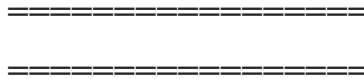


The Final Commission of Jesus Christ

**A Few Observations
In Light of the Holy Scriptures**



**Together with an Appendix
Setting Forth the Historical Position
of Primitive Baptists
on the Final Commission**

By Elder Vince Hardy

Third Edition

**BRYAN, TEXAS
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR**

2025

The Final Commission of Jesus Christ

First Edition, March 2002

Second Edition, December 2018

Third Edition, January 2025

Photocopy reproduction of this pamphlet in its entirety is permitted for the advancement of the truths contained herein.

Note: The reader is apprised that all bolded and/or underlined words in quotations were added by myself for emphasis; VH.

Foreword

By Elder Bernard Gowens

This short work on the Final Commission of Jesus Christ by Elder Hardy expresses an obvious explanation of the Scriptures found in Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-20, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21-23, Acts 1:4-8, and Acts 10:40-42. The context of these verses is frequently referred to as *The Great Commission*.

It is my conviction that the author has conferred Scriptural substantiation as to the meaning and purpose of the final commission which Christ gave primarily to His apostles and, through them, to all His called ministers, even unto the end of the world. The evidence for the continuity of this belief by Old Baptists is given in the accompanying Appendix which includes many excerpts from various articles written by Primitive Baptist ministers in both the 19th and 20th Centuries.

I believe the author's arguments are consistent with the teachings of Christ Jesus regarding the call to preach the Gospel to all nations (now including Gentiles), even beyond the previously limited confines of the Jews to whom it was first given. Disciples in all ages, being converted to the Lord Jesus Christ through the gospel of the grace of God, are to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Elder Hardy is blessed with a keen mind and is an able minister of the word of God. He has produced an arresting labor of love in this frequently debated subject. It is my prayer that this booklet will frame the current debate in a historical context, and promote a growing consensus of opinion among our beloved people on this subject.

The Final Commission of Jesus Christ

As I approach this subject, I realize that there are many brethren who are better qualified to write upon this subject than I. Nevertheless, the burden is upon my heart, and I desire to see brethren in our churches in peace on this subject and all speaking the same thing that there be no divisions among the various households of faith (1 Cor. 1:10). I fully realize that my short writing on this subject will not satisfy all brethren, but hopefully, it may be of benefit to some of the Lord's people. The First Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to His twelve apostles is given in Matthew 10:5-42, Mark 3:14-15; 6:7-13, and Luke 9:1-6, and is very much like that which He gave to His seventy disciples as recorded in Luke 10:1-16; all of which is similar to Christ's Final Commission delivered after his resurrection as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21-23, Acts 1:4-8, and Acts 10:40-42. In this final commission, under the authority of Christ (Matt. 28:18) and the influence of the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23), Christ sends forth His disciples commanding them to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15), communicates to them the message they are to preach (Luke 24:46-47, Acts 10:42), communicates the design or purpose of their preaching which was to teach or make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19), not of the Jews only as in the first commission (Matt. 10:5-6), but now also of the Gentiles, and afterwards, commands them to baptize such disciples (Matt. 28:19), and teach them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them (Matt. 28:20). With the recent travels of Primitive Baptists to the Philippines and other parts of the world, the subject of the final commission has been much discussed among our people concerning to whom the commission actually applies or extends. Some believe that the commission ended with the original eleven apostles and hence, does not apply to us today. Others who believe that the commission is still in effect today say that the commission was given as a "Church Commission," while others say it had nothing to do with the church, but

was simply a “Ministerial Commission” given to the ministry. The real question under discussion is not to whom the commission was verbally given, for all know that it was verbally given only to those disciples who were present with Christ when He spoke forth the commands of the commission. But rather, the question under discussion is to whom the commission now applies or extends. The question under consideration is in what capacity the commission was given to the disciples. Was it given to them collectively as the Church, or was it given to them individually as ministers of the gospel irrespective of their church relation?

With these questions in mind, I would like to briefly consider four different views of the commission, the first three views being held by those who believe the commission is still in effect today, and the fourth view held by those who believe the commission is no longer in effect. The four views I will notice are as follows:

1. The commission was given to the Church, irrespective of the Ministry.
2. The commission was given to the Ministry, irrespective of the Church.
3. The commission was given to the Ministry of the New Testament Church.
4. The commission was given to the eleven disciples, extended unto them only, and ended with them.

The First View;

The Commission was given to the Church, irrespective of the Ministry. This is a position which was advanced by some in the missionary movement in the early 1800’s. It is also one of the most erroneous views of the commission. Those who hold this view believe the commission was given to the eleven disciples simply considered as church members and not as ministers of the church. If this view be correct, then all church members, whether man, woman, boy or girl, are commanded

by Christ to preach the gospel, make disciples of all nations, and baptize all such disciples. Nevertheless, the Scriptures are clear that women are not called to the ministry (1 Tim. 3:1-2), but are commanded to keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak (1 Cor. 14:34-35), nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence (1 Tim. 2:12). I am not aware of any Primitive Baptists who currently hold this view of the commission.

The Second View;

The Commission was given to the Ministry, irrespective of the Church. This is a view that has been occasionally advocated by a few of our people. Those who hold this view believe the commission was given to the eleven disciples simply considered as ministers of the gospel, irrespective of any relation with Christ's Church. If this view were correct, then a man whom God has called to preach the gospel would be authorized to baptize as well as preach without any affiliation with or ordination from a New Testament Church. If this view were correct, such a man would receive his authority to preach and baptize directly from Christ, and not from Christ through His Church. Brethren who hold this view do not seem to realize that Christ has placed His ministerial gifts within the pale of His Church (1 Cor. 12:27-28; Eph 4:11-12). Not recognizing that Christ's ministers preach and baptize under the auspices of Christ's Church, such brethren believe that baptism is not a church ordinance, but is rather a ministerial ordinance, separate and apart from Christ's Church.

History reveals that brethren who take this view are among some of the first who begin advocating the reception of alien baptism.¹ Historically, our Primitive Baptist forefathers by and large rejected alien baptism, not because the person baptized was unconverted or that the minister who baptized him was not called to preach, but alien baptism was rejected because the man who baptized was not a proper administrator of baptism because he was not clothed with the authority from Christ's Church to baptize. It is clear that our forefathers understood baptism to be an

ordinance of the New Testament Church.² The view that baptism is a ministerial ordinance rather than a church ordinance logically ends in the reception of alien baptism and the practice of open communion.

The Third View;

The Commission was given specifically to the MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH. I believe this to be the scriptural view of the commission and it is most certainly the historic Primitive Baptist view. The commission was not given to the church irrespective of the ministry, nor was it given to the ministry irrespective of the church. **In a true sense, the commission embraces both the Ministry and the Church.** It was given to the ministry, in that they alone are the ones gifted and called by God to preach and, hence, baptize. Yet the church is embraced in the commission in that the command to preach and baptize was given to the eleven disciples (preachers) considered as members of Christ's Church, and not apart from or outside of His Church. It is not the renegade preacher, separate and apart from Christ's Church, who is to go forth preaching and baptizing in fulfillment of the commission, but only those clothed with the authority and sanction of Christ's Church as God has placed his preaching ministry (including His apostles) inside the pale of His Church (1 Cor. 12:27-28; Eph 4:11-12). In a true sense, the dissemination of the gospel into all the world, by which disciples are made, is to be through the New Testament Church which is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). God never set up any other organization for the promulgation of His gospel other than His Church. Missionary societies and other humanly-devised organizations have no authority to go forth preaching and baptizing disciples.³ Christ's Church alone is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), and as such, is the custodian, guardian and dispenser of that truth. As such, both the preaching of the gospel and the baptizing of disciples come under the auspices of the New Testament Church.

Thus, speaking in generalities, it is the church of Christ which is the

designated means of disseminating the gospel of Christ. But speaking in specifics, this dissemination of the gospel through Christ's Church is to be done specifically through the church's ministry who are specially called and qualified by God to do that work. It is not every man, woman, boy, and girl in Christ's Church who is commanded to preach and baptize, but the ministry only. The ministry is indeed an important part of Christ's Church and as such, should be highly esteemed for their work's sake (1 Thess. 5:12-13). Nevertheless, despite the noble and important work of the ministry, all should remember that Christ's ministers function within the pale of Christ's Church. It is evident that the church was not made for the ministry, but rather the ministry for the church. Ministers are indeed servants of their churches, and they preach and baptize under the auspices of those churches. True it is that a man receives his calling to preach from the LORD HIMSELF, and not from the church. True it is that a man receives his burden to preach and his direction where to preach from the LORD HIMSELF, and not from the church. Nevertheless, it is an error to exalt the ministry above the church, or to say that the ministry is not subject to the church, or that their authority to preach and baptize comes directly from God APART FROM CHRIST'S CHURCH seeing that God has placed His ministry inside the pale of His Church (1 Cor. 12:27-28; Eph. 4:11-12).

Brethren, if the command and authority to preach and baptize disciples was given to the ministry irrespective of Christ's Church, then we are fooling ourselves if we think a valid baptism can only be administered by an ordained minister of a New Testament Church.

Where is the scriptural authority for such a practice or requirement? If the authority to preach and baptize was given to the ministry irrespective of their affiliation with Christ's Church, then all who are called of God to preach and baptize may scripturally do so without any ordination or affiliation with Christ's Church.

I realize that a standard article of Primitive Baptist faith states that only

regularly ordained ministers of a New Testament Church are authorized to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. But where is the Scripture to support such a doctrine or practice? Brethren who do a little searching in our old articles of faith will discover that our forefathers often give Matthew 28:19 as a proof text for the belief that only ordained ministers of a New Testament Church are authorized to baptize.⁴ Why is this? It is because Old Baptists historically held that the commission was not given to the ministry irrespective of the church, but was rather given to the ministry OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. The reason that church affiliation and ordination of a minister by a New Testament Church is required for valid baptism is that Christ's command to preach and baptize was given to the ministry OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, and not apart or separate from it (1 Cor. 12:27-28; Eph4:11- 12).

In light of these observations, I would encourage brethren to be more careful in their expressions and explanations of the final commission, and refrain from using objectionable phrases or phrases that only set forth partial truths. To simply say that the commission is a "Church Commission" without explaining that it was to the MINISTRY of the church, or to simply say that the commission is a "Ministerial Commission" without acknowledging that it was to the ministry OF THE CHURCH, I say, to state these things in that fashion does not adequately state the whole truth of the matter and leaves one open to criticism which could easily be avoided. I believe that if opposing brethren were more careful in their expressions and explanations of the commission, they would soon find that they are not as far apart on this issue as they might think. Moreover, none should allow mistakes or irregularities by brethren overseas or in our own country (whether real or imagined) drive them away from maintaining and teaching the clear scriptural principles concerning evangelism as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

In addition to the three views of the commission as noticed above, some brethren have espoused the view that the commission is no longer in effect

today. Thus, we will make a few observations regarding this view.

The Fourth View:

The commission was given to the eleven disciples, extended unto them only, and ended with them. Brethren who espouse this view believe that the commission is no longer in effect today, believing that it ended with the original disciples to whom Christ verbally spoke the commission. According to history, this is the newest view that has been advocated among Primitive Baptists regarding the final commission. I realize that many good brethren have been innocently mistaken upon this historical point, having heard that this view of the commission is the historical view of the Primitive Baptists. Evidently, some have thought that in the division with the New School Baptists in the early 1800's that the point of controversy concerned whether or not the commission was still in effect. Nevertheless, in that division, such was not a point of controversy as both sides understood that the commission to "preach the gospel to every creature" was still binding on the present-day ministry of Christ's Church. The view that the commission ended with the apostles was relatively unheard of among Primitive Baptists until the early 1900's.

For instance, in 1856, Elder G. M. Thompson⁵ (son of Elder Wilson Thompson) was unaware of any Primitive Baptists who held the view that the commission had ended with the apostles. While Elder Thompson (in his public debate with Mr. Selvidge on Missionism) correctly held that the "modern missionary enterprise" is "condemned by the Scriptures"⁶ and that the Baptist division was caused by "the money hunting and money gathering and speculating system" of the New School Baptists,⁷ he also maintained that he preached the gospel under the authority of the final commission,⁸ and stated that he was unaware of any who denied that it was right and scriptural to preach the gospel to every creature as laid down in the commission.

In this discussion, Elder Thompson said:

“That it is right and scriptural to preach the gospel to every creature, no one denies,...”⁹

“It is under this self-same commission that every true minister of Christ, in every age of the world, goes forward preaching the gospel to every creature.”¹⁰

In 1856, Elder Thompson was unaware of any Primitive Baptists who held the view that the commission had ended with the apostles.

