

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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UNION, FELLOWSHIP AND HARMONY

NEW VERNON, N. Y., August 15, 1840.

TH**ERE** is probably no subject of more vital importance to the children of the kingdom of Christ, than that to which we wish in these lines to call their attention. Much has been said upon the subject, by various characters, with as great a variety of designs. Knowing how much the saints desire a perfect union and fellowship among themselves, the enemy has sometimes effected to be very zealous for the promotion of the same object; and to deplore what he or they have denominated a schismatic spirit. Under this imposing pretext, the New School Baptists have generally denounced those who have, in obedience to the command of Zion's glorious King, conscientiously withdrawn their christian fellowship from disorderly walkers. Some honest hearted christians have become bewildered by the hypocritical whinings of ungodly persons, from failing to discern the true design of those who have exhorted them to a general union. There is at this present time, an uncommon zeal manifested by some in whom we have had, and some in whom we still have confidence as Old School Baptists, for union. Several articles have recently appeared in the *Primitive Baptist, the Correspondent, and the Advocate*, as also a letter recently prepared as a circular, for the W—Association, (which was not adopted) upon this subject; and among them, some very well written essays. But we have been led to examine this

subject, with reference to the general want of sufficient discrimination manifested by some, and the evident bearing of *other some* to work a dissention and schism in the ranks of the Old School Baptists, under the imposing plea of union. We will not *charge* any with such intention; but when we see a series of numbers on the subject of union, prefaced by what we consider an unprovoked attack on this paper; and when we had sought for an explanation, and received none, we have found it rather difficult to suppress our misgivings as to the sort of union contended for. It is true, the attack appears to carry on its face, that which might make any farther explanation unnecessary. Inasmuch as the fact that we had dissented from some views of an esteemed writer in the *Primitive*, wherein we felt confident the brother had erred; and had opened our columns to the injured brethren of the Old School, in the Mississippi Valley, to defend themselves against the slanderous charge of being Sabellians, heretics, apostates, &c.; that we had thus offended, was used as a signal for rallying the forces of Israel against us; and while the denouncing of more than one half of all the Old School Baptists in the United States, as base heretics, was winked at, our course is, with the same pen, and by the same *conciliatory* spirit, swelled into schism, sedition, &c.

Having just glanced at the views of some modern writers, on the subject of union, we will briefly state our opinion on the subject also.

They that gladly received the word, at the day of pentecost, and were baptized upon the reception thereof, continued steadfastly in the apostles' doc-

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trine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer, &c. Here lies the foundation of all christian union. **Where the word of the Lord is rejected, or is not gladly received, there is no scriptural ground for christian fellowship;*** but where the word of life has been gladly received, as on that memorable day, and sinners, quickened by its almighty power, have bowed their necks to wear the yoke of Jesus, and in the holy ordinance of baptism have put it on, and do, like those primitive Baptists, continue in the apostles' doctrine, true gospel fellowship must, and will invariably follow. They not only continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, but equally steadfast in the apostles' fellowship; and consequently in sweet union and fellowship among themselves. And while abiding in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles of the Lamb, the saints are prepared to travel harmoniously in the breaking of bread, and in social worship. **But under no circumstance are the saints at liberty to extend their fellowship where there is not a hearty reception of the word, in faith and practice, and a steadfast continuance in the apostles' doctrine. The moment our fellowship exceeds these New Testament limits, it ceases to be christian union, or gospel fellowship, and becomes a wicked perversion of the word—a mere giving of flattering titles one to another.*** Called with a heavenly vocation, by one spirit, and in one hope of their calling, having one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, one God and Father of all, &c.,

the saints are not only prepared to adhere strictly to the doctrine and practice of the gospel, as ordained by Christ and taught by his inspired apostles, but also to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Under such circumstances, it is not only lawful, but expedient, that christians should exhort one another to cherish an unfeigned love and christian regard for the happiness and spiritual growth of the King's royal family. As we said in the commencement of this article, no subject is of more vital importance to the church of God; so we see the necessity of guarding against the influence of any thing in doctrine or practice, that is calculated to sever these blessed bonds; but we should never be unmindful that it is Satan's masterpiece to lead us, if possible, to incorporate within the embrace of our fellowship and union, something that is not found within the limits of the apostles' doctrine; and thereby to pervert our union, and subvert our hearts. Beware of him!

Let us now enquire, whether controversy, discussion, and explain dealings among professors of the gospel faith, is in reality prejudicial to a true christian union, or not. A late writer defines controversy, as meaning dispute, debate, quarrel, &c. The correctness of his definition we shall not dispute; but we know God had a controversy with Israel; although we do not understand that he quarreled with them, in conducting it. That he disputed the premises they assumed, and that his manner of displaying his disapprobation was by himself denominated a controversy, is certain. The apostles were so far from considering a controversy detrimental to christian union, that they exhorted the saints to *contend earnestly* for the faith once delivered to the saints; and this was found indispensable to the maintenance of a scriptural fellowship. Thus our Lord disputed with the doctors in the temple; and Paul disputed daily in the school of one Tyrannus; and yet the purity of the christian faith, and the spirit of the gospel, suffered nothing by this controversy.

But it may be objected, that the controversy for which we find precept and example in the scriptures, was a contention for the faith, against those who were enemies to the truth. All this we admit; but among those, opposers were found some at least in a nominal connection with the church of Christ. Chris-

tians, while continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, will find nothing to controvert in the faith or practice of each other; but 'when any one or more of the disciples depart from the **RULE** of faith and order, then such as are spiritual, are commanded to restore such a one, in the spirit of meekness. The idea that we, as Old School Baptists, are to contend against the errors of the New School, and at the same time wink at the errors of all who may please to call themselves Old School, will not answer. One wolf in the fold, will do more mischief to the flock, than a thousand in the forest.

We perfectly accord with brethren Bennett, Jewitt, Burritt, Battle, and many others, that a gentle, meek, patient, forbearing, humble demeanor, forms the christian character; and that without such a spirit as will lead us to love the truth, the order, the ordinances, and laws of Christ's kingdom, as well as all such as give evidence that they are born of God, by walking conformably to his precepts, all our pretensions are vain.

