

The Remnant

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

March-April, 2012
Volume 26, No. 2
(This issue first printed in SEPTEMBER, 2012)

What does “Eternal Vital Union” mean? Some of our readers have asked for more information. Elder Stanley Phillips’ book entitled *Eternal Vital Union*, advertised on page 18 of this issue, is the only available book on this topic currently in print. The readers’ requests were passed on to Elder Phillips who graciously furnished the following article for our publication. May the Lord God bless your reading of it.—Editor

THE LIVING UNION OF CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE

By
Stanley C. Phillips

God’s people were chosen IN Christ – not in Adam – before the world began. - Ephesians 1: 4. Being IN Christ, they were in Him in seed substance from eternity, and the eternal life they receive in the new birth is derived from “His seed” and “counted to Him for a generation.” They are specifically said to be the “body of Christ,” and Christ is the “Head” of His progeny, and they are “members in particular” of His body. Throughout

history, Christian writers have written volumes on “Unconditional and Eternal Election” with their emphasis upon “Divine Election.” Few have taken much notice of the eternity of that election. The emphasis of this article is upon the “Eternality of Divine Election,” or, “Eternal Vital Union.”

The Church of Jesus Christ, as His body, is manifested upon the earth in collected visible assemblies during its development. Some are added to the visible local church and if preserved faithful to Christ, are preservers of the doctrine and order of His constitute kingdom on earth. Others, not added to the visible church, are equally in the church triumphant, the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, and have full and free access to the Gospel of the grace of God in the churches’ congregations here below where ever, or if, the Lord situates them near enough. However, in considering her in her eternal union with Christ as His Bride, we will view her in the aggregate of all the elect of God, and the individual development of each of her members.

In order to examine the origin and development of the body and Bride of Christ, we

The Remnant

published
6 times annually
by
Saints Rest Primitive Baptist Church
of Dallas, Texas

The Remnant Publications

In the interest of
The Old Order of Baptists

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The Remnant is sent free of any obligation
to all interested persons.

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and www.primitive-baptist.com

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wish first to notice a large collection of Scriptures that are needful to present this subject. Every Bible reader will recognize the passages we cite, and every Bible believer will realize that the Holy Spirit has presented them with a real and important design. Following this discussion, then, one may expect to see many of these passages unfolding to present a gestalt view of the Church of the living God. To begin this collection of passages, let us note some that are extremely important, drawn from the creative design of our Lord God in the beginning of the genesis of the race of man.

Others before us have discovered a "principle of first mentioning" in the Bible. To wit, wherever a subject is first mentioned by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, the way it is introduced is often applicable in other places where the same word is used. So it is with reference to a theme found in the first chapter of Genesis. More than any other principle emphasized, the notation that all species developed "after its own kind," and have "seed within itself" is outstanding (Genesis 1:11, 21,24, 25, 29). The same is true of Man, who was made in the likeness and image of God,

and was as Paul taught, a "figure of Him that was to come." (Romans 5:14). Not only, then, is the modern theory of evolution proved heretical, but the relation of the first creature to all its offspring is faithfully demonstrated to be absolutely true of the record God has revealed in Genesis one. There never were any "missing links" between species and kinds. Nor have believers ever supposed there were.

It is very noteworthy that consistent to this principle are the following revelations. First, God reveals the "generations of Adam," (plural- Genesis 5:1), and the "generation of Jesus Christ," (singular- Matthew 1:1). Second, the Holy Scriptures reveal both a "first Adam," (1 Cor. 15:45,) and a second or "last Adam," (1 Cor. 15:45). It is written that the first man Adam was "made a living soul," while the last Adam was "made a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). The first man "is of the earth, earthy: the second man is Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). We would alert the reader to the fact that as the first man Adam was made of the earth, the record is given that "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy," that is, of like kind with their father Adam, and as he, has his seed of reproduction within himself. (1 Cor. 15: 48). And of special note, such as are of the last Adam, who is Lord from heaven (Christ), "such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48). Third, the revelation includes a "natural man," born of the first Adam (1 Cor. 15:44,) and a full discussion of him is found throughout the Sacred text; and a "spiritual man," born of God (1 Cor. 15:44,) whose characteristics are also fully presented in the holy pages. The inspired record speaks plainly of one that is born of the first Adam as being "born of the flesh," (John 3: 6), and of those born of the Spirit of God, it is recorded that

