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SANCTIFICATION

By S. C. Phillips

We have had several requests for an article on this important subject; and while we feel unworthy to approach it; nevertheless, we feel that neglect of this truth has been great and the results have been injurious to the church.

Both sanctification and holiness are so entwined that one cannot exist without the other — they are inseparable. Both have reference to purification; and in fact, the Greek word used for sanctification is most often translated interchangeably with purification. Thus, sanctification has reference to purification and holiness, which also, cannot exist separately. If one is sanctified, he is purified and made holy; if one is purified, he is sanctified and made holy; if one is holy, he has been sanctified and purified. These three effects of grace stand together as one of the most important experiences and work in the life of an heir of heaven. Its importance, then, is obvious; and its neglect by elders, inexcusable!

In the absence of this great work of the Spirit no soul shall be glorified. In its absence, there is no evidence of God's gracious work in the soul, and vain is the man who speaks His holy name without it. In its absence, there is no salvation. Without sanctification all nominal believers are of the same mass as unbelievers — heirs of hell. In the neglect of this "so great salvation" heresies abound and wax worse, and immorality is more established. How seriously, then, we should examine the subject in reverence and fear.

Occasionally even some professed believers are caught up into Satan's counterfeits of holiness. I will mention but two major errors, although there are many others.

First, (and the oldest) is a view that sanctification is *progressive*. Simply stated, the view is that a believer may by diligently

praying and reading the Bible, get better and better; or holier and holier, until he eventually has very little warfare with sin. We reject the concept, because it is contrary to the Scriptures and the experiences of the saints. It is false idealism — a brand of spiritual utopianism.

Second, (and the worst) is the belief that one may “pray it through” and “get the Holy Ghost” and thereby receive a so-called “second blessing” which eradicates the adamic nature and so renovates the old man of the flesh that the receiver of this “sanctification” can never sin. Strangely, however, ALL who hold that view (whom we have met) believe such a one can yet “fall from grace” and go to hell! Adam sinned and fell from the state in which he was created, but those, who say they cannot sin in the same way as Adam sinned; do nevertheless fall, even as he! The inconsistency of this position seems to indicate some form of mental incapacity on the part of those who advocate it.

The purpose of sanctification is that God should have a people made conformable to His holiness; separated from the world; purified as an holy habitation of the Spirit, to the praise of His own grace. Thus, sanctification can be no part of the work of the creature. Being born of the flesh, he can not “born” himself of the Spirit in order to separate, or sanctify, himself from the world of which he is a natural and integral part. Natural man, to be sanctified, must be totally changed, or viewed in God’s sight in a completely different condition than he is in actual being. He cannot perform any part of the work to purify himself; he must have his sins purged and washed away by the cleansing blood of the Lamb, which blood was shed and the work performed on Calvary’s tree nearly two-thousand years ago. He has no way to find and to apply the shed-blood of Christ for himself. Natural man cannot make himself

holy, no matter how sincere and diligent he may appear; he is included in that number of whom it is written: “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and “There is none righteous, no not one.” (Rom. 3:10,23) He must and will die —for the “wages of sin is death.” As it is written, “Wherefore, as by ONE man sin entered into the world, and DEATH BY SIN; and so death passed upon all for that all have sinned.” (Rom. 5:12) And so he is shut up by nature in his own natural environment and condition until grace does ALL the work, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for IT IS NOT SUBJECT to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh CANNOT PLEASE GOD.” (Rom. 8:7, 8) Now, “this is the will of God, even your sanctification.” Therefore, sanctification is pleasing to God. Yet “they that are in the flesh CANNOT please” Him. It is, and of necessity must be, the work of God alone.

What aspect of sanctification can be said to be “progressive”? Does the natural man “separate” himself, or does God do this? Does the saint gradually put away his own sins — purify himself, or does God do this too? Does the saint make himself holy, or does God make him so? And, does God do these things progressively making the man holier and holier? Is sanctification merely a spiritual *evolution*, as the Mormons teach? Can you not see that progressive sanctification is a Buddhist and a Mormon doctrine? If sanctification is not “progressive”, then what is it? How is it effected?

Sanctification is the setting of one aside for a holy use. The vessels of the tabernacle and, later the temple, were sanctified and purified, to be used exclusively for God’s service. Recall how God smote Uzzah (II Sam. 6:6) for putting his unsanctified hands upon the Ark of the Covenant to steady it on the cart; which act of touching it belonged to the ordained priests only. See how God

brought Babylon down in one hour, even as they drank from the holy, or sanctified, vessels taken from Jerusalem!

When Jesus made intercession to His Father for His people, He specifically said, “I pray for *them*: I pray *not for the world*, but for them which Thou hast given Me; (not, given “to Me”) for they are Thine.” (John 17:9) That was a sanctifying prayer — it divided between them and the world, thus separating them from the world. “Sanctify *them* through Thy *truth*: Thy word is Truth And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they (being IN Him) also might be *sanctified* through the Truth.” (John 17:17, 19).

Let us learn two things from that prayer: (I) Jesus sanctified them Himself, and, (II) They are sanctified in Him through the truth. Is it not then necessary that they should also believe the truth? Consider:

In His prayer Christ stated, “Thou hast given them Me.” Christ was theirs as much as they were His, and thus He prayed that they be one, saying, “I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” (vs. 23) He prayed “that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: ... “(vs 21) His prayer is for their oneness in Him and for their sanctification in Him.

In I Corinthians 1:2, the apostle addressed his epistle “unto the church of which is at Corinth, to them that are *sanctified in Christ Jesus...*” which displays the answer to Christ’s intercessory prayer extended to the Gentiles; to the complete church of God. They did not make themselves holy, for they were contrary in nature to everything which is holy. As Paul said again (referring to what they *had been before* and who were not permitted then to enter the kingdom of God) “And such *were* (past tense) some of you: but ye *are* washed” (purified), “but ye *are sanctified*, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and *by the Spirit*

of our God.” (I Cor. 6:11)

Now we see something else revealed. They are sanctified by, and in, Christ Jesus; they are sanctified through the truth; and they are sanctified by the Spirit of God. All these in the Godhead are involved in the separation of God’s people to sanctification. It was the Spirit of God who called them out of darkness, and placed them in Christ’s body; and this was before, during and after the crucifixion, and before and after the resurrection. (I speak of the true and actual body of Christ — not just His representative body or church.) And it is IN Christ they have this great grace. “But of Him are ye IN Christ Jesus, who of God *is made unto us wisdom*, and *righteousness*, and *sanctification*, and *redemption*.” And why so? “That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (I Cor. 1:30, 31).

The first conclusion we must draw from the foregoing is that *Christ* Himself is our sanctification by virtue of our being IN Him as well as our righteousness and redemption. Is redemption progressive? Does it mean being gradually “filled with the Holy Ghost”? Is righteousness progressive? Does it mean being gradually filled with the Holy Ghost? Christ was made to be our Sanctification. Was that a progressive gradual work? Absolutely not! He worked a “short work” upon the earth..., and said, “It is finished.”

In considering the act of separating (sanctifying) His people from the world of darkness, the eternal purpose of God to do so is seen to be the foundation of every act which followed. The eternal purpose rests solely in the everlasting love of God and His election of them unto salvation. “According as He hath CHOSEN US in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should BE HOLY and without blame before Him in love” (Eph. 1:4) It is the Spirit of God who leads a quickened sinner to Christ, and He does that through the truth even as Christ prayed. “But we are

bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” (II Thess. 2:13)

The sanctification of the Spirit, (which is His effectual call) whereby we are “called with a holy calling” rests upon purification and holiness. The Spirit of God does not dwell in an unclean and unholy habitation. For this cause both the tabernacle and temple were sanctified. How, then, could He ever condescend to quicken a poor sinner and bring him under the terrors of the law, and slay him with the effectual commandment? The answer is found again “in Christ Jesus.”

