

The Remnant

*“Even so then at this
present time also there
is a remnant according to
the election of grace.”
Romans 11.5*

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THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND OF THE SADDUCEES

Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees (Mt. 16.6-12).

Neither the Pharisees nor the Sadducees had any business being there, but many of both groups had come to observe the baptism of John. “But when he [John] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come (Matthew 3.7)?”

John called them the “offspring of snakes.” Snakes or serpents have been associated with Satan since the time of the Garden of Eden. John here anticipated Christ’s later calling them the same—the offspring of snakes (Matthew 12.34), and the children of the devil (John 8.44).

What Was “the Leaven”?

When Jesus spoke figuratively, He usually explained His words. In verse 12, He explains the leaven He had mentioned in verse 6: The leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees is the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The doctrine of any group is their organized collection of teachings.

In the Bible, leaven always speaks in some way of sin. It doesn’t mean something bad in Exodus and the Levitical law, and in 1 Corinthians 5.6-8, and in our text above, and then mean something good in, say, Matthew 13.33. Leaven is always bad.

Nowhere in the Bible is it otherwise. Leaven is that which puffs up the bread, making it rise. In so doing, it also corrupts, hastening its spoiling and collapse. Sin, hypocrisy, the works system, and false doctrine likewise puff up the sinner, making him swell with pride and worldly ambition, and these evils hasten to corrupt still more man’s already corrupted and totally depraved nature.

Luke, in his telling of what Christ said, puts it this way: “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” He does not mention the Sadducees but emphasizes the Pharisees’ *hypocrisy*.

In the case of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the leaven was their false doctrine, as Jesus said, and all that this implies. Jesus told His disciples, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” His disciples thought He was rebuking them for not bringing bread on their journey. But when He had further explained to them, Matthew says, “Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of

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the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” That is what puffs up and inflates men, churches, and “Christianity” itself, eventually causing all it corrupts to mold, sour, and collapse.

Who were the Pharisees?

In defining their doctrine and practice, we define Pharisees. Jesus described their practice in Matthew 23: “But **all their works they do for to be seen of men**: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.” In His sermon on the mount, He said, “When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward,” and, “When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward (Matthew 6.5, 16).” All their deeds were for show and whatever praise they could garner from men.

The Pharisees were the fundamentalist Jews of their day. Believing in the inspiration of the Scriptures, angels and spirit-beings, the resurrection, judgment, and afterlife, most modern-day “evangelicals” would have felt at home. But they wouldn’t have felt much at home with the Pharisees’ conditional predestination. As weak as it was, it was stronger predestination than most modern, evangelical, “soul-winning” Pharisees can stomach.

The Pharisees held the doctrine of foreordination, and considered it consistent with the freewill of man (**Pharisees**, *Dictionary of the Bible*, John D. Davis).

Here, it should be noted plainly: In condemning the doctrines of the Pharisees, the Lord never attacked the doctrines of the inspiration of the Scriptures, angels and spirit-beings, the resurrection with a judgment following, and an afterlife. Rather, He, and His apostles after Him, advocated all of these points. These things Jesus and His disciples held in common with the Pharisees.

Because a Pharisee says something does not automatically make it wrong. **Mixing error with truth, which is a favorite tactic of Satan, does not destroy the truth.** The fact that truth and error can reside in the same sentence only emphasizes the need for the saints of God to read and to hear with discernment. Spiritual discernment is a gift of the Holy Spirit to His people (1 Corinthians 12.8-11). One who discerns does not fall for everything he reads in a “religious periodical” or hears from the pulpit, but, compares spiritual things with spiritual (1 Corinthians 2.13).

If any other group professing to be a church proclaims a particular doctrine, that in itself is not necessarily a sufficient reason for anyone, including Old School Baptists, to reject it. If it were, we could not advocate many Biblical truths, including the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin birth of Christ, His miracles, His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His second coming, because many Arminian denominations proclaim these truths.

But Christ did not unite with the Pharisees, and we likewise are not in the least obliged to join with the church denominations of the world merely because it seems we have some of these truths in common. As ever, we are obligated to search the Scriptures daily to see whether anything presented in the name of God and religion is so (Acts 17.11). If there are biblical truths proclaimed, we are bound to believe them, as the Lord gives us the grace to do so, no matter who else does or does not believe them, and no matter who opposes our presentation of them. Likewise, if a teaching is scripturally unsound, we are bound to oppose it, as God graces us to do so, no matter who supports it.

The things the Lord condemned in the Pharisees’ doctrines were their works system of salvation and their elevating *the traditions of the elders* to a place equal to or above the value of the Scriptures.

Pharisaism is the final and necessary result of **that...which makes religion consist in conformity to the law, and promises God’s grace only to the doers of the law. Religion becomes external. The disposition of the heart is less vital than the outward act...**they had delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from

the fathers which are not written in the law of Moses...these being **the traditional interpretations of the elders, which our Lord pronounced to be of no binding authority** (Mat. xv. 2, 3, 6).” (*Ibid.*, Davis; emphasis supplied.)

Shortly before He gave this warning to His disciples, the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Matthew 16.1-4) had confronted Him, joining forces to ask Him for a sign from heaven. Ordinarily, these two groups opposed each other, being poles apart doctrinally; but in their opposition to Christ, they often united to try to defeat Him. “The **Pharisees also with the Sadducees** came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.”

Think of it. He had just healed many who were dumb, maimed, lame, and blind, and then He fed a great multitude with seven loaves and “a few little fishes.” He had seven baskets full of leftovers, far more food than that with which He started. In the face of these miracles He had performed, which they had witnessed, they yet despised and disrespected Him enough to ask Him for a sign from heaven!

He told them, “A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas (Matthew 16.1ff).” As He had said in a similar conflict earlier (as recorded in Matthew 12.39f), “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” In so saying, He prophesied of His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. His words seem to have fallen on deaf ears. Only those given seeing eyes and hearing ears can receive them.

Most writers presenting sovereign grace principles major on exposing the leaven of **Phariseism** because it is a works system that ties directly into conditional Arminianism. The Pharisees were so visible in Christ’s day, and so antagonistic toward Him, and He so often rebuked them, that they are to this day a safe and easy target.

And, to this day, *Pharisees* still means those who are self-righteously proud of their deeds and doings, hypocrites who observe religion’s outward form

rather than its spiritual meaning. And why is self-righteousness wrong? Because among men, “there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3.10).” Only God is righteous. Among men, only those who have been given the righteousness of God by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ are righteous in the sight of God. “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe... (Romans 3.21f).”