"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). So we see the first principle being maintained even in one's spiritual birth: i.e., reproduced in "like kind, from a seed within Himself." Fourth, We read of the natural man, his body and all of its component parts and passions, referred to as "our outward man," and we read together with that phrase, of an "inward man," "but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4:16). In fact, the apostle clearly contrast these two men by saying, "That ye put off the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24.) Again, as "like begets like kind," hence the flesh can only produce flesh; and the spirit can only produce spirit; the animal can only produce another animal of the same kind; and a plant of its own kind. This totally destroys Charles Darwin's fatal theory, and a Christian should expect it to overthrow atheism. But we are not discussing that false theory. Our subject is much more sublime.

In order for the reproduction of the species, including man, the "seed is in itself." The seed carries the living germ of life necessary to reproduction and identity with the specie in view. The entire specie throughout all time was in the seed of the first of its kind when created. It is too well established among us for any to deny that in the sin of Adam's fall, the entire race of his progeny was in seed substance in him at the time of his transgression, and so "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Death reigns over them all. "As in Adam all die; so IN Christ all shall be made alive." - That is, in "seed substance" in

Him. The result is that "there is none righteous, no not one," of all that were semi-nally in Adam's loins that fatal day (Romans 3: 10, 23.) So too, the inspired record amply speaks of a "seed" of the last Adam, - of Christ Jesus. Here, brethren and sisters, we beg of you to give careful attention. Notice the Scriptures supporting this statement: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:8.) It appears in this text, at first sight, to refer to Abraham's offspring; yet the Apostle says, "and to Thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16,) when he refers to this O.T. verse. "A seed shall serve Him, and it shall be counted to Him a generation" (Psalm 22:30.) "He shall see His seed, and He shall prolong His days," (Isaiah 53:10.) "Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles" (Isaiah 54:3.)

It is the life that is in the seed that produces an offspring to perpetuate the specie. As surely as this is so of man in nature, so it must be of the spiritual seed that produces the children of God. A corrupt seed must produce a corrupt offspring; and an incorrupt seed must produce like kind: an incorrupt offspring. And so we read of God's children, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed," of which we certainly are in our first birth from the first man, Adam; "but of incorruptible, by the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23.)

We do not expect any to deny that whomever begat us into this world can only have been our father. If our father begat us by the implantation of his corrupt seed that he inherited from Adam, then we surely must be "his children," and also corrupt by birth. Will any dispute this conclusion? Then I insist that the same is true of the incorruptible seed as well. For any of us to be children of God, we

imperatively must be "begotten of God." This truth leaves out the Arminian theory of "Gospel regeneration," or of the Calvinists' "preacher-made Christians." John clearly taught: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His Seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9.) And "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5:1.)

The implanted seed must be alive in order to produce an offspring. When God fashioned man, He then "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Ever afterwards, man has transmitted that natural life from one generation to the next, wave after wave down to this present day. So too, the incorruptible seed is also a living seed, and conveys life to all God's offspring. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in the Son" (1 John 5:11.) Notice where the actual life is found: Therefore the apostle can justly claim, as he did, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life" (1 John 5: 12.) In our natural birth the living sperm must impregnate a living ovary, or the attempted procreation will fail. [Note: Life does NOT begin at conception! Life began at Creation!]

When that eternal life is transmitted by the incorruptible seed, the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever, the object that is born is a child of God; just as surely as a man is an offspring born of Adam and possessing natural life from him. A point ought to be made here. Whoever, or whatever, is born of God cannot commit sin. Hence, we cannot say that a man's soul is born again, because the soul of

a man can contract blame, as Paul prayed, that God would keep them, "both body, soul and spirit, blameless unto the day of Jesus Christ." We read again, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (I John 5:18.) Jesus did not say, "Except a man's soul be born again," or "Except a man's spirit be born again," or yet, "Except a man's body be born over again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." So not a "part" of that which is born of the corruptible seed from Adam's life is the object of a renovation. The natural man is not born over again into a spiritual man, otherwise such a man would be sinless, and this is contrary to the witness and confession of every child of God! Jesus said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bone as ye see I have."

