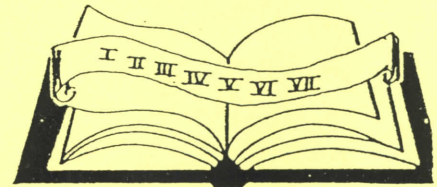


Hermeneutical Help on Thorny Theological Themes

1. **Dispensationalism:** KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES



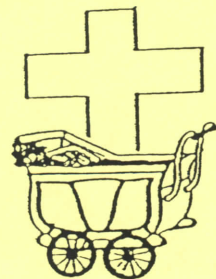
2. DIVINE **Election** OR HUMAN EFFORT?



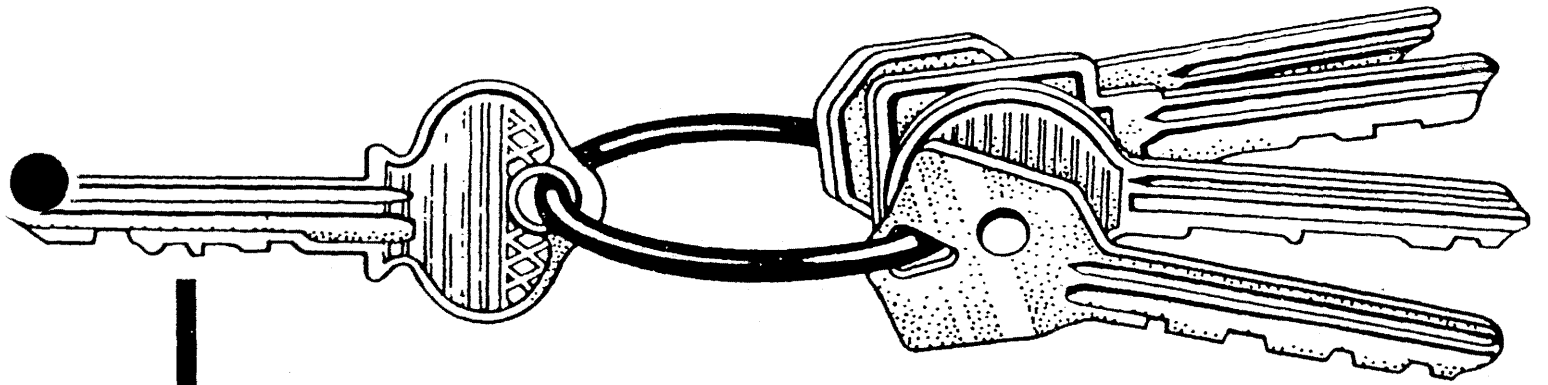
3. **Lordship Salvation:** FORGOTTEN TRUTH OR FALSE DOCTRINE?



4. **Infant Salvation:** HOPE OR HOAX?



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

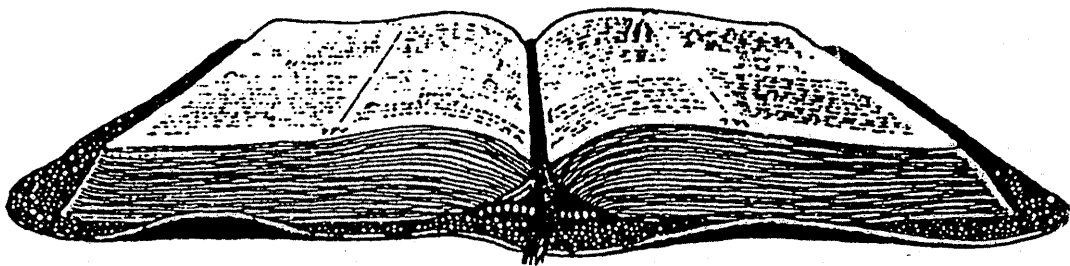


DISPENSATIONALISM

Key

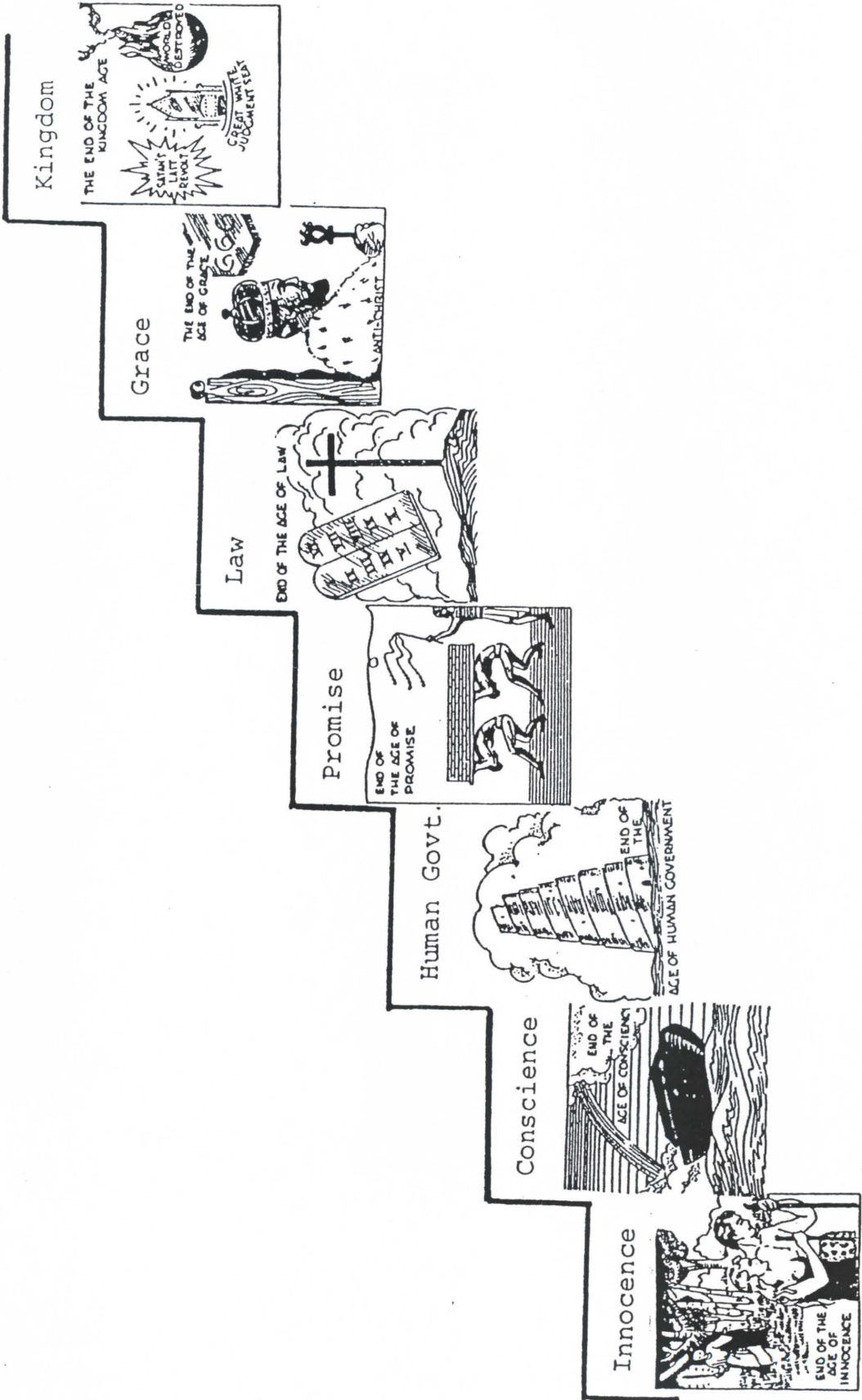
to the

Scriptures

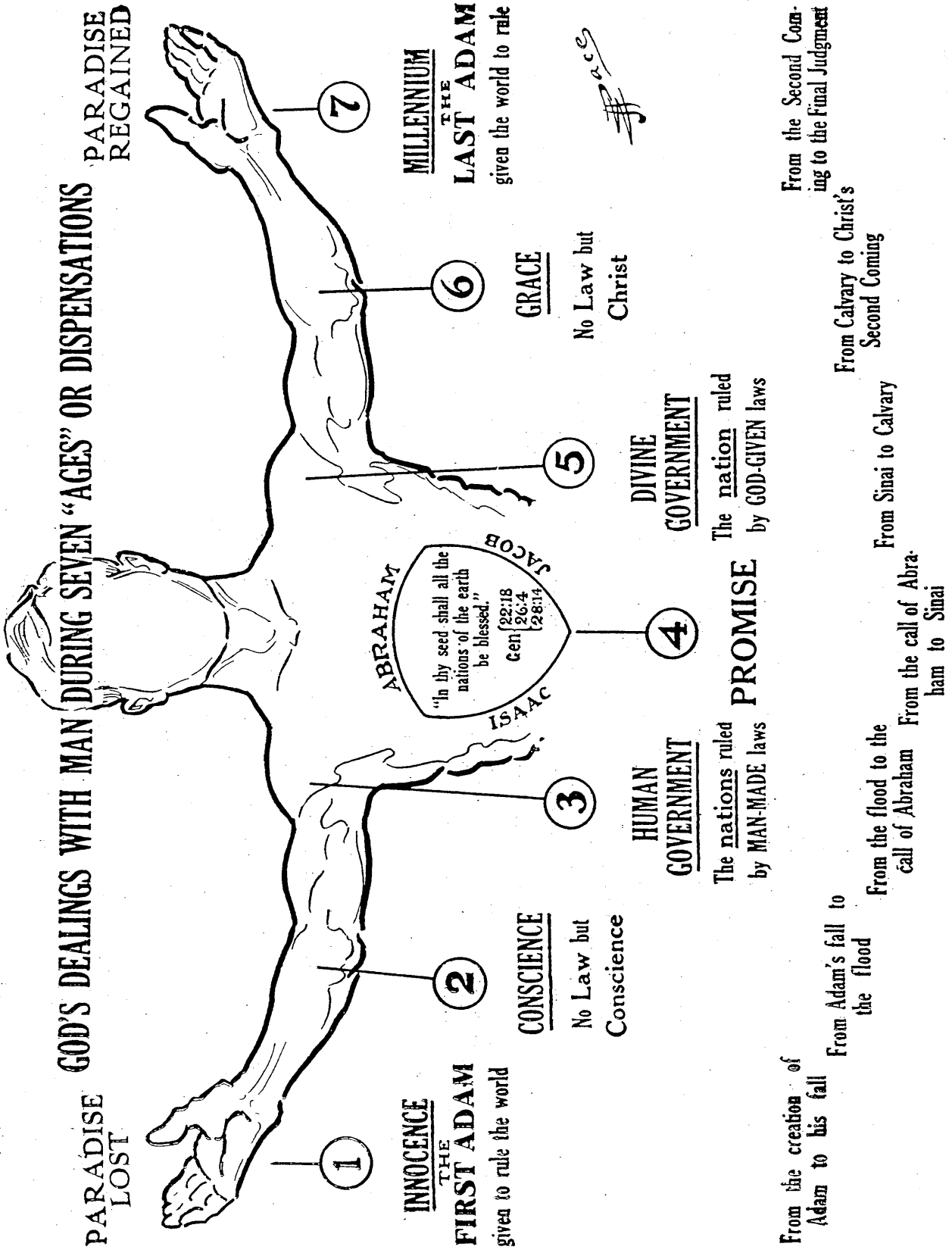


Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

THE DISPENSATIONS



GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MAN DURING SEVEN "AGES" OR DISPENSATIONS



PARADISE LOST

PARADISE REGAINED

INNOCE

THE FIRST ADAM

given to rule the world

MILLENNIUM

THE LAST ADAM

given the world to rule

CONSCIENCE

No Law but
Conscience

GRACE

No Law but
Christ

HUMAN GOVERNMENT

The nations ruled
by MAN-MADE laws

DIVINE GOVERNMENT

The nation ruled
by GOD-GIVEN laws

PROMISE

From the creation of
Adam to his fall
From Adam's fall to
the flood

From the flood to the
call of Abraham
From the call of Abra-
ham to Sinai

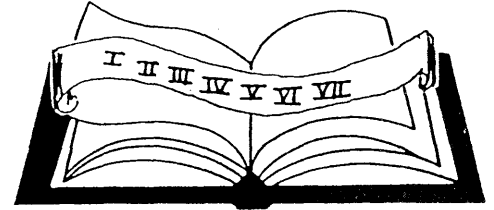
From Calvary to Christ's
Second Coming

From the Second Com-
ing to the Final Judgment

acc

God's Plan for the Ages or

DISPENSATIONALISM



1A. THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISPENSATIONALISM

1b. The opposition:

1c. Dispensationalism is recent:

Since the study of dispensationalism was popularized only within the last 100 years, it cannot possibly be true.