It is easy enough, then, for preachers of sovereign grace to oppose the leaven of the modern-day Pharisees who surround us. Much of the time, it seems, the labors of those of us who love the free grace of God as it is in Christ Jesus are directed toward exposing the works-and-will-worship system of man-made religion, and doubtless with good reason. Well and good; this is as it should be.

However, relatively little is said about the **Sadducees** and their brand of leaven, which, although it is as bad or worse than that of the Pharisees, it is perhaps not as safe to dismantle Sadduceism among those afflicted by it. Be that as it may, we leave the Pharisees for now and will try to consider the Sadducees and what their leaven tastes like.

Who were the Sadducees?

The name *Sadducee* is thought to have come from Zadok, a Levite living in the times of David and Solomon. Zadok was a descendant of Eleazar the son of Aaron. As the Greek language was spoken throughout the Roman empire in the New Testament era, and the Greek form of Zadok was *Sadoc*, his name was the probable source of the name *Sadducee*.

Zadok, then, was a priest, charged with the care of the ark of the covenant, loyal to king David. When David fled from the treasonous rebellion of his son Absalom, Zadok and the Levites left Jerusalem with David, taking the ark with them. When David later returned to Jerusalem, Zadok and the devoted priests returned with him. As David lay near death, he had Zadok anoint Solomon as king. Solomon, in turn, established Zadok as the high priest, and he ministered in this office until his death. Because of his distinction in the reigns of David and Solomon, his descendants remained in prominence through the remainder of Old Testament times.

How could Zadok’s descendants, with such a distinguished heritage, degenerate in the intervening centuries into a group that so hated and opposed Christ? The same way any person or group may so degenerate. Such deterioration is inevitable in anyone or any group, including those bearing the name of the Old School Primitive Baptists, if they are not kept by the grace and power of the Lord. A dear Elder used to say that if the Lord had not been pleased to keep us, we would have destroyed ourselves as a people long ago. Down through the years, many old brethren have expressed this truth.

During the centuries between Solomon and the New Testament, the Zadokites (or Sadducees) at first were loyal to the written word of God, primarily focusing on the law of Moses, nobly insisting they would have no doctrine that could not be supported from the Scriptures, a vital principle held by the Old Baptists to this day. So far, so good; but over time the Sadducees began to ignore two things, at least:

(1) They ignored the principle of *progressive revelation*—that the Lord continued to inspire other of His prophets to write other Scriptures after Moses. The Sadducees did not admit what they could not know, which was that the body of Scripture would not be complete until the Apostle John had completed his writings with the book of Revelation. Thus they confined their scriptural research mostly to the five books of Moses or Pentateuch.

(2) They ignored the Scriptures—even those of Moses, whom they professed to so admire—that teach doctrinal truths the Sadducees denied (see under **Not Knowing the Scriptures**, below).

Another major problem within the Zadokites clan was that they became secularized. During the Greek and Roman empires they gradually became more political. The Pharisees were more nationalistic, desiring a return to their national independence and the reestablishment of the Davidic kingdom under the coming prophesied Messiah. The Sadducees, however, abandoning Messianic hopes, carried the favor of the ruling Romans.

Under king Herod the office of high priest was an appointed position, and he selected his friends among the Sadducees for this employment. Under Rome’s government, the Levitical priesthood had become a worldly group of well-to-do politicians with an outwardly religious appearance. In Mark

8.15, Mark records Jesus' warning to His disciples in these words: "And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, **and of the leaven of Herod,**" because the Sadducees were so closely associated with wicked king Herod.

The Doctrine of the Sadducees

Again, In defining their doctrine, we define the Sadducees. The Sadducees were the "religious liberals" of their day. Doctrinally, the Sadducees were known for the following:

1. According to some historians within the early Christian church, the Sadducees denied the inspiration of all Scriptures except the five books of Moses. This charge is actually uncertain; other equally believable historians think the early church-members so saying may have confused the Sadducees' doctrine with that of the Samaritans. If the Sadducees *did* deny the inspiration of all Scriptures but the law of Moses, that would have made it easy enough for them to deny any doctrine based on the Old Testament books from Joshua through Malachi.

2. The Sadducees denied the "oral tradition" of the Pharisees, who claimed that, along with the written law, their traditions had been passed down by word of mouth from Moses. "As the Pharisees asserted, so the Sadducees denied, that the Israelites were in possession of an oral law transmitted to them by Moses." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.) (With that point we can agree, as Jesus Himself often rebuked the Pharisees about their man-made traditions.)

3. The Sadducees denied the existence of angels and other spirit-beings. Again, they said Moses did not write of such things.

4. They denied predestination and advocated the freedom of the human will. Secularist and humanist to the core, they said our works, good or bad, are left to our own decision.

5. They denied man's resurrection after death; they did so because they said there was no reference to the resurrection in Moses' writings.

6. They denied future retribution, teaching that our rewards and punishments are reaped in this life alone. They said Moses did not write of future rewards and punishments in an afterlife.

Within the last hundred to two hundred years or so of our own era, these Sadduceean errors have gained prominence among many otherwise orthodox

churches and ministers. There was a time when it was generally only isolated heretics who held to such errors. A review of the writings of John Gill (1697-1771) and other sound ministers of his day will give the reader a place to begin verifying this fact.

In most of the doctrinal points above, the Sadducees were more like Buddhists than orthodox Jews or the New Testament Christian church. Sadducees most surely were the forerunners of the modernist movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which, as "religious liberalism," continues to this day. One notorious and widely-known example from our own times must here suffice:

"Of course, I do not believe in the Virgin Birth or in that old-fashioned substitutionary doctrine of the atonement; and I do not know any intelligent Christian minister who does," wrote Harry Emerson Fosdick, in his infamous letter of January 31, 1945, to W. B. Barnhart of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Fosdick, the late pastor of the Riverside Church in New York City, was a modern Sadducee within apostate twentieth-century "Christianity." He denied not only the virgin birth of Christ and His blood atonement, but he also denied the inspiration of the Bible, the existence of the spirit world, eternal punishment of the wicked, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection of the righteous and of the wicked. He would have been right at home among the Sadducees of Christ's day.

Jesus and the Sadducees

Jesus' one major confrontation with the Sadducees was in the temple of Jerusalem a few days before He was crucified. The account is found in Matthew 22: "The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is **no resurrection**, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother... (Matthew 22.23f)." They made up an extravagant story based on Deuteronomy 25.5f, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel."