None can more sincerely deplore an alienation or coldness among the children of God, than we do; but we would not supply the want of christian union, by crying, Peace, where God has not spoken peace; nor by healing the hurt of the daughter of the Lord's people slightly. We cannot compromise the truth.

Editorials of Gilbert Beebe Volume 1 - pgs 631-635

***Editor's Note:** The bold emphasis in Elder Beebe's article was supplied by Brother Tom Adams of Vancouver, Washington, who kindly furnished this reprint.

Elder Beebe's conclusions and mine are the same. During a time of dissention and controversy between the "Calvinists" and the Arminians of a student body, I was given the assignment to prove from the Scriptures that love, brotherhood, and fellowship should override any doctrinal considerations, however variant they might be. I did indeed try, searching the Scriptures for the theme of fellowship, unity, and the like. It was tough sledding until I was given Acts 2.42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' **doctrine and fellowship**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." From that moment, I have remained convinced **there can be no fellowship, unity in breaking of bread or in prayers, without first a unity in the doctrine of Jesus Christ.**--CCM

Gist of a sermon on Luke 11.21

Preached by Elder Stanley Phillips

This morning my mind is turned to a couple of passages in the prophets, and in Jesus' rebuke to the Pharisees in Luke 11.

In the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, we read this passage: *"Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors"* (verse 12).

I feel that I'm on very safe grounds to interpret this passage as a messianic passage, and therefore apply it to the time of Christ's first advent into the world. In like manner, I feel equally safe to so apply this text in Jeremiah: *"For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he"* (Jeremiah 31:11)." I say in like manner, because we find within this same chapter this passage that the New Testament applies to Herod's slaughter of the male children two years old and under at the time of Christ's birth: *"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not"* (verse 15)." In so far as the Holy Ghost has applied this passage to the time of Christ, I can likewise find confidence in applying verse 11 to the same.

As I often express, sometimes a text is too deep for me. I can't fathom its greater import. Maybe I'm on better grounds here. Several years ago a student could not function in her library assignment. She was crying, and obviously very disturbed. I gently enquired as to what was wrong. She answered: "I just can't do it!" "Do what?" I asked. "I can't save souls," she replied. "My preacher says if I can't win them to Christ, their blood will be on my hands in the judgment! But I can't do it!" I patted her shoulder and said, "Hon, God never has called a woman to preach. He has never called all men to preach. Their blood will not be on your hands, for it is not required of you." She asked what church I went to. I told her, and she asked: "But if you don't try to get members, your church will die!" I replied, "It is not my church. It is the Lord's church. Getting

members is His business, not mine." She instantly replied: "You have a devil!" I laughed and walked away. I thought to myself: "Go on crying then!" So, since I'm going to be speaking of the devil, maybe I know somewhat of my subject! We are acquainted.

Satan enters the picture of the Scriptures almost as early as Adam. God gave to Adam dominion over all the beasts of the field and fowl of the air; but in his transgression, Satan usurped his dominion. We find Satan offering to Christ in his temptation in the wilderness dominion over all the kingdoms of the earth if He would bow down and worship him. Christ did not rebuke him by saying, "They are not yours to give!" The Holy Spirit has left us a record that he is a prince: *"Wherein times past ye walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"* (Ephesians 2:2)." Christ referred to him as a "prince of this world" (John 14:30 and 16:11)." My text, this morning, says that he is a "strong man." *"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace"* (Luke 11:21)."

While I want my greater emphasis to be upon the "stronger than he," yet I wish to demonstrate how strong this "strong man" is.

Not only has he usurped the former dominion of man, he has and is fully able to snare men, *"who are taken captive by him at his will"* (2 Timothy 2:26)." Immediately we see that he has what no man has. He has a freedom of will, albeit limited by his Master, which nowhere in the Scripture is said of man. He is quite able to keep his goods in peace relative to any power found in man. Adam was never able to gain his dominion back, and his offspring collectively have never regained it either. This strong man is indeed strong!

Jesus said, *"He that committeth sin is a servant of sin."* That is, he is a slave. As Satan's bond-slave, there is no way that he can recover himself from the dominion of sin, Satan and self. This prince is armed. He has many ways to keep his goods in peace. As Paul suggested in Corinthians, *"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works"* (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)." Why, this prince is not stupid. He knows that man is such that he *"will not have this man (Christ) reign over*

us.” And he knows that man by nature has a built-in religiosity. He must worship something. So, Satan has provided his captives with “*ministers of righteousness*,” to keep them satisfied. Such pious, pompous, sanctimonious, pharisaic, work-mongering professionals have flooded the world with freewillism and “self-help” salvation, preaching what men love: a dodo religion. Whoever the “man of sin” is, one thing we know about him is, “*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 receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved* (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10).”

Before completing this quotation, think what my text said: “He will **divide the spoil with the strong.**” Here it is: “*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*”: Why would God do such a thing as this? The text answers: “*That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness* (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).”

He will divide the spoil with the strong. When I served a church in Appalachia, Virginia, we had a family whose father died. The two children fell out with each other over who inherited what. Finally they came to me and wanted to drag me into the fray. I suggested that one of them divide the property into two equal lists and give the other first choice. It worked well. That is “dividing” the spoil. You take this one; I’ll take that one. “This is yours; this is mine,” *etc.*

The Father gave the Son all power in heaven and in earth to do what He will with His own. In return, He shall divide the spoil with the strong man. “Jacob is Mine; Esau is yours. Abraham is Mine; Ishmael is yours; Manasseh is Mine; Ahab is yours.” And thus He goes down the rostrum of those whose names are written in His book of life.

These “*are Mine saith the Lord.*” In fact, He will make it easy for Satan to claim his portion. “I will harden their hearts, because they will not receive the love of the truth.” He didn’t say, “because they would not receive the truth.” Many dead-letter Calvinists will receive the truth. But Oh! How few receive the “love of the truth!”

Of the “Mine,” Paul continues: “*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 (2 Thessalonians 2:13,14).”