The judicial cleansing of the elect was accomplished by Christ “who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us FROM ALL INIQUITY, and PURIFY unto Himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.” (Titus 2:14) Under the law covenant with Israel, all things were purified with blood; not really, but symbolically, “for if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purification of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, PURGE your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:13-14) It was “by one offering He HATH PERFECTED (past tense) for ever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14) By this purging the saints “are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT.” (Eph. 2:20-22) The sins of the elect having been remitted and forgiven in Christ by the atonement, the Spirit has an habitation purified and sanctified by His blood, and

accordingly indwells the redeemed at the appointed time. At which time the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them to the poor sinner feelingly and sanctifies him through the truth.

Here we may receive opposition from many directions. But we dare not draw back. Christ, in His intercessory prayer, asked the Father to “sanctify them through THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH.” (John 17:17) He had, in a previous prayer, said to His Father, “Father I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always... “ (I John 11: 41, 42) We can believe, then, that since Jesus prayed that the elect be sanctified, and sanctified through the truth; and that His Father ever answers His prayers, the elect shall unfailingly be sanctified through the truth. Almost all Baptist articles of faith state this.

[ATTENTION PREDESTINARIAN OLD SCHOOL BAPTISTS: Mr. Eddie Garrett says he understands that we here in Mississippi are the only Predestinarian Old School Baptists who believe all the elect will be brought to faith and repentance, or as we prefer to state it, be sanctified through the truth. We surely would like to hear from Predestinarians outside of Mississippi relative to the position stated above, and in the next paragraph below. PLEASE correct us if we are wrong. Is the above the truth as understood by Predestinarians?]

Peter addressed his first epistle to the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ... “(I Pet. 1:2) This sanctification is vital. Through divine election and sanctification of the Spirit, they are brought experimentally into union with Christ’s obedience — which is theirs; and the sprinkling of His blood — which was

shed for them. Paul's statement took that a step further, for he said, "...because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation THROUGH sanctification of the Spirit AND BELIEF OF THE TRUTH" (II Thess. 2:13) Shall the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ fail? Shall the word of inspiration be found false? God forbid! Then, the elect are all to be sanctified through the truth. And according to the apostle, election, sanctification of the Spirit and sanctification through the truth is the demarcation line between God's people and all pretenders; for he wrote: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness IN THEM THAT PERISH; because THEY RECEIVED NOT the LOVE OF THE TRUTH, that they might be saved. And for this cause GOD SHALL SEND THEM strong delusions, that they SHOULD BELIEVE A LIE: that THEY ALL might be DAMNED who BELIEVE NOT THE TRUTH, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, BRETHREN BELOVED OF THE LORD, because God hath from the beginning CHOSEN YOU to salvation through sanctification OF THE SPIRIT and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH:" (II Thess. 2:9-13) Can you not see that the line is drawn between those "who love not the truth" and those who are "sanctified by the Spirit and belief of the truth"? If language has meaning, we must agree that belief of the truth is an essential effect of the Spirit's work in the elect of God. What other conclusion can one draw Scripturally? Those who think they see a problem here usually base it upon (1) this leaves too few elect, or (2) this leaves infants out. How many the Lord sanctifies is His business; and who says infants can't believe? Merely because they may not be able to express it, does not necessarily mean it isn't true. John the Baptist heard it, and it is

recorded that he leaped for joy! We conclude, therefore, that he believed it!

[PREDESTINARIANS: Please respond to the above. IS THIS the belief of others, or have I misunderstood our position? Please allow me to print your answers. — ED.]

Truth in the "letter", no matter how orthodox or calvinistic it may be, does not sanctify. For Paul wrote of those who turned the truth into a lie" and were damned. (Rom. 1:18) Those found in the text cited above were not condemned for not "believing" the truth only, but for not receiving the "LOVE of the truth." He speaks again of those who "concerning the truth have erred" and denied the resurrection. (II Tim. 2:18) Some live such rotten lives that the "way of truth is evil spoken of" (II Pet. 2:2) Rather, it is the Spirit of God that sanctifies through the truth, and by His effectual power the truth then sanctifies the believer.

The truth so separates one from the mass of corrupt and carnal worshippers, that his conversation becomes consistent with the language of heavenly experience. By the belief of the truth, in the love and power of it, the church recognizes God's objects of mercy; and without this she has no authority to receive one into her fellowship. In fact, the church is commanded to reject heretics and withdraw from a brother found walking contrary to the witness of truth. The truth separates one, often times, from companions, children, parents, and friends; and the end served by this separation is to enter into the sufferings of Christ. An earnest contending for the truth is the source, perhaps, of all tribulation — in its many forms — both inwardly and, outwardly as the Spirit performs His preserving work.

The truth sanctifies and establishes the morality of an individual on a higher plane than can ever be achieved by the flesh.

Indeed, there technically is no “morality” where truth is not found! — only whited sepulchres full of dead men’s bones. Through sanctification of the truth, the moral foundations of nations and societies are laid and established; and where it fails, nations fall. (Holland, England, and the U.S. are prime examples).

Sanctification of the truth gives the most cowardly saint a strength he cannot find in his nature. Supported by the Spirit, he suffers and bears reproach; ridiculed and reviled, he rejoices; hated of all men, he is loved the more by the saints. When he is weak and ignorant, he confounds the scholarly. In his timidity, his humility is coveted as the better gift; Arminians hate his doctrine, but admire his walk; Conditionalists oppose him, but cannot move him; when he falls, he and his enemies find they had expected more of him than he or they had expected of themselves! When he is poor and needy, he is the richer in faith; when he doubts and fears, his mind and heart are exercised the most toward his God. The truth sanctifies! No elect shall leave this world without it, for Christ prayed for it for them, and the Spirit works it in them.

The Godhead also is united in the sanctification of the elect — Father, Son, and Spirit. “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are SANCTIFIED by God the Father, and PRESERVED in Jesus Christ, and CALLED:” (Jude 1)

The elect family of God is sanctified by God the Father. It was the Father that “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” and by that unconditional election separated those given to Christ from all the rest of Adam’s race, to be a peculiar people unto Himself. It was for this cause that He gave them to His only begotten Son, who, willingly became their Surety, and entered into the humiliating and shameful death of the cross to redeem, to purge, to cleanse, and to make

them holy.

Through the sacrificial work of Christ, He “purified unto Himself a peculiar people” — so peculiar, that they are “zealous of GOOD works” with no rational fleshly motive to do so. They do it out of pure love and devotion; with no vulgar thought of reward. Indeed, it is offensive to them for anyone to suggest that they do it for any reward — temporal or eternal.

Christ was made unto them all the Sanctification they need. And through Him they have an imputed righteousness” by which they have access to God the Father.

The Father and the Son are One, even as the Spirit is one with them in the Godhead. Yes, it is a great mystery, and if it were to be explained it would cease to be one. But it is sufficient to know that whatever the Father purposed; whoever the Son purchased; the Spirit will work and reveal. The Father sanctified the elect, the Son preserved them in this sanctification and the Spirit called them to a knowledge of it in the Father and Son. They were called with a holy calling, and are sanctified by the Spirit who separated them from the world of perishing rebels and washed them by regeneration.