Hence, if one's body, soul, or spirit were born over again, and became a spiritual body, soul or spirit, such a being would be invisible! "Being born again," does not mean "being born all over again." It simply means the man must experience a second birth, and this second birth is altogether different from his first and natural birth. His natural birth put him into the human family with all its cursed woes!

And, he will ever be in that family, unchanged, biologically and physiologically the very same until the last heart-beat of that Adamic frame. But the second birth, produced by the incorruptible seed, the word of God that liveth and abideth forever, gave him eternal life, and that life is in God's Eternal Son, and that experience puts him into God's family. That family – every member of it – is counted for a generation (singular), and is the completed body and bride of Christ of whom Christ is the Head and Husband, and they are

"members in particular" set in that body in their rightful and ordained place.

If it is claimed, as it has been by some, that such a view as this means that God has not done anything for the body, we reply, "Are you completely unskilled in the Word! Every sin committed was done in the body! Every pain and groan of the suffering Savior was done because of the sins done in the sinners' bodies! The whole scheme of salvation is to deliver those children of God who reside in the corrupt natural and earthy bodies of Adam's race. In fact, our Lord, seeing that His children are partakers of this flesh and blood, "took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them," (Heb. 2:14) – His children, His offspring, His seed, His generation, from that corrupt family, and translate them from that kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

The entire church and family of God were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:1-6.) The life they must have to reside in His glorious presence was "hid in Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3) in seed substance, waiting until the time of their procreation or development, first into the family of man, and then in His spiritual family by the second birth. All of the sufferings of Christ, and all His obedience was for His children's fleshly tabernacle, in the putting away of the results of their sinful fall in Adam and consequent works of wickedness in that evil family. In that gracious work, He put away sin, and its natural penalty, and only because they made up His bride, did He have relationship to them to legally incur their debt, and pay the full obligation of the transgressed law for each of them. We see this emphasized in Jude

1, "...to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." Again, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Psalm 90: 1, 2.) They were all chosen in Him, preserved in Him, and had their dwelling place in seed-substance in Him, and so intimate was this relationship, that the Psalmists could say, "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; because He bare [Hebr. "natal"] them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63:9.) The word "bare" in the above passage is from the Hebrew word, "natal." And yet again, David speaking in personification of Christ, (David's son, or "Son of David") says, "My substance was not hid from Thee," ("preserved in Christ Jesus") "when I was made in secret," ("before the world began"), "and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth" (in Adam's earthy corrupted frame). "Thine eyes did see My substance, yet being unperfect;" (before actual development) "and in Thy book all My members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are Thy thoughts unto Me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139: 15-17).

It too, is assumed by some that because there are two separate and distinct men in this tabernacle of flesh, that there need not be a bodily resurrection of the dead. [This has been referred to as a "hollow man doctrine"]. However, the record is too clear to deny, that the man of the earth, earthy, the sinner man, is the object of redemption, and also the object of

divine adoption. The spiritual man, that is born of incorruptible seed, cannot sin, and hence needs no adoption or redemption! It is the fleshly man, body, soul and spirit, the sinner, who must be adopted and redeemed. The Bride will be whole and complete in the day of her wedding. She will possess her real identity, and be herself, and not another, or a bodiless phantom—a puff of vapor. What she has waited in hope for will sweetly be her bliss in ages untold.

The Church in the aggregate is the Bride of Christ. While here below, she is waiting for the Bridegroom and must keep herself chaste. Church discipline helps, fellowship with one another strengthens the ties of matrimony, and finding one's place and work within the visible church helps to develop and maintain that heavenly and spiritual bond.

It is needful for every member and believer to assemble together to worship God and to encourage one another in the most holy faith. When our Little Zion meets, it is all of our privilege to take such a rare opportunity, and make the most we can out of it. We can hunt, fish, work, play, watch ball games, or whatever else Adam's offspring find more entertaining just about any time we please; but the appetite of the spiritual family of the last Adam is in the spiritual realm, and here it should not be neglected, and if it is, the believer is surely the loser for neglecting it.