Ah! Isn’t that sweet to a believer’s ear! I’d hate to pass over this text without noting something extra here. No charge for this: He included both “sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” This is where we greatly differ with the anti-gospel Primitives. “*As many as were ordained to eternal life believed* (Acts 13:48).”

He does not leave his poor and afflicted child in Satan’s bondage. Rather, He translates them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. He brings both life and immortality to them by the eternal Spirit, and He brings this life and immortality to light, or manifestation, to them “by the gospel.” He has ordained the “preaching of the gospel to save them that believe,” and no one else!

Many are the gimmicks Satan enlists to keep his goods in peace. But there is one “stronger than He.” “*But when a stronger than he comes upon him, and overcome him, He taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils* (Luke 11:22).” Satan suggests to the elect in bondage, “You can’t be saved.” Or, “Why be saved now? Why not enjoy life first.” He will never let it slip that Christ has already “*saved His people from their sin.*” His ministers have so successfully planted the “lie” in the minds of the masses that Christ is still “trying to save souls,” or, “Wanting to save” people; or, as one e-mailed me (a Calvinist no less!) “God Himself cannot save a sinner without the gospel being preached to him.” Poor soul. He has no business trying to preach if He knows so little about our God! Or even Christ’s finished salvation! But that is one of the ways Satan keeps his possession in peace. “God can’t save you unless YOU let Him!” We may smile at such ignorance, but it is a serious thing indeed. It gives us a bird’s eye view into the psychological and mental conceptual frame of that one’s mind. His view of God is infantile; bordering on simplicity. “*I will blind their eyes, and stop their ears, and harden their hearts, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and believe in their hearts and be converted.*” God does that! And to His people it is so obvious that it cannot be denied. The strong man armed has full control of their mental capacities.

But the “stronger than he” has a “set time to visit Zion.” *“But thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search My sheep, and find them out...I will seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.”* (Read the whole 34th Chapter of Ezekiel and notice the “I will” in so many verses.)

At the appointed time, this “stronger than he” passes by the strong man’s palace. *“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love.”* All the powers of hell cannot prevent the awakening call of the Holy Spirit to life and salvation. He need not beg as preachers do, and as they say He does. He commands, and it is done. When He stood by the graveside of poor dead Lazarus, He said, “Lazarus, Come forth.” And that man came out of that tomb, bound hand and feet with a napkin over his eyes. He could not walk, he could not crawl, he could not see, but he came! To me there is a point to make here as well: Jesus told his disciples to *“loose him and let him go* (John 11:44).” God called preachers can, by the faithful preaching of the gospel, loose living souls and let them go free; but no preacher can bring the dead to life.

The “stronger than he,” the Lord of Glory, disarms Satan and/or his devils, and frees His portion of the spoils from the dominion of Satan and darkness. He brings them into the kingdom of light and love, and gives them a heart to serve Him. He is the Almighty God, and the Saviour of the chiefest of sinners. He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto Him by faith. As *slaves* they need to be *redeemed*; and He is their Redeemer God. As *captives*, they need a *ransom*, and He has ransomed them by the shedding of His blood. A two-fold cord cannot be broken, and by these two great acts of Divine love and favor, He has saved His people with an everlasting salvation. May the Lord bless His word to the edification of His saints. Amen.

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EZEKIEL 36-37

PART I: Introductory

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help (Hosea 13.9).

Some covenants God made with national Israel were unconditional and of free grace, such as the land grant that He gave to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and to their descendants forever. There are other covenants that God made with Israel that were conditional, such as the law covenant made at Mount Sinai.

It evidently takes an absolute Predestinarian to tell the difference between a conditional covenant and an unconditional one, because, other than Predestinarians (*Absolute* Predestinarians, the only kind), practically everyone else seems to know only a conditional way of thinking. That is, men of religion are overwhelmingly united in the opinion that God has issued Adam’s posterity a list of laws and duties to perform, leaving it up to us to obey or not, as we see fit and choose. If we obey (so goes the conditional, Arminian belief), God will bless us for our obedience; but if we disobey, He will punish us for our disobedience. These blessings and punishments (according to various Arminian conditional systems) may be in this present life, in the eternal state, or in both.

Anyone who desires to live under a conditional covenant would do well to consider the history of national Israel from the time they stood at the foot of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19) until now.

“And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him (Exodus 19.3-7).”

The response was, “All the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we

will do." And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Before Moses returned from the mount, however, Israel had gone into idolatry and fornication. So much for **will-worship**.

In contrast, consider what the Lord told Abram: *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12.2f)."* No conditions were imposed, no ifs or buts.

Consider what the Lord told Jacob/Israel: *"And God spake unto Israel [the man, not the nation] in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: (Genesis 46.2-4)."* No conditions were imposed, no ifs or buts.

God deals with nations as He does with individuals. By sovereign electing grace He chose not only Abram/Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel, but He in His sovereign will chose the nation which would descend from them. Israel was indeed a nation when they came out of Egypt, about two million strong (over 600,000 men of fighting age plus their families—wives, children, and their elderly). They are referred to as "all Israel" 150 times in the Bible, beginning with Exodus 18.25 ("And Moses chose able men out of **all Israel...**") and ending with Romans 11.26f ("And so **all Israel shall be saved**: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."). No conditions are imposed, no ifs or buts.

Hosea 13.9 expresses a divine twofold principle: **"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."** This is true whether it is spoken of individuals or nations. Adam destroyed himself and his unborn posterity. As individuals, we have destroyed ourselves. Jacob destroyed himself. National Israel destroyed itself. The Adamic race, individually and collectively, has destroyed itself, and is presently in the process of destroying the earth, the seas, and the atmosphere along with itself. The professing church has destroyed itself. The United States of America is

destroying itself, if it has not done so already. None of this is beyond the scope of God's predestinated purpose, His will, and His council; rather, it is in perfect fulfillment of that purpose. All, all, is in accord with it, because man's self-destruction sets the stage for the second part of the verse: By His sovereign grace and mercy provided in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord God Almighty says, **"...but in ME is thine help."** Our self-destruction and the help from Jehovah Elohim go together hand in glove.