2c. Dispensationalism is heretical:

Daniel Fuller reached the conclusion that dispensationalism is "internally inconsistent and unable to harmonize itself with the Biblical data. . ." ("The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism," unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, 1957, p. 386.)

3c. Dispensationalism is dangerous:

Dispensationalism sees the future establishment of a literal kingdom, a suggestion that is branded as a devilish doctrine. One California group is very outspoken in its hatred for those who subscribe to the dispensation of the kingdom:

"Those human devils who are teaching that Christ will set up an earthly utopia or Communistic heaven on earth are promoting Communism under the masquerade of the Christian faith. When they are confronted with this issue they only maintain a surly silence and keep right on with their subversion and subterfuge. They desecrate the faith and the American flag with their premillennial Communism. They who hold the faith in unrighteousness are gravediggers." (Christians Awake, Summer 1972, p. 2)

4c. Dispensationalism is man-made:

Men like John Nelson Darby, the "pope of the Plymouth Brethren" movement is said to have invented it. Since the system is a human innovation, it must be wrong.

5c. Dispensationalism is erroneous:

1d. Dispensationalism is accused of teaching two ways of salvation. Old Testament saints were saved by offering sacrifices; New Testament saints are saved by trusting in Christ.

2d. Dispensationalism is accused of totally disregarding the Sermon on the Mount, relegating it to the Kingdom Age.

2b. The origin of dispensationalism:

1c. Bible schools

2c. The Scofield Bible

3c. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)

4c. Pierre Poiret (1647-1719)
The Divine Economy, 6 vols., 1713 (orig. 1687)

2A. THE DEFINITION OF DISPENSATIONALISM

1b. The definition of "dispensation":

"A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose." (Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today, p. 29).

2b. The etymology of the word:

1c. Dispensatio, the Latin term

"To weigh or dispense"

2c. Oikonomia, the Greek term

Oikos=house Nomos=law

The Greek term, oikonomia, means "the managing of a household"

3b. The usage of Scripture:

1c. The general usage:

1d. The usage of the word dispensation:

The various forms of the word *dispensation* are used in the New Testament twenty times. The verb *oikonomeo* is used once in Luke 16:2 where it is translated "to be a steward." The noun *oikonomos* is used ten times (Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; Rom. 16:23; I Cor. 4:1, 2; Gal. 4:2; Titus 1:7; I Pet. 4:10), and in all instances it is translated "steward" except "chamberlain" in Romans 16:23. The noun *oikonomia* is used nine times (Luke 16:2, 3, 4; I Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; I Tim. 1:4). In these instances it is translated variously ("stewardship," "dispensation," "edifying"). The Authorized Version of Ephesians 3:9 has "fellowship" (*koinonia*), whereas the American Standard Version has "dispensation."

(Ryrie, p. 25)

2d. The Lucan passage, Luke 16:1ff

AND he said also unto his disciples, "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

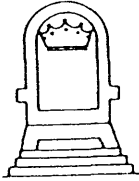
3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

3d. The inference from the usage:

- 1e. A stewardship involves two parties.
- 2e. A stewardship involves an obligation of one party to the other.
- 3e. A stewardship involves accountability.

2c. The specific usage of dispensation:

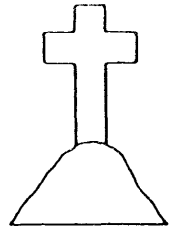
1d. Ephesians 1:10--"Dispensation of the fullness of time"



10 That in the ³dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him;

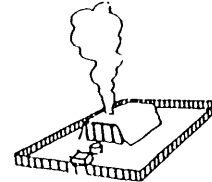
2d. Ephesians 3:2--"Dispensation of the grace of God."

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the 'grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

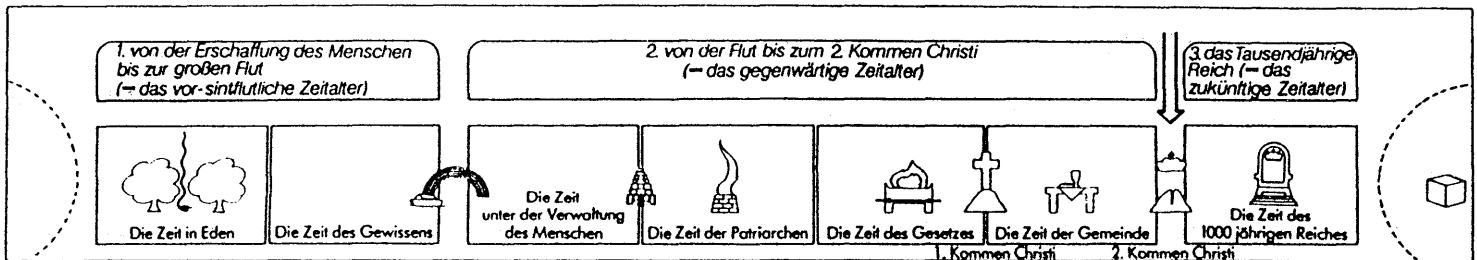


3d. Colossians 1:25-26--"I am . . . a minister, according to the dispensation of God."

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to ²fulfil the word of God;
 26 *Even* the 'mystery which hath been hid from 'ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:



Die 3 Zeitalter



EPHESIANS 1

Kingdom

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.

EPHESIANS 3

Grace

3 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words;

COLOSSIANS 1

Law

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

3A. THE DISTINCTIVES OF A DISPENSATION

1b. The characteristics of a dispensation:

1c. Primary characteristics:

1d. God's change in governmental relationship:

God initiates a new stewardship on earth.

2d. A new responsibility for man:

Man receives new obligations as steward.

3d. God's revelation to that end:

Before God can expect man to function under his new responsibility, added revelation is necessary.

2c. Secondary characteristics:

1d. Divine test:

Each dispensation is a test to see whether man under whatever circumstance can please God.

2d. Human failure:

Invariably man falls short of God's expectations.

3d. Eventual judgment:

Each dispensation concludes with a divine judgment.

4d. Divine Grace:

God's justice is tempered by His love and despite miserable human failure and inevitable judgment, God manifests His grace.

2b. The sine qua non of a dispensationalist:

1c. Negatively: A dispensationalist is not one who

1d. Uses the word "dispensation"

2d. Subscribes to a certain number of dispensations

3d. Believes in a premillennial return of Christ.

2c. Positively: A dispensationalist is one who

1d. Consistently distinguishes Israel and the Church.

A dispensationalist sees two eternal purposes of God, expressed in His dealings with Israel and the Church. Israel is always Israel; the Church is the Church, not spiritual Israel.

2d. Uses literal hermeneutics:

Dispensationalism practices consistent literal interpretation of the Bible.

3d. Sees the underlying purpose of God as His glory:

God's overall purpose in the universe is to manifest His glory through salvation and other means.

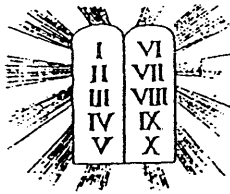
3b. The number of dispensations:

1c. The importance of the number:

The number and names of dispensations are of relatively minor importance. It is possible to have between 3 to 8 dispensations. Covenant theologians only see the Old and the New dispensation.

2c. The inference from Scripture:

1d. The New Testament refers to three dispensations:



1e. The millennium: Eph. 1:10

2e. Grace: Eph. 3:2

3e. Law: Col. 1:25-26



These three dispensations, Law, Grace and Kingdom are the subject of extensive Scripture.

2d. The Old Testament implies five dispensations:

1e. A dispensation before the fall: Man's life under innocence.

2e. A dispensation after the fall: Man's life under conscience, offering sacrifices.

3e. A dispensation after the flood:

In Gen. 9:1-17, four new features for man's stewardship are introduced:

1f. The fear of man upon animals, v. 2.

2f. The eating of meat, v. 3.

3f. Capital punishment, v. 6.

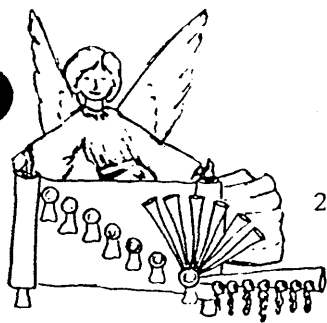
4f. A promise of never causing another flood, vv. 8-17.

4e. A dispensation beginning with Abraham, involving a covenant of promise.

5e. A dispensation commencing at Mt. Sinai with the giving of the Mosaic Law.

3c. The inconclusiveness on some periods:

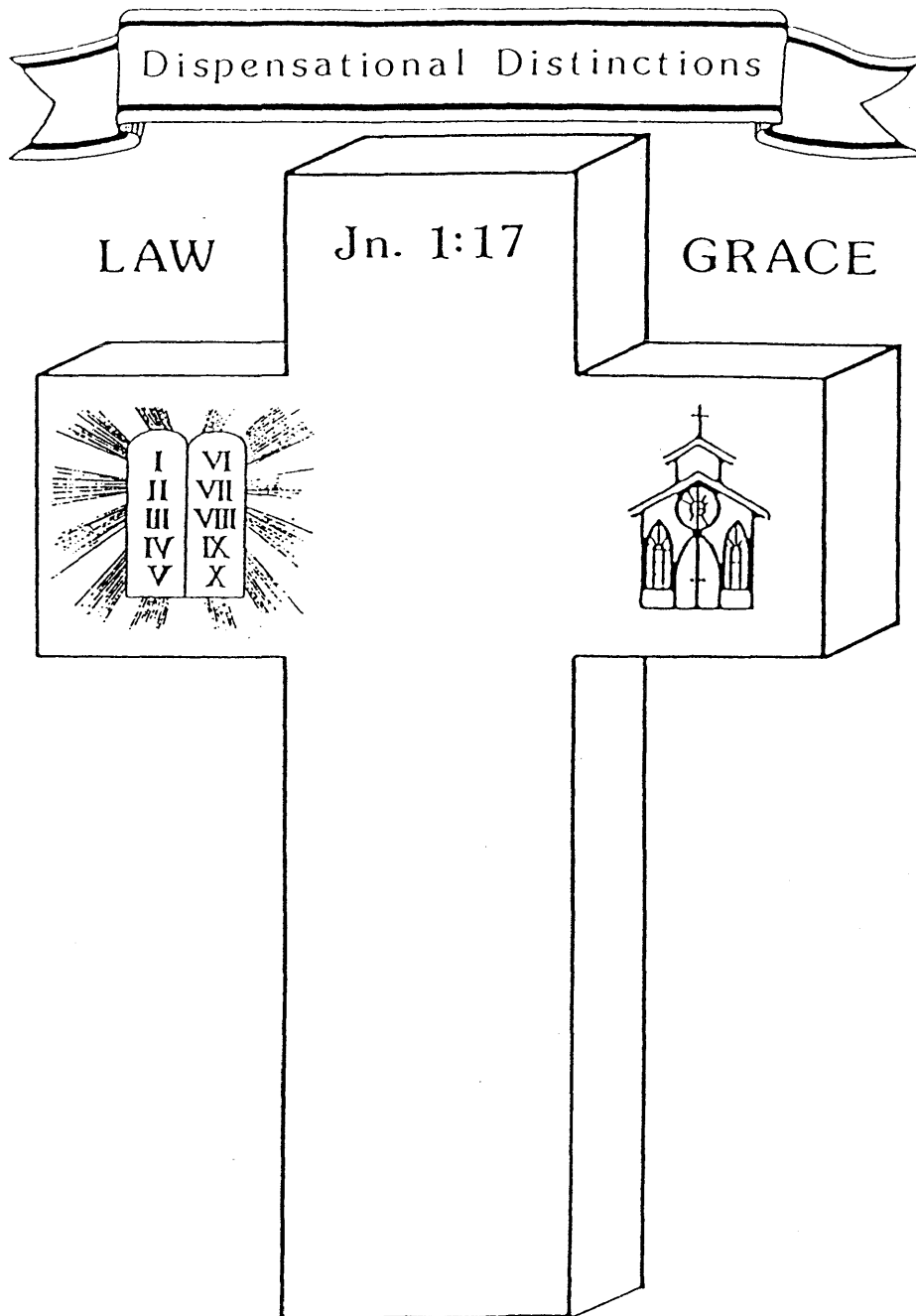
1d. Should the tribulation be a separate dispensation?