With all the above Scriptural topics presented together, what reason or comprehensive view can we derive from this collection? That they are meaningful, none should deny; that they are given by inspiration for some ordained consequence should be admitted by

all. Where, then, should we begin to show the Christian Man prior to regeneration, if not here; considering that Paul teaches that Adam was a figure of Christ, and that Genesis presents the Adamic creation, we suppose that is where we should begin. But why not pass over Adam and his posterity until last, and go directly to his Creator's Bride and her origin? Is it not written that "last shall be first and the first last"?

We have now presented this aspect of the Gospel as simple as we know how. But it is not good that a believer live his life upon the "milk of the Word." He is to grow "in grace and knowledge," and thus we admonish the reader to delve deeper and to a higher level of Christian doctrine. One should put much more emphasis upon "the meat of the Word," than most today do. May the grace, mercy, and peace of Christ Jesus rest with the interested reader.

—Elder Stanley Phillips

QUESTIONS FROM A READER ABOUT PREMILLENNIALISM

Brother M. B., a reader of The Remnant, and who is evidently amillennial in his understanding of the Scriptures, sent a kind letter in which he said many complimentary things about our periodical. He included several observations with questions which are often asked about the premillennial view. I would hope I might be as kind and humble as he in my attempt to answer him.

Since many readers ask similar questions, we will print our observations and answers, such as they might be, in hope that they might be of a general interest to our readers.

Whichever prophetic position one believes, whether it is amillennialism, postmillennialism, or premillennialism, there is often much debate about the details even within each of these schools of thought. It should be emphasized that, historically, one's views of prophecy have almost never been grounds for division among brethren, nor should they be. While prophecy is often warmly debated, one should search the Scriptures for what God hath said, and, as much as within us lies, as God gives the grace to do so, we should hope and pray that our views might be conformed to His.

The Roman numeral divisions in the article that follows are mine, not his. Their addition, I hope, will add to the discussion's clarity.

To: remnantlink@gmail.com

Sun, Mar 4, 2012 at 1:57 PM

Dear Brother Morris:

I just finished reading the current issue of the Remnant. It was GREAT! The article by Elder Mattingly on Romans 9-11 was superb and cleared up a lot of haziness in my own thinking. What a loss to Israel that the Lord was pleased to take this brother home. He will be missed! The chapter you reprinted from William Huntington was also richly rewarding for study and reflection. If you would not mind could I offer a few thought [sic] on your eschatological comments?

I.

As I see it the problem with the historical premillennial [sic] position is that according to Huntingtons [sic] construction when the thousand years' regin [sic] with Christ is expired Satan will be loosed out of his prison and the

wicked will be gathered together [sic] to surround the saints. The problem as I see it is where do these wicked come from?

Reply: Many ask this question. The wicked to whom you refer will come from those of mankind living on the earth at the end of Christ's thousand year reign (verse 7), whom He has ruled with a rod of iron during those years. Ruling them with a rod of iron shows they are unconverted sinners who must be kept under His firm control. Why else would He rule them with an iron rod? He does not so rule over His people. "Where will they come from?" is asked.

A. The war of Armageddon (Revelation 19.11-21) occurs immediately before the binding of Satan (20.1-2) and the start of Christ's 1,000-year earthly reign ("the Millennium," Revelation 20.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

1. Many believe Ezekiel 38.1 through 39.7 describes the Armageddon war. (Some brethren think not. Personally, I think it is. This is one of the many things I referred to, above, which are "warmly debated.") If Ezekiel 38-39 is indeed a description of Armageddon, it is my understanding that the rebels of Revelation 20.7-9 will be the descendents of that one-sixth (1/6) of the world's armies that are turned back in Ezekiel 39.1-5: "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: 2 And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: 3 And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. 4 Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with

thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. 5 Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD."

2. But if Ezekiel 38-39 is not Armageddon, half the world's population will still be destroyed in the plagues of Revelation:

a. "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth (Revelation 6.8)." That is one-fourth of the earth's people, 25%, who will be destroyed under the pale horse's devastation.