The objection is often vented by haters of the Jews (i.e., national Israel) that anyone who believes God has a future purpose for the nation of Israel is a "dispensationalist." This is meant to be a smear term that should end all controversy in the non-thinking mind, linking the one who so believes (in a future for Israel) with Arminians such as J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, and their present-day followers who, numbering in the millions, dominate the conservative Arminian expositors and prophetic teachers. The "Dispensationalism" of Mr. Scofield and that crowd is of this mind-set: God is perennially testing the Adamic race. Adam failed in the garden, so the Lord tried something else. ("Conscience," from Adam to Noah, according to Mr. Scofield. Where he got "conscience" in Genesis 5 is a puzzle no one has answered yet.) That didn't work; it ended in the destructive flood in Noah's day. God tried something else, "Human Government," among Noah's descendants, ending in man's failure at the tower of Babel, etc. And so it goes. There is indeed an element of truth in the dispensational approach; but, as is usually the case, a half-truth can cause more damage to the cause of truth than does a flagrant lie. Arminian Dispensationalism is a perversion of biblical truth, implying man is in control of his own actions and God is a passive re-actor rather than the Divine controller of all things including man's heart, will, and actions. Because the Arminians only present biblical prophecy and Dispensationalism from the free-will standpoint, we are bid by some to ignore and completely reject whatever truth Dispensationalists might be misapplying. There are more popes who would seal up the Bible against "the common man" than the one who sits in Rome and his predecessors.

No, I am not a dispensationalist in the common understanding of the word. Those who think, say, and preach that "God is through with Israel as a nation

forever” are truly “dispensationalists” with their inner Arminianism showing. Their doctrine is that

(a) God dealt with Israel one way, for a period of time (dispensation); it did not work out; so now God is through with Israel and is working in the world through the church. And,

(b) God’s elect can so sin as to lose their salvation.

Strange; such is the peculiar view of those who believe God is gracious to the Gentiles but not to the nation He freely chose and loves. How strange it is to behold those who profess a belief in the unmerited, irresistible grace of God for the church among us Gentiles and who then say Israel’s sin is beyond the eternal love of God and the redemption provided in the Lamb of God.

“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations... (Deuteronomy 7.6-9).”

If a generation is nominally thirty years, say, then a thousand generations would be thirty thousand years. If it is twenty, then twenty thousand years. However long a generation is defined as, how long has it been since Moses penned those words—3,500 years ago? Then we still have a way to go with “the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments **to a thousand generations....”**

Some will surely say, “Oh, BUT the text says God just keeps covenant and mercy with *them that love him and keep his commandments*, and the Jews do not love Him and keep His commandments!”

Neither do you or I, yet we hope in the grace, mercy, and salvation that flow abundantly from the eternal God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And the text does not say, “God **just** keeps covenant....” *Just* in that usage means **only**. “God

only keeps covenant and mercy with those who keep His commandments,” etc., is what our objector is saying. God is not so limited, not limited at all. If he **ONLY** showed mercy to those who kept His commandments, you and I would be utterly without hope, and you know it.

God deals with nations as with individuals. And “...whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Hebrews 12.6).” Does God chasten individuals? Does He chasten nations? Has He chastised national Israel? If God chastens nations in general and Israel in particular, then there are some nations, including but not limited to Israel, whom He loves, *as nations*.

The unending, unconditional land-grant promises to Abram and his descendants were given by grace. Abram was a heathen in Ur of the Chaldees when the Lord appeared to him, giving him a promised land with no conditions, ifs, or buts. “Now the LORD **had** said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that **I will** show thee: And **I will** make of thee a great nation, and **I will** bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou **shalt** be a blessing: and **I will** bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee **shall** all families of the earth be blessed.” Jehovah **HAD** said it, prior to Abram’s moving an inch. Jehovah did not say “IF you will go, THEN I will bless you.”

There was never a question as to whether or not Abram would go to the promised land. “...and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came (verse 5).” Nothing was left to chance or the whims of Abram, or whether or not he would go. All hinged upon the divine shalls and wills. It was not Abram’s to “decide”; it was God’s eternal council that determined the outcome.

Time prohibits our going into the fifteen hundred years of Israel’s innumerable failures under their judges and their kings, from the time of Moses until the time of Christ. Suffice it to say, it was one failure in sin after another on the part of national Israel, alternating with the free grace deliverances by their sovereign God. “I will heal their backsliding, **I will love them freely**: for mine anger is turned away from him [Israel] (Hosea 14.4).”

Before going to our text in Ezekiel, we only call the reader’s attention to another expression of the principle expressed in Hosea 13.9, which this time is

expressed in what the Lord said in the early chapters of Judges. (I encourage the reader to read the first two chapters of the book of Judges.) There, we see Israel's incomplete victory over the Canaanites: "Also Judah took Gaza [the same "Gaza Strip" that is in the news today] with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof. And the LORD was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but **could not** drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron (Judges 1.18f)." "...the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day (verse 21)." "...the Canaanites **would** dwell in that land (verse 27)." "...the Amorites **would** dwell in mount Heres...(verse 35)."

"...and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel (Judges 2.10)." This always happens in the affairs of men and nations; it was so with Israel, it is so with us, as a nation.

"And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed **my covenant which I commanded their fathers**, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: **that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.** Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua (Judges 2.20-23)." Here note three things:

1. *my covenant which I commanded their fathers*: The command indicates the Conditional covenant made at Mt. Sinai and has no bearing on the unconditional land grant to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel.

2. *that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not*: In effect this proving proved Israel would not keep the way of the Lord to walk therein.

3. Such remarks in the Bible *never* mean God is "trying" to find out what men will do. "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because **He knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man** (John 2.24f)." Rather, God uses such measures to prove to men how totally

helpless and (apart from Him) hopelessly depraved and rebellious we are.

This is perhaps what we repeatedly learn by experience more than any other single lesson we are destined to learn in this life, other than that of the free, unmerited grace of God provided in the shed blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus our Lord.

Such sinful failures on the part of Israel were repeated seemingly times without number. The ten northern tribes, known collectively as **Israel**, were carried into Assyrian captivity in 721 BC. The two southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin, known together as **Judah**) were carried into Babylon in 606 BC.