The tribulation period is not a separate dispensation, but the climatic judgment concluding grace. The 70 weeks of Daniel began about 1,000 years after the law was given and are completed during the tribulation, but are not necessarily the same as the dispensation of the Law.

2d. Should the eternal state be a separate dispensation?

When temporal history ends, so do God's stewardship arrangements with men.



GOD'S PLAN OF THE AGES

or

THE DISTINGUISHABLE

ECONOMIES

IN THE

OUTWORKING

OF GOD'S

PURPOSE

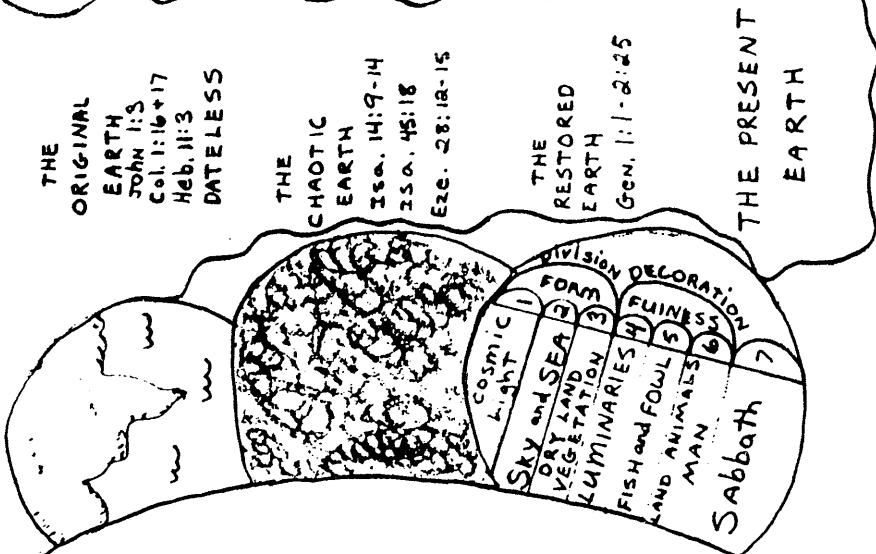
1. THE ETERNAL GOD (Deut. 33:27)

2. THE ETERNAL SON (John 1:1+2)

3. THE ETERNAL SPIRIT (Heb. 13:14)

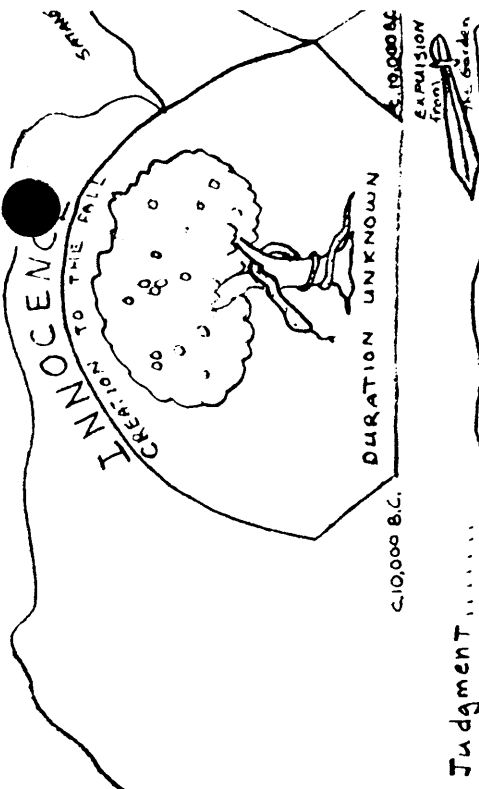
4. THE ETERNAL PURPOSE (Eph. 3:11)

ETERNITY



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.
Faith Baptist Bible College
Ankeny, Iowa

Reduced by Scott Felton



Judgment

SCRIPTURE

PERSONS

Responsibility

Failure

Grace

GEN 1:26-3:6

Adam, Eve

populate and subdue the earth. Dress and keep the garden. Resist from eating of the tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil.

They doubted GOD'S Word, goodness, judgment and motive and ate of the forbidden tree.

Promised Redeemer, Coats of skin, long life, Supply of needs, Separation of tree of Life.

EDENIC COVENANT
GEN. 1:28-30; 2:15-17



CONSCIENCE



ADAM to the Flood
DURATION 5,000 YEARS

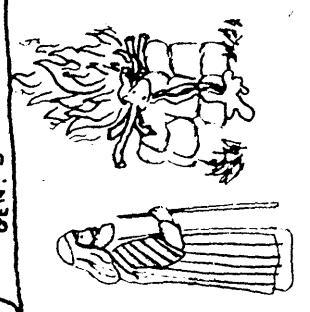
GEN. 3:7-8:19

ADAM, EVE, SETH, ENOCH, NOAH
Life under a curse.
Conscience as a rule of life
Blood sacrifices.

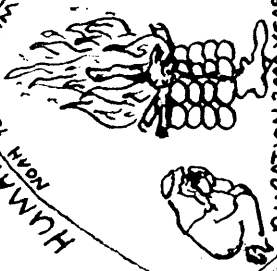
Failure to live up to
conscience.
Universal wickedness

Salvation of some.
Preservation of Noah.
Long suffering before judgment

ADAMIC COVENANT
GEN. 3:14-19



HUMAN GOVERNMENT



HUMAN TO ABRAHAM
DURATION 3,000 YEARS
C. 2000 B.C.

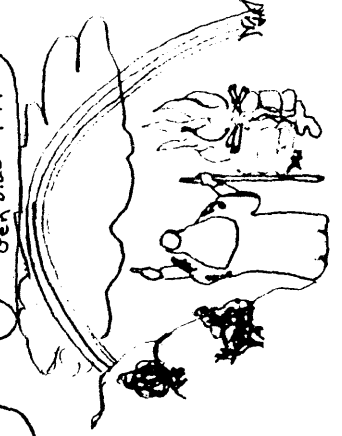
GEN 8:20-11:9

NOAH, SHEM, HAM, JAPETH
Renewed command to multiply and have dominion
Essence of government established involving organization and legislation.

Noah's drunkenness, Ham's irreverence
Failure of human government to curb sin.

the seed of the woman.
Preservation of a bodily remnant.

NOAHIC COVENANT
GEN 8:20-9:17



PROMISE



ABRAHAM to MOSES
DURATION 560 YEARS
Bondage in EGYPT

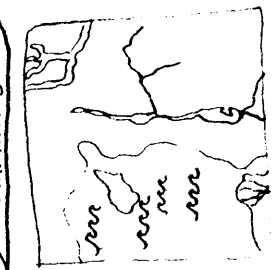
GEN 11:10-EX. 19:9

ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB, JOSEPH
Faith in the material, spiritual and social promises of God.

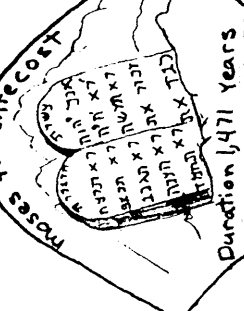
Abraham's delay, doubt and descent into Egypt. Isaac's doubt. Jacob's deceit. Israel's murmuring.

A deliverer was promised.
Victory over enemies was given.
Unconditional promises renewed.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
GEN. 12:1-3



LAW



MOSES to PENTECOST
DURATION 1,471 YEARS

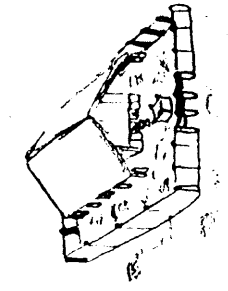
EX. 19:9 - JOHN 2:1-25

MOSES, JOSHUA, JUDGES, KINGS, PROPHETS.
Israel is to obey a detailed system of works comprised of 613 commandments.

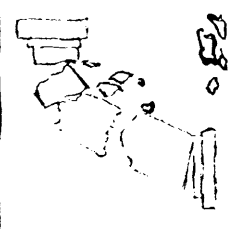
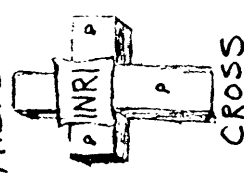
The entire Old Testament is a record of failure, culminating in the crucifixion.

Sacrifices provided a way of restoration. God raised up deliverers. The nation is preserved. Millennium promised.

MOSAIC COVENANT
EX. 19:5 - 31:18



A.D. 32



Jerusalem Destroyed
70 A.D.

GRACE
 Pentecost to Second Coming
 Duration 1,900+ Years

KINGDOM
 Second Coming to Great White Throne
 Duration 1,000 Years

TRIBULATION

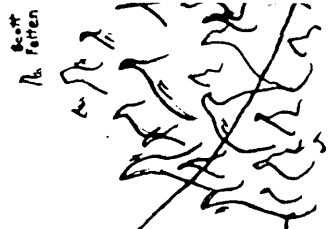
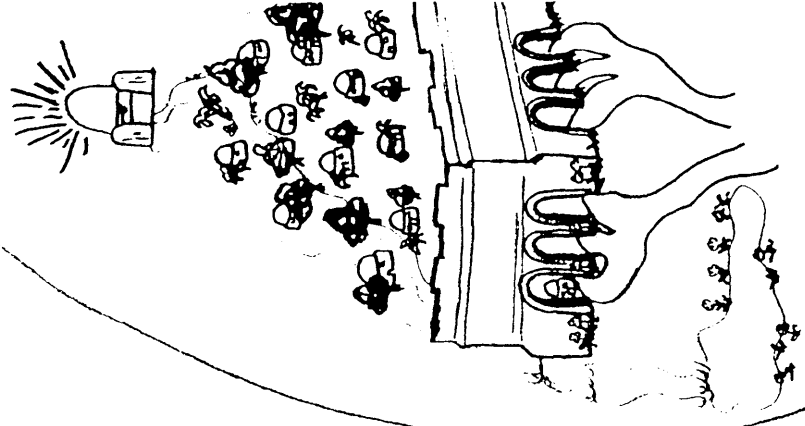
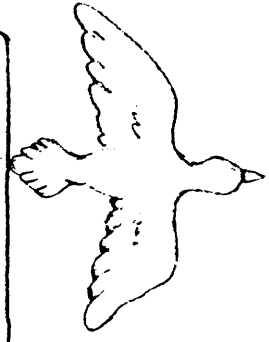
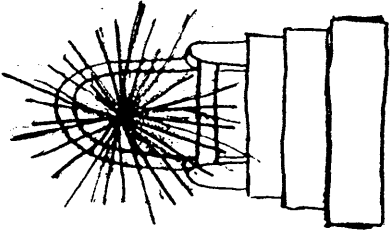
Acts 1:1 - Rev. 3:22
 Apostles, Church Fathers, Christians.
 Church's responsibility includes Salvation by Faith, Sanctification Through the Spirit, World Evangelism
 Grace has not produced a world-wide acceptance of Christ or a triumphant church and ends with great apostasy.
 The appearance of Christ. The standing before God. The rule of life, Deliverance from Judgment