Moving ahead about thirty years, we find that in 1885, the well-known and well-informed, Elder Lemuel Potter,” was also unaware of any Primitive Baptists who believed that the commission had ended with the apostles. With his extended knowledge of Primitive Baptists across the country, Elder Potter did not know of any elders among our people who professed to preach outside of the commission and knew of none who denied that the commission extended past the eleven apostles unto their successors in the ministry. In his debate with Mr. Yates on Foreign Missions, Elder Potter said:

“I do not know of one Regular Baptist minister in the world who thinks it is wrong to “go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” “..... I do not know of a Regular Baptist minister anywhere, or a brother anywhere, who thinks it is wrong.”¹²

“I object to the Foreign Mission work, because, in order to show even a shadow of authority for it in the Scriptures, its advocates say the great commission was given to the Church instead of **to the apostles and their successors** He says the commission was given to the Church, not only to the ministry, but given to every man, every individual, ordained and unordained, male and female, old and young; that all are addressed in the commission that says, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Let us see whether they were or not. Go ye.” Go who? The eleven disciples -- that is it. The eleven were the ones spoken to, and not the Church. There is no intimation that it was the Church -- it was the eleven. **As a matter**

of course no person denies - that I know of - that it is to their successors as well. First to the ministry the commission is given. It is the duty of a man who is called of God to preach, to “go.” It is the duty of every man whom God calls to preach.”¹³

“In the support of the gospel, under Christ’s plan, in all these countries, the servants of God, in humble obedience to the great commission, were self-sacrificing, God-fearing men; and instead of being supported by appropriations from the State, or wealthy Mission Boards, or Church endowments, they were only clothed with the authority of the commission from the Lord;”¹⁴

“I believe when the Saviour said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” it is right for them to go. I believe that every Baptist believes it.”¹⁵

If there were Primitive Baptists in Elder Potter’s day who were advocating the idea that the commission had ended with the apostles, it is very likely Elder Potter would have known of such. Nevertheless, he knew of no such instance. Elder Potter was well-known, well-traveled, and well-informed as to the state and beliefs of Primitive Baptists in his day.

While such a view of the commission was relatively unheard of during the 1800’s, we find that by the early 1900’s a few Primitive Baptists had begun adopting the idea that the commission had ended with the apostles. In speaking of different views of the commission, Elder J. W. Richardson¹⁶ of Indiana writes in *The Gospel Messenger* in 1906:

“The Old Quakers, and of late some Old Baptists, have taken the view, that the Commission was delivered to the Apostles *alone*, and ceased to be in force after their death Holding this view the Old Quakers do not baptize and commune, and in this they are consistent, for if the Commission to preach is at an end, so are also the ordinances, for the reason that they are joined together. To prove that the Commission is at an end, the following text has been quoted, “But I say, Have they not all heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” Rom. x. 18.

Because it was made incumbent upon the Apostles to “teach *all nations*, baptizing them, etc.,” it is inferred by some brethren that when the then known nations heard the gospel by the Apostles, the Commission was at an end; not, it seems, taking into consideration the results of such application of the above text, for to thus apply the text ruins our cause, for we believe in preaching and baptizing. Now, a witness that ruins our cause we had better not put upon the stand to testify.”

“...the Baptists believed (before the great division) that the Commission embraced the Apostles and all succeeding ministers...” “.....Let us all adhere to the old landmarks, and let new views alone, and good feeling and harmony will prevail among Old Baptists.”¹⁷

From reading the writings of our Primitive Baptist forefathers, it is realized that the view that the commission ended with the apostles is a fairly new idea among Primitive Baptists which began to be adopted around the turn of the 20th Century by some of our brethren. Nevertheless, before the spread of this new idea among our people, Primitive Baptists held the view that both preaching and baptizing were done through the authority of Christ’s commission given to the ministry of the New Testament Church, and that the command to preach the gospel to every creature extended, not only to the apostles, but also to every ordained minister of Christ’s Church who had been called by God to occupy that office. For the interested reader, further historical testimony to this truth may be found in the APPENDIX (p. 24-62).

The view that the commission ended with the apostles is not the historical view of Primitive Baptists, nor do I believe it to be the scriptural view. Thus, believing that the final commission given by Christ to his disciples extended beyond them to their successors in the ministry, I make the following observations:

1. It appears that portions of Christ’s commission given to His disciples extended unto the apostle Thomas although Thomas was not

actually present to receive such from the mouth of the Saviour. It appears that although the words of the commission found in Luke 24:46-49 and John 20:21-23 were not actually spoken to Thomas by the Saviour as they were to the other ten disciples (Thomas being absent when Christ appeared the evening of the first day of the week after his resurrection; John 20:1,21,24 with Luke 24:1-49), such portions of the commission seem to apply and extend to Thomas as we notice that Thomas was one with the apostles in all that they did in fulfillment of that commission (Acts 1:12-14,26; 2:3-4,37,14,41-42; 4:31-35; 5:17-20,27-32,40-42; 6:2-6).

2. Likewise, it appears that the commission given to Christ's disciples extended unto Matthias although Matthias was not actually present when the commission or commands were issued forth from the Savior before his ascension. Although the words of Christ in His commission as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21-23, Acts 1:4-8, and Acts 10:40-42 were not actually spoken unto Matthias (as we have no evidence of such, nor reason to think it), it is clear that he was one with the eleven apostles in the fulfillment of their ministry from which Judas by transgression fell, as he was chosen by lot and was numbered with the eleven (Acts 1:26), bringing the number of the apostles back to twelve. While some with a great zeal for the apostle Paul have attributed to him Judas' place as the 12th apostle, it is clear from Scripture that Matthias was truly the 12th apostle, being numbered with the eleven (Acts 1:26). It was Matthias who was chosen by lot (Prov. 16:33), was numbered with the eleven apostles (Acts 1:26), was endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8), was filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues (Acts 2:3-4), stood as one of the eleven with Peter (Acts 2:14), was called an apostle (Acts 2:37), continued with the apostles in doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and in prayers with the rest of the saints (Acts 2:42), continued with the other apostles in preaching and tribulation (Acts 5:17-20,27-32,40-42), was numbered as

one of the twelve who called together the multitude of disciples in Acts 6:2, and must have been one of the twelve apostles that Christ appeared unto after His resurrection (1 Cor 15:5; Acts 1:21-22) of which Paul refers in 1 Cor. 15:5 in distinction from the Lord's appearing unto himself, lastly, as one born out of due time (1 Cor. 15:8). Now seeing that Paul spoke of another as being the twelfth apostle rather than himself, it is no safe course for one to maintain differently.

3. It appears that the commission given to Christ's disciples extended unto other preachers in the early Church who carried the gospel forth to Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth, while the apostles themselves primarily stayed in Jerusalem. While the Scriptures affirm that the word went unto the ends of the world (Rom 10:18) and that the gospel was preached unto every creature under heaven (Col. 1:23), having gone into all the world (Col. 1:6), yet it is noticed that this preaching of the gospel in all the world was primarily done by the successors of the eleven disciples who carried the gospel beyond Jerusalem, and not the original eleven to whom the commission was verbally given. Thus, it appears that the New Testament preachers who took the gospel to Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth were fulfilling the command of the commission given to the eleven to be witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In accordance with the words of the commission in Acts 1:4-8, the gospel was first preached in Jerusalem primarily by the 12 apostles (Acts, chapters 2-7), then in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1; chapters 8-12) through Philip the Evangelist, and Paul (but also Peter and John), and then to the uttermost part of the earth primarily through Paul, and others such as Timothy, Silas, Barnabas, Apollos, John Mark, and Philip the Evangelist, (Acts, chapters 13-28).

Upon the persecution that arose about Stephen in Acts 7, it is seen that the apostles stayed in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1) while other preachers were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1),

and as far as Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch (Acts 11:19). They went abroad everywhere preaching the word. One of these was Philip who went to Samaria and preached the gospel. Others went to Antioch and spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus, whereby the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord (Acts 11:20-21). It is interesting that their preaching everywhere (Acts 8:4) and the hand of the Lord being with them (Acts 11:21) is similar language to that concerning the ministry under the commission as found in Mark 16:20: “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them.”

The progressive fulfillment of Acts 1:8 in preaching in Jerusalem, and then proceeding to Judea and Samaria, and then to the uttermost part of the earth is clearly observed as one reads through the book of Acts. Accordingly, it is noticed that such fulfillment of Acts 1:8 was primarily accomplished through men who were not of the original eleven disciples. Nevertheless, their labors to preach and make disciples of all nations, the baptizing of such, and the setting up of churches were owned and blessed of God. Most of the New Testament epistles are written to churches which were established through the labors of men who were not of the original eleven disciples.

4. It appears that some have concluded that the absence of apostolic signs and miracles today is evidence that the command to preach the gospel in the commission has ceased. I would encourage such brethren to consider that the confirmation of the word through miracles, signs, and wonders was not part of the commands issued forth in the commission, but were annexed blessings from the Lord in confirmation of the apostles’ preaching, which He indeed issued forth (Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3; Heb. 2:3-4). Those who study the subject of apostolic signs will discover that such signs are correctly linked to the apostles themselves, rather than to the command to preach. The Lord did indeed confirm the word with signs following when an apostle was present or those upon whom the apostles

had laid their hands. For in the apostolic age, the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:45; 11:17; 8:20) to the believer in the confirmation of the word through miraculous signs and wonders appears to have been limited to the laying on of the apostles' hands (Act 8:14-19) except for the fulfillment of the prophesy of Joel (Joel 2:28-32) when the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh (Jew and Gentile) without the laying on of hands as seen with the Jews in Acts 2 and with the Gentiles in Acts 10. Other than these two places in Scripture, the miraculous gifts of the apostles which would follow in the believer was only given by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:17-18). It is after this fashion that Philip the Evangelist, who had the apostles' hands laid upon him (Acts 6:6), could perform such miracles among the people (Acts 8: 6-7,13), but could not confer upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:20) to the performing of miracles which was only to be had by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-19).

It appears that as Moses received of the Lord's hand miraculous signs which he performed over the space of about forty years (Acts 7:36) in confirmation that he was the Deliverer of the Lord's people (Exod. 4:1-9), even so it appears that in the coming of Christ, the Deliverer, who would be a prophet like unto Moses (Deut. 18:15,18; Acts 3:22; 7:37), God would publicly confirm Him and His message (including His message through the apostles and prophets; Eph 2:20, 2 Peter 3:2) through signs, miracles and wonders (Acts 2:22; John 7:31; 10:25; Matt. 11:2-6; Heb. 2:3-4; Acts 5:12; 14:3; Mark 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12; Rom 15:18-19), for a period of time, possibly for about 40 years (Acts 7:36), the time paralleling the wonders in Israel's coming out of Egypt (Micah 7:14-15), especially considering that the early church was composed mostly of Jews which, as we know, required a sign to believe (1 Cor 1:22), but not so much the Gentiles (Mat 8:8-10; 15:22,28), which after the bringing in of the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; Rom 11:25), the miraculous signs were not as much needed as before.

Hopefully, those who give honest study to the subject of apostolic signs will realize that apostolic signs have ceased, not because the commission has ended, but because there are no apostles living who can lay their hands upon the believer and impart the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17-18). The purpose of these signs and miracles through the hands of the apostles was to give proof of their apostleship and message, and, therefore, such miraculous signs and wonders are said in Scripture to be **“the signs of an apostle”** (2 Cor. 12:12).

Thus, brethren err in their thinking when they link (in their mind) these miraculous signs to the command to preach the gospel in the commission instead of linking such miraculous signs and wonders to the apostles themselves as being signs of their apostleship. The result of such thinking is that brethren begin to view the miraculous signs in Mark 16:17-18 as being “the signs of the commission still being in force” rather than correctly viewing them as being “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12) as the Scriptures state them to be.

Brethren, the Bible is its own interpreter. Every honest brother will acknowledge that whatever God has said is right. And God has said that the miraculous signs which attended the apostles’ ministry were “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12), and, if we are thinking correctly, we will view them in this light. Indeed, there is a very good, scriptural reason as to why we hear ministers speak of “apostolic signs,” but never hear them speak of “final commission signs.”

Brethren, as these miraculous signs which attended the apostles’ ministry are said in Scripture to be “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12), it is no safe or proper course to maintain differently or to think of these miraculous signs in a different light. Such a course would be a liberal departure from the clear language and teaching Scripture.

I believe that brethren who give serious study to the subject of apostolic signs will discover that apostolic signs have ceased because the apostolic

period has ceased, and not because Christ's command to preach the gospel has ceased. Christ would still have His ministers "preach the word" and "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:1-2, 5). He would still have His ministers preach the same gospel that He and His apostles preached, and to preach in the same manner in which they preached, and for the same purposes that they preached. Christ would still have His preachers to sow the gospel seed, to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind. He would still have them baptize disciples and teach them to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded.