Sanctification, then, is immutably locked, or fixed, in the eternal Godhead. The Father’s sanctification of them was from eternity; the Son’s sanctification of them was in His active and passive obedience to redeem them; the Spirit’s sanctification of them is continuous from regeneration to the resurrection. We did not say “progressive.” We said “continuous.” Far too often old age and social domestication is confused with sanctification — and these are progressive. But the Spirit never ceases His refining work while our warfare ever rages! He is ever putting His children through the fire; ever lifting them up and casting them down to teach them truth. He guides them along the strait and narrow way. If they wander, He drives or leads them back. They

never find contentment for long extended times, and they often feel to be greater sinners than when they first believed. The more they feel, the more they see, and the more they see, the more they understand that they “see” so very little. And thus they grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth.

ON MARRIAGE

By Gilbert Beebe, Sept. 15, 1840

We are requested by a correspondent to give our views on Romans 7: 2, 3. *“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.* From this apostolic exposition of the law of God upon the subject of matrimony, we are fully sustained in asserting that nothing short of the death of the husband can so exonerate the wife from her marriage obligations as to leave her at liberty to marry another man. That cases may and do sometimes occur in which a wife may lawfully separate from her husband, or a husband may put away his wife, we believe the Scriptures are sufficiently clear and to the point. See Matt. 5:32; also 19:9; but in no case do we find authority for such persons to marry again. Cases may occur in which a separation may take place against the will of one of the parties, and not for the cause mentioned, Matt. 19:9; but in such cases the parties are forbidden to marry again. *“But unto the married I COMMAND, yet not I, BUT THE LORD, let not the wife depart from her husband; but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.”* (I Cor. 7:10, 11) *“The wife is*

bound by the law as long as her husband Liveth.” (I Cor. 7:39) From the plain testimony of the Scriptures as referred to above, we give it as our decided conviction that no married wife can, under any circumstances whatever, marry another man while her husband is living, without involving herself in the crime of adultery. Nor can a man marry again while his wife lives, without involving the same sin. We do not say, first husband and first wife, for a second marriage does not constitute the parties husband and wife, where this legal impediment exists.

A bill of divorcement, legally obtained, may in the eye of our civil code disannul a former marriage contract, so that, as far as the civil law is concerned, the parties may contract to live in adultery with impunity, and their issue be legally their heirs; but the Bible gives them no such liberty. Nor has the God of heaven given *any authority* to any *earthly legislature* to divide asunder what God has joined together.

We could as soon extend our fellowship and approbation to the direct crime of adultery, where no separation has taken place between the husband and wife, as where such separation has taken place, a divorce obtained and the new connection legalized by the marriage of parties where one or both have a living wife or husband.

We know there is a difference of opinion among professors of religion on this subject; but we have ever refused to perform the marriage service, in any such case, as we should as soon connive directly at or countenance the sin of adultery. We hope NEVER TO HEAR OF AN INSTANCE AMONG OLD SCHOOL BAPTISTS; nor can we hold any as Old School Baptists who would thus live in adultery. The very use the apostles makes of this law, in the text at the head of this article, shows that the church of Christ could not be lawfully wedded to Him, in her visible Gospel order, until she became

dead unto the law. Her being put away and cursed by her former husband, (the law) did not release her — *she must die*, and she did die to the law; Christ became the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believes. We might extend this article; but we hope enough is said to satisfy the mind of our inquiring correspondent. — *Editorials, Vol. 1, pg. 637*

ASSOCIATIONS

By Gilbert Beebe, 1838

It is to us, at all times, a matter of no small joy, to witness a disposition on the part of our brethren, to examine the divine rule, and to inquire at the sacred oracle for the validity of every institution of our religious practice. The attention of several of our dear brethren, in these parts and elsewhere, has lately led to the subject of Associations, and it will be seen that the result of their investigation, thus far, has not produced a unanimity of sentiment on the subject. Some are of the opinion that the New Testament provides neither precept or example for them, and other some conceive that the assembly which convened at Jerusalem, on the question from the Antioch church, amounts at least to an example. We have listened with a good degree of interest to the arguments thus far brought forward, pro and con; and without designing to check the discussion of so important a point, we esteem it our privilege to offer our brethren a few remarks which have occurred to us, on the subject, in doing which we shall probably accord, in part, and in some things differ from all who have furnished us with their views.

In the first place we admit that what we call “Associations,” are, or are not divine institutions; they are, or are not directly and positively warranted in the New Testament. If from the Scriptures we can show them to be

divinely instituted, and precept and example given for their observance by the church, then we must consider no church complete and independent, or walking in *all* the ordinances blameless, which do not stand in such connection associated with other churches; and if on a careful examination we find that what we denominate “associations” are not divinely authorized, we must admit (painful as it may be) that we have and do observe a religious practice, for which there is no “Thus saith the Lord;” and we may be subjected to the fearful interrogative, “Who hath required this at our hand?”

But to the merits of the question. Are they from heaven, or of men? We have failed to see with some of our brethren whom we love, that the assembly referred to at Jerusalem, furnishes the least testimony in support of what we denominate “Associations;” and if we can produce no other, or more tenable ground for them, we shall be disposed to give them up, notwithstanding our feelings are strongly, very strongly, enlisted in favor of them. Without going minutely into the comparison of modern associations, with the meeting at Jerusalem, we will observe a few particulars which to us present serious discrepancies. First, those who form *our* modern associations are Elders and brethren, sent by their respective churches, as messengers, or what is by far more exceptionable, delegates. [That churches have the right to send their messengers on lawful messages, is fully warranted by the practice of the primitive churches, but that she has the right to *delegate her authority* to messengers, committees, or to councils, is to us as absurd as that a married wife should have the right to transfer her relationship or privileges to another woman.]

The meeting at Jerusalem, was not composed of messengers, or delegates from the churches, but *the apostles and Elders*

came together for to consider this matter. (Acts 15:6) And the whole church, not delegates from the church (see verse 22,) and the Holy Ghost, (verse 28). But our modern Associations are not composed of apostles, the Holy Ghost, and the whole church. The regulations of many associations of our acquaintance, restricts the churches in regard to the number of messengers to be sent. We have said this council at Jerusalem was not composed of messengers from churches represented in that meeting. True there were messengers (not delegates) present from the church at Antioch, but let it be observed these formed no part of the council, but were merely messengers of Antioch church, to the council and other messengers of their own company (verse 22) bore the message of the Holy Ghost, the apostles and elders and the whole church, to Antioch. How our brethren can make this meeting an example for modern associations, without involving the right of associations to rule in judgment, if not in legislation over the churches, we are unable to perceive; yet all our brethren agree that the churches are the *highest religious body on earth*, and contend earnestly for the *independence of the churches*.

Another discrepancy which we would notice as we pass; as being, in our judgment, no less formidable than the foregoing, is that the council at Jerusalem was not, nor did it pretend to be, a constituted body, independent of, or separate from the church, having a written constitution and by-laws for their special regulation; and a body to be continued, and to hold annual sessions for business, to impose yokes and grant exemption from burdens, from time to time, as might seem good to them and their successors in all subsequent ages. The apostles, seated on the twelve thrones, for the express purpose of judging the spiritual tribes, the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to write the law of the new covenant in the hearts of the

spiritual family, and the church, which is divinely empowered and qualified to judge angels, assembled as they were, certainly were in possession of power which would not become us, in what we call “associations.”