“Now there were with us seven brethren,” they said; “and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.”

The hypocrisy of these men should be evident to all: They believed neither in a resurrection nor a life hereafter; yet, in their attempt to entangle the Lord in a battle of wits and words, they feigned a belief in both!

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”

Errors in these two areas, the Scriptures and the power of God, lead to all other errors.

“For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage,” He continued. In the resurrection and the life hereafter, the marriage relationship and all earthly family ties we have known here will be left behind.

“... but are as the angels of God in heaven.” Here, the Lord introduces them directly to the world of angels. He did not say the resurrected saints will *be* angels, which are a different order of creation entirely. He said they will be “*as* the angels of God in heaven,” in that “the angels of God in heaven” neither marry nor are given in marriage.

“But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Luke’s gospel adds that Christ said, “For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: **for all live unto Him** (Luke 20.38).”

As far as the unbelieving world of our own time is concerned, to be dead physically is to be *dead*, period. It is the Sadducees’ present-day, ongoing denial of the Scriptures and of the power of God. But the doctrine of our God and Savior is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and by extension all the saints who have died, are alive and well in the presence of the Lord.

The Bodily Resurrection

The definition of the word for resurrection, as taken from Strong’s Concordance, is: *Anastasis*

(from *anistemi* [which in turn is from *ana*, **up**], and *histemi*, **to stand**): **a standing up again**, i.e. (literally) a resurrection from death.

What stands up again? The same thing that lies down in death—the body.

Paul looked for a resurrected and changed body at the coming of our Lord, “For our conversation [lit. *citizenship*] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Philippians 3.20f).”

The hope and expectation of Job, one of the most ancient of the patriarchs, was the same as that of Paul and the saints of every age: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, **yet in my flesh** shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me (Job 19.25-27).” Having lived and died over two thousand years before Christ was born of Mary, Job was not referring to seeing Him with his own eyes in the days of His Redeemer’s earthly ministry. That was not the latter day of which he spoke. He looked beyond the time when the worms would have destroyed his own body, to another time when he would stand again in his flesh, and, with his own eyes, he would see his God and Redeemer for himself. Survival of the individual personality of the saints, through death and the resurrection, could not be expressed more clearly.

The Psalmist David, joyfully anticipating the resurrection, wrote: “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my **flesh** also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16.9-11).” Peter applied this text to Christ (Acts 2.25-36), but David, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was expressing his own hope: that in death he would nevertheless be at the right hand of the Lord, in fullness of joy and everlasting pleasure, anticipating the glorification of his mortal body, which would rest in hope until that appointed day.

Isaiah said, "Thy dead men shall live, **together with my dead body shall they arise**. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, **and the earth shall cast out the dead** (Isaiah 26.19)."

Daniel was told, "And many of them that **sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt... But go thou thy way till the end be: for **thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days** (Daniel 12.2, 13)." What of Daniel shall *stand* but that that lies down in death?

Nor do the Scriptures teach "soul sleep," that darling of the Seventh Day Adventists and other cults. When the Bible mentions death as a sleep, it is referring only to the body in its appearance of repose, and not to the soul. At death the spirit returns to God to await the resurrection at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12.7)."

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5.8)," Paul said; he also said "to die is gain," not "to die is unconsciousness"; adding that he had "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better (Philippians 1.21, 23)."

The departed saints are living with Christ now. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, *whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him* (1 Thessalonians 5.9f)." He is not returning for them other than for their bodies, which shall then be reunited with their spirits and souls.

The uniform testimony of the Scriptures whenever they refer to that event is, the saints are to return **with Him**: "...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **with** all His saints (1 Thessalonians 3.13)." "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring **with Him** (1 Thessalonians 4.14)." Even that ancient prophet Enoch, the seventh from Adam, said the same: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh **with** ten thousands of his saints (Jude 14)."

Although the body decays back to its native elements in the earth, Christ preserves it blameless, along with the spirit and soul, until His second

coming, when it shall stand up again in righteousness and glory: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul **and body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it (1 Thessalonians 5.23f)."

And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine (Matthew 22.29-33)." And to this day, the doctrine of Christ is astonishing!

Not Knowing the Scriptures

The Old Testament Scriptures, then, teach what the Sadducees denied. We cannot document these points here, other than quite briefly:

1. The verbal or plenary inspiration of the Scriptures: Not merely the thoughts or sentiments, but the very words and the letters of the words, exactly as the Lord gave them, are God-inspired:

A. There are well over one hundred direct statements in the writings of Moses alone that say, "The Lord said," "Thus saith the Lord," and similar declarations. Either they are true, or they are false. God either said what Moses said he said, or He did not. If He did not, then Moses lied and must be discounted. But if He did, then Moses wrote the words of God, even as he said he did.

We believe Moses was inspired by God to write, in the original language, every one of these words. The Sadducees professed to believe Moses was inspired, but they did not believe what he wrote, nor did they believe their own prophets were inspired. Or, if they did, as some have pointed out, they considered the prophets and other Old Testament writings to be inferior to Moses.

They did not believe what Paul believed: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3.16)." They did not believe what Peter believed: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1.21)." How could they, when "Ghost" is the same as "Spirit," and they did not believe there was such a thing as a *spirit*?

B. In Jeremiah 36, as another example, the very words of the Lord's inspiration are mentioned seventeen times. "...**this word** came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Take thee a roll of a book,

and write therein **all the words** that I have spoken unto thee... ." "Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah **all the words of the LORD**, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book." "Tell us now, How didst thou write **all these words** at his mouth? Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced **all these words** unto me with his mouth, **and I wrote them with ink in the book.**" The emphasis is on the individual, God-inspired words of the Book.

2. The resurrection, and the point that the Lord Jesus Christ made, that those who are "dead in Christ" are alive, even now:

A. David's statement: Peter quoted Psalm 16.10, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," on the day of Pentecost as a prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

B. "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it (Isaiah 25.8)."

Paul quoted, "Death is swallowed up in victory," in 1 Corinthians 15.54 as a "saying" which was well known to the Israelites. John quoted part of the same verse, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," in Revelation 21.4. It is bodies, not souls or spirits, that have tearful eyes. In both cases, Isaiah's verse is applied to the eternal state of the redeemed after the resurrection.