5. The view that the commission has ceased is also inconsistent with current Primitive Baptist practice. I do not know of a single Primitive Baptist elder who does not follow the directions of the commission laid down in Matthew 28:19 in baptizing disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Do we perform baptism in the name of the Triune God because so directed in the commission? or do we practice such because it has been passed down to us through tradition? If through tradition, such is further proof that our forefathers preached and baptized under the commission that Christ gave his disciples. Nevertheless, there is no passage of Scripture other than Matthew 28:19 which tells us HOW TO baptize. If the commission does not extend to us today, then I am at a loss to know where to obtain authority for the practice of baptizing disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Truly, if it were wrong to "teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19) because those words do not apply to us today, then it would also be wrong to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19) and be wrong to teach disciples to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded (Matt. 28:20) for the same reason, seeing that all these instructions occur together in the same text.¹⁸

Nevertheless, I trust that sincere brethren who study the subject will

realize that it is proper and right today to teach disciples “to observe all things” whatsoever Christ has commanded, that it is proper and right today to baptize disciples “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” and that it is proper and right today to preach to “all nations,” not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles, for in Christ Jesus “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female” for they are all one in Christ (Gal 3:28; Col. 3:11).

6. I believe some brethren have adopted the view that the commission ended with the apostles due to the fact that they mistakenly believe this to be the historical view of the Primitive Baptists, and they believe it would be wrong to advocate a different view from that of our Primitive Baptist forefathers. This line of reasoning was recently expressed by a brother in one of our church papers. Condemning the view that the commission is still in effect today, the brother writes:

“It is absolutely important that we Primitive Baptists of this modern age understand that our forefathers in the late 1700’s and early 1800’s did NOT hold to such beliefs, and, for that reason, they did not practice such measures, for that was one of the main reasons why the split took place among the Baptists of that day (1832). ... I am of the opinion that anything being taught or practiced today that is essentially different from what past generations of Primitive Baptists stood for is essentially wrong.”¹⁹

I do not include this quotation in order to embarrass this dear brother, but to simply reveal the type of reasoning that some follow in adopting the idea that the commission is no longer in effect today. The line of reasoning is as follows: 1) our Primitive Baptist forefathers did not believe the commission was still in effect, 2) the idea that the commission is still in effect is what caused us to separate from the New School Baptists in the 1830’s, and 3) it would be wrong for us today to advocate anything different from what our Primitive Baptist forefathers believed.²⁰

Nevertheless, this line of reasoning is found wanting in all three particulars. First, as can be discovered in the APPENDIX of this pamphlet, our Primitive Baptist forefathers did not hold the view that the commission ceased with the apostles. Secondly, this view was not the cause of the division among the Baptists in the 1830's as both sides believed they were still operating under Christ's command to "preach the gospel to every creature."²¹ Thirdly, it is a liberal departure from the Word of God (Acts 17:11; Isa. 8:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17) and a departure from our articles of faith to look to the teachings and practices of past generations of Primitive Baptists in order to discover what is right or wrong concerning spiritual things. The unifying principles among sound Primitive Baptists are not to be found in what we "think" our forefathers believed, but are only to be found in the divinely inspired and preserved WORD OF GOD which is the ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE for a Bible Baptist. To simply adopt what one "thinks" his forefathers believed is a liberal departure from the "faith once delivered to the saints."

7. I believe that some have taken the view that the commission ceased with the apostles due to the fact that the New School Baptists have claimed that the Scriptures of the Final Commission authorize all of their humanly devised missionary schemes and methods. Thus, in the minds of some brethren, to admit that the commission is still in effect today is to admit that modern missionism is supported by the Scriptures. Nevertheless, such is a mistake. The final commission in no way authorizes missionary boards or societies, nor does it authorize churches to call men to the ministry and appoint to them their fields of labor. Moreover, the commission does not authorize a preacher to appoint to himself his own field of labor, but he must continually wait upon the Lord and be led by the direction of the Holy Spirit and God's providential hand as did the ministers of old (Acts-8:26,29; 10:19-20; 13:2-4; 16:6-10; 20:22; 1 Cor. 16:9).

Those who oppose the commission being in effect because they think it would authorize humanly-devised plans of evangelism should take heed to the early New Testament church. It is clear that the early New Testament church did not view the commands to “teach all nations” and “preach the gospel to every creature” as endowing them with the responsibility of devising schemes and plans for the evangelism of the world, nor do we find them engaged in or focused upon any such humanly-devised efforts. Rather, we find such brethren in the early church engaged in and focused upon the divine worship of God. Moreover, it will be noticed that God did not open doors of evangelism unto those engaged in and focused upon humanly-devised schemes and plans of evangelism, but contrariwise, God opened doors of evangelism unto those who were engaged in and focused upon the divine worship of God.²²

Those who oppose the commission, thinking that it authorizes humanly-devised schemes or plans for evangelism are simply mistaken. God has his own plans for the fulfillment of His commission and He does not look to men to come up with their own plans, methods or means. “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Psalms 127:1). While we certainly should have a burden for evangelism, and should be ready to walk through any door of opportunity that God would open unto us in that way, true Biblical evangelism is always under the direction and leadership of the Holy Spirit. The Lord will open doors of evangelism when and where he pleases. Thus, we find in Acts 16 that Paul, Silas, and Timothy were “forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,” and “assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not,” but the Lord directed them by a vision “to go into Macedonia” where they preached, baptized, and set up churches in Philippi and Thessalonica.

Brethren, the final commission in no way authorizes or legitimizes any of the errors promoted by the advocates of the modern missionary system, nor does it authorize them to preach a gospel of salvation by works, which is no true gospel at all (Gal 1:6-7). Those who believe that the commission

authorizes any of the errors of the modern day missionary have simply allowed themselves to be misled by the advocates of missionism.

Brethren, if our great adversary, the devil (1 Pet. 5:8) cannot persuade a person to espouse the errors of the modern day missionary, he will try to move him into an opposite, erroneous extreme, away from a Biblical view of evangelism. May the Lord deliver us from the errors of a humanly-devised missionism, and also deliver us to a Biblical view of evangelism as the Lord would have all of his ministers do the work of an evangelist and make full proof their ministry (2 Tim. 4:5). Let us not be moved to an extreme position by errors on the right hand or left. Let us ever adhere to the plain teachings of the Holy Scriptures in all things.

My prayer is that the Lord would grant grace and understanding to all His ministering servants that they might be scriptural in all their endeavors to preach the gospel of the grace of God.

February 15, 2002
Bryan, Texas.

Elder Vince Hardy

APPENDIX

While history can be interesting and informative, we believe and profess that the Scriptures alone are the only rule or standard of faith and practice for a Bible Baptist. Nevertheless, mistaken ideas regarding history can unfortunately hinder at times the acceptance of doctrinal truths. Therefore, as many have been persuaded that the historic Primitive Baptist position on the commission is that it ceased with the apostles and is no longer in effect today, I feel obligated to set forth this APPENDIX that brethren may gain an accurate appreciation for the historical position of Primitive Baptists on the subject of the final commission.

In the division with the New School Baptists in the early 1800's, it was never a point of controversy as to whether or not the commission was still in effect. In that division, both sides understood that the command to "preach the gospel to every creature" was still binding on the present-day ministry. The idea that the commission ended with the apostles was a foreign doctrine to both the Old and New School Baptists alike. While the Old School or Primitive Baptists tenaciously opposed all humanly-devised, money-based, missionary methods and schemes, they also held the view that true ministers of God preached the gospel through the authority of the commission and that the command to preach the gospel to every creature extended, not only to the apostles, but also to every ordained minister of Christ's Church who had been called by God to occupy that office. At the time of the division and afterwards, Primitive Baptists understood that the ministry was still under the obligation and command to preach the gospel to every creature as set forth in Christ's final commission. This historic Primitive Baptist position on the commission may be seen from the following excerpts taken from their writings:

1827 - Elder Joshua Lawrence²³

"Chapter xxviii. verse 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Thus we see the solemn charge of Christ to his disciples, to teach and baptize the nations without the exception of any nation. But this is **the binding clause on them and us**: on them, to teach nothing but what he commanded them; on us, **to obey only what Christ commanded them**. And this we take to be the duty of both minister and members, and that **a minister is not at liberty to choose one command and refuse to obey another**, but that he is bound by one direction of the Saviour as well as the other. For the same that said, Go teach the nations, has also said, provide neither gold nor silver in your purse, for the laborer is worthy of his meat -- as his own example shows, as well as that of John the Baptist and Paul We must admit these were the directions of Christ to his apostles, the first teachers of Christianity; and that **the above commands were binding on them, and the same commands are on us**, as they were to teach us what he commanded them. And to say what was a rule for the apostles is not a rule for us, is vain; to say he has made any alteration in his laws for his church, can't be proven; to say we are at liberty to make rules for ourselves as the church of Christ, is presumption; to say that Christ has granted a new revelation since the apostles, wherein ministers have a right to change his directions for their conduct, or the ordinances, or the doctrines and discipline of his church, can't be attested with sufficient proof to be received by us. And that Christ, as the head of his church and the wisdom of God, gave the best directions at first, and those that comported with his own will; and we are not at liberty to change or alter them, without the curse promised.

Chapter xvi. verse 15: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. This agrees with teach all nations, and ought in their goings not to deviate from the directions of Christ, lest they reproach themselves and the gospel which they go to preach. For certainly Christ knew best how ministers should carry his gospel to the nations to be successful, and therefore he gave his apostles such explicit directions."²⁴

1828 - Kehukee Association Circular Letter

The year after the Kehukee Association's withdrawal of fellowship from the New School Baptists in protest against their money-based religious institutions, it was an undisputed truth among the Kehukee Baptists that they were under the commission to preach the gospel to every creature. They state in their circular letter for 1828:

“You will please to pardon us, dear brethren, for trespassing upon your time a little longer, by making a few laconic observations in relation to the doctrine of Election This doctrine is supposed by many, to imply an insuperable obstacle, in the way of man's salvation; but like the others with it, is often misunderstood. And the consequences which it has been supposed to involve, have been deduced, not from the doctrine as taught in the scriptures; but from erroneous, and distorted views, which have been given it by its opposers But a question might here arise: If God has an elect number, how can this be reconciled to the universal call, which you give in the gospel? **As you are commanded to preach to every creature.** We answer, that as man's disability, is of a moral, or intellectual, and not of a physical character; that our preaching or exhortations are directed to his mental, and not his natural powers.”²⁵

1830 - Elder Joshua Lawrence

“Now, Nehemiah, my dear Sir, remember that I have laid down the principle, that the scriptures alone is a sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice in matters of religion; and I hope you will not dare to dispute what that good book says, nor add the invention of men to it as commandments of God. Then by it I am willing to stand or fall in our dispute on missions, and you ought to do the same. I shall take up the minister first, and advance step by step to the end of what I conceive you have asserted, and prove as I go by the scriptures.

First, then who are ministers that go preaching? They are a chosen set of men by God Almighty, scattered through different ages of the world, to preach the gospel to dying men

The second step is, that he calls them by his grace, as an effect of this

choice to the ministry

The third step is to shew he qualifies them, & not theological schools, for the work of the ministry from the scriptures it is as clear a point as any, that God qualifies his ministers with gifts of grace, knowledge, and understanding in the scriptures for the work of preaching, without the aid of theological schools.

The fourth step is to show, after he has chosen, called, and qualified them, where the work is. Mark, xvi. 15: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Luke, xxiv. 47: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Matthew, xxviii. 19: “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” So you see plain where the work is, and what it is, by the above scriptures. Now I know you missionaries will agree, that the work is in all the world and among all nations; this you are fond to teach and support -- and why not teach with equal zeal the rest of Jesus’ commands that here follow, or do you intend to pick and choose out of his commands, which you will obey and which you will not?

The fifth step gives his ministers directions in starting to the work, and while at work. Of starting to the work -- Matthew, x. 9: “Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses:

Now I will give the Saviour’s direction while at the work in going into all the world. Matthew, x. 11: “And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; & there abide till you go thence.....

Directions for food and clothing -- Luke, xii. 22: “And he said unto his disciples, therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body what ye shall put on.” by these directions Christ and his apostles, and all God’s faithful ministers, have gone in all ages of the world, before law and begging religion came in vogue, to counteract the plan and directions of Jesus Christ.

Now, Nehemiah, compare your plan of missions a man by star-light might see you are wrong, according to Christ’s plan. **And who, think**

ye, ought to know best how the gospel should be carried abroad to the nations, Christ or missionaries? For the gospel is God's rich and free gift to men of all nations; it is he who sends it, and directs how it should be carried; and I say he knew best in what way it would be most successful, and for his glory. And the missionary plan is exactly contrary to Christ's plan.....