The wretched work of New School Baptist associations in arrogating such powers as were exercised by the council at Jerusalem, has very justly excited great alarm among our old fashioned brethren. While the former have attempted to rank and file, or mark the ground of distinction observed by all anti-christian bodies, of clergy and laity, and in their assumed consequence have attempted to legislate for the Zion of God, to take into their hands the destiny of the world, the direction of those acknowledged as God’s ministers, and appoint the field of their labors, the term of their services, and the manner and amount of their reward: meeting from year to year, binding heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and binding them on men’s shoulders. Now they resolve that one thousand dollars shall be raised from their churches for the home mission, *alias*, to send Arminians out to trouble and distress the peaceable churches of the Mississippi valley; [Here Beebe refers to the early practice of the Baptist Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions of sending hired “missionaries” to infiltrate Old School and Independent Baptists’ churches and attempt to lure them into the mission enterprise I and anon, they resolve to raise one hundred thousand dollars for the General Convention; [Tri-ennial Baptist Convention — **Ed.**] but mark us! they themselves touch not these burdens with one of their fingers, to bear any share of the burden. We might continue to trace the unhallowed consequences resulting from this sort of associations, for truly they have caused the saints to howl, until their cry has come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, Who is, we trust, about to deliver them.

After what we have written our readers may suppose that we renounce associations *in toto*, but such is not the fact; for while we wash our hands from *all such associations as we have described above*, we hold most sacred and dear the *association of the children of God*, upon Gospel ground; and while we deny the divine authority of any *constituted religious body*, except the church of God, as such, we are prepared to show from the practice of the primitive saints, that it is proper, lawful and expedient that the saints should *associate together*, for social worship, for correspondence, for mutual edification and instruction in righteousness, and for the promotion of that christian fellowship and Gospel union which is like the oil which was poured on Aaron's head, and like the dew of Hermon which descended upon the mountains of Zion, &c.

Where the object of our Old School brethren in coming together is to worship God, and to inquire after the welfare of Zion, and to encourage each other in walking in all the ordinances and commandments of Christ blamelessly, we say to all such, where providence permits us to attend, "Entreat us not to leave thee. Thy people shall be our people, and thy God shall be our God. Where thou livest, let us live," &c.

If any, or all of our associations have been led off from the simplicity of the Gospel track, let them correct the wrong, renounce it and flee from it. But to cease from "christian correspondence" among the churches which are in fellowship, would be to run into as great an error as that from which they attempt to fly. We should not contend for constitutions, or anything which would have a tendency to characterize associations *as an organized, or standing body, apart from the church*; yet we conceive that a full understanding of the *terms of correspondence*, or association, is essential, and should be agreed to, reduced to writing

and published in order to prevent, as far as possible, the amalgamation of heterogeneous materials in such religious assembles.

There can be no lack of Scriptural testimony that the primitive churches of Christ kept up a correspondence, and that the disciples were in a habit of mingling together for religious worship, and mutual edification, wherever, and whenever opportunity served; and such meetings we would call "associations." They, however, being not so parliamentary in their forms of communicating with each other as modern professors are, could generally proceed to worship, or to edify, without waiting to elect by ballot a Chairman, or President (Moderator) and being minute men, could even preach an introductory sermon without being appointed for that purpose twelve months in advance!

In regard to corresponding meetings, on the principle of those held at Occoquan, and at Bethlehem, Virginia, within the last two years, [As those now held by the Little Zion, Conecuh River, and Ebenezer, etc. as we understand. — **Ed.**] and referred to by brother Chrisman, in his late communications on associations; we had the pleasure of attending the latter, and was highly gratified with the order, harmony and Gospel union which was abundantly manifested on that occasion.

A very general sifting has commenced among some of the professedly Baptist churches and associations; there are many of the former as well as of the latter of these, with whom we *could not walk in fellowship* a few years ago, among whom the missionary fever has been raging like a pestilence; but *now we behold them emerging from that corruption* which then obscured their glory, and *taking their places among the regular churches of our communion*: and while a redeeming spirit pervades our associations, and those connected with them are seriously

inquiring for the old paths, may we not hope they will soon *shake off every human device, and every unscriptural practice*, and shine forth in unsullied splendor, in the glorious truth and order of the Gospel of Christ.

The primitive churches on various occasions, sent messengers to *deliver messages, contributions, &c., for them*. It is therefore lawful for Old School churches to send their messengers to report their welfare, for the comfort of sister churches, and to bring back word of the prosperity of the cause, among such sister churches. Such messengers, when assembled with a sister church, may unite in worship, in preaching, and in the general improvement of all the gifts among them. Such a meeting we would call an "association," and against such associations we conclude there is no law.

In the foregoing we have given some of our views on the subject. Our columns are open for the views of our brethren, judiciously written, on the same subject; we recommend moderation and free discussion. Let us prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

COMMENTS

The above position advanced by Beebe, is, in general, the position that we hold to in our churches relative to the subject. Perhaps Beebe was too much alone to stand against the major trend in the development of the Baptists. The associations, and their chains of correspondence, continued to development in spite of his opposition, and that of others. James Osborn, very nearly as close to the Strict Baptist brethren as any minister in America during this same period, held basically to this same position. In most matters, Beebe influenced a great many of the Old School Baptist churches; but on the subject of associations, apparently he had his

least success. Baptists had not had time to see the attendant evil associated with organized papacy among themselves.

Is it now possible many of us have learned by past experience that fellowship must be had on a better principle? We invite the readers to join our columns in discussing this subject in love and respect. If you wish to comment, please do.

THE NONELECT HAVE NOT THE LAW OF GOD

By William Huntington, approx. 1800

Having shown what I conceive to be the Gospel, I shall now consider the law, and inquire who they are that have, and who have not, the law of God in their hearts. And I am sure that for what I am going to advance I shall be reproached for my singularity: but what I enforce I shall endeavour to support with the word of God, for by that I wish to stand or fall.

I do most assuredly believe in my conscience that, of all the laws which ever came forth from the Lord God of Israel (and the Jews say there are some hundred), God never did, since Adam fell, apply any one to any man in this world but to the Son of God, and to the elect of God IN HIM: to them, and to them ONLY, are the laws of God applied. Nor do I believe that there ever was one non-elected soul, or reprobate, in this world, that could say, with truth and conscience, that God ever had, at any one time, put any one law of His into his mind, or written it on the fleshly tables of his heart.

No heathen, no Jewish or British Pharisee; no formalist; no outer-court worshipper whatever; no gifted minister, even such as have been enlightened, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; nor any other, who hath received the external gifts of the Holy Ghost, nor even that servant who received the one

talent, (Matt 25:25); nor the gifted man, that received the one pound, (Luke 19:13); no minister of the letter; no, nor those that boast of wonderful works, and of casting out devils (Matt. 7:22); no collegian or academician in the present day, however endowed with natural abilities; however learned, or however studious, eloquent, industrious, or laborious; if he be a non-inspired man, ever had any one law of God applied in its divine power to his heart. No graceless professor, no hypocrite in Zion, however reformed, varnished, embalmed, enrobed, adorned, or set off by the most illustrious minister of the letter, ever had one law of God in him or applied by God to him. "The law is made for the *lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane,*' (I Tim. 1:9) Now, although the law is made for such, yet the Apostle in the above passage calls them lawless; respecting the spirituality of the law they are lawless, and with respect to the Gospel disobedient. Though the law is not made for a righteous man, but for such ungodly sinners, yet he styles them outlawed, without law, or lawless, because no one law of God, in its spiritual meaning, in its latitude, in its unlimited demands, in its purity, holiness, and divine sanction, authority, and power, in the glory of it, in the majesty of it, was ever applied to any reprobate or uninspired man in this world; nor ever will be until the day of the grand assize; nor even then will the morality of it be applied, but its wrath and curse, and no more. "And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?" (Job 24:25) Now we will act the part of the noble Bereans — search the Scriptures, to see if these things be so, (Acts 17:11) And,

