



# IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN THE CHURCHES

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## P R E F A C E

In this treatise it is not the writer's intention to unchristianize anyone. While he believes there are some churches whose preaching is entirely foreign to the plan of salvation, yet there are others though unscriptural in origin and church policy, which preach the plan of salvation. The writer rejoices to believe that there are many saved people in the latter class of churches. While not questioning their salvation, the writer believes their church relationship and baptism to be unscriptural.

Missionary Baptists are often misrepresented in their preaching. They are often accused of teaching that no one but Baptists are saved. On the contrary they have ever been those who championed the cause of salvation apart from church membership, baptism, or other human works and merits. One night the writer preached for an hour on the subject, "Is Baptism Essential to Salvation?" He showed that salvation was wholly by grace, and not dependent on baptism or other works. One man went out from that service and accused him of preaching that no one but Baptists would be saved. Those who thus misrepresent Baptists do so wilfully or they are certainly lacking in comprehension, or have been misinformed. We do not believe other religious bodies to be Scriptural churches, but do contend for the salvation of all their people who have repented toward God and have believed in Jesus Christ.

In putting forth this work the purpose is to seek to awaken the minds of people to search the Scriptures and think upon matters that the vast majority accept without thought or reason. Reader, if you are a Methodist, you should have some good reason for being one. That reason should be based upon the Word of God and not personal desires or relationship. If the Methodist doctrine and practice cannot be justified by the Bible you should be willing to sever your relationship with such a body. The same thing is true in application to the Presbyterians, Nazarenes, Baptists,

or whatever one might be in a religious way. In the day of judgment, we shall not be judged by what we wanted to do, or our kindred or friends wished us to do, or by what is popular, but by the Word of God. That service which is of men, though done in the name of Christ will come to naught. Only that which is in keeping with the Word of God will have the divine approval. We are strictly admonished, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." I Cor. 3:10.

In this work it has been the writer's policy to assume nothing. He puts forth only that which can be proven by God's Word. This has ever been his method in preaching. He has never felt or insisted that people should accept his bare statement. Neither my opinion, nor the opinion of any other man is worth anything unless that opinion is founded on the Bible. Too many people follow their preachers rather than the Scriptures. This is a mistake. Let a thing first be proven before accepted. We are accountable unto God as individuals, and should each, for himself, weigh the evidence given to sustain each thing we are called upon to believe or practice.

Neither has it been the purpose of the writer to point out the Scriptural church so much as to help the reader find it for himself. It has ever been the belief of the writer that if a child of God honestly desires to find the true Scriptural church, and will earnestly search the Scriptures with a will submitted to follow wherever the Word of God may lead, he shall surely find the right way.

Finally, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," I Thes. 5:21. Be like the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so. (Acts 17:11). If the writer has said some things you do not like, before you fall out with him, ask yourself the question, "Is this the truth?" "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" Gal. 5:16. If I have told you the truth, accept it for the sake of the Lord and your own good. If I have not proven my positions by the Word of God, you are under no obligation to accept them.

## IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN THE CHURCHES?

We are living in an age of loose thinking along Scriptural lines. There is much sickly sentimentalism and very little conviction. Few people act from convictions founded upon the Word of God. The vast majority are moved by personal feelings and popular opinions. They think more about how their actions will be considered by their kindred and acquaintances than as to how they will be judged by the Lord. I have known many to attach themselves to a certain church, not because they are convinced by the Bible that they should do so, but because it happens to be more popular in that locality to belong to that particular church. Again, I have known of husbands to be urged to join a certain church just because their wives belonged to that church, and the other way around. Business and professional men will attach themselves to those churches which they think will enhance their business. On one occasion this writer was preaching on the subject of baptism. A doctor who was present and who was supposed to be a Baptist turned his face toward the back of the house in disapproval. He was afraid that some of his patrons would take offense. Is such service as this acceptable in the Lord's sight? Are we to please God or men in our religious actions? The Apostle Paul wrote "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," Gal. 1:10. Are not such as are doing what men would have them do making use of a religious form to promote their own interests?

Those who follow their own desires, rather than God's Word, justify their actions by saying that one church is as good as another. Many put forth this statement as though it settled the question forever and that there was no need of going into a Scriptural investigation of the comparative merits and demerits of different religious bodies. Such a statement may satisfy those who do not think upon these matters but it will not stand the light of the truth. But many who

realize the weakness of their position prefer that their teachings and practices be accepted as a matter of fact, instead of being examined in the light of the Word of God. Those who are conscious of having the truth welcome a thorough investigation of their position.

Is one church as good as another? We might as well say that one woman is as virtuous as another, or that one man is as honest as another. To say that one woman is as virtuous as another would mean that all women are virtuous or that none are virtuous. To say that one man is as honest as another means that all men are honest or that all are dishonest.

None of these conclusions are true. Neither is it true that one church is as good as another. There are some that will practice only what they find the Word of God to teach. There are others who will practice things for doctrine they do not try to justify from the Word of God. Some churches will practice three kinds of baptism when the Bible teaches only "One Baptism," Eph. 4:5. If the Word of God tells us there is only one baptism and some churches practice three then those churches are practicing at least two that are commandments of men. Jesus said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men," Matt. 15:9. If such churches are worshipping Christ in vain are they as good as the one that teaches only that baptism the Lord commanded? Which is the best child, the one that is obedient or the one that is disobedient?

The following excerpt is taken from the Nazarene church manuel. See Page 23.  
 "Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the choice of the applicant. In case a pastor, when requested to administer baptism in a mode which he deems to be unscriptural, has conscientious scruples against so administering the ordinance, he shall not be required to do so; but he shall see that the candidate for baptism shall be baptized in the mode desired by the candidate."

Did Jesus tell us to baptize the candidate in any way he desired to be baptized, or did He tell us to teach them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded? Which church is carrying out His will, the one that teaches believers to observe things as He has commanded or the one that teaches that you may do things your own way? Which is seeking to please God and which is seeking to please men? Is the preacher who is required by his church to have baptism administered in a way he deems unscriptural any less guilty than he would have been had he done the work himself? If I get some other man to steal for me am I not guilty, myself?