The sending of the gospel to the destitute or heathen, is thought to be the great bone of contention, though it is not; but the unscriptural practices resorted to by those who send and pretend to carry it.”²⁶

1830 - Kehukee Baptist Association Circular Letter

Speaking of the responsibility of sowing the gospel seed broadcast, the Kehukee Baptists wrote in their circular letter for 1830:

“And should not this method of preaching, and writing, by Christ and his apostles, teach us, **that we are to preach the gospel to every creature**, to all sinners in general? Should it not teach us, that it is a secret with God, for whom Christ died? Should it not teach us, that we are to preach the gospel to sinners in the general, and leave it to God to make the application to the persons he has chosen, or when and where he pleases?”²⁷

1831 - Elder Green Carrowan ²⁸

Shortly before his death in 1832, Elder Carrowan was asked “whether he regretted that his past life had been spent in proclaiming the doctrines of predestination and election, the effectual calling and the saints' final perseverance?” ²⁹

In response, Elder Carrowan made the following reply:

“Those glorious doctrines were taught me of the Lord in the 28th year of my age, and I have no doubt they will be sacred in my latest hours. But I have to regret that I have been compelled to spend so much of my precious time in laboring for the support of my family, and thereby have failed fully to comply with **that great command given me of the Lord, ‘Preach my gospel to every creature.’** But if it is the will of God to

restore me to health, I intend that in future my days shall be spent in declaring to the world salvation through the merits of a suffering, dying, and risen Redeemer.”³⁰

1832 - The Black Rock Address

In the noble stand against the modern missionary system in 1832, the Old Baptists at Black Rock issued forth the following in what is now known as the “Black Rock Address.” In speaking of missions, they stated:

“Previous to stating our objections to the mission plans, we will meet some of the false charges brought against us relative to this subject, by a simple and unequivocal declaration, that **we do regard as of the first importance the command given of Christ**, primarily to His apostles, and through them **to his ministers in every age**, to **“Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,”** and do feel an earnest desire to be found **acting in obedience thereunto**, as the providence of God directs our way, and opens a door of utterance for us. We also believe it to be the duty of individuals and churches to contribute according to their abilities, for the support, not only of their pastors, but also of those who go preaching the gospel of Christ among the destitute.”³¹

1837 - Elder Mark Bennett³²

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ...The apostles were to *go*, not to *send*; the Saviour bade *them* go themselves, not to send *others*; “Go ye.” The missionaries apply this passage as though it read, *Send ye, &c...*” **“We believe that notwithstanding the apostles literally fulfilled their commission, it is nevertheless through the above commission, the duty of Christ’s ministers to preach the gospel. And that wherever the Lord in his providence casts their lot, or whithersoever his word and Spirit bids them go, they will preach Jesus Christ, whether in Asia, Africa, or Europe. Like Christ’s first ministers, they will not go, when he bids them stay; nor stay, when he bids them go. And if the Lord have sent them, he will put it into their brethren’s heart to help them forward, or open a door of support among the heathen.”** ³³

1841 - Elder Samuel C. Johnson

“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matth. 28 c. 19,20 vs.

I have not taken hold of this subject thinking to do it justice, but because it is so violently handled by those effort people. They seem to take a sort of license from it, to go and beg and preach missionary sermons, (as they say,) and take up contributions, calling it the work of the Lord to help to convert the heathen. Not so, for he has no need of their assistance in that way, no thus saith the Lord for that course. But go ye therefore, teach-teach what? the inventions of men and the “isms” of the day? I answer, no; but, teach whatsoever I (Jesus) have commanded you **Go ye therefore, teach all nations-that is, in your bounds, or wherever the holy spirit leads you. For we learn, that when he the spirit [of] truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth. For it never was the desire of God for one nor two men to preach the gospel to all the world, but every one in his sphere, and according to God’s arrangement. Go in God’s way, taking God’s word as your guide, and teach what you there find encouched, for that is your commission and the message that you are to deliver We will now notice some of the faults the missionaries find of us. We will not join them in their money plans, and leave the good old way of teaching the things that are commanded, as they have; but because we act in accordance with the commission given in the text, they say that we are opposed to the spread of the gospel. But so far from being opposed to that, we see that the Old Predestinarian Baptists, though illiterate and unlearned as they may be, they leave their houses, homes, their wives and children, and all that they have, to preach the gospel of the Son of God. What is all this for? because they are opposed to the spread of the gospel? We say no;”³⁴**

1842 - Fishing River Association (Missouri) Circular letter on Missions

“Who are the preachers of the gospel? 1. They are a chosen set of men, scattered through the different ages of the world..... 2. They are called by the grace of God..... 3. Christ qualifies them without the aid of studying divinity in the schools..... 4. **“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” as much as if he has said, preach what I have commanded; and what I have not, that let alone.**” Mark, the servant is not to transcend the law laid down in the commission. “Go,” do not stop for the direction of boards; do not stay for outfits and the promise of \$300, \$500 or \$1000 before you can start.”³⁵

1844 - White River Association (Indiana) Circular letter on Missions

“Here, then, let us turn over a leaf in the ministry, who are the preachers of the gospel? 1st. They are a chosen set of men, scattered through the different ages of the world.... 2d. They are called by the grace of God..... 3d. Christ qualifies them without the aid of studying divinity in the school.... 4th. **“Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” as much as if he had said, preach what I have commanded; and what I have not, that let alone. Mark, the servant is not to transcend the law laid down in the commission. Go; don’t stop for the directions of boards; don’t stay for the promise of \$300, \$500 or \$1000 before you start.**”³⁶

1849 - Elder John Watson ³⁷

“And He said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**” Mark 16:15; 16..... Paul and Barnabas, preached several days at Antioch in **Pisidia--preached the Gospel, according to the commission** to every one--stating also how John had fulfilled his course, by preaching the repentance of baptism to *all* the people of Israel. Paul both preached and exhorted, and in conclusion, we are informed that “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” Observe, not as many as were addressed, but as many as the Lord made alive, as many as the Lord enabled to believe, or gave faith to, which blessings always take the course of God’s ordination, and not the course of general or promiscuous preaching. While Paul, for

instance, is preaching and exhorting all his hearers to believe the Gospel tidings, a secret, unobserved, hidden power is operating on the few in the way of divine ordination. Our preaching is unto all -- we have only the letter of the Gospel committed to our charge, and that we should declare unto all; but “the excellency of the power” is with God, and takes the line of His election with divine certainty, and all the preaching that was ever done by Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, or called Ministers, will not extend “the excellency of the power” beyond it. God has never delegated that to anyone else, and of course it will be put forth according to His will, predestination, and election; **but not so of the commission to preach the literal word; which includes in its scope “all the world and every creature” in it.** Now, if it be asked, Why did the Lord give a commission to preach to every creature, when it was not His design to save every creature? I will answer it as soon as the following one is correctly answered: “Why was it necessary that the word of the Lord should be first preached to the unbelieving Jews, who *despised* and *wondered* at it, and put it away from them, before it was preached to the Gentiles?” **Let us learn our duty as ministers, examine our commission, and see how fully it authorized us, *in faith*, to exhort the sinner to repent believing that the Lord can give him repentance; so as to believe, believing that the Lord can give faith.**”³⁸

1852 - Tombigbee Association of Primitive Baptists (Mississippi)

“We are told by them that we are opposed to the spread of the Gospel. This charge we deem it scarcely necessary to deny, since it is proved to be false by every act of our lives, in a ministerial sense, in **attending churches and ordaining ministers under the imperative command, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”** “We believe in the spread of the gospel according to the Apostolic mode, leaving to God his prerogative to select his own agents, then to qualify them and send them when and where he will, as he did the Apostles.”³⁹

1856 - Elder G. M. Thompson

In the Thompson - Selvidge Debate, Mr. Selvidge said,

“Mr. Thompson makes a great blow about his call to the ministry. I

would like to know what words the Holy Ghost said to him when it called him. If he has got a commission from the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel, I would like to see it. (Mr. Thompson remarked, “it is in the 28th of Matt.”) I have read that chapter through several times, and I have never seen Mr. Thompson’s name there. That commission was given eighteen hundred years ago, long before Mr. Thompson was born.”⁴⁰

In his reply to Mr. Selvidge, Elder Thompson said,

“That it is right and scriptural to preach the gospel to every creature, no one denies ...”⁴¹

“When Mr. Selvidge was ridiculing the idea of a special and heavenly call to the ministry, he exultingly and with a show of triumph, called on me to show my credentials; and I referred him to the 28th chapter of Matthew; and with a sarcastic sneer, he said “I have read the chapter often, and have never seen your name there.” But this is a foolish quibble, unworthy the sacred character professed by my friend. **It is under the self-same commission that every true minister of Christ, in every age of the world, goes forward preaching the gospel to every creature.**”⁴²

1859 - Elder Theodrick Boulware⁴³

Listing the characteristics of those whom it is doubtful that God really called to the ministry, Elder Boulware wrote:

“4. Him that says that he is called of God, and compelled to preach against his own will, such generally preach more about their “call” than about Jesus Christ. This call is very doubtful.

5. Him that labors more to show his learning and oratory, than to shew the excellency of religion. This preacher was not sent by Paul’s God, for his ministry was not “with wisdom of words.”

6. Him that is sent to preach to the Church only, and has nothing to say to the unregenerate. Who can tell where this preacher got his commission from? **Here is the “commission” Jesus gave, Mark 16:15--”Go ye into *all* the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;”**⁴⁴

1860 - Elder Zachariah Thomas⁴⁵

“..... how devoted we ought to be to the cause of our Lord and Savior. We should ponder well the blessed word of truth, and endeavor to obey its holy commands. **The commands he gave his followers for their observance, and rule of obedience, are yet binding upon his dear children and will be until the end of time. The minister’s duty was to preach the gospel to every creature,** and those that heard and believed and were baptized, the blessed Saviour said should be saved, but those that believed not should be damned. How great and solemn the duty of the ministers...”⁴⁶

1873-Elder John Clark⁴⁷

“The same divine power displayed in the resurrection and ascension of Christ; and, indeed, in making or creating all things, is manifested in the case of every one that believes. This view, also, is in perfect accord with the great leading idea in the administration of the word of life, the preached Gospel, which the King in Zion **commanded his ministers to preach to every creature,** and as he came into the world to save sinners, and as it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, *sinner*s, consequently, are subjects of Gospel address, and the true Gospel ministers have no hesitancy in preaching to them Jesus and the resurrection....”⁴⁸

1874 - The Siloam Association of Regular Baptists (Oregon)

“Because we have opposed the men-made missionary system of the present day, we are often accused of being opposed to the spread of the gospel; this accusation is false; **we believe it is the duty of Gospel ministers to promulgate the glorious Gospel of God our Saviour in every land and section of country where God by his spirit opens the way and influences their minds to go;** and it is the duty of the members when they are able, to contribute to them their earthly means; this duty is too often neglected;”⁴⁹

1877-Elder John Clark

“As the command in the Gospel commission is, **“preach the Gospel to every creature,”** of course, whenever and wherever God in his providence opens the door, it is the minister’s duty to go in and

occupy, no matter as to the circumstances that brought the people together.”⁵⁰

1879-Elder John Clark

“We noticed in an exchange recently a communication from a correspondent, embracing in part the subject of preaching repentance. The writer criticised the Arminian theory of repentance very freely before he stated his own, and in it we were reminded of what is often witnessed in this world of sin and ignorance of God and divine things, an effort to pull down what is regarded as error, and then attempt to build up a theory as erroneous as the one opposed. The writer says he cannot exhort natural men to repent with gospel repentance, because they have no spiritual life. What advantage has this theory over the Arminian theory? Both of them savor of ignorance and rebellion against God in his divine command and ordination in the gospel ministry. The Arminian exhorts the sinner to repent, because, he says, he has power to do it, and the other will not exhort him because he has no power. Both of them ignore the Holy Ghost in the work of the ministry, **and God’s express command to preach the Gospel to every creature- to all classes, orders and conditions of men-**and, though it be a stumbling-block to Jews, and foolishness to Greeks, to still preach it to them. The prophet when commanded to preach to dry bones did not say, I won’t do it, for they cannot hear, see, feel or understand; but as an obedient and faithful minister said, *‘And I prophesied as I was commanded.’* In that lies the beauty and glory of a gospel minister and his work. God has given him no discretion in that work; has not allowed him to ask questions, or have any scruples about the condition or power of those addressed.

.The command and order of Christ is, that “repentance and remission of sins is to be preached in his name among all nations,” [Luke xxiv, 47;]”⁵¹

1880 - Elder Lemuel Potter

“The gospel is good news, glad tidings--the joyful intelligence of salvation through a crucified and risen Savior **Thus we have the Bible definition of the gospel that we are to preach in all the world to every**

creature. It was this gospel that our Lord commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach to every creature. **We understand from the commission that we are required to preach the gospel to all, both saint and sinner.**"⁵²

1882-G. W. Matthews

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

There is not the shadow of a doubt in my mind but that it is the minister's duty to preach the gospel to both saint and sinner, wherever God in his providence may call them to preach, as did John the Baptist, who was commissioned from heaven to be the harbinger of the Messiah. Matt. 3. And Jesus Christ, who certainly was the prince of preachers, and also the apostles who copied after their divine Master, and confined their attention to religion, and left the schools to dispute, and politicians to intrigue, all of which God's ministers would do well to copy or imitate, in this day in which we live.

The preacher as represented in Matthew xiii is the sower, who when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them; and some fell upon stony places, and for the want of earth they withered away; and some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold.

It appears that the sower had nothing to do in preparing the ground, it was only his business to sow the seed,

It is not the preacher's business to ask his audience whether or not they are in a saved state, in order that he may preach to them; **but it is his duty to preach the gospel to every sin cursed creature of Adam's fallen race** who may be under the sound of his voice; "and he who hath ears to hear let him hear." Matt. xiii: 9.