For discussion purposes only, say the earth's population at that time is eight billion (it approximates that figure now), that would be two billion people killed by sword, hunger, "death," and the beasts of the earth. That would leave around six billion people, or 75% of the original eight billion, worldwide (verse 8). Remember that figure: six billion. 75% of the starting population of eight billion.

b. Later, when the first four angels sound their trumpets (Revelation 8.7-13), one third of all trees will be burnt up; all green grass will be burned up; a third of the sea will turn to blood, and a third of the sea-creatures will die, and a third of all ships will be destroyed; a third of all fresh-water will become wormwood and "many men" will die; and a third part of the sun, moon, and stars will be darkened (probably resulting from the smoke of the burnings and the steam vapors released from the oceans as a result of the meteor or asteroid, "as it were a great mountain burning with fire," and the "great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp," that poisoned the drinking-water supply. The figure "one third" (33%) figures

prominently throughout, and implies, proportionally, that around one third of humanity's six billion remaining (from 2. a., above; two more billion) will be destroyed during these plagues. Chapter 9 tends to confirm this one third.

Ignore the chapter division for chapter 9, because the "locust plague" is a continuation of chapter 8. We know the one-third of humanity (33%) that remains until the time spoken of in Revelation 9.15-18 will be destroyed, leaving only four billion, max, of the original eight billion. "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men... By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths." Somewhere between one-quarter and one-half of earth's total population will die. In any case, about half of the earth's people will survive the plagues and also Armageddon, to be ruled by Christ in the "millennium."

B. Remember too, the war of Armageddon will only involve soldiers. Their wives and children, those too old or too young for combat, and any other non-combatants, whoever survived the plagues, will still remain in their respective nations. These will not necessarily all be killed by the plagues springing from the trumpet and vial judgments of Revelation chapters 8 through 16.

When Christ returns, He will fulfill the prophecies that He will rule from David's throne. This is CHRIST'S throne of glory, as distinct from His present position on His Father's throne. His saints will rule with Him: "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring

forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1.30-33)." The Lord Jesus Christ is presently seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1.3) and is not seated on David's throne, unless we are to believe that "the Majesty on high" is David.

But there is more to come: Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

After the saints (from Adam through the Great Tribulation) are resurrected, glorified, and ruling with Christ, the natural survivors of the human race will continue to multiply according to God's original intent and command. "Multiplying" is not sinful; it was God's original command to lesser life-forms in Genesis 1.20-23, to Adam and Eve in 1.28, and it was repeated to Noah and his family in Genesis 9.1. Nothing in that respect will change. That is the natural order established by God.

The natural race of Adam and their offspring born during the millennium, still having Adam's fallen nature, will still be sinners subject to sin and death (Isaiah 65.20). During the thousand years (mentioned six times in Revelation 20), rebellious Gog and Magog will be repopulated to the point described in Revelation 20.7-9.

It should be noted: The individual glorified saints will neither continue to maintain the marriage bonds established in this earthly life nor to multiply. Christ told the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection or an afterlife: "Ye do err, not knowing the

scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven (Matthew 22.29f)." Note, too, He did not say the resurrected saints would be angels, but they will be as or like the angels in that the angels do not marry.

Again, He did not say God's heavenly angels cannot marry; He said they do not marry.

II.

2 Thess. 1.8-10 and Matthew 13.49-50 among others clearly teach, in my view, that when Christ returns the wicked will be consigned to everlasting torment.

Reply: Generally, yes. Specifically, there will be exceptions, as indicated above, left to repopulate the earth. The destruction of approximately half the earth's population in Revelation 6.8 and 9.15ff implies the other half will not be destroyed. Since Christ and His saints will rule on the earth (Revelation 5.9-10), it follows that they must rule over someone, does it not? Since Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6.15; Revelation 17.14 and 19.16), there will be kings and lords over whom He and His saints will rule. His saints are not the kings and lords over whom He rules; they are kings and priests glorified and ruling with Him.

A. The text in 2 Thessalonians 1.8-10 says: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

1. This does not say this vengeance of flaming fire and everlasting destruction will be the final (great white throne) judgment. That will come later. I understand 2 Thessalonians 1.8-10 to be a description of Armageddon, answering perfectly to Zechariah 14.1-15 and other passages. Note that Zechariah 14.16 bears out what was earlier said: there will be some (1/6) left, even from Armageddon, to enter the millennial kingdom: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." This, of course, has never happened yet, either figuratively or "spiritually." It remains to be literally fulfilled at His second coming, with His saints, in His kingdom glory.