C. Paul's and others' declarations of the saints coming with Christ at His second coming (See above under the heading, **The Resurrection**).

3. The existence of angels and spirits: The spirit world cannot be perceived by man's five natural senses. To know anything about that place, we must have a revelation given to us by someone who is there, the three-one God Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Speculation and theories are useless. To know anything authoritatively about that realm is one reason why God's revealing Himself to His people is so important.

This is also why it is dangerous and forbidden to contact evil spirits. We must wonder what the Sadducees thought about Moses' prohibiting contact with familiar spirits (Leviticus 20.27, Deuteronomy 18.11), since these enemies of the truth did not believe in spirits, "familiar" or otherwise.

God's revelation of the spiritual realm and what He has given His people to know about it is primarily in and through the Scriptures. Jesus in particular often spoke of angels and demons.

Natural men tend to ignore what they cannot see, hear, feel, taste, or smell. Much like modern scientists, the Sadducees confined their philosophy to the tangible things of nature and human reason.

What men first ignore they may later hold in contempt when it resurfaces. This is true whatever the subject, including the spiritual realm and the truth about it. Men like the Sadducees who do not perceive the kingdom of God think those who do discern it are mentally unstable, to put it mildly.

Some of the things God has revealed about the spiritual realm are, in addition to His own existence, the reality of angels, demons, and the devil or Satan. In the angelic realm there is a hierarchy of at least four levels mentioned in the Bible: cherubim, seraphim, archangels and angels, in descending order:

A. **Cherubim:** From almost the very beginning of the Bible *cherubim* and *angels* are prominent. "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life (Genesis 3.24)." *Cherubim* in Hebrew is the plural of *cherub*.

A cherub is a mighty spirit-being, higher than ordinary angels and archangels. Cherubs are not the cute little Kewpie-doll winged babies of medieval art, perpetuated on Valentine's Day cards. Angels fear cherubim, and archangels respect them. From the mercy seat atop the ark of the covenant we are given to understand that cherubim evidently occupy the position of highest honor closest to the throne of God in heaven. "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be (Exodus 25. ff)."

Cherubs, associated with the glory of God, figure prominently in Ezekiel's prophecy. By com-

paring their description in Ezekiel 1.5ff with Revelation 4.6-9, the four “beasts” (literally, *living creatures*) John saw were most likely the same cherubim Ezekiel saw.

We cannot explore further the subject of cherubim here, which would take us too far from the subject at hand: the Sadducees who did not believe in them. Suffice it to say, cherubim appear first at the Garden of Eden; they are mentioned eighteen times by Moses in connection with the tabernacle, seventy-five times more in the remaining books of the Old Testament, and once in the New Testament book of Hebrews.

B. Seraphim: Mentioned only in Isaiah 6:2-6, these sublime beings seem associated with the holiness of the eternal God and His glory as manifested in His providence throughout the earth: “Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”

C. Archangels: From the Greek *archo*, a primary verb meaning *to be first in political rank or power*; and *aggelos*, the word for *angel* (Strong’s Concordance).

There are only two mentions of an archangel in the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 4.16, which tells us “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of **the archangel**, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first”; and Jude 9, which says, “**Michael the archangel**, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” These two verses give an amazing amount of information:

(1) The only archangel *named* as such in the Bible is Michael; and,

(2) as powerful as he is, he is plainly presented as having less power than the devil.

Some, entirely without warrant, speculate that Michael is somehow just another name for Jesus. Such idle speculation is a poor substitute for the doctrine of Christ. The idea that “Michael equals Christ equals Michael” manifests an unfamiliarity with not only what the Scriptures say about angels and archangels, but also with the divine Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. (a) Jesus is Jehovah God, one

with the Father, and He is not an archangel, a created being. (b) Jesus’ name is above every other name (Philippians 2.9-11). Why then would Jesus trade His name for the lesser name of Michael, whom He created? (c) As powerful as Michael the archangel is, he dares not (for that is what *durst not* means) bring against Satan a railing accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

Who in their right mind should say that the Lord Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, “who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him (1 Peter 3.22),” is *afraid* and *dares not* to accuse Satan or to rebuke him?

(3) Again, it is altogether fitting that in the Scriptures the angels and archangels are so often linked with the bodily resurrection. The naturalistic and unbelieving Sadducees were most known to disbelieve about angels and the resurrection, and yet the resurrection and angels are often biblically linked together.

D. Angels: Angels, then, are a fourth order of spirit-beings, lesser in power than cherubs, seraphs, and archangel(s), but who, as ministering spirits, also live in the presence of God. The word *angel* means *messenger*. Angels are God’s messengers and ministering spirits. From that standpoint, any “messenger” can be considered an “angel.” Because of these facts, the pastors of the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 2-3) are called *angels*. The word *evangelist* has *angel* embedded in its middle.

It is a logical fallacy, however, encouraged by the unbelief of the Sadducees and their modern heirs, to think all angels are merely earthly, human pastors or preachers. Jesus Christ, when He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh, who “was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death (Hebrews 2.9),” was hardly made a little lower than preachers, pastors, or Elders. In the hierarchy of created beings, humanity is what is “a little lower than” the spirit-beings known as angels.

The Sadducees thought Moses did not teach the existence of angels, but Moses wrote Genesis, wherein angels are mentioned. Thus the Sadducees despised their professed birthright.

It is true that most of the time when Moses spoke of a single angel, it was “the angel of the Lord,” or “the angel of God,” which was a pre-incarnate ap-

pearance of the Son of God. (Compare Exodus 3.14 with John 8.58.) Yet there are times Moses mentions *angels*, more than one, appearing at the same time:

“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it (Genesis 28.12).” Jesus Christ is that ladder, the One who spanned the awesome gap between heaven and earth, and He so identified Himself to Nathanael in John 1.51: “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

“And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim (Genesis 32.1f).”

The angels that Jacob saw on these two occasions were hardly an assembly of preachers.

(Regretfully, because of space constraints, we must leave “The future judgment” and “Predestination” without further comments in this article.)

Other Confrontations

As far as their differences with the Sadducees were concerned, things did not get better for the early apostolic church after the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The Sadducees remained in political and religious power in Jerusalem and Judea. In an ongoing effort to silence the apostles, they used what power they had, in God’s providence.

Peter and the Sadducees

Peter and John were involved in the healing of a lame man near the temple (Acts 3). They denied doing the healing themselves, rather attributing the miracle to God through their crucified and resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ: “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, **whom God hath raised from the dead**; whereof we are witnesses. And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong...Unto you first **God, having raised up his Son Jesus**, sent Him to bless

you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities (Acts 3.13-16, 26).”