The preacher cannot know those who only hear naturally, from those who hear and understand spiritually. **Then, I say, as did our Savior, preach the gospel to every creature;** hew to the line, let the chips fall where they will. But this much we are assured of, that if the plowshare of

God's spirit has not broken the fallow ground of the sinner's heart, and prepared it for the reception of the seed, that all seed that may take lodging there will perish for the want of root; Matt. xiii: 21, or will be choked up by the deceitfulness of riches; Matt. xiii: 22; or the devil will come and take them away; Matt. xiii: 19.”⁵³ **1885 - Elder J. H. Oliphant**⁵⁴

“We feel under obligations to do right in life, and **feel in duty bound to preach the gospel to every creature**, and many of us are spending much time in trying to preach the gospel to sinners. I have marked the arguments of those who oppose us, and I am persuaded that they, generally, misunderstand our position.... We agree that sinners of all classes are accountable; all “under the law,” and are under just obligations to love and obey God. There is a *sense of this duty in all men. We all agree that it is right to preach the gospel to every creature*, and this we are trying to do.”⁵⁵

1885 - Elder E. D. Thomas ⁵⁶

“One baptism means, one understanding of its use, taking the yoke of Christ upon them, to be united in the one body, one action, that of being buried with Christ by baptism; one officer, **performing the action by the authority of the church of Christ, acting under the commission, baptizing believers in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.**” ⁵⁷

1886 - Elder Sylvester Hassell⁵⁸

“The Eleventh Mark of the Apostolic Church was the sending out of the divinely called and qualified ministry by the Holy Spirit in themselves and in the churches, their going forth, whithersoever the Lord directed, in simple dependence upon Him, and **their preaching the gospel to every creature**, whether Jew or Gentile, and especially shepherding the lambs and sheep of Christ.”⁵⁹

1887 - Elder Lemuel Potter

“I know that it has been charged against our people, ever since the days of Andrew Fuller that the doctrine we advocate is the doctrine that the Missionary Baptists say paralyzes the efforts of ministers to go into all the

world and preach the gospel to every creature. Upon their own hypothesis, they come up here represented by a gentleman of ability, and they say that we oppose the spread of the gospel to every creature. Let him prove this. I emphatically deny it. I want that distinctly understood. I am here to speak for the Regular Old School Baptists, now.”⁶⁰

“He says that we do not generally hold that the Gospel should be preached to every creature. For our people, I deny that charge. I think it is the duty of the minister to preach the Gospel to every creature, saint and sinner. I have made this statement to the people all over this country. He does not seem to be very well posted about what we do believe on that subject.”⁶¹

“It is very common for men to represent our people as opposing the spread of the Gospel. They do this on the hypothesis that we do not go headlong into everything they suggest. I believe in the spread of the Gospel; I believe that when Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” it meant just what he says it meant.”⁶²

1888 - Elder G. M. Thompson

“We are not the husbandman, and can not prepare the human heart for the reception of the word; but it is our duty to sow the seed broadcast, for we know not what heart the Lord has prepared for its reception. We are to sow the seed in the morning, and to withhold not in the evening, for we know not which is to prosper, or whether both alike is to be good. We are not of that people who were never called to preach to sinners. **The command we have received from our King is, “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”** But we are nowhere commanded to prepare their hearts to receive it, but he that can prepare their hearts **has promised to be with us always.** With this promise, we go sowing the seed, and leaving the event with him who can prepare the heart for its reception.....”⁶³

1889 - Elder Sylvester Hassell

“...baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of Christ to be continued in his church to the end of the world, and to be administered

only by those qualified and thereunto **called according to his commission;**"⁶⁴

1892 - Elder Sylvester Hassell

"From the meaning of language, and the other statements of the Final Commission, and the comparison with the terms of the First Commission to the twelve Apostles and the commission to the seventy disciples.....and from facts stated in the Acts of the Apostles, and the facts in the subsequent history of the church, I believe that **our Lord in these words commissions not only His twelve Apostles but all His truly called and qualified ministers, not only in the apostolic age, but *till the end of the world*, to go, not only among the *Jews*, as He had in His first commission restricted His Apostles, but also among the *Gentiles* ... as God should guide them by His Spirit and open the way for them by His providence...**"⁶⁵

1895 - Elder Sylvester Hassell

"...the Final Commission of Christ to His Disciples seems to have been given, in words somewhat different but having substantially the same meaning, on four different occasions after His resurrection from the dead..."

"Just as the direction which Christ gave to Peter, in John xxi. 15-17, to feed His sheep and lambs undoubtedly applied also to all the apostles, and is applied by Peter to all elders -- 1 Pet. v. 1-4, so I feel sure that (as plainly intimated in His words in Matt. xxviii. 20, "Lo, I am with you always," not to the end of each one of your personal earthly lives, but "***even unto the end of the world***") **Christ in the words of His Final Commission, commands His true ministers, to the end of time, to go unto all the world, as they may be impressed and directed by His Spirit, and as the way may be opened to them by His providence, and to teach all nations, whether Jew or Gentile;**"⁶⁶

1896-Elder H. C. Hogan⁶⁷

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." -- Matt. xxviii. 19.

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”
Mark xvi. 15.

“The above language, with Luke xxiv. 46, 47, is **the commission given by our Savior to the apostles and to the ministry.**”⁶⁸

1899 - Elder Sylvester Hassell

“The language in Matt. xxviii. 20, and in Luke xxiv. 47, proves that **Christ’s commandment to preach His gospel everywhere or among all nations was not limited to the Apostles but is binding upon all His called and qualified ministers to the end of the present dispensation, and that it is under this commission all true ministers preach and baptize and teach the doctrine and commandments of God our Saviour**”⁶⁹

1905 - Elder George Stewart⁷⁰

“In the three preceding chapters I have attempted to point out briefly the fundamental principles of the gospel of Christ, who commanded His apostles to preach the gospel to all “nations” or to “every creature,” and it is evident that the apostles did preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, or to “all the world.” In this chapter I desire to point out the *manner* in which the apostles proceeded to preach the gospel in obedience to the command of their Lord and Master, for, just as the apostles proceeded in obedience to that command, just so should we proceed, because they are the example to all true ministers of the gospel so long as time shall last.”⁷¹

1906 - Elder J. W. Richardson

“Several questions are now being agitated which cause confusion among our people, a few of which I will mention; and first as to the great and last commission delivered by Christ to the Apostles. It is a fact that there are, at least, three views taken upon the Commission.

¹ **The Old Quakers, and of late some Old Baptists, have taken the view, that the Commission was delivered to the Apostles *alone*, and ceased to be in force after their death.** Holding this view the Old Quakers do not baptize and commune, and in this they are consistent, for if the Commission to preach is at an end, so are also the ordinances, for

the reason that they are joined together. To prove that the Commission is at an end, the following text has been quoted, “But I say, Have they not all heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” Rom. x. 18. Because it was made incumbent upon the Apostles to “teach *all nations*, baptizing them, etc.,” it is inferred by some brethren that when the then known nations heard the gospel by the Apostles, the Commission was at an end; not, it seems, taking into consideration the results of such application of the above text, for to thus apply the text ruins our cause, for we believe in preaching and baptizing. Now, a witness that ruins our cause we had better not put upon the stand to testify.

2. The next view I mention is that the Commission was delivered to the Apostles, *including the whole church*. Now, if this view is correct, it is the duty of the whole church to go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature, the female members as well as the males ought to go. In view of what the Apostle Paul said, it is strange that any person should try to maintain this view. He said, “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” 1 Tim. ii. 12. Evidently the Apostle did not understand the Commission to embrace the woman, and if they are not commanded to preach, then this view of the Commission is not correct.....

3. The third view is that the Commission was delivered to the Apostles *directly*, and all succeeding ministers whom God should call to preach the gospel are and were embraced, and is intended to remain in force until Jesus comes back again to this world.

This latter view is the one I embrace and try to maintain, and expect to as long as I live, for I have no doubt of its correctness. Shades of difference of opinion may and doubtless do exist among those who embrace this view, but it may be that those differences are more in the manner of expression than a real difference in *sentiment*. I have never met a brother who embraced this view, that I could not love and fellowship, notwithstanding we may not express our views in the use of the same words, yet we were agreed in sentiment.....”

“... the Baptists believed (before the great division) that the Commission embraced the Apostles and all succeeding ministers and none others,” “ ...Let us all adhere to the old landmarks, and let new views alone, and good feeling and harmony will prevail among Old Baptists.”⁷²

1906 - Elder Sylvester Hassell

“According to Matthew, Christ’s last commandment to His Apostles was: “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28: 16-20). And, according to Mark, Christ’s last commandment to His Apostles was: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:14-16). **Ever since this solemn and important commandment was given, Baptists have believed that it applied**, not to all the members of the church, but **to the Apostles and all other God-called and God-qualified ministers**, who were to preach the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, and to baptize all believers.”⁷³

1908-Elder R. H. Pittman⁷⁴

“Old School Baptists.....take a view of the missionary question something like this: **When Christ in the commission, so-called commission, says “Go,” we believe in going; and when He says “preach,” we believe in preaching; and when He says the gospel, we believe in preaching the gospel,**”⁷⁵

1908-Elder T. S. Dalton⁷⁶

“Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem **We believe as a people, in carrying out the mission of the Saviour, Go into all the**

world, and we go. We do not wait to be sent; and when we go we preach repentance to everybody that will listen to us; but we preach it in the name of Jesus Christ; and we claim that Jesus is exalted, a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to the sinner and the forgiveness of sins; and we claim this, that a Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. It is not an act of man; it is the product of the divine Spirit of God that produces that sorrow in the sinner's heart that turns him away from sin, and hence it is a repentance to salvation not to be repented of. But the sorrow of the world, as Paul says, worketh death. **Now you understand what we understand in preaching the gospel to every creature. Wherever God, in his providence, casts our lot we preach,** but we preach in the name of Christ, and none of it in the name of the sinner, and leave the event of it to God.”⁷⁷

1909 - Elder Thomas Bazemore⁷⁶

“Now we all know that the immediate disciples of Jesus, to whom he gave this command, did not and could not go themselves into all the world, and preach the gospel to every individual creature in the world. It is evident that the Savior only meant to take away the restriction that he had formerly placed on his disciples, in confining them in their preaching to the Jews. And the restriction remains taken away, **so God's ministers are authorized and commanded to preach the precious gospel of Christ to everybody that they can, of whatever nationality.** But this commission by no means authorizes the modern system of missions.”⁷⁹

1912-Elder Walter Cash⁸⁰

In reply to Elder Pence who had begun advocating that the commission was given to the ministry, irrespective of the church (which opens wide the reception of alien baptism), Elder Cash comments:

“Elder Pence denies that baptism is by authority of the church, but claims it is vested solely in those “called and commissioned of God to preach the gospel.” But who is to decide who is “called and commissioned” to preach the gospel? Primitive Baptists believe that the church is the proper authority to pass upon the “call and commission,” and we do not propose to recognize the authority to baptize when the

church has not passed upon the evidence of the “call and commission.”⁸¹

NOTE: In the compiling of this APPENDIX, I only surveyed materials from 1820 through 1912, and that not exhaustively. Nevertheless, in all of my reading, only one quotation was found where a brother affirmed his belief that the commission ended with the original apostles. All other quotations either indicated or positively affirmed the belief that the commission extended unto the apostles’ successors in the ministry and that our ministers preach under the authority and command of that commission.

Endnotes

¹ Elder Walter Cash, “The Subject of Baptism Again” In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. 38, No. 12, (May 1, 1912), p. 230-232; Elder Walter Cash, “Elder Pence’s Explanation” In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. 38, No. 14, (June 1, 1912), p. 270-271.

² In 1859, Elder Charles Sands of Indiana writes in the *Zion’s Advocate*, “...a proper baptism consists of a proper administrator (one set apart by the authority of the gospel church), a proper subject (one whose soul has been regenerated), and a proper mode (which is immersion).” [See [Letter] In: *Zion’s Advocate*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (February 4, 1860), p. 45.]

In 1867, Elder Wilson Thompson writes, “...the immersion of an unconscious infant is no gospel baptism; nor can any man administer gospel baptism without the legal authority of Christ. This authority He has vested in the true church, as the executive authority in His kingdom, to see to the proper execution of all His laws and ordinances. The proper authority, therefore, is indispensable to gospel baptism...” [See, Thompson, Wilson, *The autobiography of Elder Wilson Thompson: His life, travels, and ministerial labors*” Conley, GA: Old School Hymnal Co., Inc., 1978, p. 194.

In 1874, Elder J. E. Goodson, editor of the *Messenger of Peace*, writes in the *Abstract of Principles* for that periodical: “...God has ordained that faithful believers should be associated together in a church, for the maintainance of the ordinances, of His house on earth, the chief of which is Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; **which ordinances belong to the Church of Christ**, and are to be administered by its order.” [See “Abstract of Principles” In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (December 1, 1874), p. 25.]

