesh*; if so you have no battle to fight nor anything to pray for; and it is well for you that your faith is grown so exceedingly! But there are some who are so weak in this grace that they are obliged to pray as the apostles did, "Lord, increase our faith!" and with him that said, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief," and these petitions prevailed with the Savior as well as yours.

Therefore preach the faith, encourage weak faith, and impart that which is lacking in their faith, and let them go on their own pace. "He that believeth shall not make haste" and "He that hasteth with his feet sinneth."

The Lord's family is like Jacob's dove when he said to Esau, "My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant; and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure." (Gen. 33:13, 14)

I have often observed that some of the most renowned saints in the Bible, I mean those that were strong men in grace and mighty in faith, have appeared like little children when God has withdrawn the light of His blessed countenance from them and put them into the furnace of affliction. And we have some in our days who would willingly be thought to excel in this most excellent

grace of faith who, I am persuaded would discover as many doubts upon the deep waters of affliction as Peter did when the boisterous sea hid the face of Jesus from his eyes. Therefore I entreat thee in the behalf of my brother Little Faith (he is a good man, though, like Zaccheus, of little stature), not to drive him with your *strong assurance* into the sycamore tree. If you do, when Jesus comes, He will make him *come down* again!

To be short, the strongest man in faith was once a babe in grace. Those that are weak are to be received but not to doubtful disputations. Faith and her evidences, unbelief and her doubts, do inhabit a believer at one and the same time. There is "little faith", "growing faith", and the "fullest assurance of faith", mentioned in Scripture. Neither the apostles, prophets, nor even God our Savior Himself, ever refused to suckle the babe, lead and feed the child, strengthen the weak, or encourage the ewe great with young. No Bible pastor ever found the whole family of God in the full assurance of faith; much less did they confine their ministry to those only who are called "fathers" in Christ. Lambs stand in more need of the shepherd's aid than grown sheep or old rams; and the children are more craving after food than aged fathers who can feed themselves... I would caution thee, as David did Joab, to deal gently with the young man, even Little Faith....

We are to separate the vile from the precious, and the chaff from the wheat, as the Lord discovers them; to purge out the old leaven, to draw proper lines, to show the sincere from the hypocritical, and to purge ourselves from disorderly and false professors. But the command to Simon is applicable to every minister of Christ: "Lovest thou Me? Feed My lambs; feed My sheep." The weaklings of the flock are to be fed as well as the sheep.