NEW COVENANT
 Mat. 26:26-29; I Cor. 11:25

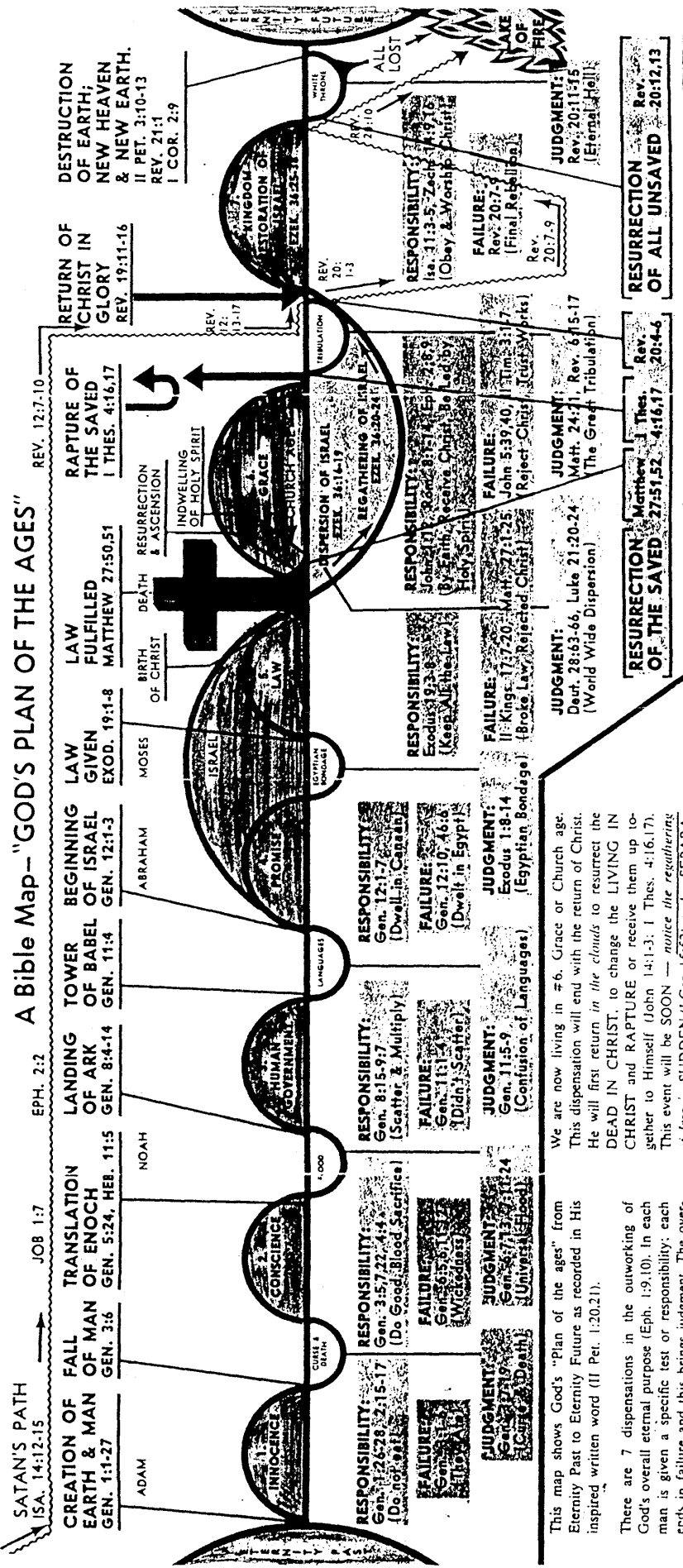
Rev. 20:1-15:21:9-22:5
 Tribulation saints who endured People born in the Millennium.
 To obey the King.
 Outward sin.
 A climate rebellion.
 Fulfillment of the Abrahamic, Palestinian and Davidic Covenants - Establishment of the New Covenant.
 Fruition of Nature.

NEW COVENANT
 Jer. 31:31-40

GREAT WHITE THRONE



A Bible Map -- "GOD'S PLAN OF THE AGES"



This map shows God's "Plan of the Ages" from Eternity Past to Eternity Future as recorded in His inspired written word (II Pet. 1:20,21).

There are 7 dispensations in the outworking of God's overall eternal purpose (Eph. 1:9,10). In each man is given a specific test or responsibility; each ends in failure and this brings judgment. The overall revelation of the dispensational tests show that man is utterly *sinful and lost* (Rom. 3:10,23).

Salvation in every dispensation is by the GRACE OF GOD (un-deserved, un-earned gift) and is received BY FAITH. Some examples are Abel, Heb. 11:4; Enoch, 5-6; Noah, 7; Abraham, 8-19; Moses, 23-29. See also Eph. 2:8,9; Rom. 6:23.

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The Tribulation will be God's wrath on this Christ rejecting world and men will beg the mountains to *fall on them* to hide them (Rev. 6:12-17). There will be wars and AT LEAST 1/3 THE WORLD'S POPULATION WILL BE KILLED (Rev. 6:4-8; 9:15-19). Men will be scorched with *fire*, there will be *great earthquakes* and *100 pound hail*. Cities will fall and every island and mountain will *disappear* (Rev. 16:8,9,18-21).

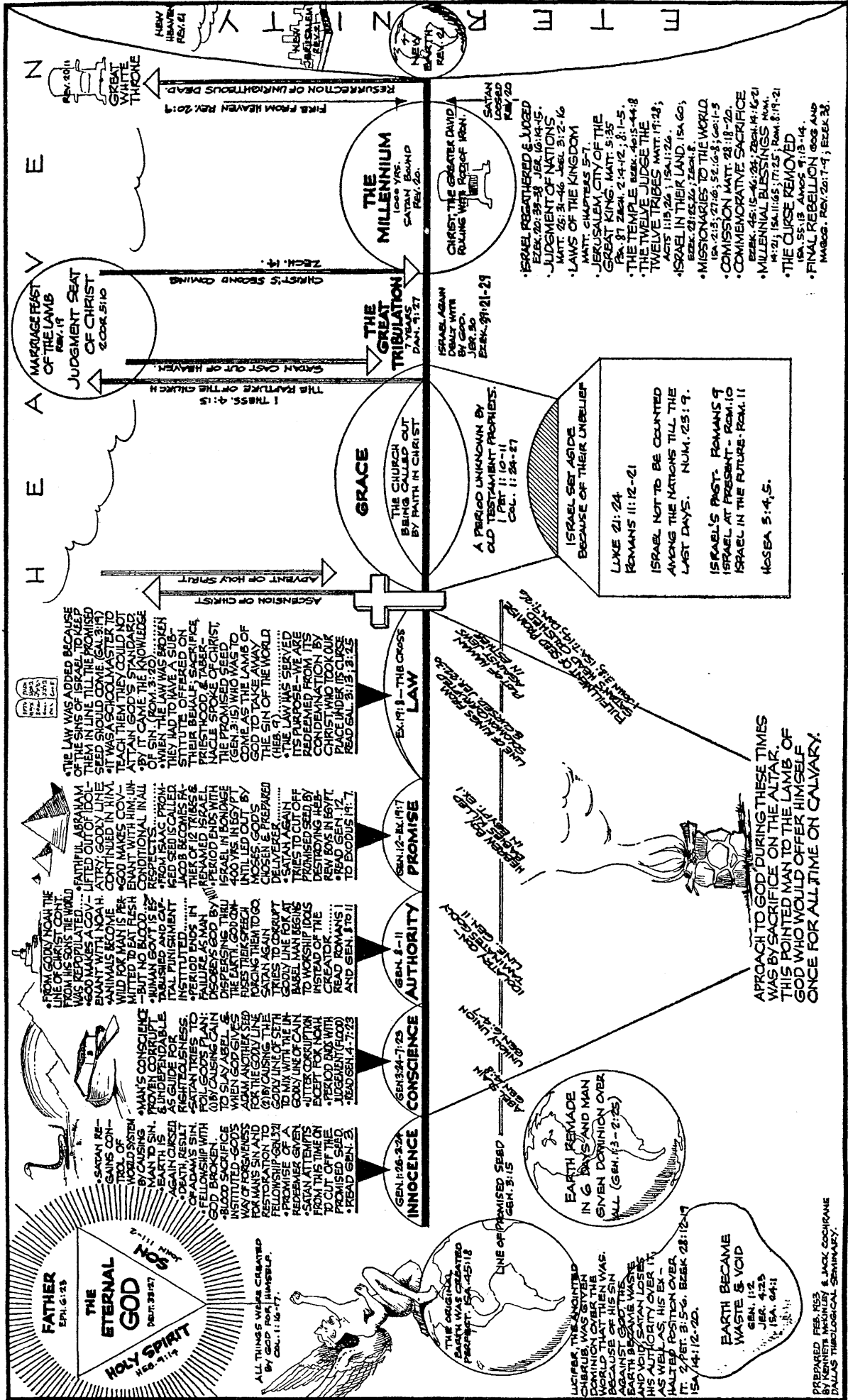
The White Throne is God's final judgment on all who have rejected His GRACE. BY FAITH salvation. They will be resurrected from all dispensations to be proven they could NOT be saved by their own works and their names are NOT written in the Lamb's Book of Life. They will then be separated from God *forever* in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15). WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH JESUS CHRIST?

RESURRECTION OF THE SAVED Matthew 27:51,52, 4:16,17 Rev. 20:4-6
RESURRECTION OF ALL UNSAVED Rev. 20:11-15 (Eternal Hell)

JUDGMENT: Deut. 28:63-66, Luke 21:20-24 (World Wide Dispersion)
 II King. 17:20, Math. 27:1-25 (Broke Law, Rejected Christ)
JUDGMENT: I Tim. 3:17 (Rejected Christ, Trust Works)
 Math. 24:1, Rev. 6:15-17 (The Great Tribulation)

JUDGMENT: Rev. 20:7-9 (Final Retribution)
 Isa. 11:3-5, Zech. 14:9, 15 (Obey & Worship Christ)
 Rev. 20:7-9 (Final Retribution)

JUDGMENT: Rev. 20:11-15 (Eternal Hell)



4A. THE BENEFITS OF DISPENSATIONALISM:

1b. It answers the need for biblical distinction:

Everyone faces problems in practicing some kind of consistent interpretation. Every expositor needs to account for the differences between the Old Testament economy and this dispensation in areas such as:

1. The inheritance of the land.
2. The keeping of the Passover and Sabbath.
3. Animal sacrifices.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said that one is a dispensationalist, whether he realizes it or not, if one does not claim or practice the above.

2b. It answers the need for a philosophy of history:

- 1c. Dispensationalism recognizes progressive revelation.
- 2c. Dispensationalism provides a unifying factor to history. Whatever God does is for His glory, that is, it serves a doxological purpose.
- 3c. Dispensationalism provides for a goal of human history, the millennium.

3b. It provides a consistent procedure in hermeneutics:

1c. The two Great Commissions: Matthew 10; Matthew 28

In Matthew 10, Christ demands the disciples not to preach to the Gentiles or Samaritans. In Matthew 28 He commands the same disciples to go and disciple all nations. Only a dispensational distinction will help solve the apparent discrepancy.