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were prophets during the Babylonian captivity, which lasted seventy years. Jeremiah was left in the land of Israel with "the poor" of the land. "...the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah...governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and **of the poor of the land**, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon...the captain of the guard left certain of **the poor of the land** for vinedressers and for husbandmen (Jeremiah 40.7, 52.16)." Jeremiah was one who was left in the land of Israel.

Ezekiel, like Daniel, was carried into Babylon. Ezekiel's book of 48 chapters is—according to *Smith's Bible Dictionary*—divided into two main sections: chapters "1-32 are mainly occupied with correction, denunciation and reproof, while the remainder deal [sic] chiefly in consolation and promise"; a straightforward-enough summary for our purposes.

PART II: NEW COVENANT PROMISES

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you (Ezekiel 36.24-29).

This text is from the second part of Ezekiel, chapters 33-48, which deal “chiefly in consolation and promise” as *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* puts it.

How oft has this text been blessed to present the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! Let us look at each phrase in a little detail:

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries: Surely this is a wonderful gospel promise. Christ said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28.18-20).” “Go ye into **all the world**, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16.15f).” “...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and **unto the uttermost part of the earth** (Acts 1.8b).” Surely the Lord is gathering His elect out from among the heathen, out of all countries, because He has chosen a great multitude out of every tribe and tongue on earth. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5.9f).” “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb (Revelation 7.9f).” What a wondrous, glorious sight are these, “...they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7.14).”

And will bring you into your own land. The church is presently being brought into their own inheritance, their spiritual land of promise, the kingdom of God. It is theirs by inheritance, by virtue of their spiritual birth, with Christ being both their Everlasting Father (Isaiah 9.6) and their Elder Brother (Romans 8.29)

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you: What magnificent promises are part and parcel of the inheritance of the saints in light. What wonders are signified by these spiritual waters! “He leadeth me beside the still **waters** (Psalm 23.2).” “Husbands, love your wives, **even as Christ also loved the church**, and gave himself for it; **that he might sanctify and cleanse it** with the **washing of water** by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5.25ff).” “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by **the washing of regeneration**, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3.5ff).”

A new heart also will I give you: Oh, how we need a new heart! Of our natural heart, the seat of our relationship with God, He says, “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is **graven upon the table of their heart**, and upon the horns of your altars...The **heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked**: who can know it? I the LORD search **the heart**, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings (Jeremiah 17.1, 9f).” “Yea, they made **their hearts as an adamant stone**, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts (Zechariah 7.12).” The adamant stone is thought to be the diamond—nothing is harder in nature than the diamond and the heart.

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of **the blindness of their heart** (Ephesians 4.18).”

And a new spirit will I put within you: Blessed promise! Whoever said “the Holy Spirit [or the new birth] is not in the Old Testament” knew little of this great doctrinal and experimental truth. Ezekiel reiterates it in the next verse: “*And I will put my Spirit within you* (verse 27).” Lest we mistakenly think the “new

spirit” God puts in His people is a remake of our own spirit, God makes it abundantly plain: It is God’s Spirit, not our spirit (which we already have!), that He puts within His people.

And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh: Here the heart of flesh that God gives His people is not flesh in the bad sense (as in “the works of the flesh”) but flesh as contrasted to stone; whereas stone is hard, the heart God gives is soft, and whereas stone is unfeeling, the new heart in the Lord’s people is sensitive and feeling.

and cause you to walk in my statutes: Friend and foe alike, take note that when anyone walks in God’s statutes, it is because and only because He **causes** them to do so. It will never be otherwise. We cannot walk in His laws of ourselves, as we are every bit as helpless as the man who lay so long beside the pool of Bethesda. How is it some walk in righteousness while others do not? It is only by the grace of God, only because “...He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He **leadeth** me in the paths of righteousness **for His name’s sake** (Psalm 23.2f).”

and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them: Who else could say ye **shall** in such a context, other than our Sovereign, predestinating God? *And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God:* Oh the greatness of the firm yet graciously gentle pronouncements of the shalls and wills of God. The poet Kent was moved to write,

Glory to God! They ne’er shall rove
Beyond the limits of His love,
Fenced with Jehovah’s **shalls** and **wills**,
Firm as the everlasting hills.

I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: Is this not also amazing? I will **ALSO SAVE YOU!** Had He not said this, would we not have concluded that all that has gone before—taking His people from among the heathen, applying this spiritual water, cleaning and cleansing them, removing the hard and stony heart and giving them a heart of flesh, giving them His Holy Spirit within them, causing them to walk in His ordinances—would we not have concluded all of this to be His “saving you”?

But no; salvation includes all of those precious things and more; namely, to be resurrected, glorified,

and crowned in the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, saving you “from all of your uncleannesses” to the right hand of the majesty on high to rule and reign with Christ.

And I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you: And He feeds His children in such a way that they have no want. “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd (Isaiah 40.11).” “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, **he shall be saved**, and shall go in and out, **and find pasture** (John 10.9).”

*

Such glorious New Testament truths have been preached by and to the Lord’s children from the time John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ began preaching as recorded in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This gospel was perpetuated by Christ’s apostles, and it constituted **the faith which was once delivered unto the saints** (Jude 3). It was carried on by the Baptist brethren in the first three centuries of the Roman Empire’s persecution of the saints. The persecuted church continued without letup when Constantine changed the system over from secular Rome to religious Rome; through the dark ages, through the inquisitions, through the Reformation, only to be persecuted anew by the “reformers”; through the newfound freedoms into the New World, where, in what became the United States of America, they were eventually granted by our God a brief respite from nearly two millennia of persecution. This same Gospel has been preached, believed, and loved by the Old Baptists and their forbears into the twenty-first century of our Lord’s era. This gospel has been proclaimed from texts in the Old and New Testaments, including this beautiful text, Ezekiel 36.24-29, and myriads of other like texts, from literally every page and chapter in the entire Bible.

Yet, this New Testament Gospel application, as wonderful as it is, is *not* the primary purpose of this text. Let us go back and take another look at it in its context.