First, We will begin with the heathen. "For, when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto

themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." (Rom. 2:14) Now these few fragments of the law that remain in the light of nature (which is in some measure a guide to some things, right and wrong, which agree with the law), and which are to be found in the ruins of the fall, are not the law itself; for the law is spiritual, but these poor heathens were carnal, and sold under sin; therefore they had not the law itself, but the *works of it*. The Gentiles, which have not the law, they do by *nature* these things. They have not the law; they are a law unto themselves; they sin without law, and shall perish without law. (Rom. 2:12) The light of nature, or natural conscience, is all that these poor creatures have; and this light of nature often puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; (Isa 5:20) as may be seen both among Jews and Gentiles. The Samaritans called Simon Magus the great power of God, when the prince of darkness was in him. These put darkness for light, and the Jews, who called the Son of God Beelzebub, put the true light for darkness. And, as the light of nature errs so fatally as to put darkness for light, so their thoughts and consciences err also; both among Jews and Gentiles. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." (John 16:2) Paul's thoughts and conscience also acquitted him, for blaspheming the Saviour and murdering the saints, which confirms what Paul says of himself, that he was alive without the law, and that sin was dead; for God's law never countenances, much less justifies, blasphemers and murderers. Nor can it be supposed that the Gentiles, which sacrificed to devils and not to God, ever had that law in their hearts which allows of no God but one,

and demands love to Him with all the heart and soul.

Second, Nor had any of the non-elect among the Jewish Pharisees any one law of God ever applied to them, although they pretended to this: "Then they reviled" the blind man, "and said, Thou art His disciple; but we are Moses' disciple. We know that God spake unto Moses (Ed. — A know-so salvation, no doubt); as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is." (John 9:28,29) The whole of this boasted claim was an arrant lie, for a real disciple of Moses is a man taught out of Moses' law, and one who imitates his master in learning and knowledge, and who treads in his master's steps. Hence Moses' law is called "a schoolmaster." — "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. 3:24) Observe here that the apostle does not call the law *their* schoolmaster; it is not the schoolmaster of reprobates, or non-elect persons; but he calls it *our* schoolmaster to bring *us* to Christ, that *we* might be justified by faith: "but after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." According to the above passage the law is intended as a schoolmaster to God's own elect, and is applied to them as such. "Whom God foreknew, them He did predestinate; and whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified." (Rom. 8:28-30) Now, if the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Him, then it never was a schoolmaster applied to any of the non-elect, even among the Jewish Pharisees; therefore their calling themselves Moses' disciples was an arrant lie; for they never had been sent to his law to school; they never had learned *experimentally* one lesson from him, neither moral nor evangelical; for, instead of sitting at Moses' feet to be taught

of him, they jostled him out of his chair. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit IN Moses' seat." (Matt. 23:2) And, as to Moses' law, they made the word of God (by Moses) of none effect through their own traditions. (Mark 7:13) Yea, instead of embracing the instructions of Moses in his law, they rejected it altogether, "And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." (Mark 7:9)

So far were they from submitting to Moses' tuition, that they rejected his commandments, turned him out of his seat, and set up their own traditions above his law: for all of which Moses became their accuser, instead of their teacher. "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust." (John 5:45) There never was one self-righteous Pharisee among the Jews, nor yet among the Gentiles or Britons, that ever had the law of God applied to them, or that ever had the law of God in them. Let us hear what the Holy Ghost Himself says upon this head; and what He says He speaks by the mouth of one who was once a Pharisee of the first magnitude — a Pharisee of the Pharisees. "For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died. (Rom. 7:8, 9) Here the Holy Ghost affirms that during the time of Paul's continuing a Pharisee, and while in an unconverted state, he was without the moral law. And he mentions this twice. "For without the law sin was dead; for I was alive without the law." And the Spirit confirms this still further, by asserting not only twice that he was without it, but takes notice of the application of the law to him, and that by God Himself. "I was alive without the law: but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died." (Rom. 7:9) All that the non-elect, or unconverted among mankind, can pretend to, is,

1. That they are without the law.

2. That sin is dead, not purged; and,
3. That they themselves are alive without the law; that is, they are alive to sin, alive to the flesh, alive to themselves, alive in their own righteousness, and alive to their own ends and aims, which is their own applause.

Having thus proved that all heathens, and the best of all Jewish, and British Pharisees, are without the moral law of God in its morality, in its power, and in its spiritual operation, as applied by God Himself; so take notice, further, that it is God's prerogative to apply the law; man cannot do it. It is not only God's work to apply the law, but also to teach it, or to teach men out of it; to pick lessons out of the law and apply them, so as to make men *know and feel them* [How we wish we could make men see this! If ever seen and understood, all controversy over dead-Calvinism, letter-preaching, duty-faith, conditional blessings, and dead orthodox predestinarianism would cease! The importance of a living, vital God-wrought salvation would be more fully comprehended. — **Ed.**] "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of Thy law, that Thou mayest give him rest." (Psalm 94:12) If they, and only they, are blessed, whom God teaches out of the law, then it is plain that all are cursed who receive their teaching out of the law by men only, and not from God. They are ministers of the letter, and the letter killeth; therefore it is no wonder, for they are nothing else but blind guides. "The priests said not, where is the Lord? And they that handle the law knew Me not: the pastors also transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal." (Jere. 2:8) There is a veil upon the heart of these pretenders to the law, that blinds them to the last degree, which no Pharisee is acquainted with. Hence we read of some who said, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I

am holier than thou." (Isa 65:5); of others, who affirm that they have kept all these things from their youth up; (Matt. 19:20) and others who never at any time transgressed God's commandment. (Luke 15:29) And sad teachers of the law must these be, seeing the Lord declares that publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before them. (Matt. 21:31). But I shall now,

Thirdly, Go to another set of men, and see if the moral law is to be found in them. These are the (so-called) "gifted" men that appear under the "Gospel," and we may call their name Legion, for they are many. (Mark 5:9) By these I mean such as got into the primitive church and were called "believers." "Thou seest, brother," (Saul) "how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law." (Acts 21:20) Now these are called ministers of the letter, being destitute of the Spirit of God, and so are distinguished from those ministers which God sends out. "But our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (II Cor. 3:5, 6)

Now the Scriptures declare that "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven;" (John 3:27); neither law nor Gospel A man may steal the word of God out of the mouth of his religious neighbor; but even this the Almighty hates: "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal My words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, "He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their lightness; yet I sent them not nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." (Jere. 23:30-32) And, as He is against those thieves

that steal His words of prophecy, so He is against these unpardoned and unsanctified law men, who trouble their heads with His statutes. "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? (Psa. 1:16) All that such men can do is to take this covenant of works, which is called statutes, into their mouth; for none but God can put it into their hearts; and He never will write any one of His laws on the minds of reprobates, nor put it into their hearts. Hence, they are called ministers of the letter, not of the law, for "the law is spiritual." (Rom. 7:14) They have nothing of the law but the bare letter, which is all that the Holy Ghost allows them to have, and this is all they have to trade with. Hence, the distinction: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life" as said before. (II Cor. 3:6) The stock of these preachers is the letter of the law; and they are dead men, dead in soul, and dead to God; and all their ministry is a dead work, being never quickened nor made alive by the Spirit of God; having nothing but death in their souls, and the killing letter of the law in their mouths, they minister death unto death. And any soul, that is alive by faith, may feel the effects of such a ministry as soon as he enters the place where such ministers are.