When I was living in Plumerville, Arkansas, there came an evangelist to that town who held a meeting for the Methodists. He publicly stated that he had immersed many people, but that he did not believe in immersion. Did he not then sin in the act? "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Romans 14:23. Was he not also guilty of hypocrisy? In the pulpit he said he did not believe that Christ commanded immersion. In the creek he lifts up his hand toward heaven and says he is performing that act in the name of the Holy Trinity. Is such a preacher and such a church that permits and endorses such action, as good as those who refuse to baptize only in the way God commands? Let us examine the Word of God on this line.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 5:19.

This verse of Scripture implies that just such men as mentioned above would come and teach men to break the commandments of Christ. They shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Those who keep and teach them would be called the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The Missionary Baptist will teach and accept nothing but immersion, and that by proper administration. Some who administer only im-

mersion themselves will take immersion no matter by whom administered. Now let us think a little upon this matter. The church that will accept alien immersion would have to receive a person who had been immersed by that preacher who said he did not believe in immersion but did administer it. If he did not believe in it, and therefore sinned according to Romans 14:23, was such baptism acceptable in the sight of God? If so, will God accept a sinful act as service to Him? If God does not accept such baptism, should we accept it? Does not the church that accepts immersion from other churches therefore have to accept such baptism as is unacceptable in the sight of God?

Before leaving this part of this treatise let us consider another popular saying. We often hear it said that we are all trying to go to the same place. First of all, I wish to say that we are not going to heaven by trying to get there. We are not saved by our doing, but by the grace of God. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast," Eph. 2:8-9. Next, I wish to say that two men may be seeking the same place and actually going in the opposite directions. One day I was coming out of Damascus, Arkansas, and traveling to Morrilton. Presently I was stopped by a stranger who was headed toward Damascus. He asked if that was the way to Morrilton. Here were the two of us seeking Morrilton and going in opposite directions. When I told him that he was going away from Morrilton, he very wisely turned around and went in the opposite direction from which he had been traveling. Had he acted upon the principle that so many act upon in a religious way he would have said, "Oh, well, we are both seeking the same place, you in your way and I in my way, what difference does it make?" He certainly would have found out in the long run that it did make a difference. So will men find out in eternity that it does make a difference what we believe and teach. There may be

some things that men err on that will not affect their salvation, but if not their salvation it will most certainly affect their rewards in the world to come. Not everything about the human body is necessary to life, but everything is necessary to well-being. I could live without either hands or feet, but both hands and feet are necessary to my well-being. There are some truths that are essential to salvation just as there are some organs in the human body that are essential to life. Then there are other things, while not essential to spiritual life, are essential to our spiritual progress.

#### NON-ESSENTIALS

Today we hear a lot about things that are non-essential. Men excuse themselves for ignoring certain things on the ground that they think those things are non-essential. A certain Pedo-Baptist once said to a Missionary Baptist that the more spiritual he became the less attention he paid to non-essentials like baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Baptist preacher asked him how spiritual a man had to become before it was not a sin to refuse to keep a commandment of Christ. This question still remains unanswered. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," John 15:15. He also said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," John 14:21. What right then has a man to claim to love Christ and then deliberately refuse to heed what He has commanded? How can such claim to be spiritual?

We would like to know on what grounds any doctrine or precept in the Word of God can be called a non-essential. Some things are not essential to salvation, but they are essential to the purpose for which they were given. Baptism, while not essential to salvation, is an essential monument in the preserving of the doctrine of the resurrection, which doctrine is essential to salvation. The same is true of the Lord's Supper. There is no saving virtue in the Lord's supper so far as the one is concerned who is eating the supper, but it helps to preserve the truth of Christ's death for sin-

ners, which most certainly must be believed to be saved.

Everything the Lord commanded His people to do and preach was for some good purpose, whether we understand that purpose or not. If He has commanded a certain thing, it is sufficient to know that He has commanded it. If we set aside that thing as non-essential, we question the wisdom of Christ. Certainly He has some wise purpose in commanding us to do whatever He has taught, and when we set something aside as of no consequence, that He has commanded, we set our wisdom up against the wisdom of Christ. Here is the soil in which modernism flourishes. When we set aside anything that the Lord commanded, for the sake of expediency, or with the expectation that the cause of Christ be benefitted, and the fellowship of His people will be advanced, we virtually say that the Lord unwisely commanded this thing. What is this but veiled modernism? It is my opinion that had we not been so troubled with the non-essentialist in the past, we would not now be so cursed with the modernist who denies things that are considered essential. The non-essentialist, while professing to believe the Bible to be inspired and accepting it as a rule of faith and practice, turns around and sets aside that inspired rule on things in which he desires to be broad. The modernist sets aside certain things as of no consequence because he considers all religious practice to be simply a matter of human development instead of a divine revelation. To say the least, the modernist is the most consistent of the two classes. If all religious practice is simply a matter of human development, then for the sake of harmony we should be willing to set aside that which would prevent people coming together. On the other hand, if we have a divinely given rule of faith and practice we question the wisdom of God when we dare to set aside the least jot and tittle of that rule.

But let us examine the Word of God on this matter. We shall find that it strongly condemns any such ac-

tion on our part. When God commanded Noah to make the ark, He gave him complete instructions how to make it. He told him what kind of wood to use, how long, how wide and how high it should be. Nothing was left to human ingenuity or fancy. When God told Noah to use gopher wood, that did not permit him to use some other kind. We read that Noah did according to ALL that God had commanded him. There is no room here for the non-essentialist. (See Gen. 6:14 to 22). The same thing was true when He had Moses to construct the tabernacle: "For, see, saith he, that thou make ALL things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount," Heb. 8:5. This same principle was involved when Jesus gave the great commission. He commanded His church to teach them to observe "ALL things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28:20. We are under as much obligation to do all things as the Lord has commanded as was Noah or Moses. We must build according to the pattern He gave us. What would we think of a tailor, when asked to make a dozen suits of clothes according to a certain pattern, would to suit his own convenience, make them from patterns of his own choosing. He would most certainly forfeit his claim for pay for his work. So those who choose to change the pattern and build according to the notions and desires of men rather than the Word of God forfeit their right to rewards for their work.