“And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, **and the Sadducees**, came upon them, *Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead* (Acts 4.1f).” When Peter spoke before their court, he went again to the heart of the matter: “that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, **whom God raised from the dead**, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.” Still later, “... the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison (Acts 5.17f).” The apostles’ preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead led directly to this persecution.

Paul and the Pharisees

If it had to be only one way or the other (which it doesn’t!), it might be successfully argued from Paul’s words and actions that it would be far better to be a Pharisee than to be a Sadducee. Indeed, like it or not, the Lord’s people have far more in common with the Pharisees than they have with the Sadducees. There is no doubt about it; the Pharisees were grossly wrong in their works-system salvation (the **leaven** of the Pharisees), but many of their cardinal doctrines were the same as that of the early church. But the Sadducees? In denying the existence of spirit-beings, they denied the very existence of God Himself, for “God IS a Spirit... (John 4.24).”

From the time of his early childhood and youth, Paul was raised a Pharisee; and in God’s providence he used this his heritage to good advantage. He knew their doctrine and practice from the inside out.

Negatively, he quickly saw the Pharisaic influence within the early church and opposed it wherever it surfaced. All of his writings bear this out. When “there rose up [within the church] certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses (Acts 15.5),” Paul was a key witness against them in the primitive church’s council held in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

Positively, Paul thoroughly knew the Hebrew Scriptures, which never hurts the cause of any

preacher of God's word. His arguments to Jew and Gentile believers alike were couched in Old Testament Bible prophecies.

When Paul spoke in his own defense before king Agrippa, to emphasize the doctrine of the resurrection, he drew upon his life among the Pharisees, "...which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged *for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead* (Acts 26.5-8)?"

Paul and the Sadducees

Paul's love for his nation brought him to Jerusalem in spite of his brethren's warnings. "...a certain prophet, named Agabus...took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 21.10ff)."

While Paul was in Jerusalem, the prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled: He was framed, arrested on a bogus charge, and eventually brought before the Jewish Council (Sanhedrin).

He did not take this outrage passively. "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: **of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.**" Perhaps surprisingly to some, Paul here resolutely identified with the Pharisees.

"And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. *For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.* And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the

Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God (Acts 23.6-9)." In this four verse account, many important points appear:

- ◆ Paul was a second-generation Pharisee, at least;
- ◆ On at least this one occasion Paul drew doctrinal support from the Pharisees;
- ◆ Paul pivots his entire defense on his hope in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead;
- ◆ The resurrection threw the Sanhedrin, composed in large part of Sadducees, into a turmoil, breaking up their kangaroo court;
- ◆ The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; and,
- ◆ The Pharisees, with whom Paul identified himself, say there is to be a resurrection, and both angels and spirits exist. Paul said the same, for, being grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, these vital tenets are essential details of the doctrine and gospel of Christ.

SUMMARY

It all comes down to this: There are things in the spiritual realm we would not know anything about if it were not for God's revelation in the Scriptures or the Bible. Men in every age, blind to the Scriptures and to the power of God, prefer natural reasoning and idle speculation over the truth God has given to His children. Thereby they fall into the trap of the Sadducees, who, ignoring and denying the Scriptures, ended up denying predestination, the bodily resurrection, the future judgment, the eternal state of both the elect and the non-elect, and the spiritual kingdom of God, including angels and other spirits.

Taken together, these Sadducean heresies are essential building-blocks of the cults throughout the fringe areas of so-called Christendom. Taken individually, they are errors that skew the understanding of the gospel of Christ away from the revealed truth of God's word.

May the Lord give us the wisdom and discernment which only comes from Him. Along with this, may He also give us a desire to search the Scriptures for what He reveals to His people.

CHARGED PART II

(Continued from last issue)

H*is cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers:* “The cheeks of His face are soft and piled up high with the fragrance of the spices.” The same spices that He was perfumed with as He came out of the wilderness that caused all His garments to smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia. The finest and choicest spices, sweet as a tower of flowers. A place where she finds again peace and tranquillity and the fragrance of the abundant spices is the scent of her beloved. The scent, which caused her hands to drop with myrrh and her fingers with sweet smelling myrrh. She has his aroma, she has been marked with His scent and there is no mistaking the sweet smelling savor.

“...his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” The words from her beloved are oozing with gladness, joy and brilliance. His righteousness and holiness cross over and make the transition to her and back to him in the propitiation He provided for her.

“His hands are as gold rings set with beryl.” His hands are open and welcome the fellowship of His people. This fellowship is shimmering as gold and as comforting as a clear day or fair weather. His fingers fold around all that is in His hand and accomplish, fulfill, and confirm all that He controls.

The seasons, the wind, the rain, the heart of the king, the needs of His children and the hairs of their heads are all within the realm of this hand and its government. The Hebrew word for beryl is, *tarshiysh*. The seaport city of Tarshish was renown for its merchants and their vessels. It was the center of commerce and trade, and all that transpired within, around, to, and for this city would barely begin to encompass all that is in the hand of the Lord and under His control. He has all the powders of the merchants with Him (3.6).

His hands also appear as gold rings because within them is the scepter of righteousness (Hebrews 1.8) with which he rules. John saw, in his revelation of Jesus Christ, that within His right hand were seven stars, which represented the seven churches in Asia (Revelation 1.16). No better an illustration could be given or sweeter a vision received, that all things

work together for good to them that love God to the called according to His purpose, than to see that all things, whatsoever they be, are in His hand and in fellowship one with another.

“...his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.” The reference to His belly is as to the mechanics and production of offspring or children. It is bright and glossy to a polished shine and it contains righteousness within and precious stones wrapped around. This is the origin of His children who were in Him from eternity past and bear the marks of his lineage.

“His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.” The lower section of the foundation of our Lord is as bleached white columns, appointed and established together in strength, immovable and sure. Jesus told Peter, “Upon this rock will I build my church (assembly) (Matthew 16.18),” and Paul said to the Corinthians, “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3.11).” Here is the feeling of security and longevity. No man laid this foundation and nothing can shake it. He is fixed and sure and the rock in which His people dwell (2.14). Once again, just as His head, His foundation is the purest refined gold and He is all encompassed with justice and equity.