2. The text continues, "...when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe..." linking His being glorified with the glorification of His saints at the same time as Armageddon. This in itself disproves the "pre-tribulation rapture" theory, of which I'll say a bit more from your other text (B., following).

3. Finally, the phrase in that day often refers to God's day of vengeance, nearly always linked to "the day of the Lord," which is the war of Armageddon and events that immediately precede it, including the great tribulation, and events immediately following it, including the "millennium." See these representative texts: Isaiah chapters 2, 11, 24, 27; Jeremiah 30.7-8; Ezekiel 38.19-39.11; Hosea 2.15-23, Micah 4.6f; Zechariah 2.8-13, 9.14-17, 12.3-14.21. There are far too many other texts to list here.

B. Matthew 13.49-50 says, "So shall it be at the end of the world [aion = age]: the angels

shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

This text is another that destroys the "pre-tribulation rapture" theory while establishing the doctrine of the yet future, earthly, Messianic kingdom.

Those who believe a "rapture" precedes the Great Tribulation love to cite Matthew 24.38-41—"For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." In citing this passage they assume the ones taken are the "raptured" Christians being taken to heaven, while the ones left are the "unsaved" who will then go through the horrors of the Great Tribulation. This seems to be the exact opposite of what Jesus taught.

One rule of sound Bible study is to search the context of a verse for added light. Begin in the same chapter, try the chapters before and after it, the entire book, the entire New (or Old) Testament, searching as far as necessary to find a related text. In this text our context would certainly include the entire book of Matthew. The other passage of Matthew that describes "one shall be taken, and the other left" is found in Matthew 13.36-43, where Jesus answered His disciples' request, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field."

He said, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world [kosmos]; the good seed are the children of the kingdom;

but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world [aion = age]; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [aion = age]. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

This is one of the parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, not of the church, nor is it the Kingdom of God (which has no tares). The Kingdom of Heaven is His messianic or millennial kingdom—or so it seems, to me, from what He said above.

The field is the world (kosmos).

The good seed are the children of the kingdom (God's elect).

The tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil.

The harvest is the end of the world (aion, age)... Confusion is introduced by translating both kosmos and aion as "world." Untold thousands have assumed the "end of the world" means when God burns planet Earth, destroying it by fire. This is not at all what Christ is saying here. Read Matthew 13 again.

"...and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world (aion, age). The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." This with the next verse explains who

all is involved in the "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left," etc., of Matthew 24.

The next verse says: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." The righteous are not to be "raptured" or "carried off to heaven." According to Christ, "all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" are to be "raptured" out (if we may use their word here) and on angels' wings carried, not to heaven, but to a furnace of fire to be burned up—hell seems here implied.

The righteous? They are not whisked off to a spirit-only heaven above the clouds and stars. They remain exactly where they are on the earth in "the kingdom of their Father," entering into Christ's earthly millennial (1,000-year) kingdom of Revelation 20.2, 3, 4,5, 6, and 7.

One more thing Christ said here to His disciples: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

III.

The other problem would seem to be that this view attempts a literal interpretation of a book of spiritual symbols.

Reply: To me, the problem seems to be trying to make the Revelation to be a book of spiritual symbols, or anything but a revelation: saying that it is so symbolic, allegorical, and figurative that it is impossible to understand without a college degree in ancient European history, as you will find when reading historical/allegorical interpretations.

For example, how could a medieval peasant, or the average man on the street in the 21st century, or the average occupier of today's average church pew understand Revelation 9.15? "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men."

According to ONE "interpretation" from ONE of the many "historical/allegorical" writers of bygone days, Primitive Baptist Elder Jesse Cox, this verse means:

"...As Constantinople was taken in 1453, now take thirty years from that, and we have 1423; now add three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days, and we have 1814. Now Buonaparte [sic] abdicated the throne of France, April 2, 1814, coming within forty-seven days of the exact time, which is coming as close as could be expected, considering the difficulty of chronology at this distance from the time. I have calculated the whole year. Gibbon says just thirty years, but does not tell what month of the year. But he says in the besieging of Constantinople, it commenced April the 6th, which would bring it within eleven days. It is true that Napoleon returned from Elba and fought several battles during the ninety days," etc.