In conclusion of this part of this treatise, the writer wishes to call attention to the example of King Saul and David. Saul changed the Lord's command concerning Amalek and lost his kingdom. David committed adultery with Uriah's wife and later took her for his own, yet he did not lose his kingdom. In the sight of God the sin of Saul was the greater. (If the reader doubts that one sin is greater than another, let him read John 19:11). Saul was commanded to destroy all the cattle, sheep and people. He destroyed all the people but the king, and all the cattle and sheep but the best. He thus changed the commandment of God. For thus doing he lost his kingdom. David's sin was

much greater in the eyes of men, but, while it brought upon him the chastening of God, it did not cause him to lose his kingdom. In the eyes of the religious world it is commendable to condemn such sins as David committed, but very unpopular to condemn the actions of those who, like Saul, change the commandments of God. Saul changed the commandment of God because he feared the people, and obeyed their voice. (See I Sam. 15:24). "Saul said to Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." Is this not exactly what the man does who, for the sake of pleasing the people, agrees to baptize in any way the people may want to be baptized? Is it not the fear of the people that causes some preachers to keep their mouths shut concerning the sins of those who preach and practice things that are not according to the Word of God? We venture the prediction that if some preachers who are bold to denounce the modernist would also raise a protest against those who change the Word of God on so-called non-essentials, these same preachers would soon lose much of their popularity.

#### IS THE CHURCH A LOCAL BODY OR A UNIVERSAL AFFAIR COMPOSED OF ALL THE REDEEMED EVERYWHERE?

The word church is thought by many to include all the children of God everywhere. All the saved are in the family of God, but not in a church, or the churches of Christ. There is no such thing as "The Church" in the sense of including all Christians, or all believers of the same faith and order. A church is an assembly of baptized believers joined together in the doctrine and fellowship of the gospel. The term does not extend beyond the local body. In the beginning there was only one church, the church at Jerusalem. Later on there sprang up other churches at Antioch, at Corinth, in Galatia, at Ephesus and various other places. These churches, however, were all patterned

after the first church which was at Jerusalem. After Saul was saved we read: "Then had the churches (plural) rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria," Acts 9:31. We see from this that there came to be many churches.

Not only do we read of churches (plural), but we read in various places where the whole church was gathered together. "Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the WHOLE CHURCH, to send chosen men of their company to Antioch," Acts 15:22. "If therefore the WHOLE CHURCH be come together in one place," etc., I Cor. 14:23. From these passages of Scripture we see that the term "church" is not extended beyond the group that can be assembled together.

The passage in Ephesians 5:23 is often quoted to prove the universal idea. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." If this teaches that there is one big universal church which is composed of all the smaller or local churches, then it teaches that there is a big universal wife who is composed of all the wives everywhere. If all those churches throughout Judea, Galilee, Samaria and elsewhere made one great universal church, then Jones' wife, Brown's wife, Smith's wife and all the other wives go to make up one great wife. Paul simply meant that Christ was head of the church at Ephesus, even as a man was head of his wife. So is Christ the head of all New Testament Churches.

A church has two kinds of officers; bishops and deacons. The bishop in the New Testament sense was nothing but a pastor. Paul gives the qualifications for these in I Tim. 3:1 to 15. When the apostle had finished giving the qualifications of those officers he closed by saying, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to believe thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Only a local, visible body as pastors and deacons. Thus we see that the



term "church" is applied to a local body of believers, and not to all the redeemed everywhere. We must have an organized body to have deacons and pastors. Again, it is the local body that contends for the truth. Many of the redeemed teach things that are contrary to the truth. We must have an organized body of people agreeing in what they believe to uphold the truth.

The Greek word which has been rendered "church" is "ekklesia." According to Greek lexicons the word means an assembly or congregation of persons called

is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another. But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a **LAWFUL ASSEMBLY.**" (The word for assembly here is ekklesia, the word that is translated church in other places.) This mob was not a lawful, but an illegal assembly. The clerk said, "We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause where by we may give an account of this concourse." After this he dismissed the

### WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO CONSTITUTE A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH?

First, a Scriptural church or assembly must have had its origin from the first church at Jerusalem. Many ignorantly think that all churches had their origin from the Roman Catholic Church. The first church was at Jerusalem. Many other churches were established in Judea, Samaria, Galilee and other places before the church at Rome came into existence, and that first church at Rome was not a Catholic church. The Roman Catholic Hierarchy was not developed for some centuries. Since Jesus promised to be with His church to the end of the world, that church has had a perpetual existence to this time. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end," Eph. 3:21. Soon after our Lord went back to heaven the church at Jerusalem was scattered by a great persecution. The disciples were scattered abroad everywhere and they went preaching the Word. From these scattered disciples new churches arose all over the country. They continued to spread until they reached all Europe and from Europe to America.

Since the apostolic times many men have started new religious movements and those bodies today are claiming to be Scriptural churches. We can find in history this side of Christ where all churches except the Baptist church started, and the very men that started them. Below we give a partial list of the dates when different churches were started, and the men that started them.

- The Catholic by Constantine in A.D. 325. The pope did not claim universal authority until 606.
- The Lutheran Church, by Martin Luther in 1530.
- The Presbyterian Church, by John Calvin in 1535.
- The Episcopal Church, by Henry VIII in 1540.
- The Methodist, by John Wesley in 1729.
- The Free Will Baptist, by Benjamin Randall in 1784.
- The Campbellite Church, by Alexander Campbell and others in 1827.

The Hardshells, by Daniel Parker in 1830.

The Nazarene Church, by S. F. Bresee in 1885.

The Missionary Baptist Churches are the only churches that have not had their origin this side of Christ. Dr. Ypeig and Rev. Dermott, who were appointed by the king of Holland to prepare a history of the Dutch reformed church had the following to say about the Baptists:

"We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Ana-baptists, and in the latter times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who have long, in the history of the church, received the honor OF THAT ORIGIN. On this account, the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the apostles." Alexander Campbell, in his debate with McCalla says, "From the apostles to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and their practice of baptism have had a continual chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced," (Campbell-McCalla Debate; P. 378).

Second, a church to be Scriptural must be made up of Scriptural subjects. We find in the second chapter of Acts that they are baptized believers, who continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers," Acts 2:41-42.