In 1879, Elder J. H. Purifoy of Alabama writing on the subject of RE-BAPTISM says: “**Baptism is an ordinance of the Church of Christ**, and none can be admitted into the Church and enjoy her privileges without submitting to this divine ordinance. Immersion, then, to be regarded as baptism must be administered to regenerated subjects by authority of the Church at the hands of her scripturally ordained ministry...” “...what can be said of the immersion of *false* churches? Can they be valid? ..Must we, can we, recognize their organizations as churches of Christ because they *claim* to be such? We cannot; therefore we cannot receive the administration of the ordinances by them. If they are not true churches of Christ they have no right to the ordinances of the gospel. When members come from them then to us, which is frequently the case, we *baptize* them, not re-baptize them.” [See “Why I Am a Primitive Baptist” In: *Zion’s Advocate*, Vol. 18, No. 22, (April 15, 1879), p.

342-343.]

In 1912, Elder Walter Cash writes, “Primitive Baptists believe that they are the church of Christ, and that no body can administer the ordinances of the church for it, it must administer its own ordinances; and that baptism is a declaration of faith and consecration before the world.” [See “The Subject of Baptism Again” In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. 38, No. 12, (May, 1, 1912), p. 231.]

³ Historical Note: In the division with the New School Baptists, Primitive Baptists correctly maintained that the responsibility of preaching the gospel rested upon Christ’s Church rather than on the newly introduced missionary societies of the day. Elder Mark Bennett, the first editor of *The Primitive Baptist* periodical of North Carolina, writes in 1835 that: “The New Testament furnishes no record of any true religious society except the church of God. The societies of the day are not the church. They are superadditions; **The church alone is qualified and intended to support the ordinances thereof. It is theirs to maintain the truth and to spread the gospel. Aid called in from any other quarter betrays something adverse to the church and the spirit of the Gospel.**” [See [Editor’s Note] In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Prospectus Edition, (October 3, 1835), p. 8-9.]

⁴ Elder Walter Cash, *Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum of the Primitive Baptist Church* (St. Joseph, MO: Messenger of Peace, 1919), p. 12; *Minutes of the One Hundred Forty-Second Annual Session of the Original Upper Canoochee Primitive Baptist Association.... 1971.* p. 10; *Those Things Most Surely Believed Among Us: The Primitive Baptist Confession of Faith of 1900*, Fulton, Kentucky, E. D. Speir, R. E. Cagle, E. D. Speir, Jr., Eds., (McDonough, GA: Merry Suppliers, Inc, 1981), p. 91.

⁵ Elder G. M. Thompson, a son of Elder Wilson Thompson, was born in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri, April 11, 1811. In May 1826, he joined the church in Lebanon, Ohio and began preaching shortly thereafter. In the division with the New School Baptists, Elder Thompson faithfully stood alongside Elders Joshua Lawrence, Stephen Gard, and Wilson Thompson in the defense of the faith once delivered to the saints against all the humanly-devised societies and methods of the New School Baptists. During Elder Thompson’s sixty years of preaching, he traveled extensively, having preached in seventeen states, and was a strong defender of the faith, and engaged in several public discussions of which two have been published. Elder Thompson was a frequent writer to many of our periodicals and published two books: *The Measuring Rod, or, Principles and Practice of the Primitive Baptists: stated and defended* in 1861 and *The Primitive Preacher* in 1888.

Elder Thompson died at Ashland, Missouri on March 9, 1888. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 267-268; Thompson, G. M., *The Primitive Preacher: a book of sixteen sermons delivered by Gregg M. Thompson member of the Primitive Baptist Church*. (Greenfield, IN: D. H. Goble Publisher, 1888; reprint ed., Stone Mountain, GA: Primitive Baptist Publications, n.d.), p. 5-20; Cash, Walter, *Portraits, Primitive Baptist ministers* (Marceline, MO: Walter Cash, 1896), p. 111.]

⁶ Elder G. M. Thompson, *A Debate, Held in Calhoun, Georgia, January 15, 16, and 17, 1856, between Eld. G. W. Selvidge, of the Missionary Society, and Eld. G. M. Thompson, of the Primitive Baptist Church* (Calhoun, GA, 1856), p. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28-29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26, 30. (In this debate, Elder Thompson claimed to preach under the authority of the commission as found in Matthew 28. Elder Thompson says, “When Mr. Selvidge was ridiculing the idea of a special and heavenly call to the ministry, he exultingly and with a show of triumph, called on me to show my credentials; and I referred him to the 28th chapter of Matthew.”)

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹¹ Elder Lemuel Potter was born in the state of Illinois on October 28, 1841, joined Providence Primitive Baptist Church of Wayne county, Illinois in 1863, and was ordained to the ministry in April 1867. Elder Potter was one of the most highly esteemed and respected elders among our people. Elder R. H. Pittman said of him, “His personal character was without stain, and he was so widely known and so universally beloved that it would seem almost superfluous to speak of his character or work. He traveled much among the churches and associations, and labored untiringly wherever circumstances placed him. He was the founder of the Church Advocate, and its editor until his death. As a defender and advocate of the faith and doctrine of the Old School or Primitive Baptists, we judge none among us were his superiors. As an author and editor, a minister and pastor, a debater and defender.....he was of the first rank among our people.....” During his lifetime, Elder Potter published several books including: *Unconditional Election Stated and Defined* in 1880; *A Synopsis of Four Lectures on The Communion*, in 1886; *Mount Tabor Church Trial in the Supreme Court of Indiana* in 1893; *Labors and Travels of Elder Lemuel Potter* in 1894; *A Short Treatise on Regeneration, Christian*

Warfare, and the State of the Dead in 1895; and *A Souvenir of the Ministers of the Old School or Primitive Baptist Church* in 1895. Elder Potter was buried at Poseyville, Ind., December 10, 1897. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 216-217; Potter, Lemuel, *A souvenir of the ministers of the old school or Primitive Baptist Church*. (Evansville, IN: Worthington Eng - Ptg Co., 1895), p. 49.]

¹² Elder Lemuel Potter, *Joint discussion on foreign missions between the Rev. H. Clay Yates and Elder Lemuel Potter* (Nashville, TN: Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House, 1886), p. 38-39.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 53-55.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 475.

¹⁶ Elder J. W. Richardson was born June 24, 1829, professed a hope in Christ in his twenty-eighth year, was baptized January 10, 1858, and later ordained to the ministry on January 22, 1872. Elder Richardson had the care of four churches almost continually throughout his ministry. Elder Richardson was a frequent writer to our church papers and was greatly loved and esteemed by the brethren. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 230; Potter, Lemuel, *A souvenir of the ministers of the old school or Primitive Baptist Church*. (Evansville, IN: Worthington Eng - Ptg Co., 1895), p. 66.]

¹⁷ Elder J. W. Richardson, [Letter] In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 28, No. 2, (February 1906), p. 49-52.

¹⁸ I have recently learned that some brethren (opposed to the commission) are now suggesting that we stop baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. If such brethren are consistent, the next step will be to stop teaching disciples to observe ‘all things whatsoever Christ has commanded’ as found in the same text. I trust the Lord will intervene on the behalf of His people and prevent the adoption of such a course.

¹⁹ have chosen to withhold the reference to this quotation as I do not wish divert the reader’s mind away from the issues before us unto personalities. Nor do I wish to single out this good brother or cause him any personal embarrassment. Nevertheless, should any reader challenge the authenticity of the quotation, I stand ready to supply the reference.

²⁰ The reason that some brethren believe it would be wrong to advocate a doctrine or interpretation of Scripture different from that of our Primitive Baptist forefathers is that they believe it is impossible for Primitive Baptist teachings or interpretations to change from generation to generation. Such brethren have been heard to say, “the very same faith that is preached in Primitive Baptist pulpits today is the very same faith that has been preached since the days of the apostles down to this present day and has not changed one jot or tittle,” or as a brother stated a few years ago while preaching: “If I want to know what Primitive Baptists believed 100 years ago, I don’t need to read their writings. All I need to do is read the Bible.” While brethren who hold to this sentiment admit there are a few “odd” preachers about who do not always agree with the majority of their fellow ministers, such brethren are persuaded that the majority of our preachers in any given generation could not be mistaken on any doctrine or interpretation of Scripture. They reason that since we are the true New Testament Church, the pillar and ground of the truth, the doctrines and interpretations of Scripture taught by the Church’s ministry MUST be true, yea, true in every generation for truth does not change from generation to generation. Nevertheless, while it is accurate that truth does not change from generation to generation, it is not true that the Primitive Baptist ministry as a whole is infallible in their teachings. Nevertheless, many of our brethren, who would unhesitatingly condemn the supposed “infallibility” of the Pope, appear to come very close to believing in the “infallibility” of the majority, consensus opinion of the Primitive Baptist ministry. It appears that such brethren believe that the majority opinion of the Primitive Baptist ministry in any generation could not be wrong. Thus, for such brethren, the simple adoption of what they think our Primitive Baptist forefathers preached and believed seems to be a safe course to follow.

Nevertheless, while it is true that the fundamental truths of salvation by grace have not changed from generation to generation, it is obvious from history that some Primitive Baptist teachings and interpretations of Scripture have indeed changed over the years. While many examples could be given, I will mention just one which has to do with the Parable of the Sower. I mention this only as an example. Concerning this parable, it is clear from history that the highly esteemed and respected Primitive Baptist ministers around 100 years ago (and before) such as Elders J. H. Oliphant, Sylvester Hassell, R. H. Pittman, Walter Cash, Lemuel Potter, S. N. Redford, J. E. W. Henderson, C. W. Radcliff, John M. Watson, and G. M. Thompson did not believe that all four types of ground in this parable represented regenerated persons as do (I suspect) the majority of our contemporary brethren (references to these historical facts may be found at the end of this footnote).

Thus, either Primitive Baptists 100 years ago (and before) were wrong in their views of this parable or else our contemporary brethren are wrong. They cannot both be right. As uncomfortable as it may be to admit, the historical record reveals that some Primitive Baptist teachings and interpretations can and have changed from generation to generation. The interpretation of the Parable of the Sower is only one of many examples that could be given. Thus, it is no safe course to merely adopt the views of our Primitive Baptist forefathers, or to adopt what one “thinks” were their views. Likewise, it is unsafe to merely adopt the majority views of our contemporary ministry. It is never right to simply adopt another’s opinion when it comes to spiritual things. When it comes to the discernment of spiritual truths, sound Primitive Baptists will take the Scriptures alone as their standard of faith and practice, and will not be found just adopting the beliefs of our Baptist forefathers, nor will they be found just adopting the majority, consensus opinion of their contemporary brethren regardless of how much respect and esteem they may have for them. Sound Primitive Baptists look to the Scriptures ALONE for their rule of faith and practice. To do otherwise is a liberal departure from the Scriptures and from our stated articles of faith.

[References for the above statement concerning the Parable of the Sower are as follows: Oliphant, J. H., “God the Author of our Faith” In: *Principles and Practices of the Regular Baptists Stated and Defended* (Indianapolis, IN: A. R. Baker, Printer, 1885), p. 159; Hassell, Sylvester, “Questions and Answers” In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 32, No. 7, (July 1910), p. 242; Pittman, R. H., *Questions and Answers* (Front Royal, VA: Warren Press, 1935), p. 59; Cash, Walter, “The Unfruitful Hearer” In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. 22, No. I, (November 15, 1895), p. 4; Potter, Lemuel, *Labors and travels of Elder Lemuel Potter* (Evansville, IN: Keller Printing Company, 1894; reprinted., The Primitive Baptist Library [Carthage, IL], c. 1990), p. 321-322; Redford, S. N., “The Parables” In: *As A Man Thinketh* (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Primitive Baptist Recording Library, 1980), p. 343-344; Henderson, J. E. W., “Take Heed” In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 28, No. 6, (June 1906), p. 197-201; Radcliff, C. W., *Doctrine and Practice of Primitive Baptists and Church Identity* (Greenfield, IN: Wm. Mitchell Printing Co., 1928), p. 114-116; Watson, John M., *The Old Baptist Test; or Bible Signs of the Lord’s People* (Nashville, TN: Bell, Jones & Co., “Gazette” Book Office, 1867; reprinted., Ellenwood, GA: Primitive Baptist Publications, 1990), p. 518-519; Thompson, G. M., *The Primitive Preacher: a book of sixteen sermons delivered by Gregg M. Thompson member of the Primitive Baptist Church* (Greenfield, IN: D. H. Goble Publisher, 1888; reprinted Stone Mountain, GA: Primitive Baptist Publications, n.d.), p. 130-131.]

²¹ In the Baptist division in the 1830's, the New School Baptists often claimed that our Primitive Baptist forefathers were opposed to the preaching of the gospel as commanded by Christ in the commission. Thus, I am grieved to see some of our good, well-meaning brethren now claiming the same thing as our adversaries. I would encourage such brethren to become better informed of their true Primitive Baptist heritage that they be not led astray by the false accusations of the Missionary Baptists against our people. History abundantly testifies that the spread of the gospel through the authority of the commission was never a point of controversy in the Baptist division of the 1830's. But because our forefathers opposed the newly introduced schemes and modern missionary methods of the day, the New School falsely charged them with opposing the preaching of the gospel as commanded by Christ in the commission. This was a false accusation which our brethren continually defended against as may be seen below:

Elder Joshua Lawrence, who authored the document upon which the Kehukee Association withdrew from the Missionary Baptists in 1827, wrote:

“The sending the gospel to the destitute or heathen, is thought to be the great bone of contention, though it is not; but the unscriptural practices resorted to, by those who send and pretend to carry it.”