PART III: CONTEXT, CONTEXT!

We have earlier briefly described the innumerable sins and transgressions of national Israel that led them into one chastisement and captivity after another. Beginning in Judges, right after the death of Joshua, Israel went into idolatry, followed by their captivity

and subjugation to the wicked nations around them. This continued with scarcely any pause during the times of the kings, until the ten tribes of northern Israel were conquered by Assyria, and Judah was later destroyed and carried into Babylon.

Ezekiel was a prophet-priest who was one of the multitudes taken into Babylon. There, he prophesied for his people, in general assuring them (in the earlier chapters) that the yet-coming destruction of Jerusalem would inevitably come to pass, and then consoling the exiles (in the later chapters) that they would indeed be restored to their homeland, the land God had given to Abraham and his family forever.

Ezekiel 36-37 comes in this latter section of the book and is a prophecy of Israel's restoration.

Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD: Are these symbolic mountains? No. How does one know what is symbolic and what is literal? The context. Verse 2: Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession: Mountains are high places, but there is more in verse 4: Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about.... Mountains are sometimes symbolic in the Scriptures, but not when the Lord is speaking to a geographic region as He is here.

Poets are known for using symbolic language, or at least trying to. However, that is not always the case. In 1938, Irving Berlin wrote,

“...From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America, My home sweet home.”

I have never yet heard anyone ask, “What do you think Irving Berlin meant by ‘mountains’? What do prairies symbolize? What do you believe the ‘ocean’ represents? What does ‘white with foam’ mean to you?” They mean mountains, prairies, and foam-flecked oceans. They mean exactly what they say. Ezekiel's paraphrase, pardon me, might have been:

From the mountains, to the rivers,
To the valleys, where we roam,
God bless Israel, My home sweet home.

Or something like that.

God was speaking to the desolate land itself. *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they [the Babylonians] have made you [the land of Israel] desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the LORD (verses 3-11).*

Again we see “God's shall and wills, firm as the everlasting hills” (Was the hymn-writer speaking of literal everlasting hills or of figurative everlasting hills?)

Nowhere is a figure used as a figure of a figure or a symbol used as a symbol of a symbol! **The literal**

hills to which Kent refers are themselves the figure of the strength and intent of our God.

The Lord God continues through the pen of Ezekiel: *Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men* (verse 12): Since we know that in the past the land of Israel was later and again “bereaved of men,” this text prophesies of a yet future time when this will never happen again; either that, or Ezekiel missed it. There are plenty of modern pundits that so “spiritualize” and “symbolize” such a passage away as to in effect say the overzealous Ezekiel, waxing poetic, overshot his runway.

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations; therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD. Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD (verses 13-15).

Ezekiel then restates Israel’s sins leading up to their captivity and which continued during their dispersion, even bringing a reproach—in the minds of the heathen—upon the blessed name of the Lord: *Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land* (verses 16-20).

Then God indicates one of the most important lessons in the history of Israel, and all of history: God’s name, His honor, is foundational to all salvation by grace. Salvation is founded in the faithfulness of God and expressed in His name. Nowhere is this more plainly stated than in Matthew 1.21: “...thou shalt call His name JESUS: for he shall save His people from

their sins.” If one of His people were to be lost (in the sense of “not saved”), His very name would be degraded and utterly ruined—it is that serious:

But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes (verses 21-23). The sake of Israel is relatively unimportant compared to the good name of our God, which is all-important. Even among men, “a good name” is associated with truth and honoring one’s commitments. Robert Service wrote, “Now, a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code....” If this is so true among men of character and integrity, how much more true is it that the promises God made to Abraham and Israel *must* be fulfilled—or what is the good of God’s promise?

This brings us to our text, verses 24-29. This time, let us consider the text as it was originally meant to be, a prophecy relating to the restoration of the nation of Israel to the Promised Land.

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. From the context it is evident that it is Israel, not the church, which is under primary consideration and which is to be gathered out of all countries.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you (verse 25): The early church, especially in Greece (Achaia, Macedonia) had its problems with idolatry, and Paul addressed it in Romans and the Corinthian letters. Here, however, it is Israel. Israel, we have already seen in verse 18, was specifically charged with idolatry among their other crimes against God. Because God’s very name means He is the Savior of His people, His reputation is on the line. He *must* save Israel from their idols!

One time, after one of Israel’s lapses into sin during their wilderness wandering, the following dialog took place between the Lord Jehovah and Moses:

And the LORD said unto Moses, “How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.”

And Moses said unto the LORD, “Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man [See, Moses believed God deals with nations as with individuals], then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, ‘**Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.**’ And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, ‘The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.’ Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”

And the LORD said, “I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, **all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD** (Numbers 14.11-21).”

Moses’ argument was that the Lord’s reputation was on the line. Although God’s destruction of Israel would be strictly just, God’s enemies would use it as another occasion to blaspheme the Living and True God all the more, calling Him weak and saying He was unable to deliver His chosen people. The situation as Moses described it in Numbers exactly parallels God’s own argument *for His name’s sake* here in Ezekiel 36.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (verse 26): The New Covenant Jeremiah describes expressly addresses the issue of the “new heart”: *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will*

make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

This text is usually applied to the church, and that is true enough, as far as it goes. It is not the whole truth, however. This *New Covenant* is not with Gentiles (who never had an *Old Covenant!*), but it is with *the house of Israel* [the ten northern tribes], *and with the house of Judah* [the two southern tribes], exactly as Jeremiah says. They, Israelites, and not we who are “sinners of the Gentiles (Galatians 2.15),” are the ones who had a (conditional) Covenant with Jehovah; **THEY** brake it, although Jehovah was an husband unto them. The nation of Israel, not the church, is whom God took by the hand to bring out of the land of Egypt. **Apply** this text to the church if you will—I have done it on countless occasions—but please don’t call it your “interpretation.”

God says, **After** those days (*after what days?*) God will put His law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, the inward parts and the hearts of both Israel and Judah. It is with them, Israel and Judah, that the New Covenant is to be made.