“... his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.” The Lord and Master appears to His beloved as the white mountains in Lebanon. So high that they tower above all other, so majestic that they seem unapproachable, and so near to the heavens that they are year-round white with snow. “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth (Psalm 121.1f).” He appears as the mountain and the one who, “...cometh leaping upon the mountain and skipping upon the hills (2.8).” As majestic and grand as these mountains seemed, He was above even them and, as it were, danced and played with joy upon them. His countenance was as excellent as the cedars because the cedars have a tenacious root system and can withstand the forces of nature. They are straight, tall, and majestic within themselves, and their presence will cover the land and blanket a forest.

“His mouth is most sweet...” The words that proceed from his mouth are life unto His children.

They are nourishment and sustenance to their souls. He feeds them by the still waters. He renews their strength. He knows their needs and supplies them before they ask for them. He speaks peace to the troubled, rest to the weary and comfort to the distressed.

"...yea, he is altogether lovely." There is nothing in Him that displeases her, and every aspect of Him draws her to His side. She is bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. She is of Him as Eve was of Adam. The separation she feels causes her to long for and desire His presence and His comfort.

This is why her beloved is different from another and this is why she will have no other. She will not hear another's voice. She will not heed another's call. She will not walk in another's path. "This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem (5.16)."

When in the course of time and at the moment ordained of old by God, the child of grace is quickened and the presence of the treasure, afore placed within earthen vessels is manifested, when the pricks and the pains of the law have driven this chosen one through the valley of the shadow of death, when the burden of sin has been lifted and the yoke of peace has been applied, there is no greater realization that there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

When He reveals unto His own that He had a body prepared for Him just as His children did when they became partakers of flesh and blood; when He conveys to them that He was in all points tempted as they were, yet without sin; when He shows them that He who knew no sin became obedient to the will of His Father and became sin by taking on Himself the sin of His people and them alone; when He imparts the knowledge unto them that, when they were without strength, at enmity with God, alienated from the commonwealth of the house of Israel, walking according to the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, that He came and stood for them in the Holy of Holies as the High Priest, the sanctuary, the altar and the only offering accepted of God; that He was delivered up for our offenses and raised again for our justification; and that now, being justified by His faith, wherein He was faithful above all the house, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; then and only then can the redeemed of

the lord say so and the inhabitants of the Rock sing, He is my beloved and he is my friend!

Hear the words of this Lord of glory when He spoke to His disciples and said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command. Henceforth I call you no more servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you (John 15.13ff)."

I ask you dear brethren, did this fairest among women come to this revelation about her Lord by flesh and blood? Did she scurry down to the library to find the wisdom of the world so she could better understand this wonderful truth? Did she sit under the tutelage of the doctors of divinity, the great oratorical evangelists or soul-winning preachers of the day? Was it not unto her as it was with Peter and is to every one of her children, that flesh and blood has not revealed this unto her, but her Father, which is in heaven? No earthly means could produce this realization in her. No reading of the scriptures, no preaching of the gospel, no mediation or prayer or anything even remotely connected to the flesh could bring this about or even help it on its way. "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts (Zechariah 4.6)."

Was this a universal revelation or open calling? Not at all! This was given to one who was chosen in her beloved before the foundation of the world. One who was born of royalty, her Father being the King of Salem and her brother being the Prince of Peace. She then is the daughter of peace, the descendant of peace or, as it is translated from the Hebrew, the Shulamite. Therefore her beloved calls her my sister, my spouse, and my beloved.

This was neither a loss of any temporal blessing nor a diminishing of class standing. She had not 'backslidden' or 'grieved the spirit.' She had not fallen from grace. The Heavenly Father had taken her into this tribulation and had, by His grace, cleansed her from this fleshly malady. He demonstrated His love for her by chastening her. He

removed the branches that were not fruitful. This was not a punishment but a pruning so that the vine would bring forth more fruit and that more abundantly. He refined the gold, silver and precious stones, which cannot be destroyed, by purging and removing the wood, hay and stubble. "How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious stones of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter (Lamentations 4.1f)!" The fine gold can never become tainted, for it is pure; but it can be concealed on the outside by the flesh. The scum of the flesh coats the exterior and clings to the fine gold and precious stones.

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide in the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness (Malachi 3.1ff)." He took the watchmen in one hand and his beloved in the other and washed and sheared his sheep. This was a blessing to her and a benefit for her. "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins and none is barren among them (4.2)." "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every one he receiveth. If ye then endure chastening, God dealeth with you, as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not (Hebrews 12.5f)?"

"Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy love turned aside? that we may seek him with thee (Canticles 6.1)" The daughters of Jerusalem now ask the second question of this one who is sick of love. She has come to them, those of her family, of like precious faith and charged them to find him and relay to him her

condition. She hopes that they can help her find comfort and guide her to his side. They have first asked her to identify just whom it is that she is seeking and now ask her where he is. Observe carefully how that they do not 'lead her to her Lord' nor do they 'teach her the way of the Lord that she may walk in it'. They do not chide her with the same legalism that she was just delivered from by laying out before her a plan for her to, "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called (Ephesians 4.1)." They do not, as the friends of Job, attempt to condemn her by imposing their form of piety and priestcraft. They do not convene a 'prayer chain' or an emergency meeting of the board of deacons in order to isolate the problem and contain it before it grows. There is no haughtiness or condescending towards this one who is in this condition and she is not told to, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2.12)." These would be and are the ways of the world. They are even more burdensome and laborious to the weak and feeble child of the King.

Here is an individual who has been to the top of the mountain and felt the presence of her Lord and then finds herself alone and desperately seeking the one she loves. Is there any comfort for her in flesh-induced will-worshipping? Shall she find peace in renewed and more diligent Bible study and prayer? No. She finds that the words of the book are sealed to her. The pages are darkened and the truth is hidden and she feels herself even more alone. When she would attempt to force a thought of prayer, she feels that no one is listening. Her heart condemns her, her words fall silently to the ground and she had just as well talk to the wall than to feel that her beloved will hear her. Have you been there, and that more than a few times, dear brethren? All God's children are led there from time to time to teach them, and that by their Heavenly Father, that they should have no confidence in the flesh and no self reliance. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ (2

Corinthians 1.3f).” These sisters of the grieved were there to comfort her and to “seek him with thee.” They stood with her to weep with her, and later they will rejoice with her.

“My beloved is gone down to his garden...”