In declaring non-fellowship for the modern missionary schemes of the day in 1832, the Old School Baptists at Black Rock wrote the following in the Black Rock Address:

“Previous to stating our objections to the mission plans, we will meet some of the false charges brought against us relative to this subject, by a simple and unequivocal declaration, that **we do regard as of the first importance the command given of Christ, primarily to His apostles, and through them to his ministers in every age, to “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,”**

In 1841, Elder Samuel C. Johnson also defended against the false accusations of the New School. He wrote:

“....Go ye therefore, teach all nations--that is, in your bounds, or wherever the holy spirit leads you We will now notice some of the faults the missionaries find of us. We will not join them in their money plans, and leave the good old way of teaching the things that are commanded, as they have; **but because we act in accordance with the commission given in the text, they say that we are opposed to the spread of the gospel.**”

In 1852, the Tombigbee Association of Primitive Baptists also mentioned these

false accusations in their circular letter. They wrote:

“We are told by them that we are opposed to the spread of the Gospel. This charge we deem it scarcely necessary to deny, since it is proved to be false by every act of our lives, in a ministerial sense, in **attending churches and ordaining ministers under the imperative command, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”**”

We could go on with more, but will desist as these examples with others are to be found in the APPENDIX.

Because our forefathers would not follow the advocates of modern missions into all their unscriptural means and methods, they falsely accused our brethren with being opposed to the preaching of the gospel as commanded by Christ in the commission. Nevertheless, our Primitive Baptist forefathers were not opposed to this command, but professed to preach and baptize under the authority of that commission.

²² The early New Testament church did not view the commission as endowing them with the responsibility of turning their focus and attention away from the worship of God unto evangelistic efforts. It is clear that the early church realized that, notwithstanding the command to teach all nations, all evangelistic efforts would be initiated and directed under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we find the disciples waiting together in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Acts 2:1-4) as the Lord had commanded them (Luke 24:49). Moreover, it is noticeable that on the day of Pentecost the early church was not met together in the upper room devising methods and plans for the evangelism of the heathen, but were met together in prayer and supplication to God (Acts 1:13-14). It is also noticed that under God’s initiated plan of evangelism, three thousand were converted that day (Acts 2:41). Further, it is seen that Peter and John went to the temple in Acts 3, not to attend a meeting to discuss how they might best “blanket” the world with the gospel, but went to the temple to pray (Acts 3:1). We also notice that on their way to prayer, God opened a door for them to preach, and under God’s plan of evangelism, five thousand were converted that day (Acts 4:4). In both of these instances, a door of evangelism was opened unto those who were focused on the worship of God, rather than being focused on the development of some kind of humanly-devised scheme or plan for the evangelism of the world.

We also notice that it was under the direction and leadership of the Holy Spirit that Philip went down to Gaza to preach to the eunuch (Acts 8:26,29) and that Peter went down to Caesarea to preach to Cornelius’ house (Acts 10:9-20). It is clear that

Peter went up upon the housetop in Joppa, not to figure out the best way to evangelize the Gentiles, but to pray (Acts 10:9). It is obvious to every reader of Acts that Peter did not come up with his “own plan” of evangelism for Cornelius’ household, but became engaged in God’s plan of evangelism through the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, when the Holy Ghost separated Paul and Barnabas from the church in Antioch to preach to the Gentiles, we find that the church in Antioch was not met together devising methods or schemes for the evangelism of the heathen, but were met together fasting and ministering to the Lord (Acts 13:1 -2). Paul and Barnabas’ ministry was successful because it was under God’s plan of evangelism through the leadership and direction of the Holy Ghost. Again, it is seen that God opened a door of evangelism unto those engaged in and focused upon the worship of God. Such is God’s method of initiating evangelism of which all would do well to take heed.

²³ Elder Joshua Lawrence was born in Edgecombe Co., North Carolina, September 10, 1778. He was baptized by Elder Nathan Gilbert, and ordained to the ministry by Elders Lemuel Burkitt and Jesse Read. Elder Lawrence was one of the main defenders of the faith against the money-based, religious institutions of the early 1800’s, and was the author of the document upon which the Kehukee Association withdrew fellowship from the New School Baptists in 1827. He was such a dominate figure and leader in the Kehukee Association during this division that the Old Baptists of North Carolina were derogatorily called “Lawrenceans” by the New School. Elder Lawrence was a consistent writer to *The Primitive Baptist* periodical (which he helped establish in 1836 in Tarborough, N. C.) and published a number of works including, *The North Carolina*

Whig’s apology for the Kehukee Association; A patriotic discourse; The American telescope; The mouse trying to gnaw out of the Catholic trap; and Missionary craft. Elder Lawrence was considered a “Father in Israel” until his death on January 23, 1843. [See “Biography of Elder Joshua Lawrence” In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (October 28, 1843), p. 312-316; *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 160; Temple, Burwell, “A Short History of the ‘Primitive Baptist’ Paper” In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 29, No. 23, (December 26, 1872), p. 364-365.]

²⁴ Elder Joshua Lawrence, “The Clodhopper’s Reply” In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (February 12, 1842), p. 36.

²⁵ Kehukee Association, *Circular Letter*, 1828, p. 3-4.

²⁶ Elder Joshua Lawrence, “The North Carolina Whig’s Apology for the Kehukee

Association” In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (January 28, 1843), p. 19-21.

²⁷ Kehukee Association, “CIRCULAR LETTER; written by Elder Joshua Lawrence for the Kehukee Association, held at Morattock m. h. Washington county, N. C. Oct. 1830.” In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 7, No. 14, (July 23, 1842), p. 213.

²⁸ Elder Green Carrowan of the Kehukee Association was born July 27, 1778, and was baptized around 1806 and soon ordained to the ministry. Elder Carrowan’s preaching was greatly approved by the churches, and he was possessed of great natural abilities and a profound knowledge of the Scriptures. Elder Carrowan departed this life January 31, 1832. [See Biggs, Joseph, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association* (Tarborough, NC: Tarborough Free Press, 1834), p. 262-267.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁰ Elder Joseph Biggs, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association* (Tarborough, NC; Tarborough Free Press, 1834), p. 267.

³¹ *Feast of Fat Things*, W. L. Beebe, Ed. (G. Beebe’s Sons, 1890), p. 13-14; *The Black Rock Address and Kehukee Declaration*, W. J. Berry, Ed., (Elon College, NC: Primitive Publications, n.d.), p. 30; [Slightly modified versions of the “Black Rock Address” may be found in: *The Trial and Decision of Mount Carmel Church*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., c. 1916), p. 121; Hanks, Lee, *The Church of God* (Atlanta, GA: Dowman & Wilkins Co., c.1910), p. 138; *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 363.]

³² Elder Mark Bennett was a member of the Kehukee Association at the time of the division with the New School Baptists in 1827. Elder Bennett was the first editor of *The Primitive Baptist* periodical which began publishing in 1836 in opposition to the newly devised missionary schemes of the New School. Along-side Elder Joshua Lawrence, Elder Bennett was a staunch defender of the faith against the new “isms” of that day. [See “Proposals, For Publishing in the town of Tarborough, N. C. a semimonthly paper, entitled The Primitive Baptist” In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (January 9, 1836), p. 1; Biggs, Joseph, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association* (Tarborough, NC: Tarborough Free Press, 1834), p. 234-261.]

³³ Elder Mark Bennett, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 2, No. 14, (July 22, 1837), p. 217-218.

³⁴ Elder S. C. Johnson, [Letter], In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 7, No. 7, (April 9, 1842), p. 108-109.

³⁵ Fishing River Association, *History of the Fishing River Association of Missouri* (Marceline, MO: Walter Cash, Publisher, 1896), p. 47-48.

³⁶ White River Association of Primitive Baptists, “Minutes of the White River Association held at Prairie Creek Meeting House, Daviess County, on the third Saturday in August 1844” In: *Minutes of the White River Association of Regular Baptists* (Bloomington, IN: J. C. Carlton, Printer, 1856), p. 95-96.

³⁷ Elder John Watson was born in 1798, received a hope in Christ in early adulthood and united with the Old School Baptists at Wilson’s Creek Church in Williamson Co., Tennessee. He was soon after ordained to the ministry, and became a leading minister of the old order of Baptists in Tennessee. Elder Watson was a staunch defender of the Old Baptist cause and replaced Washington Lowe as editor of the *Old Baptist Banner* in 1839 which Elder Watson renamed, *The Correspondent*. Elder Watson was a proficient writer to many of our periodicals and also published several books including *A Refutation of the Manichaeo-Parkerite Heresy* in 1849, *A Defense of Wilson’s Creek Church* in 1859, and *The Old Baptist Test* in 1855 with a second revised edition in 1867. Elder Watson died in full triumph of faith in 1866. [See: *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 284-285; Lowe, Washington, “The Correspondent” In: *Old Baptist Banner*, Vol. 1, No. 12, (April 1839), p. 191.]

³⁸ Elder John Watson, *The Old Baptist Test; or, Bible Signs of the Lord’s People* (Nashville, TN: Bell, Jones & Co., “Gazette” Book Office, 1867; reprinted., Ellenwood, GA: Primitive Baptist Publications, 1990), p. 327-329; [see also, Watson, John, *A refutation of the Manichaeo-Parkerite Heresy* (Murfreesboro, TN: D. W. Taylor, Pr., Telegraph Office, 1849), p. 13-14.]

³⁹ Tombigbee Association of Primitive Baptists, “Circular Letter” In: *The Primitive Baptist*, Vol. 16, No. 24, (December 25, 1852), p. 373-374.

⁴⁰ Elder G. M. Thompson, *A Debate, Held in Calhoun, Georgia, January 15, 16, and 17, 1856, between Eld. G. W. Selvidge, of the Missionary Society, and Eld. G. M. Thompson, of the Primitive Baptist Church* (Calhoun, GA, 1856), p. 26.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴³ Elder Theodrick Boulware was born November 13, 1780 in Essex county, Virginia, and was ordained to the ministry in North Fork Church, Kentucky in 1810. Elder Boulware was truly a minister of the “old stamp” who preached the gospel among the Lord’s people for close to 50 years. Elder Boulware was a frequent writer

to our church papers and published two editions of his autobiography and sermons entitled, *A Sketch of the Life of Theodrick Boulware*. [See, Boulware, Theodrick, *A Sketch of the Life of Theodrick Boulware* (Saint Louis, MO: Sherman Spencer, Printer, 1859), p. 1-45.]

⁴⁴ Elder Theodrick Boulware, *A Sketch of the Life of Theodrick Boulware* (Saint Louis, MO: Sherman Spencer, Printer, 1859), p. 47.

⁴⁵ Elder Zachariah Thomas was born in 1817 in Licking County, Ohio, and united with Mt. Pisgah Church in Morrow County in 1846, being baptized by his father, Elder John D. Thomas. He was liberated to preach in the winter of 1847, and ordained to the ministry in June 1849 and took the pastoral care of Mt. Pisgah Church. Early in his ministry, Elder Thomas also pastored Alum Creek Church at Ashley, and Salem Church near Johnsonville. In 1860, he moved to Licking County, and became pastor of the Licking and Friendship Churches while retaining charge of Mt. Pisgah and Salem. In 1865 he moved to northern Indiana where he was instrumental in the organization of two churches, Mt. Salem and Elkhart which he visited as pastor as long as he could travel. Elder Thomas preached his last sermon at Elkhart in May 1884. As a minister he was faithful and zealous, in discourse systematic and logical. Elder Thomas was greatly beloved by all that knew him. [Extracted from: *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 266.]

⁴⁶ Elder Zachariah Thomas, [Letter] In: *Zion's Advocate*, Vol. 7, No. 4, (February 18, 1860), p. 54.

⁴⁷ Elder John Clark was born in Orange Co., Va. on July 4, 1804. He was baptized in 1829, and ordained to the ministry in 1831 by Elders R. B. Semple, L. W. Battle and A. H. Bennett. Elder Clark commenced the work of the ministry with only the advantages of a common school education, but being possessed of a fine mind and retentive memory, he pressed his researches far into the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages. His labors in the Master's vineyard were perhaps more abundant than any minister's in his native state. Besides his monthly ministrations to the five different churches under his care, he commenced the publication of *Zion's Advocate* in 1854 and was its editor until his death. He also edited and compiled the *Ebenezer Hymn Book* first published in 1856, and published a small book entitled *Exposures of Heresies* in 1873. He was truly an able minister of the New Testament and was looked upon by some as the leading minister of the Old School Baptists in Virginia. Elder Lemuel Potter says of him, "He was truly a sound and able minister of the New Testament, and an able exponent of the doctrine of the Church." Elder Clark

died in the full triumph of faith, November 9, 1882. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 64-65; Potter, Lemuel, *A souvenir of the ministers of the old school or Primitive Baptist Church*. (Evansville, IN: Worthington Eng - Ptg Co., 1895), p. 11; Clark, John, "My Ministerial Record" In: *Zion's Advocate*, Vol. 22, No. 11, (December 1, 1882), p. 165-166.]