From the above passage of Scripture we learn that the steps to the Lord's Supper are, first salvation (gladly receiving the word) second, baptism; third, continuing in the apostles' doctrine; fourth, fellowship; and then the Lord's Supper. No one who has not been Scripturally baptized can come to the Lord's supper. No one who is not in the apostles' doctrine is qualified to come to the table. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "I hear that there be divisions among you: and I partly

believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper." I Cor. 11:18-20. If those in the same church cannot take the supper when there are divisions among them, they why should we be expected to eat with those of other denominations who differ from us?

Third, A Scriptural church is one that proclaims and guards the truth. "The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." A pillar is a support. The church then is something that upholds the truth and defends it against error. "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," Jude 3. To be a Scriptural church, an assembly must contend for the faith. This means that it must denounce error. The body that does not do this is not a New Testament church. Since the Word of God teaches "One baptism" it must contend for one and only one. There must be no compromising with those who teach three. To fellowship with those who teach doctrines contrary to the Word of God would weaken or nullify our testimony against error. A church that practices three baptisms, or other things that are unscriptural, in order to please men, is most certainly not contending for the truth.

Many speak harshly of those who expose the error of others, and call them fighters. But the Apostle Paul said of himself, "I have fought a good fight," II Tim. 4:7. He admonished Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Those who call this prejudice, do not know the difference between prejudice and conviction. There are those who would take refuge under a cloak of charity, from having their unsoundness exposed. They speak smooth, oily words about love, as though love bids us close our mouths and let false teachers spread religious poison. If I know someone is seeking to give my neighbor poison food, love does not require me to keep my mouth shut, but

to warn my neighbor. I would probably incur the disfavor of the one giving out the poison food, but it is my duty to warn my neighbor, nevertheless. So, when I see people preaching false doctrines, that would poison the minds of men, love bids me speak out and warn people about the same. Love rejoices in the truth, I Cor. 13:6. That subtle teaching that would forbid the exposure of false doctrine, is from the pit and not from God.

Not long since, a certain man asked me why we did not do constructive work, rather than destructive work. He had reference to the writer's book exposing the doctrines of Campbellism. I told him it was sometimes necessary to do some destructive work before we could do a work of construction. When a field has become grown up in briars, it is necessary to cut off and destroy those briars, before that field can be cultivated. The same is true in religious work. It is necessary oftentimes, to clear away the rubbish from the minds of people, before their minds can receive the truth. A New Testament Church must contend for the truth without fear or favor. It must reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. It will consider itself responsible to God, and not to men, for what it teaches. Throughout the Old Testament, we find the prophets of God denouncing the errors of false religion. The same is true with the apostles and teachers of New Testament times. It is also true of the real churches of Christ, today.

A New Testament Church is a peculiar church. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," I Peter 2:9. We are not to be like other people. We are to stand separate and apart from those who do not teach and walk according to the Word of God. When Israel wanted to be like the nations about them, and demanded a king, they started in the wrong direction. This choice on their part, ultimately, carried them into Babylonian captivity. So when churches desire to be like other people around them, they are headed for religious Babylon. Last year

I was visiting in Kansas. I found, by inquiring, that there was not a single Baptist church in that county, where I was visiting. Why had Baptists ceased to exist in that part of the country? The Northern Baptist people had affiliated and compromised with other denominations until they had become completely swallowed up. Baptists must contend for their principles and their peculiarity of separation from other denominations. But, thank God, there will always be some churches that will contend for the truth, once for all delivered unto the saints.

#### CAN DOCTRINES, WHICH ARE OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER, BOTH BE RIGHT?

If one church is as good as another, then doctrines which are opposed to one another, would all have to be right. Can this be true? Does God forgive the sins of some people before baptism, as Baptists and some others teach, and the sins of others in the act of baptism, as Campbellites and others, teach? If God forgives sins before baptism, then it is not an error to teach that they are not forgiven until baptism? (For full discussion of this subject see my book, "The Tribe of Ishmael." If God forgives sins before baptism, the one who goes into the water expecting to receive remission of sins in that act, will most certainly not receive remission of sins at all. His faith has been misplaced. The same principle applies to all other doctrines. There can only be one kind of churches that is right. "There is One Faith, One Lord, and One Baptism," Eph. 4:5. The one faith means one system of doctrine. There can no more be two or more correct systems of doctrines than there can be two or more Lords. There cannot be more than one baptism any more than there can be more than one Lord. Several churches differing in doctrine from one another cannot all be right. If three men counted a flock of sheep, and they counted ninety-eight, ninety-nine, and one hundred, respectively, they could not all be right. They

might all be wrong, but they COULD not all be right. Only ONE could be right.

So, a dozen or more churches, teaching doctrines that differ, cannot all be right. Only ONE can be RIGHT. If Baptist churches are right, others are wrong. If Baptist churches are wrong, then some other kind is right. Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Campbellites, and various others, cannot all be right. If Baptist churches are TRUE churches, then they are the ONLY TRUE churches. If Baptist churches are NOT true churches, then other churches are inconsistent in receiving Baptist baptism. If Baptist churches are true churches, then they are consistent in rejecting the baptism of others. This much must be conceded by other denominations.

All truth is narrow. Two and two make four and not six. Neither can we compromise the matter and make two and two equal five. If a man proceeded upon this principle in every day matters he would soon find himself in the greatest of confusion. If New York is twelve hundred miles away, and some one says it's only eight hundred miles away, it would be folly to compromise and say it is only a thousand miles away. Suppose I proceed upon that theory and borrowed enough money to take me a thousand miles and back. I would find myself four hundred miles away from home when my money was spent on the return trip. So it is with religious truth. It is narrow, like all other truths. The world likes to speak of those who stand ready to fellowship anything and everything that comes in the name of Christ as being broad. Those who refuse to fellowship those whom they consider in error, the world terms as narrow. In reply to this I refer you to the words of Christ in Matt. 7:13-14: "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Baptists accord to others the right to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, but at the same time we consider it our duty to expose

what we believe to be error in others. To be consistent we must refuse to exchange pulpits or hold union meetings with them or accept their baptism. If others believe themselves to be right and us to be wrong, then, to be consistent they should expose what they believe to be wrong and refuse to fellowship the same. It is very inconsistent to say that a thing is wrong and then be willing to practice and support the same. If sprinkling is the baptism our Lord commanded, then it is a sin to practice any other. Why then, will some practice sprinkling and other forms? The church that does that stamps itself at once as not contending for the truth, and therefore being unscriptural. In substance it says "we believe in both truth and error and will uphold both." All who sprinkle will also practice immersion. This eliminates all bodies that sprinkle for baptism and leaves the field open to those who practice immersion only, in our search for a New Testament Church. We do not have to go two hundred years back to find the Missionary Baptists standing alone for immersion only. Campbellites, Free Wills, Advents, Christadelphians, and Hardshells had not come into existence at that time.