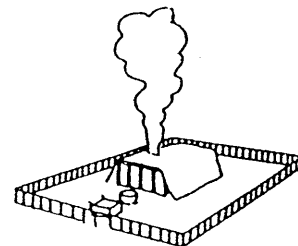
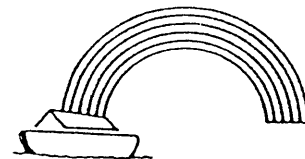
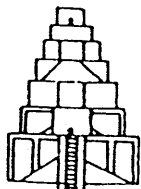
2c. The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5-7

Certain commandments in this passage cannot possibly be practiced literally in the Church Age, such as turning the other cheek and giving to anyone who asks of us. Seeing that part of the Sermon on the Mount applies to the Kingdom Age relieves apparent hermeneutical tensions.

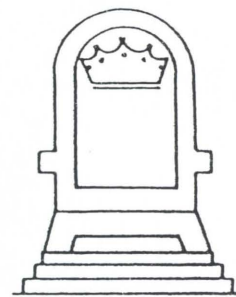
5A. THE DETAILING OF DISPENSATIONS:

1b. The listing of the dispensations:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1c. Innocence: | Creation to Fall |
| 2c. Conscience: | Fall to Flood |
| 3c. Human Government: | Flood to the call of Abraham |
| 4c. Promise: | Call of Abraham to Mount Sinai |
| 5c. Law: | Mount Sinai to the Cross |



- 6c. Grace: Pentecost to Rapture
- 7c. Kingdom: Second Advent to Great White Throne
- 2b. The exposition:
- 1c. The beginning:
 - 2c. Related Scriptures:
 - 3c. The state of man:
 - 4c. Human responsibility:
 - 5c. Human failure:
 - 6c. Divine judgment:
 - 7c. Divine grace:
 - 8c. Divine covenant:
- 3b. Concluding general observations:
- 1c. Innocence has devoted only 37 verses to it.
 - 2c. Law and grace have the most Scripture relating to them.
 - 3c. It is best to see 7 dispensations:
 - 4c. Our GARBC fellowship is the largest dispensational group in the USA.



XVIII. Israel

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37.

(General Association of Regular Baptist Churches 1988 Church Directory, p. 16, pages 13-16 "Articles of Faith")

XIX. Rapture and Subsequent Events

We believe in the premillennial return of Christ, an event which can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51-54; Phil. 3:20, 21; Rev. 3:10.

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom. Dan. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29, 30; Rev. 20:1-4, 6.

FBBC'S Statement of Faith

Dispensations

We believe that the dispensations are not ways of salvation, which has always been by grace through faith, but are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on earth through man under varying responsibilities; that changes in dispensational dealings depend upon changed situations in which man is found in relation to God due to man's failures and God's judgments; that, though several dispensations cover the entire history of mankind, only three of these are the subject of extended revelation in Scripture; that these three (Mosaic law, grace and millennial kingdom) are distinct and are not to be intermingled or confused.



4A. THE DISPENSATION OF PROMISE: ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

- 1b. The beginning: The call of Abraham, Gen. 11:10
- 2b. The Scripture: Gen. 11:10 through Ex. 19:2, the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai (approximately 600 yrs.).
- 3b. The state of man:
 - 1c. A chosen portion of the race became recipients of wonderful and gracious promises.
 - 2c. God turned from the world to one man and his seed.
- 4b. The human responsibility:
 - 1c. Faith in the material, spiritual and social promises of God.
 God's promises were restated to Isaac: Gen. 26:1-4
 - 2c. The content of that faith is expressed in the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - 1d. The promises are national: Gen. 12:2 "a great nation"
 - 1e. A land: Gen. 12:1; 13:14, 15, 17; 15:7; 17:8; 18:21
 - 2e. Great numbers: Gen. 13:16; 15:5
 - 3e. Riches: Gen. 15:4; Ex. 12:25-36
 - 2d. The promises are personal, to Abraham:
 - 1e. He would be blessed: Gen. 12:2
 - 2e. He would have a great name: Gen. 12:2
 Abraham is honored by Jews, Christians and Mohammedans.
 - 3e. He would be a blessing: Gen. 12:3
 - 4e. He would be very fruitful: Gen. 13:16; 17:6
 - 3d. The promises are universal:
 - 1e. God would bless them that bless Abraham: Gen. 12:3
 - 2e. God would curse them that curse Abraham: Gen. 12:3
 - 3e. In Abraham would all the families of the earth be blessed: Gen. 12:3



- 4d. The promises are unconditional:
- 1e. They were given in pure grace: Gen. 12:1 (at age 75)
 - 2e. They were confirmed by a sacrifice: Gen. 15:17 (at age 95)
 - 3e. They were sealed with God's oath: Gen. 22:16-18; (at age 145)
 - 4e. They were declared to be everlasting: Gen. 17:7, 13, 19; Neh. 9:5-12; I Chron. 16:16-17; Ps. 105:3-15
- 5d. The promises are accompanied by a sign, circumcision: Gen. 17:13-14, 17, 19. Ps. 105:10

5b. Human failure:

1c. Abraham's failure:

- 1d. Delay of going to the promised land: Gen. 11:31
- 2d. Abraham becomes the father of Ishmael: Gen. 16:1-16
- 3d. Abraham goes down into Egypt: Gen. 12:10-13:1
- 4d. Abraham does not return to Egypt but gets in trouble when he comes close to Egypt: Gen. 20:1-18-- the deception concerning Sarah
- 5d. Abraham was nevertheless grateful and worshipful. He had a human responsibility:

- 1e. He built altars at: Moreh: Gen. 12:6,7
Bethel: Gen. 12:8 cf. 13:3-4
Mamre: Gen. 13:8
Moriah: Gen. 22:9

2e. His life was characterized by deep piety:

- 1f. Gen. 13:8 "I pray thee. . . let there be no strife"
- 2f. Gen. 14:22-23 "I will not take a thread nor a shoelatchet"
- 3f. Gen. 17:3 "Abraham fell on his face"
- 4f. Gen. 18:2-5 "Bowed himself to the ground"
- 5f. Gen. 18:17-19 "He commanded his children" (In Hebrews 11:8-12 four verses are devoted to Abraham and Sarah, as many as to Moses in Heb. 11:23-27)



- 2c. Isaac's failure: like his father he becomes a dweller near the Egyptian border. He is forbidden to go to Egypt, yet he lives as near as he can at Gerar (Gen. 26: 6-16 cf. 20:1-18)

3c. Jacob's failure:

- 1d. Unbelief in the promise made to his mother at his birth: Gen. 25:23; 28:13-15, 20).

- 2d. Jacob is guilty of lying, deceit, bargaining:
Gen. 27:1-29.
- 3d. Unbelief as to God's care and provision leads to bargaining with God in the face of the promises:
Gen. 28:13-15; 28:20-21
- 4d. The whole family moved, under the leadership of Jacob, into Egypt, despite the specific warning to Isaac against such a move.



Gen. 26: 1-5 the directive will of God--Isaac not to go to Egypt
 Gen. 46:1-4 the permissive will of God--Jacob told to go
 Gen. 15:12-14 the over-ruling will of God--God predicted Israel to be in Egypt 400 yrs.

4c. Israel's failure:

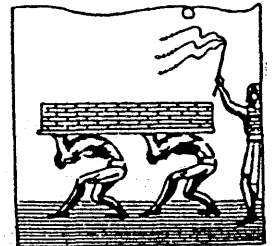
- 1d. In Egypt: her complaining, lack of faith (Ex. 2:23; 4:1,10; 5:21; 14:10-12; 15:24; etc.)
- 2d. Failure of Israel in their journeys: desire to go back to Egypt (Ex. 14:11-12)
- 3d. Israel's constant murmurings: Ex. 15:24; 16:2; Nu. 14:2; 16:11; 16:41; Josh. 9:18
- 4d. Failure at the time of the giving of the Law (Ex. 19)

Although Israel was right in pledging obedience to the Law (cf. Deut. 5:27-28) they foolishly assumed that they had the power to fulfill their pledge.

- 5d. Failure to trust the promises at Kadesh-Barnea:
Nu. 14

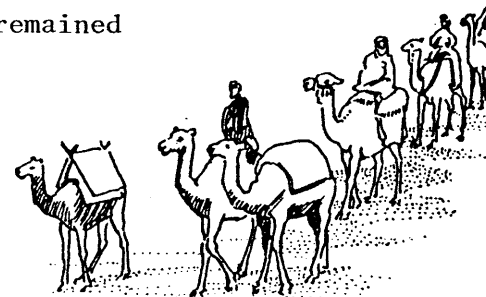
6b. Divine judgment: Bondage in Egypt

The descent into Egypt was a judgment and a punishment as well as a failure. Through it God worked out His sublime will and purpose. Sorrow and slavery and threatened extinction resulted. The experience was exceeding bitter: Ex. 1:14 ("they made their lives bitter")



7b. Divine grace:

- 1c. Though the blessings were lost, the promises remained sure.
- 2c. Israel was preserved in the furnace.
- 3c. Moses, a deliverer, was provided: Ex. 3:6-10



4c. The Passover protection was provided for the guilty:
Ex. 12

5c. God's care from Egypt to Canaan:

Egypt's bounty: Ex. 12:35-36

The Red Sea: Ex. 14

Marah: Ex. 15

Manna: Ex. 16

Amalek: Ex. 17

Borne on eagles' wing: Ex. 19:4

6c. God's power wrought deliverance to Israel (Ex. 14:15)
and death to the oppressor: (Ex. 14:28)

8b. The end of the dispensation:

1c. In one sense the dispensation of promise ends at the giving of the Law (Ex. 19), but only as testing and responsibility.

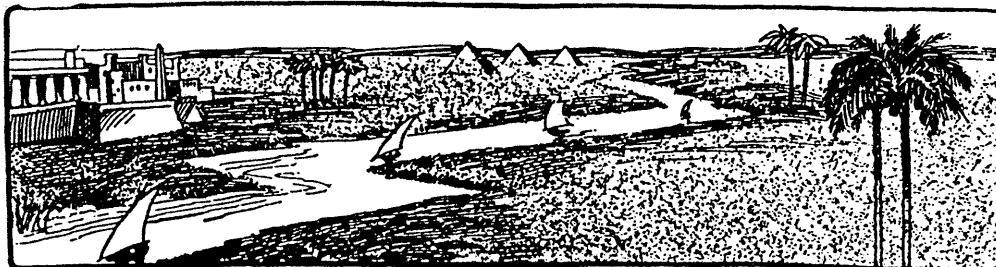
2c. In another sense the dispensation of promise continues to the end of history: its promises are still in force as an object of faith and hope. Abraham and his descendants have never possessed the land promised to them (Gen. 15:18).

SUMMARY:

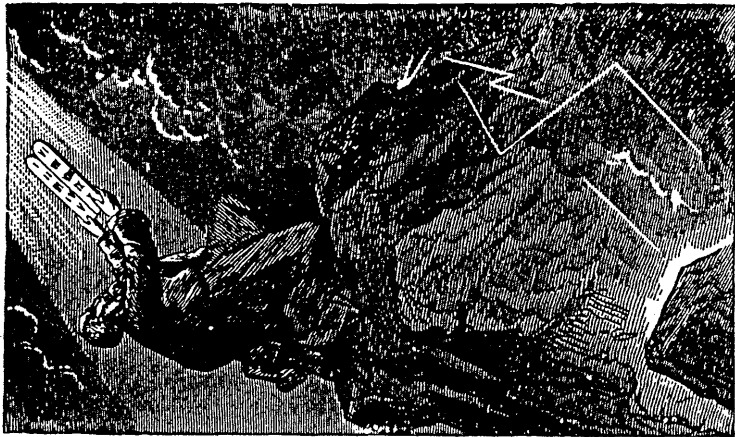
1. The dispensation of promise established clearly the principle of divine sovereignty.
2. It provided a channel of special divine revelation through the nation of Israel.
3. It continues to provide the line of redemption and channel of blessing.
4. It revealed the grace of God and provided a witness to the world.
5. Like the other dispensations, the dispensation of promise ended in failure and the Law had to be introduced as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ (Gal. 3:24).