A dismal gloom of darkness and a cold chill seizes and spreads itself through the whole soul. The sight of the audience increases this; and the taking of the text serves as a notice for the audience to get ready, and place themselves in their usual corners, for the most sound, sweet, and refreshing sleep that they enjoy throughout the whole week; being now out of the hurry of business, and the empty and barren noise of the preacher bidding defiance to all, not only the aged and the corpulent, but even the youths and the skeletons, to keep their eyes open while he is

at work. He operates upon your spirits like opium, and will lay you in a crisis, or transport you into the land of Nod, in spite of your best efforts. Standing up, pinching the flesh, snuff taking, beating the head against the pillars, or pricking yourself with a pin, is of no use. Morpheus, the god of sleep, is with him, and submit you must. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

Nor is it possible for a believer in Christ to enjoy even the life, much less the lively exercise, of any one grace, under the best discourse that a minister of the letter can deliver. Let a child of God go under the ministry of the letter in the sweetest revivals of grace; let him go in the most sensible refreshings from the presence of God, or in the most humbling frame of meekness, contrition, or self-abasement; let him go under the most lively or joyful frames; or let him venture even under the sweetest enlargement, arising from fresh discoveries of the dying love of Christ, and from the strongest confidence of interest in it; yet none of these, nor even all these together, are found to be proof against a minister of the letter. The believer may carry these in, but he will lose all this good company, and never bring them away again: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

At the believer's departure the dew of heaven is exhaled by the barrenness of the preacher; death and bitterness of soul are communicated by the deadness and wrath that are in the preacher; straightness and bondage brace and contract the soul from the servile fears which the letter of the law genders. Enmity to God, and hard thoughts of Him, attended with self-pity, bitterness of soul, deadness, and backwardness to all that is good, are all that a soul can get under the letter. "The letter killeth."

These fill the soul with murmuring and rebellion, and though they may not be spoken to the ear, nor suggested to the mind, yet

experience repeats plain enough the ancient reproof. "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." (Luke 24:5, 6) And as Christ has taken His seat on the holy hill of Zion, and dwells with the broken and contrite heart, none but the devil himself will ever entice us to seek him at Sinai, or under the minister of the letter.

Many under the impulse of the father of lies, and in vain confidence of their own strength, or excited by curiosity, have received under one lifeless discourse, such wounds and breaches in their souls, as have not been healed nor closed for many months. Here is nothing but husks. The sleepy soul gets a composing draught; the pharisaical soul gets head-notions to nurse his pride; the carnal secure gets stronger in insensibility, and the arrogant and presumptuous gets their foreheads more hardened, and their false confidence more stiffened. All letter-men are "alive without the law," and sin is dead.

GOD'S COVENANT

By Samuel Jones, 1781

[In seeking something with some antiquity on the subject of "time salvation," we discovered this article. It was written by Samuel Jones, pastor of Pennepek Church, which was founded in 1687 by Elias Keach — son of Benjamin Keach who penned the famous Third Article of the London Confession. This was written a hundred years before the first presentation of a "conditional time salvation" among Primitive or Old School Baptists]

In connection of divine truth, and progress of our order, we come to write to you, in the next place, of what, in our Confession of Faith, Chapter VII, is called God's Covenant; by which is meant the transactions of God with and towards man,

respecting his duty and happiness; more especially the exertions of infinite Wisdom and mercy, in the contrivance and establishment of the scheme of redemption, for the recovery and salvation of lost man, through a precious and blessed Mediator.

Passing over the prohibition to Adam, respecting the forbidden fruit, which is commonly called *the covenant of works*, his being the public head and representative of his posterity, as he certainly was, (Rom. 5:12), we come to the intimation made to him immediately after the fall, respecting the seed of the woman, that It should bruise the serpent's head; upon which is founded the notion of the *covenant of grace* made with Adam, which was nothing else than a *bare discovery, revelation, and manifestation of the eternal counsel of God*, respecting man's recovery, carrying in it a promise of eternal life. *No stipulations and re-stipulations, NO CONDITIONS whatever*; nothing more or less to be performed on Adam's part; nothing but a glorious *manifestation*, as was said before, of the rich grace and mercy of God in Christ. And the farther discovery of this rich grace, that was made to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was exactly of the same tenor; a promise, that in their seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. (Gen. 7:3; 26:4; 28:14) **NOT ONE WORD OF A COVENANT, OR ANY CONDITIONS.** Hence, in the New Testament, where reference is had thereunto, the same language is constantly used; as for instance: "For the *promise* is unto you and your children." (Acts 2:39) "Of this man's seed has God, *according to His promise.*" (Acts 8:23) "For the hope of the *promise* made of God unto our fathers." (Acts 26:6) "Heirs according to the *promise.*" (Gal. 3:21,22,29) "The *promise of eternal inheritance.*" (Heb.9:19) "To perform the *mercy promised.*" (Luke 1:72) "And this is *the promise* that He has promised us, even

eternal life.” (I John 2:29) For all the promises of God in Him, are not yea and nay, *if you will, and if not*, in the strain of a covenant, but yea and amen! (II Cor. 1:20) In like manner, we read of *gifts* (the time part — Ed.) “If thou knewest the *gift* of God.” (John 4:10) “*FREE gift*” (Rom. 5:15-18) “Unspeakable gift.” (II Cor. 9:15) “gave gifts unto men.” (Eph. 4:8) Hence, also, the *administrations* of grace are called the Old and New Testament, because a testament contains *free gifts and legacies* made over, and insured to the heirs. It is true we read in Isa. 59:21, “As for me, this is my covenant with them.” And in Jer. 31:31-34, “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord,” speaking of the Gospel day. With respect to which we observe, First. That in these places you see nothing that looks like a covenant. Secondly. That the word “covenant”, in the Old Testament, sometimes means a statute, ordinance, establishment, appointment and decree, as in Jer. 33:2; Gen. 9:9-11; Numb. 18:19. Thirdly. That the use of the word covenant might be more consonant with that legal dispensation, than that of a testament. Fourthly and lastly. That it might seem odd to speak of a testament, while the testator was yet living, as the Apostle hints. (Heb. 9:15,16) But when our Saviour was about to lay down His life, and considered Himself as already dead, He lays aside the use of the word covenant, and takes up the more proper word *testament*, saying, “This is the new testament in my blood.” (Matt. 26:28) And ever afterward, the word testament was constantly used, when reference is had to the *dispensations of grace* (the “*time*” experience — Ed.), as you may see in the margin of your Bibles. And besides, when we consider the nature of a covenant, we clearly see there could be no possible room for such a thing ever to exist between God and man, respecting *spiritual things*; for the very idea

of a covenant necessarily includes these things following: 1, Mutual *wants* in the parties covenanting. 2, Mutual *benefits* enjoyed by them. 3, *Power* in each party to perform the conditions of the covenant. 4, Each party is *brought under obligations* to the other, by the performance of *those conditions*. 5, *Merit* on both sides. 6, and lastly, Neither party ought to be under *prior obligations* to the other, respecting the *conditions* of the covenant; of which particulars NOT ONE can be admitted in the present case.

As for the Abrahamic covenant, as some call it, it only respected temporal things, and the externals of religion, though it had the *promise* of the Messiah tacked to it, and was therefore called the covenant of promise. (Eph. 2:12) It was with regard to selecting Abraham and his descendants from the other nations of the earth to a national church state, and the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, the peaceable and quiet possession of which they were to enjoy, upon *condition of their observing the external rituals* of that dispensation, and being obedient, which they promised, and had in their power to do by nature. And this was the covenant of which they received circumcision, an external mark or token, as a seal to confirm it. (Gen. 12:18; 17:7 8; 26:4; 28:14; Exo. 19:3-9; 24: 3-8; Lev. 26:3,40; Deut. 5:29) The word covenant seems to have been introduced into the Christian system of religion, because it favored of a *legal strain*, so acceptable to those who are fond of *terms and conditions to be performed by man*; while others that *do not favor legalism*, yet too incautiously make use of the word covenant, in bare compliance with custom; though these are generally careful to inform us, that it means a *testamentary covenant, a free, ABSOLUTE, UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT*, which is much the same thing as to say that it is no covenant at all.