Likewise, *And I will put my spirit within you* [Israel and Judah], *and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them* (verse 27). Here we have an inkling of what Paul meant when he said, “And so **all Israel shall be saved**: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and **shall** turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For **this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins** (Romans 11.26f).”

And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God (verse 28): There should be no doubt as to what land God means. He gave no land, as such, to the

church “fathers” (and, anyway, He said for His New Testament people to “call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven—Matthew 23.9”); He gave the Promised Land to *the fathers of national Israel*—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s twelve sons.

I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you (verse 29): *Uncleannesses* refers back to their sins in the land, verse 17. The bountiful fruitfulness of their fields is one of the Lord’s perpetually promised blessings upon Israel in their land. *And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen* (verse 30).

—C. C. Morris

(To be continued, Lord willing)

PLAIN SPEECH

“... *We use great plainness of speech.*”

—II Corinthians 3:12

At the risk of seeming to be inconsistent with the text, I am going to give a subtitle to this article. Namely, Hyper-Allegoricalism. This is a high-sounding phrase, but it simply means the over spiritualizing of Scripture. Already a great gulf exists between the Holy Spirit taught Bible expositor, and the average hearer. To spiritualize Scriptures that do not lend themselves to the allegorical method of interpretation, is to broaden this gulf.

Over spiritualizing Scripture causes the true meaning to grow thin, nullifies the force, creates confusion, and ascertains nothing. Spiritualizing calls for an imaginary description. Being aware of this, the Gospel minister needs to exercise extreme caution so as not to be-cloud with mystery the truth he is attempting to convey. But, alas, it appears as if there always will be those around who think they are capable of a higher conception of God’s Word, and laboring under this

false premise, they take the plainest narratives of Scripture and turn them into vague abstractions. Spiritualizers are often guilty of trying to improve upon the Scriptures. In this hour of apostasy I would not be surprised to learn that some of them which claim great ability in this method of interpretation, have corrected, enlarged and improved upon the sermon on the Mount. It might be to their dismay, but they need to learn, God is never going to quote them for verification of His Word.

Interpreting Scripture by Scripture

There are many Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament which are to be allegorically interpreted, but we are to get our interpretation from the interpretations found in the Bible itself. That is what Paul meant when he said, “Rightly dividing the Word of truth.” So it goes with all Bible allegories. The Divine explanation is all that is necessary to understand the exact truth conveyed. We should ever be aware that when we are interpreting any verse of Scripture, we are dealing with the very words of the Holy Spirit. The explanation is not left to the powers of finite intellect, but must be totally the work of the Holy Spirit, unalloyed with the wisdom of man. This does not rule out the fact that God works mediately. He does, through His church, the written Word, Holy Spirit called ministers and by any means He pleases to work through. He has given to His churches pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). Yet the hearer is responsible to prove all things, holding fast only to that which is good (II Thessalonians 5:21). That is, make sure what you receive as good comes from the crucible of the Holy Spirit.

Various Forms of Language Used in Scripture

Many forms of language are used in the Scriptures. Such as, similes, parables, riddles, fables, types, symbols, metaphors, allegories, proverbs and other forms of human expression. All of these are used in Scripture to clarify rather than confuse. These are given so the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16). But irreparable damage has resulted from the abuse and mis-use of these various forms of language. Every text of Scripture being interpreted is to be subjected to the whole of Divine revelation, conclusions that are not

perfectly consistent with the whole are at their best erroneous conclusions. The wise student will exercise double censorship where figurative language is being interpreted.

Definitions

ALLEGORICAL: “Having hidden spiritual meaning transcending the literal sense of a sacred text.” (Webster)

HYPER: “Above, beyond, super, excessive.” (Webster)

HYPER-ALLEGORICAL: By combining the above definitions, we get *imaginary meaning which transcends, is beyond, and excessive of the literal and spiritual sense of a sacred text.*

What is an Hyper-allegorist?

a. It is a person that takes undue liberty in assigning allegorical meanings to passages of Scripture that are to be taken literally.

b. It is a person that takes an allegorical passage, and distorts the true meaning to fit his heretical notion.

Hyper-Allegorical Rampage

To the hyper-allegorist there are no difficult passages in the Scriptures. All he need do is lay his patented rule upon any passage, and he will get the desired dimension. The allegorical method of interpreting Scripture is a real comfort to the reckless exegete. To him it is like a safety valve whereby anything that does not suit his mood, he just drains into the gutter and the truth disappears under his feet. Great pain is taken by them to find a hidden meaning when, in fact, there is none, (but the hyper-allegorist will not be denied,) so he invents one. To the honest and sincere student of the Word the hyper-allegorist appears as a mad bull in a china shop, by him everything in Scripture is reduced to shambles. I do not want to be unduly critical of the allegorical method of interpretation, but it is the height of theological irresponsibility to adopt the allegorical method as an overall technique of interpreting the Bible. To take a text of Scripture which is to be received literally, and immerse it in the unfathomable waters of allegoricalism is PLAIN subverting the Word of God.

Hermeneutics Helpful

The fundamental hermeneutical principle in Bible

interpretation is: NEVER AVOID THE CONTEXT “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” (II Peter 1:20).

Secondly, whoever takes it upon himself to give other than a literal meaning to a text is under obligation to prove from the balance of Scripture that his interpretation is correct.

Third, ascertain who is talking, unto whom is he speaking, and the subject of discourse. (Try this rule on the parables spoken by Christ, and much confusion will be eliminated as to the distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Church of God).

Fourth, a passage of Scripture which appears to be general in its application, but has been limited in another passage, the passage then must be interpreted in the light of the passage that restricts the application, and the interpretation made to conform thereto. (It is by ignoring this rule that the Arminian is given to wild excess in interpreting Scripture. He takes the words; World, All, and Every and preaches universal redemption from them. They do this with a flagrant disregard for the many other passages of Scripture limiting the application of these words).