ISRAELITES GATHERING THE
BREAD FROM HEAVEN, MANNA



THE DISPENSATION OF PROMISE



- 1. THE BEGINNING:
- 2. RELATED SCRIPTURE:
- 3. STATE OF MAN:
- 4. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY:
- 5. HUMAN FAILURE:
- 6. DIVINE JUDGMENT:
- 7. DIVINE GRACE:

5A. THE DISPENSATION OF THE LAW:

- 1b. The beginning of the dispensation: Exodus 19:9
- 2b. Scripture: Exodus 19:9 to the end of the gospel of John; or Sinai to Calvary.

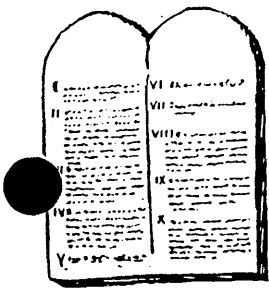


3b. The state of man:

- 1c. Law limits man to himself and requires complete obedience.
- 2c. "Not of faith," only "doing" its commands will be of value to man: Gal. 3:12
- 3c. Law could not give life: Gal. 3:21
- 4c. There were certain definite rewards: Luke 10:27-28
- 5c. The curse was no less definite: Gal. 3:10

4b. Human responsibility:

- 1c. The Law is directed to Israel alone. The heathen nations are never judged by it. In Exodus 19 only Israel was represented at the foot of Mt. Sinai.
- 2c. The Law is the Mosaic Covenant and contains a detailed system of works, encompassing a total of 613 commandments, of which 365 are negative and 248 are positive.



- 1d. The commandments--the expressed will of God: Exodus 20:1-26; Deut:5
 - 2d. The judgments--social and civic life of Israel: Exodus 21:1-24+ 11.
 - 3d. The ordinances--religious life of Israel: Exodus 24:12-31;18
- 3c. The government was basically a theocracy, governed by God who worked through prophets, priests and later kings.

4c. It was an ad interim covenant:

- 1d. It was a temporary covenant: until Christ should come (Gal. 3:24-25)
- 2d. Most of the promises of this covenant are dependent upon obedience and works--"if ye will obey my voice indeed" (Ex. 19:5)

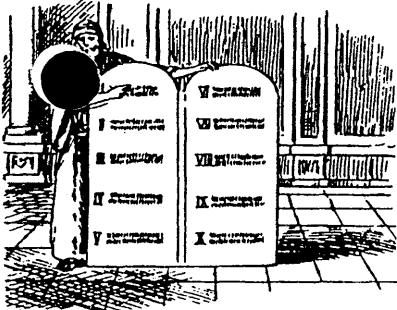
5c. For the first time in history, a complete and detailed religious system is revealed:
(Chafer, Systematic Theology, IV, 14-26).

- 1d. An acceptable standing before God.
- 2d. A manner of life--rule of moral life.
- 3d. A system of service for God to be recognized by reward.
- 4d. A righteous ground for forgiveness.
- 5d. A provision for cleansing and forgiveness, conditioned on meeting requirements.
- 6d. A program of worship and prayer.
- 7d. A future hope.

6c. The test: "Whether man, limited to his own efforts; with detailed regulations governing his conduct in relation to God and his fellowman, covering his moral, social and religious activities, is able to satisfy God's righteousness and to lead a holy life."
(H.C. Thiessen)

5b. Human failure:

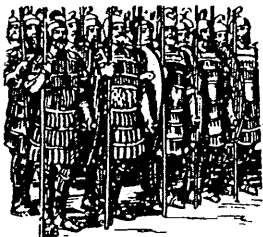
- 1c. The entire O.T. is a record of failure to keep the Law.
 - 1d. The period of the judges--the worst in Israel's history. (Judges 21:25)
 - 2d. The period leading up to the captivities: David, Sol., kings of Israel, and the kings of Judah.
 - 3d. The captivities and post-captivity period: Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.



- 2c. The N.T. continues the record of failure culminating in the crucifixion of Christ who perfectly kept the Law: Acts 2:22-23.

6b. Divine judgment:

- 1c. Judgments during the dispensation of Law: Deut. 28:1-30:20.



- 1d. Judgments during the period of the Book of Judges.
 2d. Judgments during the divided kingdom.
 3d. The Assyrian Captivity: 2 Kings 17-18. 10 tribes
 4d. The Babylonian Captivity: 2 Kings 25:1-11. 2 tribes
 5d. The persecution of the Syrians during the period of Antiochus Epiphanes (cf. Dan. 11:21-35)
 6d. The Roman domination and dispersion.

- 2c. Judgments on Israel after the close of the dispensation:



- 1d. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 2d. The world-wide dispersion of Israel: Mt. 23:37-39.
 1e. They took responsibility for Christ's death: Mt. 27:25
 2e. Christ prophesied of Gentile dominion: Lk. 21:24
 3d. The future time of Jacob's trouble: Jer. 30:1-11:
 The Great Tribulation: Dan. 12:1; Mt. 24

7b. Divine grace:

- 1c. The sacrificial system: provision of a way of restoration for sinning Israel.

- 2c. The longsuffering of God in raising up deliverers:

- 1d. Joshua pleaded for Israel.
 2d. The judges were raised up to rescue Israel.
 3d. The kings were helped in battle by God.
 4d. The prophets warned again and again of impending judgment.

- 3c. The preservation of the nation: (especially seen in the Book of Esther).

- 4c. The acceptance of genuine repentance: Moses' intercession (Ex. 32:30-35), Daniel's intercession (Dan.9)

- 5c. The writing of the O.T. with its specific revelation of God.

- 6c. The coming of Christ as the Messiah of Israel.

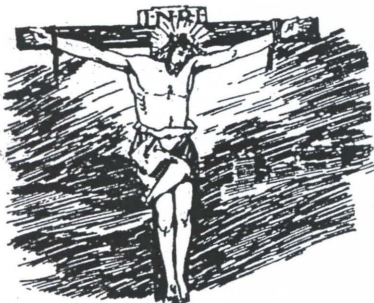
- 7c. The giving of many promises of ultimate deliverance in the millennium.



8b. The end of the dispensation:

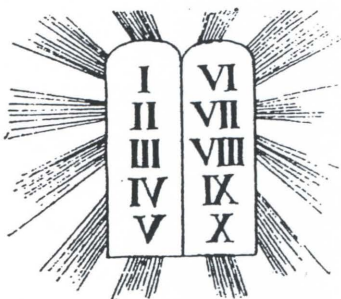
1c. The dispensation ended at the cross:

- 1d. Rom. 10:4: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."
- 2d. Gal. 3:19: "Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."
- 3d. Gal. 3:25: "But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."
- 4d. II Cor. 3:11-14: "That which is done away--that which is abolished"--and this includes the ten commandments as well, for v. 7 says that it was written and engraven in stone, namely the Ten Commandments or the Moral Law.
- 5d. Heb. 7:11-12: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." v. 12



2c. Five propositions of the Mosaic Law.

- 1d. It was given as a union and not divided as commandments, ordinances, judgments.
- 1e. All parts are equally important: Ex. 20; 21; 25
- 2e. Breaking the law in one point means the breaking of all: James 2:10
- 3e. Penalties are equally severe:
- 1f. Commandments: breaking the Sabbath: death: Nu. 15:32.
- 2f. Ordinances: Nadab and Abihu offering strange fires: death: Lev. 10:1-7.
- 3f. Judgments: Ex. 21-24: death: Jer. 25:11
The land rest was not kept for 490 years, therefore, God gave the land rest during the Babylonian captivity with ensuing death for many.
- 2d. It was given to Israel, not to Gentiles.
- 1e. O.T. proof: Lev. 26:43 between God and the children of Israel.
- 2e. N.T. proof: Rom. 2:14 Gentiles which have not the Law.
Rom. 9:4 to Israel is the giving of the Law
Eph. 2:12 the Gentiles are strangers to the Law
- 3d. All of the Law is done away: All 613 commandments.
- 1e. The Ten Commandments are especially mentioned: 2 Cor. 3:6, 7-11.
- 2e. A different priesthood necessitates a different law: Heb. 7:11-12.
- 4d. In spite of this, the Law has a right use: to show a standard from God, to demonstrate His righteous demands.



- 1e. The Law is useful for the unsaved: I Tim. 1:9.
The Law was made for the unrighteous; it was to point the ungodly to Christ, Gal. 3:19-25.
- 2e. The Law is useful for the saved: to show what God thinks about things. As all Scripture is profitable, so is the Law.

5d. The Law has a real abuse:

- 1e. When it is used as a means of salvation:

1f. Rom. 3:20 by deeds of law no flesh will be justified.

2f. Acts 13:39 man could not be justified by the Law of Moses.

- 2e. When used as a means of sanctification:

The Law stired up Paul, did not lead to a sanctified life: Rom. 7.

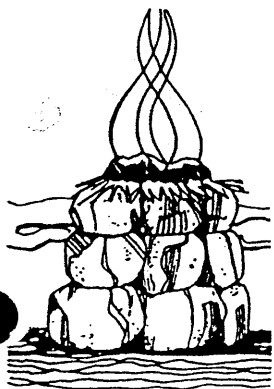
We still have laws, but they are not the same as the Mosaic Law. Some of God's standards are repeated in the N.T., but they are a part of a new code of law. We are under a new priesthood, therefore have a new code. The old law, including the Ten Commandments has been abrogated and is not for the church age believer.

- 3e. It would be sinful to obey some of the laws today, such as the putting to death of anyone who did not observe the Sabbath day.



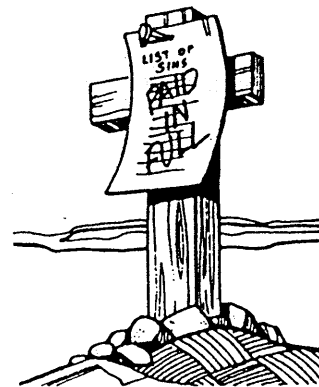
SUMMARY:

1. The purpose of the dispensation of the Law was to provide a righteous rule of life and to bring sin into condemnation--it demonstrated that moral, civil and religious law cannot save or sanctify.
2. The Law was not intended for man's salvation under the dispensation of the Law or later.
3. The weakness of the Law:
 - a. The Law could not justify: Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16
 - b. The Law could not sanctify or perfect: Heb. 7:18-19

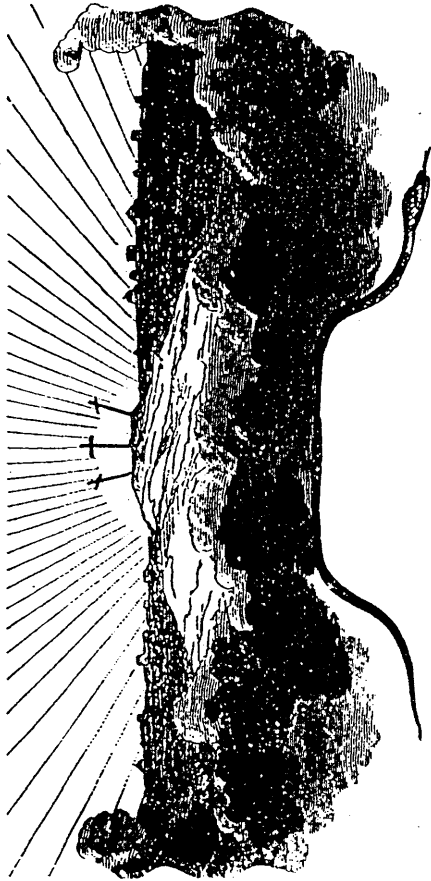


Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
 With all thy Heart
 and With all thy Soul
 and With all thy Mind
 and With all thy Strength.

this is the first
 commandment.