#### IS ERROR AS GOOD AS TRUTH?

To say that one church is as good as another is to say that error is as good as truth, or that no church teaches the truth. We read in Psalm 100:5, "His truth endureth to all generations." We read in Jude 3, that the faith "Was once for all delivered to the saints." (R. V.) This Greek word "hapax" means that a thing is so done as to never need to be repeated. Is error as good as truth in temporal things? I recently read where a boy picked up a torpedo from a candy counter thinking that it was candy. He bit down on the torpedo and had his mouth badly torn by the explosion. The truth about the matter was that it was a torpedo and not candy. The boy was in error thinking that it was candy. The truth would certainly have been more profitable on that occasion. One time I came very

near giving one of my children carbolic acid thinking it was paregoric. The paregoric bottle and the carbolic acid bottle were the same size and looked very much alike, and somehow had been placed on the same shelf. Fortunately I smelled the carbolic acid in time to avoid making a fatal blunder. The boy mentioned above did not lose his life, but was painfully injured. Some err in spiritual things to their destruction, and others, while not erroring in things so vital, bring upon themselves a spiritual loss.

To seek to fellowship and uphold both truth and error would be like teaching one boy that torpedo was candy, and teaching another the truth about it. Would it be candy to one boy and a torpedo to another? Would that carbolic acid have been paregoric to one child and a deadly poison to another? No sane person would think so. Why not use the same judgment about spiritual matters that we do about temporal things? No right thinking person would commend the one who would knowingly stand by and watch that boy mistake the torpedo for candy, without warning him. Why, then, will they censure those who seek to warn people about spiritual errors? It is important to have the truth in temporal matters, how much more important that we be right in spiritual matters! The boy mentioned above honestly thought that the torpedo was candy. That honestly did not save him from being seriously injured. So people may honestly think they are right in spiritual matters and yet lose their rewards or miss being saved. Saul of Tarsus thought he was right when he was persecuting the followers of Christ, but he found out that he was a lost man. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," Prov. 14:12.

The writer is not asking the reader to take his conclusions without them being duly weighed. He is only trying to get the reader to realize that spiritual truths are definite and positive, and that just any old thing in the name of Christ is not sufficient. We are admonished in the Word of God to examine ourselves and to prove

ourselves, II Cor. 13:5. Again we are admonished to "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear," I Peter 3:15.

ARE THOSE WHO PREACH AND PRACTICE  
THINGS CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF  
GOD AS PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT AS  
THOSE WHO ARE SCRIPTURAL IN  
DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE?

Some people seem to think that God is pleased with the preaching and worship of all churches, no matter what they may preach and practice. If this be so, then why would He not be pleased with my preaching all the different contradictory doctrines? Today I would preach that it is impossible for a child of God to lose his salvation. Tomorrow I would preach that he could lose his salvation. One day I would preach that immersion of a believer is the only baptism. Another time I would preach that baptism was good if administered by sprinkling and pouring. One day I would preach that we are saved before and independent of baptism. The next day I would preach that we are not saved until baptized. I would preach that there was a hell, and then turn around and preach that there was no hell. Then why would it not be right to preach them in the same sermon? One minute I would be contending for the doctrine of eternal punishment, and the next I would be denying it. Would God be pleased with such contradictory preaching? What would be the influence of such preaching on those who heard it? Surely they would think that I was a fit subject for the insane asylum. Then why believe that God is the author of such confusion and folly?

Does God send out all these preachers and churches to confuse the minds of people? Surely not. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints," I Cor. 14:3. A wholesale firm would not send out a dozen salesmen and give

each instructions to contradict the sales talk of the others. Then why think that God is pleased with all these contradictory doctrines?

Let us examine the Word of God on this line. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the LEAST in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 5:19. If there is a difference in the least and the greatest then surely there is a difference in the men and churches that do and teach His commandments and those who break them, and teach men so. When a preacher or church is teaching people that it does not make any difference how they are baptized, are they not teaching men to break His commandments? Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," John 15:14. How can men and churches love Christ and teach people to ignore or change His commandments? Baptists believe in practicing that which the Lord has commanded us, and in the way He commanded us to do those things. We do not believe that baptism and the Lord's supper are essential to salvation but they are essential to the purpose for which given. We do not believe that any preacher or church has a right to change them. We believe that those who play loose in these matters, in order to please men or to accommodate someone's belief or prejudice, will certainly be called to account for so doing. If they are regenerated they will not be lost themselves, but will certainly lose their rewards.

Let us now take an Old Testament example. During the times of Eli the children of Israel had taken the ark of the Lord into battle. Because of their wickedness the Lord had delivered them into the hands of the Philistines. They were defeated and the ark had been captured by the enemy. God plagued the Philistines because of the ark. They finally placed it on a wagon and hitched some milch cows to the wagon. These cows carried it back into the country of the Israelites. It

was placed in the house of Abinadab. When David came to the throne he purposed to bring the ark back and place it in the tabernacle where it belonged. That was the right thing to do but they went about it in the wrong way. The law specified that the ark should be carried on the shoulders of the Levites. David and his people did not search the Word of God to see how it should be carried. Very likely they thought like many people today, that it did not make any difference how the thing was done, just so it was done. They placed the ark on a wagon and hitched some oxen to the wagon. The ark jolted and Uzzah thrust forth his hand to stay the ark, and God struck him dead on the spot. Then David had the Levites to sanctify themselves, that they might bring up the ark. He said, "Because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, FOR THAT WE SOUGHT HIM NOT AFTER THE DUE ORDER," I Chron. 15:12-13. From this we see that God requires that our services toward Him be done after the due order. It must be done as He has instructed in His Word. The second time they went out the Lord was with them and they brought the ark back with shouting and rejoicing.