Fifth, in the word of God the expression of one thing excludes all else unless otherwise indicated by the Scriptures. By way of illustration, consider Noah’s commission to build the Ark. “Make thee an ark of gopher wood ...”. (Genesis 6:14) Noah was a literalist. God had specified “Gopher wood” and Noah knew God meant what He said. Therefore, oak, pine, hickory and all other trees were disallowed. God instructed Noah to put “a window” in the ark (Genesis 6:16). If Noah had been a super-spiritualizer he would have said, “You know God must have meant more than one window for an ark so large.” Noah obeyed the literal command of God and his family was saved from perishing in the flood.

To further illustrate let us note God’s commission to King Saul to destroy the Amalekites. “Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.” (1 Samuel 15:3) God gave Saul a literal command with specified action, but Saul was a spiritualizer. He spared King Agag and the best of the sheep and the oxen. What could be wrong with this? He said he was doing it for a sacrifice unto the Lord. Was there anything in the

command given him which forbid this action? If not, then God would be pleased with Saul, but God had told him in detail what to do regarding the Amalekites. God's command excluded every other action that would spare a single Amalekite. But old spiritualizing Saul had to exalt his wisdom above that of God's. Charges of idolatry and witchcraft (Hyper-allegoricalism borders on witchcraft) were brought against Saul, and he was rejected from being King (1 Samuel 15:23).

Hyper-allegoricalists have gone in the way of Cain (Jude 11). They are following the evil example of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron in offering strange fire before the Lord (Leviticus 10:1). In every single instance in Scripture where the literal was disregarded or spiritualized, the guilty incurred the disfavor of God and in this age end time men have taken unto themselves license to do what they will with the Word of God, disparaging the literal, substituting pure assumption for the old established principles of Bible doctrine. God holds these charlatans in holy contempt, and will cause them to know of His displeasure with them.

“... without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Hebrews 9:22) The word “blood” in this text excludes all other would-be ways of receiving forgiveness of sins. It is by the merit of Christ's shed blood, and that ALONE one is cleansed from sin. Romanism and Protestantism have spiritualized away the power of the blood, making ineffectual the meritorious sacrifice of Christ. Protestantism destroys the efficacy of the blood by teaching baptismal regeneration.

While it is incumbent upon Baptists to speak out against this damnable heresy, Baptists are not allowed to go to the other extreme and spiritualize away the Divine prerequisites which God has set to insure the proper administration of this glorious ordinance. True Baptists have for over nineteen centuries labored fervently to keep salvation detached from the ordinances. However, they have never minimized nor spiritualized away the facts, **blood before water, and water before church membership**, neither have they agreed with the spiritualizers which say that immersion constitutes baptism no matter who administers it. True Baptists have never spiritualized away wine in the Lord's supper. Some so-called fundamental Baptists have denied Christ the title of “Perfect Saviour” by

substituting grape juice for wine in the ordinance of the Lord's supper.

Read the following paragraph copied from Baptize-Dip-Only, by W.A. Jarrel, and note the progress from allegorical interpretation to hyper-allegoricalism.

“When Ralph Waldo Emerson was pastor of a Unitarian church in Boston, he told his church that wine was not necessary to the observance of the Lord's supper; that water could be used as well. So they used water instead of wine. After a while Mr. Emerson told the church that it was not necessary to partake of the water and the bread; that they could get the same spiritual benefit by sitting in their seats and contemplating the water and the bread. So they sat in their seats and looked at the water and the bread. After a while Mr. Emerson told the church that it was not necessary to put the water and the bread on the table; that they could get the same spiritual benefit from sitting in their seats and thinking about Christ; so the Lord's supper was eliminated in his church. After he once departed from the Scriptural example substituting water for wine, Mr. Emerson's course was strictly logical.”

Rome mocks the efficacy of the blood by the invention of a super-duper (duper = literal) church and teaching inherited church membership. With equal daring and influenced by a strong spirit of competitiveness, some Sovereign Grace Baptists have, by their teaching, gone far down the road toward church membership salvation. The superior quality of the Lord's true churches over the false does not depend upon the over-spiritualization of Scripture. The Lord's churches can do without self appointed interpreters who think they have been singled out by the Lord to keep His churches from going in to apostasy. The Lord's promise (Matthew 16:18) is all the guarantee we need that our Heavenly destination will be realized. Special blessings have been promised to the church by her prospective Groom and we need not steal the blessings promised to the Kingdom of God by spiritualizing Scriptures that pertain to the Kingdom. The church at its beginning was richly endowed with

spiritual graces, and it has never seen the need of borrowing support from any organization, though it be the Kingdom of God. God has put an eternal distinction between His church and His kingdom and what God has eternally separated let no man bring together. Eternal distinction is promised to His churches (Ephesians 3:21).

Far from untangling the meshes of religious error, allegoricalism and spiritualization (Hastings Bible Dictionary uses the terms allegory and spiritualize synonymously) have been the source of infinite error, and is the handmaiden of the devil in furthering heresy. Baptist spiritualizers need be careful, for an act often repeated becomes habit, and habit is often unconsciously practiced. One may start out limiting his allegory to allegorical passages, but the history of allegoricalism proves to the contrary, this method of interpreting the Scriptures has often degenerated into magic. For instance, look at Rome's hocus-pocus, transubstantiation, purgatory, and the supposed ascent of Mary into Heaven, etc. The cult and the occult are the fearful harvests being reaped from the seed of spiritualizers and the ecumenical movement could not possibly succeed without the ability to spiritualize away the difference between the "mother of harlots" and her daughters.

Historically, Baptists have been literalists in regards to Bible interpretation. They have written their confessions of faith in plain and literal language. Though they knew the words they were writing would condemn them to the stake to be burned, yet, they did not hide their convictions under a blanket of spiritualization, or ambiguous language. Plain and literal language is yet sufficient to proclaim the Baptist message. We need not resort to deceitful handling of the Word of God. Our self conceit and ego may need it, but the Holy Spirit will allow nothing to negate the literal meaning of the Divine precepts. I repeat, there are Scriptures which may be allegorically interpreted without doing any violence to the Word of God, but let us bear constantly in mind this rule, the literal interpretation is to be given the primary place. No matter how attractive a spiritualized interpretation may be, it should never be allowed to overthrow the literal meaning.

—Elder O. B. Mink (Deceased).

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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.