THE DISPENSATION OF THE LAW



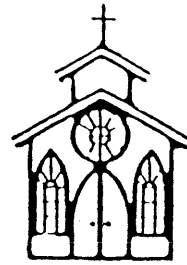
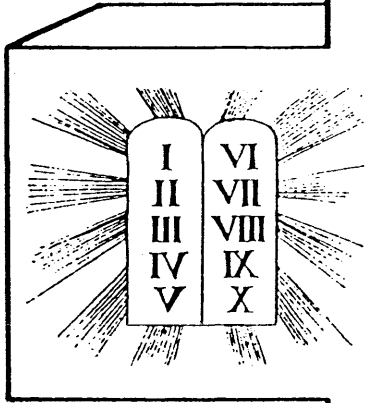
1. THE BEGINNING:
2. RELATED SCRIPTURE:
3. STATE OF MAN:
4. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY:
5. HUMAN FAILURE:
6. DIVINE JUDGMENT:
7. DIVINE GRACE:

Dispensational Distinctions

LAW

Jn. 1:17

GRACE



1500 YEARS
 ISRAEL
 THEOCRATIC NATION
 WIFE OF JEHOVAH
 LAW OF MOSES
 LEGALISM
 OBEDIENCE FOR BLESSING
 EX. 19 - JN. 21
 MT. SINAI
 HOLY LAND
 EARTHLY

Duration
 Companies
 Organism
 Relationship
 Code of Law
 Character
 Spirit
 Content
 Focus
 Destiny
 Rewards

1900+ YEARS
 CHURCH
 ROYAL PRIESTHOOD
 BRIDE OF CHRIST
 LAW OF CHRIST
 LIBERTY
 OBEDIENCE BECAUSE OF BLESSING
 ACTS 1 - REV. 22
 MT. CALVARY
 HEAVENLY CITY
 HEAVENLY

MK



6A. THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE:

1b. The beginning: Day of Pentecost:

Some teachings concerning the dispensation of grace are introduced earlier in the Gospels, such as Christ's discourse (John 13-17). In some respects, John is the bridge between Law and Grace.

2b. Scripture: Acts 1 through Rev. 3.
(The Church is nowhere found after Rev. 3)

3b. The state of man:

1c. This age has no specific covenant for man.

1d. Proof that there are no covenants for us:

- 1e. The Gentiles are strangers from the covenants of promise: Eph. 2:12
- 2e. The covenants pertain to Israel: Rom. 9:4

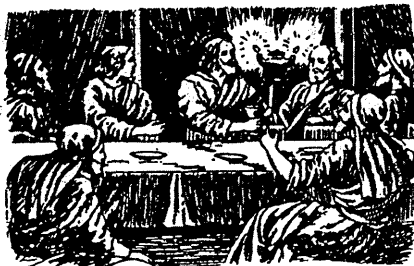
2d. Two covenants have specific, indirect relation to this age:

1e. The Abrahamic Covenant:



- 1f. It promises a blessing to all the families of the earth through the gospel which is based upon the seed, Christ: Gen. 12:4; Gal. 3:13-16.
- 2f. It was of grace, unconditional: Rom. 4:1-5.
- 3f. The imputation of righteousness is effected in all who believe in Jesus Christ: Rom. 4:24-25; Gal. 3:6-9; 22, 2 Cor. 5:21.
- 4f. The unconditional covenant becomes a pattern for today. Abraham simply believed, so this saving grace is given to us: Rom. 4:23-24; Gal. 3:13-19, cf. Gen. 15:6
- 5f. Today is to be declared the period of the gospel of His grace: Tit. 2:11

2e. The New Covenant:



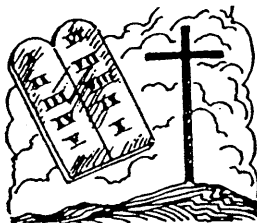
- 1f. It is promised to the nation Israel: Jer. 31:31-40
- 2f. This covenant announced in the 7th century B.C., is still in the future as far as Israel is concerned: Rom. 11:25-33.
- 3f. This is an unconditional, gracious covenant.
- 4f. The basis of the New Covenant is the sacrifice of our Savior and the Church participates in the blessings of this new covenant: Matt. 26:26-30 "My blood of the new covenant."

2c. This age sees the ultimate display of God's grace:

- 1d. This is not to say there was no grace in the O.T. under Law. The principal ways in which His grace was revealed are the following:

- 1e. He revealed Himself as the faithful and sufficient God, as the object of faith unto salvation. Any revelation of God is pure grace.
- 2e. He initiated fellowship between Himself and man by means of covenants.
- 3e. He made provision for man's eternal salvation.
- 4e. He bestowed temporal favors on men.

2d. Christ brought a new period of grace: John 1:17



17 For the law was given by Moses, but ^agrace and ^btruth came by Jesus Christ.



- 1e. Grace came in Christ's person.
- 2e. Our standing is in grace:
Rom. 5:2 "wherein we stand"
I Peter 5:12 "this is the true grace of God "
- 3e. Ours is called the "dispensation of the grace of God"
Eph. 3:2

3c. This age has three groups of people in view: 1 Cor. 10:32

32 ^dGive none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the ^eGentiles, nor to ^fthe church of God:

1d. The Jews (nationally):

- 1e. They are not cast away: Rom. 11:1
- 2e. Blindness in part till the fulness of the Gentiles has come: Rom. 11:23-27
- 3e. The Jews do not believe now but will obtain mercy: Rom. 11:28-31

2d. The Gentiles: Eph. 2:11-13

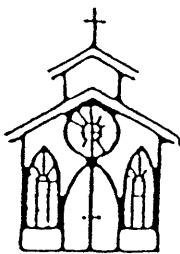
- 1e. Without Christ
- 2e. Aliens from Israel
- 3e. Strangers from the covenants
- 4e. Have no hope
- 5e. Are without God

II Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called ^athe Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 ^bThat at that time ye were without Christ, ^cbeing aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from ^dthe covenants of promise, ^ehaving no hope, ^fand without God in the world:

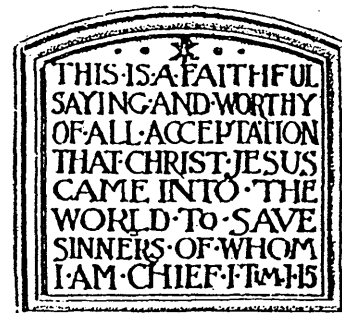
13 ^hBut now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were ⁱfar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

3d. The Church:



- 1e. The Jews and Gentiles are on the same terms:
Rom. 10:12--"neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, circumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian"--
Gal. 3:28:
Col. 3:11:
- 2e. In contrast to the condition of the Gentiles, the believer sustains a special relationship: Eph. 2:13-22

is made nigh by the blood, v. 13
 is one new man, v. 15
 is in one body, v. 16
 has access by the Spirit, v. 18
 is a fellow citizen, v. 19
 belongs to the household of God, v. 19
 and is God's building, v. 21



4c. This age goes far beyond the requirements of the Law:

- 1d. II Cor. 10:5 "casting down imaginations"
- 2d. I Pet. 2:9 "show forth the virtues"
- 3d. Eph. 5:20 "giving thanks always for all things"
- 4d. I John 1:7 "walk in light"
- 5d. Eph. 4:1-2 "walk worthy"
- 6d. Eph. 5:2 "walk in love"
- 7d. Gal. 5:16-23 "walk in the Spirit"
- 8d. Eph. 4:17-32 "grieve not the Spirit"
- 9d. I Thess. 5:19 "quench not the Spirit"
- 10d. Col. 3:1-17
- 11d. Phil. 2:5 "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"

5c. This age has laws but not the Law:

1d. The names of this system of laws:

- 1e. "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25)
- 2e. "the royal law" (Jas. 2:8)
- 3e. "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2)
- 4e. "the law of the spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2)

2d. The nature of these laws:

The Law of Christ is a definite code containing hundreds of specific commandments. Freedom from the Mosaic Law is not lawlessness or license. The Apostle Paul wrote, "being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ" (I Cor. 9:21).

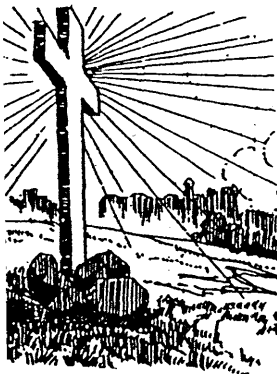
1e. Its precepts:

1f. Positive commandments: (I Thess. 5:16-18).

- 16 *Rejoice evermore.
- 17 ¹Pray without ceasing.
- 18 "In every thing give thanks: for this is ^othe will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

2f. Negative commands: (Rom. 12:2).

² And ^abe not conformed ^vto this world: but be ye transformed by ^vthe renewing of your mind, that ye may ^aprove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, ^bwill of God.



3f. Principles:

- 1g. Is it a weight? Heb. 12:1 "lay aside every weight"
 - 2g. Is it a habit? I Cor. 6:12 "not be brought under the power of any"
 - 3g. Is it a stumbling stone? I Cor. 8, esp. v. 13
 - 4g. Is it winsome? Col. 4:5 "walk in wisdom toward them that are without"
- Give no offense to unsaved I Cor. 10:32

4f. Rules:

In some areas there are neither principles nor precepts given. In this area it is necessary to have special rulings. God has made provision for this by giving leaders to His church who rule in these matters (Eph. 4:11-12, I Tim. 3:5). These leaders are given authority to rule in spiritual matters (Heb. 13:7,17). If there are rulers, it is obvious that there are those ruled who must obey these rules. (Heb. 13:17). Examples of this type of leadership would be the local church, a Christian camp, rules at school, such as dress, dating, conduct.

2e. Its power:

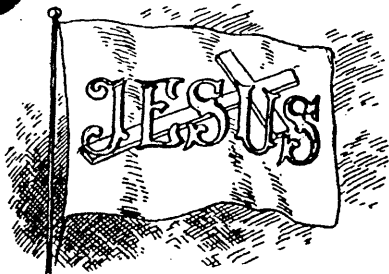
- 1f. The Spirit indwells permanently: John 14:17
- 2f. The Spirit indwells every believer: Rom. 8:9
1 Cor. 6:19--does not depend on spiritual maturity.
His presence is proof of salvation.

3e. Its purpose: Sanctification.

- 1f. A holy person resembles his heavenly Father: I Pet. 1:16
- 2f. We know what God is like through Christ: John 1:18

The person of Christ is our example for godly life; the law of Christ is our exhortation to godly life.

- 3f. We are to bring glory to God: I Cor. 10:31.



4b. The human responsibility:

- 1c. It is directed to the Church alone.
- 2c. It is revealed especially in Acts, the Epistles, and Rev. 1-3.
- 3c. It includes the following:
 - 1d. Salvation by faith. More clearly than ever salvation is revealed to be by faith alone: Rom. 1:16; 3:22, 26; 4:16, 5:15-19
 - 2d. Sanctification through following the example of Christ and obedience to the law of Christ: Rom. 12:1-2
 - 3d. Evangelization of the world: Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8

5b. Human failure:

- 1c. Grace has not produced a world-wide acceptance of Christ.
- 2c. Grace has not produced a triumphant Church.

3c. Grace ends with almost universal apostasy:

1 Tim. 4:1-3
 2 Tim. 3:1-13
 2 Pet. 2-3
 Jude
 Rev.

6b. Divine judgment:

The tribulation: for the professing but unbelieving church
 for a Christ-rejecting world
 for unbelieving Israel

The Church will not be present as Noah was not in his dispensational judgment. Each dispensation thus far has ended with a climatic judgment. The tribulation is that judgment for the Church age: Rev. 4-19; II Thess. 2:3-12. While the Church will be in heaven at the judgment seat and the marriage of the Lamb, unprecedented tribulation will come to this earth.

7b. Divine grace:

1c. Grace came as a result of the appearance of Christ: John 1:17.

2c. Grace is seen in our salvation and standing before God: Rom. 3:24; 5:1-2; 15-21; Gal. 1:1-2:21; Eph. 2:4-10.