We are admonished by the Apostle Paul to take heed how we build upon the foundation. "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire," I Cor. 3:10 to 14. Everything that is done that is not according to the Bible will be burned as wood, hay and stubble. Jesus said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Matt. 15:9. Does this sound like it makes no difference how one is baptized? Will not those who have been so broad as to change the commandment of Christ to observe the traditions of men find that they have labored in vain? "Thus have ye made the com-

mandment of God of none effect but your traditions," Matt. 15:6. Jesus accused the Pharisees of rejecting the commandment of God, that they might keep their own traditions. (See Mark 7:9.) Is this not what men do today who will practice three modes of baptism, to please the people? When the Lord judges the works of His people, such as these will find themselves reckoned as least in the kingdom of heaven. "Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first," Matt. 19:30. The judgment of men as to the worth of the servants of God will be reversed. Those whom the world lauded as being great and broad will find themselves placed as last. Those the world called narrow and little will be given the first place by the Lord. Reader, let no man deceive you. In that day you shall find that it does make a difference as to what church you belong, and as to what you practice for doctrine. "Let no man beguile you of your reward," Col. 2:18. "Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown," Rev. 3:11.

#### THERE IS NO SLIDING SCALE OF WORSHIP AND SERVICE

I find many who think there is a sliding scale of worship and service which every man may adjust to his own conditions. Not long ago, I found a man who thought that part of the Bible taught Missionary Baptist doctrine, while other parts taught Methodist doctrine, and yet other parts taught Campbellite doctrine, and on and on through the various catalogue of different doctrines. To him the Word of God was just like a Piggly-Wiggly store. Each man could go to the Bible and take what he wanted and leave the rest for others to take. I have seen men proceed upon this line in a debate. Instead of taking up the argument of their opponent and showing where he had made a wrong application they present an opposing line of argument. The Word of God does not teach different systems of doctrine opposing to one another. Rightly divided, the Bible will harmonize. Any system of doc-

trine that cannot be harmonized with the rest of the Word of God is false and should be avoided. As an example, we are distinctly told that we are not saved by works. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our own works," II Tim. 1:9. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us," Titus 3:5. "And if by grace, then it is no more works: otherwise grace is no more grace," Romans 11:6. To offset these plain passages of Scripture those who believe in salvation by works will quote James on Abraham being justified by works when he offered up Isaac. (James, Chapter two). But James does not say that Abraham was saved by works. He only says he was justified by works. There is a justification in the sight of God, and a justification in the sight of men. "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God," Romans 4:2. Then Abraham was not justified before God by his works. His justification by works was in the sight of men, only. This interpretation harmonizes with the statements that we are not saved by works. To apply this to our salvation makes the Bible teach two opposing lines of doctrine. This is handling the Word of God unskillfully, if not deceitfully. (See II Cor. 4:2).

In many meetings today people are told to join the church of their choice. This preacher has never been guilty of doing that yet. The Lord told us to "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, Matt. 23:20. He did not say to tell the people to join the church of their choice or to be baptized in any way they might prefer. We are to teach them the will of the Lord in the matter. Having done that we have discharged our duty. If the other person chooses not to act upon those instructions then the matter is between him and the Lord. But we have not discharged our duty until we have taught the will of the Lord in these things.

Does one have a right to a church of his own choice? Do people have the right to be baptized as they

please? So far as man is concerned, they may, but before the Lord they do not. Christ has made the choice for us. He has marked out that way. We have no more right to set our own standard of service than we have to set our own standard as to what is a bushel of potatoes. Suppose a wholesale merchant had engaged a thousand bushels of potatoes at \$1.00 per bushel. When they bring their potatoes in, each man claims the right to set his own standard of a bushel. Smith claims the right to have fifty-five pounds as a bushel, Williams sets forty pounds. Brown claims the right to have fifty-five pounds for a bushel. When the merchant has let each man set his own standard and purchased the potatoes, he finds his buyer insists on getting seventy pounds for a bushel. Would this not work untold confusion? Would those farmers be justified in criticizing the merchant if he refused to accept their different standards, and instead insisted upon the standard that was fixed by law? No right-thinking person would think so. There must be some fixed standard by which we are to conduct business affairs. This standard must be fixed by law. That standard is the standard for Brown, Smith, Jones and everyone else. So it is in spiritual affairs. There must be some fixed standard for every man. The one who refuses to be guided by that standard is guilty of causing discord and confusion. The one who insists on staying with that standard cannot be justly blamed for the wide-spread confusion that prevails today in religious matters.

Since we must have a fixed standard of worship, what is to be the standard? It must be the Word of God. No man or set of men have a right to legislate for the people of God. Only the great head of the church, Jesus Christ, Himself, has the right to fix rules regulating the worship and service of His people. This He has already done. Having done this He told His church to teach them to observe all things that He had commanded. A Scriptural church must do this, no more, and no less. Any church that adds one thing



or takes away one thing from what He commanded to be observed, cannot rightly be called a Scriptural church. Those who insist that something else is just as good, question the wisdom of Christ and are guilty of causing confusion and division.

#### SHOULD BAPTISTS HOLD UNION MEETINGS OR EXCHANGE PULPITS WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONS?

In some places people who claim to be Baptists will exchange pulpits and hold union meetings with other denominations. To do this means to put the other churches on the same level with Baptist churches and to give the world the idea that there is no difference in the churches. The world gets the idea that one church is as good as another. Either this is true or it is not true. If a man calls himself a Baptist and thinks that other churches are as good as the Baptist churches then he should, in all consistency insist on the abolishment of Baptist Churches. If other churches are just as good as Baptist churches and preach the truth as well, then there is no need of a Baptist church. We could abolish the Baptist churches and we would have that much less division. On the other hand if other churches are not as good as Baptist churches there is no need for other churches. What truths do they preach that the Baptists do not preach? If the world did not have them it would have just as much truth as it now has, and a lot less of error. If we join with them in a union service and leave the impression with the world that there is no difference, then we are a party to teaching the world something that is not true. Can we do that and be blameless?

If we do not believe that other churches are Scriptural churches, then to join in with them and pretend that they are equally as sound as Baptist churches is to pretend to believe what we do not think is so. This is hypocrisy. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Romans 14:23. We do not ask it, nor expect it of other

churches. If they believe they have the truth and that we do not, then consistency would demand that they refuse to affiliate with us. It is wrong to ask people to do that which they think is wrong, unless you can first teach them that they are wrong in their position. A union meeting would not last long where each party was doing his best to convince the other of his error.