The sum, then, is this, that the glorious dispensations AND *manifestations* (IN TIME — Ed.) of the rich grace and mercy of God in Christ, contain FREE, ABSOLUTE, and UNCONDITIONAL promises of the FREE, RICH, and UN-MERITED GIFTS of God, CONVEYED TO the heirs as LEGACIES, in a testamentary way.

Having thus shown you, dear brethren, that there can be no such thing as a covenant between God and man, respecting *spiritual blessings* AND *service*, we come now to consider what foundation there is to style the glorious transactions between the Persons of the ever blessed Godhead, respecting man's recovery, a covenant; and here, undoubtedly, there is some appearance of that kind. If ever there was a covenant of grace, this is it. If ever there was a covenant of redemption, here you will find it. And, on the part of Christ, a covenant of works too; forasmuch as the great work of redemption, the fulfilling of the law of God, in behalf of His people, for whom He undertook as their Surety, was performed by Him. (Psa. 119:122; Isa. 38:14)

The passages of Scripture that speak of this glorious transaction as a covenant are these following: "And My covenant shall stand fast with Him." (Psa. 89:29) "And give Thee for a covenant of the people." (Isa 42:6; 49:8) "Neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed." (Isa. 56:4,6) "As for Thee also, by the blood of Thy covenant." (Zech. 9:11) "Even the messenger of the covenant." (Mal. 3:1) But then it is spoken of under other views, in these that follow: "According to the eternal purpose, *which He purposed* in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:11) "And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (Zech. 6:13) "For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God;" (Acts 20:27) "The immutability of His counsel;" (Heb.. 6:17) "Being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" (Acts

2:23) And besides, Christ is said to be foreordained to that work; (I Pet. 1:20) sent (John 10:35) to have received a commandment; (John 10:18) was therefore a Servant; (Isa. 42:1) cheerfully obeyed; (Psa. 40:7,8) and was rewarded. (Psa. 2:8; Phil. 2:9) From the whole, then, we see, that there was a counsel held in eternity, even from everlasting, respecting the recovery of the elect; that the Godhead did then contrive, find out, adjust and settle, speaking after the manner of men, the whole scheme of that great and glorious work, who should be saved, by what means, and after what manner; that the Son of God, the second Person in the Godhead, should be a Mediator, should undertake for His chosen ones as their Surety, and should assume human nature, that He might make satisfaction to divine justice in their behalf; that ALL THE GIFTS and graces necessary for the purpose should be treasured in Him. (Col. 1:19) That the blessed Spirit should co-operate in Him in *manifesting* the whole to the world, and applying the same to the chosen ones, namely, by (NOTE THIS:) *enlightening their darkened understanding, WORKING IN THEM FAITH AND REPENTANCE*, changing their vile affections, CONVERTING them from the SERVICE OF SIN and Satan, to the SERVICE OF THE LIVING GOD, carrying on the work of grace begun, and keeping them by the power of God, unto salvation; by every means making them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and finally bringing them to the full possession of it.

Thus, dear brethren, we have briefly laid before you the plan of our redemption, as concerted in eternity, and BROUGHT INTO EFFECT IN TIME. You see the glorious covenant of grace, which was well ordered in all things and sure. You see the Son of God appointed to the mediatorial work, and ALL grace treasured up in Him for that purpose.

You see Him undertake, go through with it, and the Spirit co-operate to accomplish the whole. You see the dispensations (the time experience, or application—**Ed**) of grace to man are FREE, ABSOLUTE, AND UNCONDITIONAL; the GIFTS of God DISPERSED IN A TESTAMENTARY WAY, FREE AND FIRM. Nothing OF WORKS, but ALL of grace. Nothing OF THE WILL OF MAN, but ALL of the will of God; that we might all, and at all times, cry grace, grace, and whosoever glorieth, might glory in the Lord.

O blessed and glorious scheme! What a rich display have we here of the wisdom, justice, holiness, mercy, pity, compassion, and condescension of God! See the harmony of the divine attributes in this stupendous plan, that is every way worthy of a God! What shall we render unto Him for such rich, unmerited grace! Never to the endless ages of eternity, never shall we be able to render adequate compensation. O that the love of God were abundantly shed abroad in each of our hearts, that we might for ever admire, with astonishment admire, His rich grace; that we might forever love, fear, honor, reverence, and serve Him, with all our hearts unfeignedly.

“Now, the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Approved by order of the Philadelphia Association, Samuel Jones, Moderator.

Pennepek Church was a sister church of the Welsh Tract Church. Certainly the above was the doctrine of our people in 1781. We have never been conditionalists!

REPLY TO A LETTER OF INQUIRY

We received the second letter below from Elder Poole for publication in the *Predestinarian*. In order for it to be clear to the readers, it is necessary to publish the letter to which it is an answer.

We do not relish the thought of making the pages of the magazine a vehicle of controversy for we doubt our subscribers — who actually finance the paper — subscribed for this purpose.

The author of the first letter below called and asked our views, and we gave them as honestly as we could. If he would be patient, in time more of what we believe would be understood. In fact, it appears from the letter that he did understand our position. We do not believe in associations (as he noted), nor do we make war with our brethren among them. Correspondence is NOT the basis of our fellowship. Hopefully, the Spirit of God is. And, we do not believe that unbelievers, Buddhists, Moslems, Deists, Animalists, pagans, and any in the “broad way that leadeth to destruction” are going to heaven if death finds them in unbelief. This, too, he understood. Why then his letter to someone about a thousand miles from us? Merely to see who fellowships us? That should be our great concern — not someone else’s.

We appreciate the answer given this stranger (to us here); We only fear that Brother Poole harbors an esteem for us of which we are totally unworthy.

This stranger may be attempting to provoke a “debate” in our pages, so we will say now that we do not debate anyone. The truth of God is NOT DEBATABLE — error is! We are not disputing of what we believe; We are concerned with our personal interest in it. And our personal interest therein can not be enhanced by a debate either.— S.C.P.

Elder Eddie K. Garrett 102 Lyleburn Rd.
Middletown, Ohio 45042
Sept. 23, 1983

Elder James Poole
P.O. Box 1250
Salisbury, MD 21801

Dear Brother Poole,

I am trying to get some information on a Elder Stanley C. Phillips of Quitman, Mississippi. He is with the "Absoluter" faction of Primitive Baptists. But I have reason to suspect that his views are not quite in harmony with most of your people. Do you know him? If so, do you fellowship him and his people. He helps put out a paper called *The Predestinarian* with an Elder Dearman.

I know he is against Associations and most "Absoluters" are not, as most of our people are not. He also has a belief that ALL of God's elect WILL hear the Gospel and believe it. He does not believe in "gospel regeneration", but simply believes that all of the elect will hear the gospel and believe it. This is what the so-called "sovereign gracers" among the Missionary Baptists believe. I told Brother Phillips that I question whether most of the "absoluters" agree with him on this. Do you?

All that I ever talked to among your people do not agree with this. Another question I have for you. Are you in close fellowship with the County Line Association of North Carolina? What about Brother Berry of North Carolina. I am speaking of the Berry of *The Old Faith Contender*.