—An Exposition of the Revelations [sic] of St. John the Divine, p.343, by Elder Jesse Cox, Minister of the Gospel of the Primitive Baptist order; Franklin, 1858

How is this supposed "interpretation" richer and more fulfilling than to simply believe that God, as He said, literally has certain angels prepared and predestinated for the destruction of one-third of rebellious humanity, to bring the remaining population into subjection to the King of kings and Lord of Lords at His return?

Having a solar-powered calculator and the six-volume set of Edward Gibbon's Decline and fall of the Roman Empire (without which Elder Cox's 679-page book would have been considerably thinner) as a handbook and study

guide will no doubt help the poor, confused, average Christian, with an average modern education, to come as close as could be expected to such a proper understanding, within a month and a half (within “forty-seven days,” Elder Cox says) of the time God said would be involved—IF that is what “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year” means—as Elder Cox indicates above.

IF, however, the “hour, day, month, and year” are all specific (as, say, I am writing this at the hour of 10 to 11 a.m., on the 27th day of the month of September in the year 2012), then the above interpreter-writer missed the point entirely. But then, in his book, according to his method of “interpretation,” Elder Cox also rather dogmatically predicted that the nation of Israel would be restored in the latter part of the 1800s, the Pope would be destroyed in 1866 (p. 645), and Israel would then destroy Russia in the year 1880.

(On page 659 he says the destruction of Russia will be “in A. D. 1912, when the Jews will be fully established in their own land”; but such misplaced predictions are “as close as could be expected” and will perhaps be addressed at another hour, day, month, and year.)

IV.

The language is symbolical throughout. To then take the data of Rev. 20 and try to make it literal seems to me to be an unsound heremeneutical [sic] procedure. I would humbly suggest that the book of Revelation is not chronological in nature but teaches the spiritual truth of Christ’s victorious kingdom over the kingdom of Satan which is done in a series of recurring visions, each stating the same truth over again but adding more to each preceding vision. I would also submit that our unity is in

the true Gospel, not in our escatological [sic] views, as important to discuss as they may be.

Reply:

A. About symbolic language: May I humbly say, I hope without offense, that I would have never dreamed of saying Elder Mattingly’s passing was “a loss to Israel”? The death of Benjamin Netanyahu would be a tremendous loss to Israel, but that of Elder Mattingly was a loss to the church.

I could ask exactly why the literal is an unsound hermeneutic, but I will not in a reply already too long.

B. I would hope I might be blessed, equally humbly, to suggest that Revelation is nothing but chronological, and its outline is given, past, present, and future, in Revelation 1.19: “Write the things which thou hast seen [past, what John had just seen in chapter 1.1-18], and the things which are [present, the church age, from John’s time through the Laodicean period], and the things which shall be hereafter” [future, as Christ brings the world under subjection to Himself by the events in the rest of the book.]

The word hereafter (from the Greek $\sim\upsilon\acute{\tau}\epsilon\rho$ $\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon\rho$, meta tauta) is found eight times in the book of Revelation. Meta tauta is also translated “after this” and “after these things.” The eight occurrences are as follows:

- 1.19, hereafter
- 4.1a, after this
- 4.1b, hereafter
- 7.1, after these things
- 7.9, after this
- 9.12, hereafter
- 18.1, after these things
- 19.1, after these things

The three “hereafter”s (1.19, 4.1b, and 9.12) point to events that would happen in the

future from the time then present with John. The other five meta tautas are chronological:

A. 4.1, "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven...":

After what? After Laodicea closes out the seven churches of Asia.

B. 7.1, "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth...":

After what things? After the throne room scene of chapters 4-5, and after the opening of the six seals in chapter 6.

C. 7.9, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number....":

After what? After the sealing of the 144,000 elect Israelites, specifically 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

D. 18.1, "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven....":

After what things? After John sees the Gentile saints who come out of The Great Tribulation.