Again, if we took part in a union meeting and did not teach all things that Christ commanded we would be unfaithful to Him. How could a Baptist teach and contend for immersion only while in a meeting with people who believe in sprinkling? If we invited people to join the church of their choice, then we would leave the impression that sprinkling was just as good as immersion for baptism. If we engaged in a union service and left off the matter of baptism altogether, then we allow men to persuade us not to teach something that Christ told us to teach. By what process of reasoning can we conclude that it would be profitable to keep silent on some things that Christ told us to teach? This is the same as saying that we know better than Christ what would best promote the cause. Is this not veiled modernism?

Not long ago I was in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. At that time the American Federation of Churches held a great rally in that city. They were launching what they called the American Preaching Mission. In that heterogeneous mass of religionists, representing most of the leading denominations, were modernists and those who were supposed to believe in the inspired Word. Dr. Geo. Truett, one of the prominent men of the Southern Baptist Convention was one of the main speakers. Dr. Stanley Jones, a modernist, was another. Mr. Jones said that one of the purposes of the meeting was to bring denominations closer to each other and to pray for the success of each other. How could one who believes in the divinity of Christ, pray for God to bless the work of the man who is trying to keep people from believing in that doctrine? How

could one who believes in the necessity of the new birth pray for God to bless the work of those who do not teach the new birth. Can I consistently ask God to bless both the truth and error? This is the logical outcome of unionism. It would not stop at shutting our mouth on the question of baptism, but would soon stop our mouth on the doctrines of the resurrection, virgin birth, and the new birth. Not long ago I heard where some of the British missionaries in India were leaving the name of our Lord out of their songs and prayers to keep from offending the Hindus.

But what does the Word of God say on this line? We are told to "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them," Romans 16:17. When some legalistic teachers were disturbing the churches of Galatia, the apostle wrote and said, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," Gal. 1:9. Does this sound like praying for God to bless the work of these false teachers? The apostle even went so far as to say, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you," Gal. 5:12. To bid a person God speed is to be a partaker of his deeds. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," II John 10, 11. If any should say that John had reference here to the coming of Christ in the flesh, we reply that the same principle applies to other things that are unscriptural. If we pray for God to bless those who teach sprinkling and encourage them in this false practice, would we not be partakers with them in that false practice? But, as shown above, the union movement would not stop until it had delivered us into the camp of the modernist. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," Gal. 5:9. It has long been my opinion that the door was opened for modernism to creep into the ranks of Christians by this shut mouth policy on the part of so many. If I keep my mouth shut and wink at the

errors of some on baptism and the Lord's Supper, then presently some other men are demanding that I also keep my mouth shut when they question the inspiration of the Word and the divinity of Christ. A little hole in a levee might seem a trival matter to some, but if it is left unguarded it soon means that the whole levee is broken. In 1935 the Arkansas River bottom below Morrilton was overflowed. I was told that holes made in the levee by moles had so undermined the levee that the whole thing was caused to give away. For years the pacifists have been seeking to bring a compromise between those who hold the truth and those who hold to error. Little by little this compromising spirit has been eating at the bulwarks of faith until today many have been swept away with the flood waters of modernism. The safest policy is to stay with the Word of God on every point and compromise on nothing.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Word of God calls upon us to come out and separate ourselves from error. The ante-deluvian world was corrupted because the true worshippers of God, "The sons of God," married the daughters of men. Abraham was called upon to come out from his country and his people. The children of Israel were forbidden to intermarry with the nations about them lest they should lead them away from the true worship of God. Solomon disregarded this teaching and some of his foreign wives led him into idolatry. When some of the other tribes wished to go into a union affair with Zerubbabel and the Jews in the building of the Temple they received this reply, "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel," Ezra. 4:3.

Perhaps, the most striking example of the evil consequences of one who has the truth, going into a union with one who holds to error, is that of Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab. Jehosaphat was a worshiper of God; he walked in the first ways of David, and sought not after Baalim. Ahab while claiming to be a follower

of the Lord had mixed the worship of Baalim with his religion. These two joined affinity. Ahab wished to go out to battle and desired that Jehoshaphat go with him. Jehoshaphat desired to inquire of the Lord about the matter. Ahab had a bunch of men-pleasing prophets who knew what Ahab wanted to do so they told him to go up against Ramoth—gilead to battle and prosper. Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with these prophets. Perhaps, he discerned the man-pleasing spirit they had. He wanted to know if there were not a prophet of the Lord besides these of whom they might inquire. Ahab said there was one other, Micaiah, the son of Imla, but he said, "I do not like him for he does not prophesy good, but evil concerning me." Micaiah was sent for by the request of Jehoshaphat. When he came, Ahab professed to want nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord. Micaiah prophesied that the expedition would fail and Ahab would be killed. Then Micaiah was abused and put in prison for telling the truth. Ahab played a trick on Jehoshaphat by having him to go into battle with his king's robes on, while Ahab disguised himself. When the enemy saw Jehoshaphat with his king's robes on they thought he was Ahab, whom they wished to kill. Only the mercies of God kept them from killing Jehoshaphat. Ahab was killed despite his disguise. Then Jehoshaphat returned to his own land. He was met by Jehu who said, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" II Chron. 19:2. After this Jehoshaphat did all he could to make amend for this foolish step. He instituted many reforms and tried not only to turn his people away from idolatry, but those of the Northern Kingdom as well. But the seeds were sown. His son had married the daughter of Ahab. After the death of Jehoshaphat his son and his evil wife undid all the good work of his father. This is a most solemn lesson. It shows us the far-reaching consequence of a compromising step. While in a union meeting with others, seeds would be planted in the minds of the younger generation that might lead them away from the truth.