I am enclosing a copy of my paper and would like to be put on an exchange basis with *The Signs of The Times* if you agree.

I will be waiting for a reply -. (sign.)

THE REPLY TO INQUIRY

P.O. Box 1250
Salisbury, Maryland 21801
October 4, 1983

Elder Eddie Garrett
102 Lylburn Road
Middletown, Ohio 45042

Dear Elder Garrett:

I received your letter of inquiry yesterday and I will try to answer your questions to the best of my limited ability. I must confess to some reluctance to respond, due to the general tenor of your letter. Specifically:

1. The Absolute Predestinarians are not, as you term them, a faction of Primitive Baptists. Reliable historical accounts of the Baptists amply prove that we were and are the original Primitive Baptists, therefore, yours, and all other "splinter" groups are the factions, not us.
2. For you to write to me regarding Elder Phillips in the manner you have makes me feel that you would "sow discord among brethren" if you could get away with it.
3. We are instructed by our Lord not to give that which is holy to the dogs. Your manifest antagonism to Absolute Predestination over an extended period of time inclines me to avoid you on that basis. However, since I cannot know your heart on this matter I will reluctantly respond.

You asked if I know Elder Stanley C. Phillips of Quitman. I have known him since about 1966 and consider him a dear brother in the Lord, a sound gospel minister, and a thoroughly capable expositor of conditionalists and other assorted arminians of every dark shade.

You say you have reason to suspect that his views are not quite in harmony with most of my people. I cannot ascertain what you mean by that ambiguous statement. "Reason to suspect"! "His views"! "Not quite in harmony"! "Most of my people"! Elder Garrett, if you don't know for sure what Elder Phillips' views are, then as would become all decent men, keep quiet about them until you have something more than suspicions to go on. On the other hand, if you do know what his views are, and are trying to compare them with others, then say so in plain language and not in such a "mealy-mouthed" manner.

You asked if I fellowship him and his people. Indeed I do! However, let me advise you that what you intend by the word "fellowship" and what I intend is probably very different. I have not seen Elder Phillips in over seven years but I was warmly received by him and those he ministers to. I was welcomed in their worship service, and attempted to preach the gospel there. Should he come here, I would extend to him similar courtesy. Our union is forged in stronger links than the ties that bind or separate so many today. Also, I not only fellowship Elder Phillips, but I support *The Predestinarian*, which he publishes, as well.

You say Elder Phillips is "against" associations. So am I! I fully support the practice of churches *associating*; it is the *organization* I oppose. I view the organization as being as fully without Bible warrant as a Sunday School and I have waited over twenty years for a refutation of that statement. I pastor the oldest Primitive Baptist Church in America and it has been *associated* longer than any other Primitive Church in existence. I refer to Welsh Tract Primitive Baptist Church, founded in 1701 and entered into association with four other churches in 1707. That marked the beginning of the Philadelphia Association. In about 1794, Welsh Tract

removed to the Delaware Association and remains there to this day. She recognizes no authoritative structures but the church which hosts the meetings. We are NOT at war with associations nor those who favor them, but refuse to be yoked by them, ourselves.

As to "most Absoluters" being for associations, as long as I have my Bible in my hand I will not be moved by the many or few. The Lord informed us of only one religious institution which He would build, that being the Church. I consider the Church as the highest and ONLY ecclesiastical body on earth, thus excluding associational organizations, Sunday schools, etc.

If Elder Phillips believes what you said he does, that all the elect will hear the gospel and believe it, then, yes, I agree with him on that as well. I firmly understand the Scriptures to teach that all unbelievers will have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (See Rev. 21:8). Those that obey not (believe not) the gospel will experience flaming fire and be punished with EVERLASTING destruction... (See II Thess. 1:8-10). That "obey" is the same as "believe" in this text is established in verse 10, "(Because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." Those that believe not are condemned ALREADY. (See John 3:18) I am fully aware of your response to these and other texts of a similar vein, Elder Garrett, but all your vain attempts to fit them to the "time salvation theory" reminds me of the sign over the blacksmith shop which reads, "All sorts of twisting and turning done here."

There is no question in my mind that the number of the elect family and the number of believers is the exact equivalent. All of God's elect family will believe on Christ and believe His gospel before they enter the happy land of eternal bliss. I have preached that among the Primitive Baptists now for over twenty-two years and the only persons to dispute it were the conditionalists. Our, people never have.

You may believe that the elect may live and die in unbelief, but I consider that as high heresy. You may urge upon me to explain how infants, idiots and heathen can go to heaven if what we hold is true. I would respond as follows:

1. As neither of us have access to the Book of Life, it can neither be proved or disproved that any, all, or none of the above groups will be found among the elected.
2. God is as capable of granting them belief of the Gospel of His dear Son as He is of giving them eternal life.
3. We have never contended that hearing is contingent on the natural ear or believing contingent on the natural mind. Otherwise the deaf or senile could not qualify. "The *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

Belief of the truth by God's chosen ones is surely established by Paul in II Thess. 2:13,14. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH: whereunto He called you BY OUR GOSPEL to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Would you care to dodge the force of this text by saying that this refers to "time salvation"? Then "time salvation" is as certain as eternal salvation, as we are CHOSEN to it. And if for "time", then will they lose it by and by, and yet wake up in heaven as unbelievers? You dare not acknowledge it as eternal salvation, . either, as that establishes our position. I think, Elder Garrett, you would do well to leave the Absoluters to their Bibles.

You asked if I am in close fellowship with the Country Line Association in North

Carolina. I do not know which one you refer to as there is an Upper Country Line, a Lower Country Line, and a West Country Line Union. As to "close fellowship", I don't have such for *any* association as an association, but I do have fellowship for many of the dear brethren in the groups you mentioned. Again, I will say that I do not base my fellowship on associational ties.

You asked of Elder Berry. I view him as one of the dearest servants of God who has lived in my life time. I consider it a blessing of the Lord to know and love Elder Berry and I deeply regret that he no longer publishes the *Old Faith Contender*.

Now Elder Garrett, I will ask one question of you. Will you produce the *oldest document* or writing you can find, by any Primitive Baptist of any group that clearly sets forth the doctrine of "conditional, time salvation" as being the doctrine of the Bible? I feel the brethren at large will be greatly surprised to see how few years it has been in existence. To make the subject more interesting I will produce 10 articles for every one you produce and all mine will be AT LEAST fifty years older than yours. My articles, however, will set forth absolute predestination or the decree of all things that come to pass as the Primitive Baptist position. If you cannot produce anything at least 100 years old I will consider it of no purpose to establish antiquity.

Respectfully,
James F. Poole

COMMENTS

To be fair with Elder Garrett, it may be helpful for him to know that many of the Independent Predestinarians do not determine "fellowship" as his brethren do. They, and many others also, determine fellowship upon the basis of "who they can receive with

permission of their corresponding brethren.”
As Independents, we have no higher authority over us to say who we can, or cannot fellowship. Our fellowship is determined by an inward love, or affection, based upon a kindred spirit and doctrinal and practical unity. To us, Christ alone is King in Zion and Head of His Church.

We realize that we are limited in time and cannot always answer letters quickly. Nevertheless, it is best to ask us of our faith, rather than another. What puzzles us the most about this enquiry is the why? How can one who does not know us, nor have ever met us, and very obviously knows so little about us, be really concerned about our welfare? I know Arminians claim that they “love everybody, because God loves everybody,” but I’ve never put too much stock in the truthfulness of it. Yet, here is some one overly concerned about this poor worm. How strange indeed! Ah, how thoughtful it is.