⁴⁸ Elder John Clark, "More Questions" In: *Zion's Advocate*, Vol. 12, No. 19, (March 1, 1873), p. 291.

⁴⁹ Siloam Association of Regular Baptists, "Circular Letter" of the Siloam Association of Regular Baptists now in session with the Union Church, Marion County, Oregon, (John Stipp, Moderator), In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. I, No. 2, (December 1, 1874), p.31.

⁵⁰ Elder John Clark, [Editorial Comment on "Preaching Funerals"] In: *Zion's Advocate*, Vol. 16, No. 18, (February 14, 1877), p. 285.

⁵¹ Elder John Clark, "Preaching Repentance" In: *Zion's Advocate*, Vol. 18, No. 20, (March 15, 1879), p. 305-306.

⁵² Elder Lemuel Potter, *Unconditional election stated and defined; or Denial of the doctrine of eternal children, or Two seeds in the flesh*. (Carmi, IL: Courier Steam Book and Job Printing House, 1880), p 117-118.

⁵³ G. W. Matthews, [Letter], In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (December, 15, 1882), p. 44.

⁵⁴ Elder J. H. Oliphant was born March 10, 1846, received a hope in Christ under the preaching of Elder E. D. Thomas, and was baptized on August 1, 1869. Elder Oliphant was ordained to the ministry in 1872 and was a "highly esteemed" minister among our people and an extensive writer to our periodicals, being associate editor of the *Primitive Monitor*, *The Gospel Messenger*, and *Zion's Advocate*. Elder Oliphant also published several books including: *The Doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints*, in 1878; *Principles and Practices of the Regular Baptists*, in 1883; *Regeneration: or The Doctrine of the Quickening of Sinners Dead in Sins by the Holy Spirit*, in 1888; *Thoughts on the Will*, in 1899; *Justification and Kindred Subjects*, in 1899; *An Investigation of Bible Truths*, in 1900; *Practical Suggestions for the Common People*, in 1904; and *The Autobiography of Elder J. H. Oliphant of Crawfordsville, Ind.*, in 1923. Elder Pittman writes of him, "he is a minister of great usefulness among our people and highly esteemed for the truth's sake." [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R.

H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 202; Oliphant, J. H., *The Autobiography of Elder J. H. Oliphant of Crawfordsville, Ind.* (St. Joseph, MO: Messenger of Peace, 1923), p. 1-10.]

⁵⁵ Elder J. H. Oliphant, “The Doctrine of Election and Predestination Considered” In: *Principles and Practices of the Regular Baptists Stated and Defended* (Indianapolis, IN: A. R. Baker, Printer, 1885), p. 71.

⁵⁶ Elder E. D. Thomas, son-in-law of Elder Wilson Thompson, was born in Fayette County, Indiana in 1821, and was ordained to the ministry around 1851. Although he traveled considerably, his greatest work was pastoring churches, having served two churches for over forty years each. He also published several editions of a Primitive Baptist hymnal entitled, *A New and Choice Selection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the use of the Regular Baptist Church, and all lovers of song*. He died in 1896 in his home in Danville, Indiana, at the age of seventy-five, having served his Master faithfully for nearly half a century. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 264.]

⁵⁷ Elder E. D. Thomas, “Church Organization” In: *Principles and Practices of the Regular Baptists Stated and Defended* (Indianapolis, IN: A. R. Baker, Printer, 1885), p.414.

⁵⁸ Elder Sylvester Hassell was born in 1842, received a hope in Christ and was baptized in 1871, and was ordained to the ministry in 1874. He published *The History of the Church of God* in 1886 (which had been begun by his father, Elder C. B. Hassell), and published many small pamphlets in later years. In 1892 he became associate editor of *The Gospel Messenger*, and in 1896, its proprietor and managing editor until 1920. Elder R. W. Thompson said of him in 1911, “He is considered one of the ablest, wisest and safest exponents of the literal and spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures we have; holding them unmixed with the doctrines and new-born theories of men; zealously opposing all departures in doctrine or practice, defending the purity of the gospel church in its apostolic doctrine and practice.” [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 128-129; Hassell, Sylvester, “Combination of Zion’s Advocate and The Messenger of Truth with The Gospel Messenger” In: *Advocate and Messenger*, Vol. 62, No. 4, (April 1923), p. 101-102; Hassell, Sylvester, *History of the Church of God..... revised and completed by Elder Sylvester Hassell* [reprint of the 1886 edition, with added biographical sketches of Elder Sylvester Hassell and Mrs. M. M. Hassell] (Ellenwood, GA: Old School Hymnal Co., Inc., 1983), p. 1009-19.]

⁵⁹ Elder Sylvester Hassell, “The Twelve Marks of the Apostolic Church” In: *History of the Church of God. revised and completed by Elder Sylvester Hassell* [reprint of the 1886 edition, with added biographical sketches of Elder Sylvester Hassell and Mrs. M. M. Hassell] (Ellenwood, GA: Old School Hymnal Co., Inc., 1983), p. 316.

⁶⁰ Elder Lemuel Potter, *The Throgmorton-Potter debate: held at Fulton, Ky., beginning Tuesday, 10 A. M., July 12th, 1887, and continuing four days and two nights, question debated, “Who are the Primitive Baptists”* (St. Louis, MO: Nixon-Jones Printing Co., 1888), p. 19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁶³ Elder G. M. Thompson, *The Primitive Preacher: a book of sixteen sermons delivered by Gregg M. Thompson member of the Primitive Baptist Church* (Greenfield, IN: D. H. Goble Publisher, 1888; reprinted., Stone Mountain, GA: Primitive Baptist Publications, n.d.), p. 131.

⁶⁴ Elder Sylvester Hassell, “The Old Paths” In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 11, No. 11, (November 1889), p. 422.

⁶⁵ Elder Sylvester Hassell, “Christ’s Final Commission To His Disciples” In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 14, No. 12, (December 1892), p. 463.

⁶⁶ Elder Sylvester Hassell, “Preaching and Baptism” In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 17, No. 10, (October 1895), p. 310.

⁶⁷ Elder H. C. Hogan was born July 1, 1864 in Obion county, Tennessee and ordained to the ministry in 1887 by Elders J. K. Stephens and S. F. Cayce. Elder Hogan served churches in Middle Tennessee for about seven years after which he devoted most of his time to traveling, especially to the destitute places where the gospel was wont to be preached. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 134.]

⁶⁸ Elder H. C. Hogan, “The Commission” In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. 22, No. 16, (July 1, 1896), p. 121.

⁶⁹ Elder Sylvester Hassell, “Questions and Answers” In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 21, No. 6, (June 1899) p. 180.

⁷⁰ Elder George W. Stewart was born May 17, 1851 in Autaugaville, Alabama and ordained to the ministry in 1885 by Elders R. F. Papasan, J. D. McElroy, and J. T. Stewart. Elder Stewart was a strong writer for our people and an associate editor for *The Gospel Messenger*, and authored several books including: *Order and disorder*,

in 1901; *The Two Witnesses*, in 1905; *The Crushing of Frogs*, c. 1912; *The Fruits*, in 1916; *The Babylonish Garment*, c. 1918; *The Primitive Pathway, its Mile-posts and Sign-boards*, c. 1918; *Warning Against Evolution*, in 1923; *Why?: pungent reasons and invincible evidence presented to show why evolution should not be taught in the public schools of Alabama or in those of any other state*, in 1925; and *David's Sling: five challenges to evolutionists and their allies*, in 1928. Elder R. H. Pittman says of him, "He was a great and good man; an able defender of the truth with tongue and pen." Elder Stewart died January 11, 1930. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 255; "Obituary" In: *Advocate and Messenger*, Vol. 69, No. 6, (June 1930), p. 189.]

⁷¹ Elder George W. Stewart, *The Two Witnesses* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards & Broughton, 1905), p. 78.

⁷² Elder J. W. Richardson, [Letter] In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 28, No. 2, (February 1906), p. 48-52.

⁷³ Elder Sylvester Hassell, "The Last Commission of Christ to His Apostles" In: *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 28, No. 4, (April 1906), p. 124-125.

⁷⁴ Elder R. H. Pittman was born in North Carolina on August 20, 1870, received a hope in Christ on December 31, 1892, and was baptized by Elder A. J. Moore, and ordained to the ministry in 1900. He succeeded Elder John R. Daily as proprietor and editor of *Zion's Advocate* in 1920 and continued as such until his death on March 14, 1941. Elder Pittman published many books during his lifetime including: *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers of the United States*, in 1909; *The Trial and decision of Mount Carmel Church*, c. 1916; *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, in 1922; *The Church, its Shadow and Substance*, in 1923; *Comfort of the Scriptures*, in 1925; *In Defense of Truth*, in 1926; *Lessons from our Lawgiver*, in 1926; *What saith the Scriptures*, in 1927; *Sowing and Reaping and Twenty other Subjects*, in 1929; *Memories of Long Ago*, in 1930; *Questions and Answers*, in 1935; *A Treatise on the Example of Feet-Washing*, in 1935; *Rare Gems*, in 1940; and *Remarkable Providences*, in 1940. Elder Pittman was a highly esteemed elder among our people. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 213-214; *Advocate and Messenger*, Vol. 80, No. 4, (April 1941), p. 87-112.]

⁷⁵ Elder R. H. Pittman, [Testimony] In: *The Trial and Decision of Mount Carmel Church*, R. H. Pittman, Ed. (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., c. 1916), p. 110.

⁷⁶ Elder T. S. Dalton was born June 3, 1847 in Robertson County, Tennessee, and ordained to the ministry in September 1870. During Elder Dalton's ministry, he lived in several states, served about twenty-five churches, and had twenty-eight public debates. For a number of years, he was editor and proprietor of the *Herald of Truth*. In 1890, he moved to Virginia and consolidated this paper with *Zion's Advocate*, which he published for eight years. Elder Dalton published *A Treatise on Salvation* in 1911, and an autobiography entitled, *The Life and Labors of a Poor Sinner*, in 1912. Elder Dalton died July 30, 1931. Elder Dalton was highly esteemed as a sound and faithful Old Baptist. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 82; Dalton, Tolbert P., *In Memory of Elder Tolbert S. Dalton* (Baltimore, MD: Tolbert P. Dalton, 1932), p. 48-72.]

⁷⁷ Elder T. S. Dalton, [Testimony] In: *The Trial and Decision of Mount Carmel Church*, R. H. Pittman, Ed. (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., c. 1916), p. 142.

⁷⁸ Elder Thomas J. Bazemore was born December 25, 1842 in Jones County, Georgia, was baptized on October 16, 1864, and ordained to the ministry September 11, 1868. Elder Bazemore was the first editor of *The Gospel Messenger* in 1878, editor of *The Primitive Pathway* in 1885, and editor of *The Primitive Baptist Quarterly Review* in 1896. Elder Bazemore was a noted minister of the gospel and published several works as follows: *The Footsteps of the Flock*, in 1877; *Ruth, the Moabitess*, in 1881; *Autobiography and Book of Sermons*, in 1901; and *Words of Comfort*, in 1910. [See Bazemore, Thomas J., *Autobiography and Book of Sermons* (Greenfield, IN: D. H. Goble, Printer, 1901), p. 1 -104; Bazemore, Thomas J., "Autobiographical Sketch" In: *Words of Comfort* (Atlanta: Foote & Davis Co., 1910), p. 4-19.]

⁷⁹ Elder Thomas J. Bazemore, *Words of comfort* (Atlanta: Foote & Davis Co., 1910), p. 276-277.

⁸⁰ Elder Walter Cash was born September 2, 1856 in Linn County, Missouri, and was baptized in May 1873 by Elder Wilson Thompson. Elder Cash was ordained to the ministry in 1880 and was a faithful pastor to several churches. Elder Cash became owner and editor of the *Messenger of Peace* in December 1891 which work he continued until 1934. Elder Cash published many works including: *Portraits, Primitive Baptist Ministers*, in 1896; *Practical Suggestions for Primitive Baptists*, in 1899; *A Brief Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, in 1913; *Articles of faith, rules of decorum and obligations of members of the Primitive Baptist Church*, in 1919; *Pulling Away the Shoulder*, in 1921; *Standing with the Apostles*, in 1923;

Autobiography and Sermons, in 1925; and *Where there can be Improvement*, in 1927. Elder Cash was an able writer and was widely known and loved by our people. He died May 18, 1937. [See *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers*, R. H. Pittman, Ed., (Anderson, IN: Herald Publishing Co., 1909), p. 25; Dove, Corvin, “Elder Walter Cash Called Home” In: *Advocate and Messenger*, Vol. 52, No. 5, (May-June 1937), p. 227-231.]

⁸¹ Elder Walter Cash, “Elder Pence’s Explanation” In: *Messenger of Peace*, Vol. 38, No. 14, (June 1, 1912), p. 270-271.