Right here I desire to warn our preachers against an evil that is rapidly growing among us. In most cities and towns preachers of all denominations form themselves into what they call a "Ministerial Alliance," or a "Ministerial Association." This scribe has always steered clear of such an organization and looked upon it as an unholy alliance. He considers it an opening wedge on the part of unsound preachers to secure recognition for their false claims to being true minister of Christ. By such alliances Baptists have everything to lose and nothing to gain. When Baptist preachers join such alliances or associations they virtually acknowledge and recognize preachers of all faiths as true ministers of Christ and thereby put them on the same level with themselves. If they do not believe that preachers of all denominations should be recognized as being equally Scriptural with Baptists, then they are acting hypocritical when they so pretend by joining their alliances. Moreover, they put themselves in an embarrassing situation. Unscriptural movements and programs will be proposed in these alliances, which no true Baptist can afford to endorse. He must keep his mouth shut and have the appearance of endorsing somethings which he does not believe to be Scriptural or else find himself in a hopeless minority in objecting to such movements.

Let us remember the mistake of Jehoshaphat in his unwise alliance with Ahab, and the evil consequences of that alliance. Remember the words of Jehu, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" II Chron. 19:2. We should also remember that Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words," John 14:23. "And he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings," John 14:24. If preachers are unwilling to keep the sayings of Christ, how are we to know they love Him? Then, pray tell me, what fellowship can Baptists have with them?

In this connection I wish to say it is not the preacher's business to so preach as to keep everybody in his community on good terms with one another. Jesus

said, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on the earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two," etc., Luke 12:51—52. It is our duty to faithfully declare the Word of God without compromise. This will most certainly bring opposition from those who hold to error. Truth exposes error, and those who have their unscriptural practices exposed will become offended and start an opposition against those who expose their error. It was our Lord's exposure of the sham and unscriptural practices of the Pharisees that brought about their opposition of Him, which opposition brought on His crucifixion.

Not long ago I read in a magazine where a certain writer said there was something he could not understand about Christianity. It was supposed to bring peace and instead of doing that he had seen it divide households. I said to myself that this man had not read his Bible closely. Jesus taught us that His teachings would divide households. Not because there is anything wrong with His teachings, but because, "The carnal mind is enmity against God," Romans 8:7.

Those who hold to false doctrines will listen placidly to others preach false doctrines which they do not believe, but when someone so preaches as to expose their error they become offended at once. Mr. Kagawa, the famous Japanese who has been speaking in this country does not believe in the divinity or the vicarious death of Christ. Many who went to hear him speak believed in these doctrines. Yet they gladly listened to him and did not become offended. But had some Missionary Baptist exposed their false practice on infant baptism and sprinkling and episcopacy they would have been greatly offended. It is the truth that hurts and causes men to take offense. When Christ rebuked the Pharisees, for making the Word of God of none effect, by their traditions, they became offended, Matt. 15:1 to 12.

Though people may become offended, yet it is our duty to warn them of false doctrines and rebuke their

error. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine," II Tim. 4:2. "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith," Titus 1:13. If our preaching does not stir up opposition, then it is a good sign that we are not loyal to the truth. Jesus said, "A servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying they will keep your also," John 15:20.

### PERSECUTION, A MARK OF THE TRUE CHURCH

It would be out of place in closing this treatise, to omit the subject of persecution. A Scriptural church will be a persecuted church. It will be criticized, misrepresented, and called an ignorant, narrow, conceited sect. All forms of worldly tactics and arguments will be employed to make life miserable for those who dare to stand out from those who preach and practice unsound doctrine. Had Paul been willing to compromise with the legalism of the Pharisees, he would not have suffered persecution. "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased," Gal. 5:11. The preaching of salvation by grace, apart from the works of the flesh gave offense, and brought on persecution. The same is true today. Those who dare to preach the grace of God alone and disregard all human works and human commandments, are likewise persecuted. It is the fear of persecution that causes many to compromise the truth and refuse to separate themselves from those that live in error.

Persecution is one of the marks by which we may know a true child of God and a true church. "All that will live godly in Christ SHALL suffer persecution." II Tim. 3:12. "Before all these they shall lay hands on you, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony," Luke 21:12, 13. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake," Luke 21:17. The followers of Christ

was the sect everywhere spoken against. "For as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against," Acts 28:22. What church fulfills these predictions more than the Missionary Baptist Church?

Reader, have you been guilty of censuring the Baptists for refusing to hold union meetings, practicing restricted communion, and being peculiar? If so, you are only pointing out the Baptists, as God's peculiar people. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 5:10. Are you guilty of reviling Baptists for being peculiar, when Jesus said we were to be a peculiar people? Do you speak evil of us for being separate, when we are told to come out from among them and be separate? II Cor. 6:17. You should read where Jesus said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake," Matt. 5:11. You are only helping to point us out as being God's peculiar people. You are also branding yourself as being ignorant of the Word of God, if not an unsaved person. When Jesus was telling His disciples that they would be persecuted for their preaching, He said, "But all these things will they do unto you, for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me," John 15:21. These are plain words, but they are the words of the Master. Do these words offend you? Then you had better take an inventory of your standing before God.

Reader, are you persecuted and reviled because you are a Baptist? Do your companions, friends, or relatives say hard, cruel, cutting things against you because of your stand? If so, then you should rejoice and leap for joy. Remember the words of Christ, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," Matt. 5:12. If we are persecuted, it is a sign that we are walking in the steps of our Lord and Master. The trials that we have to endure, He also endured; the thorns that pierce our feet, pierced His; the scorn that we have to endure, He had

to endure. This should make us rejoice, for it is a sign that we are walking according to His Word. A few years ago, I made a trip to central Oklahoma to hold a meeting. When I reached the town of Roff, about eight o'clock that night, I inquired the way to a certain country church. The instructions I received were so complicated that I did not know for sure that I was carrying them out, until I reached a rocky lane leading up a hill. I was told that when I struck that rocky lane leading up the hill, I was near the church house. When I reached it, every time the car jolted over the rocks it was an assurance to me that I was traveling the way I wanted to go. So, when we meet with these persecutions, and trials, along life's way, it is an assurance that we are walking in the way of our Lord. Then, we are told, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him," I Tim. 2:12. After the suffering comes the glory; after the cross comes the crown.

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone,  
And all the world go free?  
No, there’s a cross for every one,  
And there’s a cross for me.

O precious cross! O glorious crown!  
O resurrection day!  
Ye angels from the stars come down,  
And bear my soul away.

Upon the crystal pavement down,  
At Jesus’ pierced feet,  
Joyful I’ll cast my golden crown,  
And His dear name repeat.”

THE END