What a sweet blessing is revealed unto her. He has gone to his garden. She is comforted because she is that garden. He never left her. He did not forsake her. All the time she was reclined in her beloved as He carried her through this trial and tribulation. He said, “A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up and a fountain sealed (4.12).” Entrance was barred to all strangers who are not of the household redeemed by blood. The fountain is sealed to her and for her. She is not open to the public and entrance is not to “whosoever will.”

She is His garden and He is come in to His garden. She is His workmanship. She was created in Him. She is his vineyard and He is the husbandman. He has gathered His myrrh with spice. He has eaten the honeycomb with the honey, and He has drunk His wine with His milk, and He has beckoned to His friends to eat and to His beloved to drink abundantly.

“...to the bed of spices...” The bed on which He lays His beloved for rest and love is a bed of spices. The same spices which are contained in the ointment of the apothecary that is Holy unto the Lord. They are the same spices, which anointed the altar, the sacrifice and the High Priest. They are the spices of the atonement, the sweet smelling savor before the Lord. He is the propitiation for the sins of His people. By this are they granted this access to this Holy of Holies.

“... to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies.”

Here in His garden He tends to His flock. He pastures them and provides for them. He assembles together gladness and joy in the brilliance of His righteousness.

“I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.”

The eternal oneness and union between these two was never in question or jeopardy. The fact that she was of the living stones, which were hewn from that great rock which was Christ, never was, even remotely, in jeopardy of change or diminished capacity. She was forever in Him and with Him and shall ever be; and the confidence that she expresses here, the joy that fills her soul so that she is no more “sick of love,” and the surety of her Lord and Master

could only have been achieved by the path that she walked. Only when she was stripped of the flesh, when the refiner’s fire burned off the outer trappings of corruption and she was purified by the fuller’s soap could she have fully experienced this fellowship. Would she have it any other way? This corruption must put on incorruption and this mortality, immortality; and until that time she, and all her household, must go through this tribulation.

“... he feedeth among the lilies.” While on this earth and in the fleshly habitation, the Lord tends to His chosen few with gladness and joy, supplying them with peace and comfort. This is not a reference to Him feeding Himself but to the feeding of His flock. “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever (Psalm 23).”

In need of grace,

—Chet Dirkes

PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

Since Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King to His people, the Lord willing, I will try to write a little of what I believe about all three. Christ as our Redeemer fulfilled the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King in His humanity as well as being the Son of God. He was just as much so while He sojourned here as He still is while seated on the right hand of His father.

PROPHET

The word *prophet*, taken literally, means a spokesman for God. He is not only God’s spokesman, but the prophet is also the interpreter of God’s will. Christ Himself as God’s Prophet stated, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the

Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day (John 6.38f)." Those that were given Him were the ones chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

The prophets in the Old Testament were to speak the actual words of God. The Lord told Moses in prophecy of Christ, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him (Deuteronomy 18.18)." As the priests represented the people before God, so do the prophets represent God to the people.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend (Exodus 33.11)." The prophecies of Moses and the prophets pointed to the more sure word of prophecy, Jesus Christ. They were not witness to themselves but of things to be. The fulfillment of their prophecies was in Christ.

PRIEST

The word *priest* in the Greek language means sacred or holy. In the New Testament, it indicates one consecrated to holy matters. His Priesthood, which was set up and fixed in His covenant of grace and the eternal decrees of God, was and is effective throughout all ages toward God's elect.

The atonement of Christ was just as effective before His death on the cross as it is after. With one offering, Himself, He hath perfected forever those given Him in covenant love before the world began. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10.14)."

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an **high priest** for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 6.19f)," "who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8.34)," and "... He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8.27)."

KING

As Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, He is the sovereign ruler over God's kingdom. The Scriptures teach, "For he spake, and it was done; he

commanded, and it stood fast (Psalm 33.9)." He works and none can hinder; "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth (Job 23.13)."

The book of Daniel states, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever (Daniel 2.44)." The Scriptures teach that "the kingdom of God is within you," and it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1.27)."

Isaiah 32.1 says, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment."

His purpose in coming into this world was to save the people of His kingdom from their sins, to defeat their enemies, to do away with Satan and his powers, and to deliver His people from bondage. 1 Corinthians 15.24-26 tells us, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory (verse 55)?"

Isaiah the Prophet tells us that "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this Isaiah 9.6f)."

The Scriptures speak of Christ as our Elder Brother. The prosperity of the children of His kingdom is brought about by this God of old who hath sworn, saying, "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand (Isaiah 14.24)."

To me, this blessed truth is a self-imposed obligation of God upon Himself to save those He has chosen for Himself.

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THE TESTIMONY OF OUR FOREFATHERS

In the year 1556, John Clement, an English Protestant, recorded for all to read after his death his belief of the orthodox faith. He did this because there were at that time, as today, many sects proclaiming false doctrines who claimed to be orthodox Christians. Although Clement was a member of the church of England, it is evident that he was very sound in the faith of God's elect. The children of grace should ever be open to the testimony of those who have gone before, even though many of them were not Baptists. There is much to be learned from those whose lives were given for the faith. Many of the well loved hymns sung in Old School Baptist churches were written by men who were not Baptists themselves but are treasured for the truths in them.

As he lay a prisoner in the king's jail, John Clement penned his confession, consistent with what almost all the Protestant martyrs at that time believed. It should be noted that the doctrines of grace are extremely prominent in this confession:

"I do confess and believe, that Adam, by his fall, lost for himself and all his posterity, all the freedom, choice and power of man's will to do good: so that all the will and imaginations of man's heart is only to evil, and altogether subject to sin, and bound and captive to all manner of wickedness. So that it cannot once think a good thought, much less than do any good deed, as of his own work, pleasant and acceptable in the sight of God, until such time as the will be regenerate by the Holy Ghost. Until the spirit of regeneration be given us of God, we can neither will, do, speak, nor think, any good thing that is acceptable in his sight. As a man that is dead cannot rise up himself, or work anything towards his resurrection, or he that is not (does not exist) work towards his creation; even so the natural man cannot work anything towards his regeneration (heavenly birth). As a body without the soul cannot move but downwards, so the soul of man, without the Spirit of Christ, cannot lift up himself. He must be born again (from above), to do the works that be spiritual and holy. And by ourselves we cannot be regenerate by any means, for it is only the work of God. To

whom let us pray, with David, that he will take away our stony hearts, and create in us new hearts, by the mighty operations of his Holy Spirit.