So the angel in 18.1 comes, we may say briefly, after the events of the first seventeen chapters of Revelation: after the sealing of the Jewish and Gentile saints in chapter 7. After the seventh seal is opened (8.1) After the seven angelic trumpets are blown (8.1-). After the demonic locusts are loosed (chapter 9). After the army of 200 million troops is loosed and one-third of earth's rebellious and unrepentant population is destroyed (9.15-21). After God's two witnesses are martyred and resurrected (chapter 11). After the panoramic review in chapter 12. After the dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet demand universal worship and unleash a worldwide persecution of the saints (chapter 13). After the pouring out of the seven vials (bowls) of God's wrath on the unrepentant world (chapter 16). After other

details skipped over, here, only for lack of space and time. After the destruction of religious Babylon as described in chapter 17.

E. 19.1, "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia....":

After what things? After the destruction of political-economic Babylon as described in chapters 17 and 18.

I have gone to what some may think is an unnecessary length to show that Revelation is chronological. It is not a haphazard, helter-skelter conglomeration of random visions impossible to understand without a Master's Degree in European history of the Dark Ages.

One thing follows after another in Revelation as surely as it does in Genesis. When one thing follows after another, it is chronological. The tribulation saints (Jew and Gentile) must be identified and sealed (chapter 7) before God's judgments are poured out on an unsuspecting humanity. All this must happen before Babylon is destroyed, because her destruction is the climax that comes immediately before Christ's return to Armageddon (chapter 19). That is the chronology of this book, predestinated and foreordained.

God is chronologically precise, more so than the atomic clock in Boulder, Colorado, which keeps the world's time to a nanosecond.

For example: All the archaeological, biblical, historical, and chronological evidence is that Judah's seventy years captivity was exactly that—seventy years to the day. Judah's release was on the seventieth anniversary of their captivity.

Unlike Elder Cox's being happy that he guesstimated something within 47 days, the Bible is accurate to the split second.

For another example: Daniel said, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going

forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks [heptads, or periods of sevens—not necessarily weeks of seven days], and threescore and two weeks (Daniel 9.25)."

The Lord God says to "know therefore and understand." Daniel's heptads were periods of seven years. We know that God's Bible years are 360 days (of twelve 30-day months), not the 365.242199+ days we use now. We know from history and archaeology that the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem was issued on March 14, 445 BC. Sixty-nine (69) heptads times seven years times 360 days equals 173,880 days.

Since all Jewish holy days were set by the moon, we know from astronomy that Christ's triumphant entry (Luke 19.28-44) was on April 6, AD 32. From March 14, 445 BC to April 6, AD 32, adjusted for leap years and calendar differences, was exactly 173,880 days. Christ told them on April 6, as He presented Himself as Israel's Messiah King, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

No other day would do. It had to be this predestinated day and date. He told them their enemies "shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." This visitation was the predestinated time God the Son would present Himself to Israel, fulfilling Daniel's "unto the Messiah the Prince."

Anyone can do the above research and calculations; a school-child or an atheist can do the research and the math. The information is available for anyone who wants to dig for it. Sir Robert Anderson has already done it for us, in his book, *The Coming Prince*. The Phari-

sees had Daniel 9.25 and Nehemiah 2.5-6, same as Anderson. They could have done the math, except for one thing: Christ said these things were hid from their eyes.

When God said 1,260 days, or three and a half years, or 42 months, He did not mean 1,260 years starting from who-knows-when. But that is the result of not taking God at His word. When God said days He meant days. Either take God at His word, or try to make REVELATION into an allegorical, symbolic, figurative mess applied to medieval and Asian history; anything but exactly what it is—a revelation.

God has a vocabulary better by far than we have, and He who knows all things knows the difference between a day and a year. If He meant 1,260 years, He as easily could have said 1,260 years and not 1,260 days. Christ was not three years in the tomb, and I am not a mere 75 days old.

I have fast run out of space. I had hoped I might further point out more on the fact that Revelation is chronological, and chapters 4-22 are yet future. Perhaps at another time, if the Lord has so willed.

Dear brother, I appreciate your writing to me about these things. I realize you are vitally interested in the truth, and I hope and trust I am too. I hope nothing has been said here to provoke you or anyone else to anger or to anything else other than to love and good works. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Hebrews 10.24f)." One of those "good works" commended in the book of Acts is to search the Scriptures daily, whether those things are so. —CC Morris

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Zechariah 12.1-3, 12.8-9

The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. 2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. 3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

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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.