"I do now acknowledge, confess, and undoubtedly believe, that God, our eternal Father (whose power is incomprehensible, whose wisdom is infinite, and his judgements unsearchable) hath, only of his great abundant mercy, free goodness, and favor, in Jesus Christ, ordained, predestinated, elected and appointed, before the foundation of the world was laid, an innumerable multitude of Adam's posterity, to be saved from their sins through the merits of Christ's death and bloodshedding only. To be (through Christ) his adopted sons, and heirs of his everlasting kingdom, in whom his great mercy shall be magnified forever, of which most happy number, my firm faith and stedfast belief is, that I, although unworthy, am one; only through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

"And I believe, and am surely certified, by the testimony of God's good Spirit, and the unfallible truth of his most holy word, that neither I, nor any of these his chosen children, shall finally perish, or be damned; although we all (if God should enter into judgement with us, according to our deeds) have justly deserved it. But such is God's great mercy towards us, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, that our sins shall never be imputed unto us. We are all given to Christ to keep, who will lose none of us; neither can anything pluck us forth of his hands, or separate us from him. He hath married us unto him by faith, and made us his pure spouse without spot or wrinkle in his sight, and will never be divorced from us. He hath taken from us all our sins, miseries, and infirmities; he hath put them upon himself, and hath clothed us with his righteousness, and enriched us with his merits, and mercies, and most loving benefits.

"Christ hath not only done all this, and much more for us, but also, of his great love, mercy, and kindness, he doth still keep the same most surely safely for us, and will do so forever; for he loveth us unto the end. His Father hath committed us unto his safe custody, and none can ever be able to pluck us from his hands. He hath registered our names in the book of life, in such a way that they shall never be erased. In consideration whereof, we have good cause to rejoice, to thank God, and heartily to love

him, and of love, unfeignedly to do whatsoever he willeth us to do, for he loved us first.

“Finally, Christ testifieth himself, that it is not possible that the elect should be deceived. Verily then, they can not be damned. Therefore, I confess and believe, with all my heart, soul, and mind, that not one of all God’s elect children shall finally perish, or be damned. For God, who is their Father, both can and will preserve, keep, and defend them forever. For, seeing he is God, he lacketh no power to do it, and also, seeing he is their most dear loving Father, he lacketh no good will towards them, I am sure. How can it be, but he will perform their salvation to the uttermost, since he lacketh neither power, nor good will to do it?”

“This most heavenly, true, and comfortable doctrine doth not bring with it a fleshly, idle, carnal, and careless life as some men unjustly do report of it; whose eyes (may) God open, and pardon their ignorance and rash judgements. Rather it doth maintain and bring with it, all true godliness, and Christian purity of life, with most earnest thankfulness of heart, in respect of God’s great mercy and loving kindness only.

“As for reprobation, I have nothing to say of it, for Saint Paul saith, what have we to do with them that are without? The Lord increase our faith and true feeling of our election. Notwithstanding, as the gospel is unto some the savor of life unto life; even so it is unto others the savor of death unto death. Christ is himself, unto some, a rock to rise by, and to others a stone to stumble at.”

This confession was dated April, 1556. John Clement was held in prison for his faith; expecting to burn at the stake for refusing to forsake his belief in salvation by sovereign free grace, he died in prison on June 25, 1556, of illness. Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints.

In the testimony of the saints of old is strength and boldness that without question must come from their sovereign heavenly Father. In times of oppression, the children of God are strengthened by him, and find a willingness to suffer for the truth, that is often lacking in more peaceful, prosperous times.

In centuries long past, the saints, by the grace of God, were empowered to rise up from beneath the oppression of the apostate Roman church, and the

tyranny of evil rulers. Through the providence of their gracious and merciful God they received the Holy Scriptures in their own language, and were able for the first time to read of the good news of their salvation. For this they were persecuted throughout the land. This did not stop them from worshipping their Lord according to the Scriptures but rather intensified their efforts to find places where they might meet together in peace.

May the Old School Primitive Baptists never forget the price of religious liberty, and exercise their privilege to worship, free of oppression. This is a precious freedom, and it is not certain how long it may last. What the believers of the truth possess today was bought and paid for by the lives of many who came before. May all of God’s children remember with grateful hearts.

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The following is an outline of principles the readers of *The Remnant* may expect to see maintained in this publication. Under no circumstances do the publishers or writers for *The Remnant* seek to delineate herein a standard of doctrine or views to be imposed upon the readers. Rather, we set these principles before the readers that they may know what general principles guide our efforts. All attempts at declaring articles of faith will be marred by prejudices and frailty, and ours are by no means any exception.

We believe these principles are, in the main, harmonious with the articles of faith published by predestinarian associations and churches of the old order of Baptists known as Primitive, Particular, or Old School Baptists the world over.

1—The eternal existence, sovereignty, immutability, omnipotence, and perfections of Jehovah God; He has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these sacred Three are One; Jesus Christ was and is God manifest in the flesh, and in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

2—The Old and New Testaments in their original languages are the verbally inspired word of God, and they are the complete and only valid guide of faith and practice; the King James Version is the preferred English translation;

3—The will of the eternal God is the first cause of all causes;

4—The absolute predestination of all things;

5—The eternal personal election of the redeemed in Christ, before the world began, and their eternal, vital union with Him; their number is fixed, certain, and sure, and can neither be increased nor diminished; their fall in their federal head Adam into spiritual death, total depravity, and just condemnation; their utter inability

to recover themselves from this fallen state;

6—The blood atonement and redemption by Jesus Christ are for the elect only, and are both efficacious and effectual in accomplishing the will and purpose of God to reconcile His people unto Himself;

7—The sovereign, irresistible, effectual work of the Holy Spirit in quickening the elect of God; the new birth is by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit without the use of any means;

8—The final preservation, perseverance, and eternal happiness of all the sons of God, by grace alone;

9—No works are good works other than those which God Himself has so designated; none of the works called good are left up to men to perform or not, at the creature's discretion; nor do the works of the creature, either before or after regeneration, result in merit accruing to his account in God's sight;

10—The peaceable fruits of righteousness are the certain result of God's working in His people both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and His people will be found walking in paths of righteousness for His name's sake;

11—The separation of church and state;

12—The principles outlined in the Black Rock Address of 1832;

13—The bodily resurrection, first of Christ, and also that of all the dead;

14—The final and eternal judgment; and,

15—The bliss of the redeemed and the torment of the wicked are both eternal and everlasting.