3c. Grace is evidenced as our rule of life: Gal. 3:1-5:26; Eph. 1:1-7
 (In contrast, Uzzah was killed for touching the ark, 2 Sam. 6:6)

4c. Grace is shown by removing the Church from the experience of judgment:
 Rev. 3:10

5c. The preservation of the race:

8b. The end of the dispensation:

1c. The rapture of the Church:

2c. The judgment upon the professing church, Rev. 17:16:
 The false church is destroyed by the world system.

SUMMARY:

1. The law dealt with Israel; grace deals with Jews and Gentiles equally.
2. Under grace the motivating principle is different. The Law said "do this" (Deut. 28-29); grace says, "I did this for you."
3. Conscience and human government continue: Rom. 2:15; 13:1 ff.
4. Grace is a by-product of the dispensation of promise.
5. Only law is cancelled completely.
6. Grace is preeminently manifested in the fulness of salvation and rule of life.

THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE



1. THE BEGINNING:
2. RELATED SCRIPTURE:
3. STATE OF MAN:
4. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY:
5. HUMAN FAILURE:
6. DIVINE JUDGMENT:
7. DIVINE GRACE:

"YE ARE NOT UNDER LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE." ROM. 6:14

THE DIVINE PURPOSE

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

THE BOOK OF THE DISPENSATIONS

THE DISPENSATION OF <i>Sinai</i> LAW	THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE <i>Sion</i>
Dealing with ISRAEL , God's earthly people.	Dealing with the CHURCH , God's heavenly people.
The Seventh day of the week, or the Sabbath , commemorating a <i>finished creation</i> was made the seal of Israel's separation from all nations. <small>Ex: 31:13-17</small>	The First day of the week, or the Lord's Day , celebrating a <i>finished redemption</i> , became the symbol of the church's heavenly privileges.
A day of absolute bodily rest .	A day of spiritual activity .
A day of legal restrictions.	A day of voluntary worship.
Physical labor punished by death .	Spiritual labor a proof of life .
Prescribed the principle of one day's rest in seven.	Perpetuates the principle of one day's rest in seven.
Established in a covenant of works .	Grew up in a covenant of grace .
"He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second"	
<small>Heb. 10:9.</small>	

Note: It is passing strange, if the Spirit of God intended to make the Jewish Sabbath binding upon Gentile Christians, that no mention is made of it in that epochal 15th chapter of Acts, where the status of believers from among the Gentiles was finally settled.

"LET NO MAN THEREFORE JUDGE YOU--IN RESPECT OF THE SABBATH" Col. 2:16

"What doth the Lord REQUIRE of thee, but to

(a) **DO JUSTLY**, and to
 (b) **LOVE MERCY**, and to
 (c) **WALK HUMBLY** with thy God?"
Micah 6:8.

What doth the Lord BESTOW upon thee?
 (a) **LOVE** ^{JOY} _{PEACE}
 (b) **LONGSUFFERING** ^{GENTLENESS} _{GOODNESS}
 (c) **FAITH** ^{MEEKNESS} _{SELF-CONTROL}
Galatians 5:22,23.

GRACE
LAW
CE

= Atonement

WHERE LAW AND GRACE BLEND

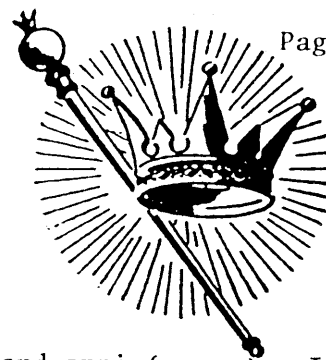
If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."
Rom. 10:9
R.V.

LAW
GRACE

do and thou shalt live.

done!
Romans 10:4
 Believe and live.

11:4:38



7A. THE DISPENSATION OF THE KINGDOM, OR MILLENNIUM

The name is derived from the Latin mille (thousand) and anni (years). In Rev. 20: 1-5, the expression 1000 yrs, is used six times. The Greek term for 1000 is chilia, therefore a belief in the millennium has been called chiliasm.

1b. The beginning: the Second Coming (Matt. 24; Rev. 19)

2b. The Scripture:

All passages on the future kingdom in the O.T. and N.T. Major Scriptures include: Ps. 72; Isa. 2:1-5; 9:6-7; 11; Jer. 33:14-17; Dan. 2:44-45; 7:9-14; 8:27-28; Hos. 3:4-5; Zech. 14:9; Lk 1:31-33; Rev. 19-20.

3b. The state of man:

1c. Universal salvation:

1d. All those who enter the kingdom will be saved people:

1e. The Jews: 1/3 of the nation shall be saved, Zech. 13:8ff

2e. The Gentiles: The goat Gentiles will be removed, the sheep Gentiles will remain on earth to enter the kingdom, Matt. 25:31-46.

2d. The Spirit of the Lord will be poured upon all flesh; Joel 2:28-32; Isa. 66:19-23.

3d. The majority of the earth's teeming multitudes shall know the Lord during these 1000 yrs.; Isa. 11:9; Ps. 98:2,3; Zeph. 3:9

2c. Unquestioning obedience to the King: Ps. 66:3

3 Say unto God, How ^aterrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies ^bsubmit themselves unto thee.

3c. Unprecedented justice and righteousness:

1d. Impartial: Ps. 72; Isa. 11:4; Isa. 32:1, 14-20

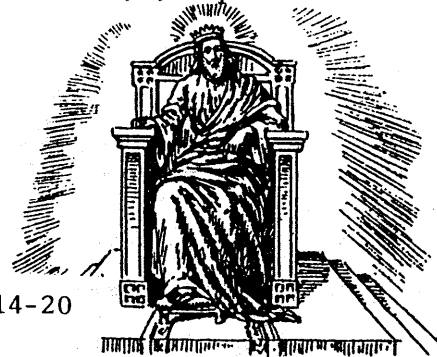
2d. Immediate: Mt. 13:41 the angels are sent out to gather the evil-doers

Isa:65:24 "it shall come to pass before they call and while they are yet speaking, I will hear"

4c. Unusual longevity: Is. 65:20 "the child shall die 100 yrs. old"

4b. The human responsibility: To obey the King.

1c. An absolute rulership, with rod of Iron: Isa 11:3-5; Rev. 19:15; Ps. 2:9



- 2c. A theocratic rulership: rule of God.
- 3c. A worshipful rulership: sacrificial system and priesthood; Is. 66:21-23; Ez. 40-48.
- 4c. An unopposed rulership: Satan will be bound: Rev. 20:3,7.
- 5b. Human failure:
 - 1c. Outward sin: Isa. 65:20; Zech. 14:14-16; Matt. 13:41
 - 2c. A climactic rebellion at the close of the kingdom. Man follows Satan when he is released: Rev. 20:7-9.
- 6b. Divine judgment:
 - 1c. The rebels are destroyed by fire: Rev. 20:9
 - 2c. The earth and the heavens are also destroyed by fire: Rev. 20:11; 21:1; II Pet. 3:6,12
- 7b. Divine grace:
 - 1c. The fulfillment of the covenant.



Premillenarians are the only ones who allow time for the fulfillment of the covenants.

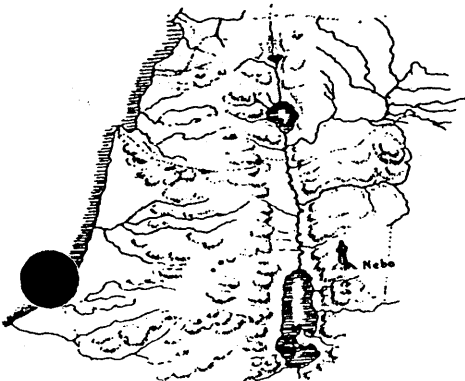
- 1d. The Palestinian covenant: Deut. 28-30
The enjoyment of the land has yet to be fulfilled.
- 2d. The Davidic covenant: 2 Sam. 7:4-17
1e. To David was promised the following:

- 1f. A house and family forever: vv. 11, 16
- 2f. A throne forever, v. 13
- 3f. A kingdom forever, v. 16



- 2e. It produces significant changes:

- 1f. Judah and Ephraim will be reunited and be made the head of the nations: Ez. 37; Rom. 11:26; Deut. 38:13.
- 2f. Commemorative sacrifices and feasts will be observed: Ez. 44-46.
- 3f. Universal peace will reign: Zech 14; Mic. 4:3; Is. 2:4; Hos. 2:18; Ps. 46:9
- 4f. Idolatry will be uprooted: Is. 2:18; Zech. 14:9, Mal. 1:11
- 5f. The twelve tribes will inherit the land from Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen. 15:18), divided into parallel sections (Ez. 48).
- 6f. Christ will reign: Jer. 23:5; Rev. 11:15; 19:6
- 7f. The center of government in the Millennium will be the earthly Jerusalem, nine square miles, 36 miles in circumference: Ez. 45:6



8f. Israel will be regathered: Is. 11:11-12; Jer. 30:1-11; Ez. 39: 25-29

3d. The New Covenant: Jer. 31:31 ff.

- 1e. Abundance of salvation: Is. 12
- 2e. Abundance of revelation: Jer. 31:33 ff.
- 3e. Forgiveness of sin: Jer. 31:34

2c. Fruition of nature:

1d. The curse is lifted: Is. 35:1, 6, 7; cf. 41:17-20

- 1e. From nature: Is. 55:12-13; Rom. 8:22 ff.
- 2e. From animals: Is. 65:25 (except for the serpent)

2d. Physical changes:

- 1e. Jerusalem exalted: Jer. 14:10
- 2e. A cleavage of the Mt. of Olives: Zech. 14:4
- 3e. A River of living water: Zech. 14:8; Ez. 47:1 ff; Joel 3:18; Ps. 65:9-10; Ps. 46:4

This is where the song "Joy to the World" fits in:

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King. . .

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns,
Let men their songs employ. . .

No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove. . ."



8b. The end of the dispensation:

1c. The destruction of the earth and the heavens by fire: Rev. 20:11; 21:1

2c. The beginning of the eternal state:

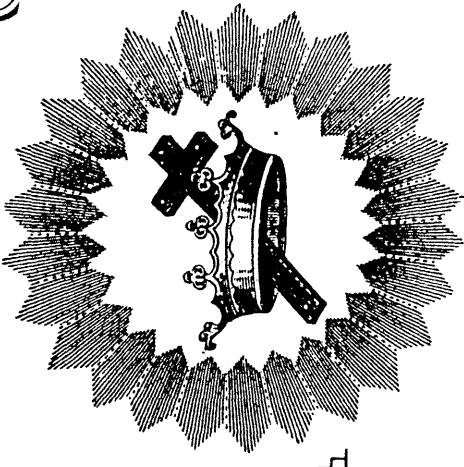
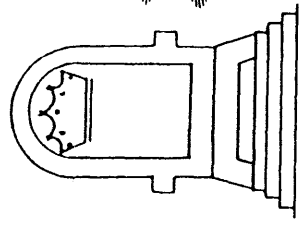
SUMMARY:

1. The dispensation of the Kingdom is different from preceding dispensations in that it is the final form of moral testing.
2. The advantages of this dispensation:
 - a) Perfect government.
 - b) Presence of Christ.
 - c) Universal knowledge of God and terms of salvation.
 - d) Satan bound.

3. The dispensation of the Kingdom is climactic in many respects, revealing grace, law, kingdom and government.
4. The Kingdom dispensation brings to consummation every possible test of man. In each dispensation man failed most miserably, yet God manifested His grace abundantly.



THE DISPENSATION OF THE KINGDOM



- 1. THE BEGINNING:
- 2. RELATED SCRIPTURE:
- 3. STATE OF MAN:
- 4. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY:
- 5. HUMAN FAILURE:
- 6. DIVINE JUDGMENT:
- 7. DIVINE GRACE:

THE DISTORTIONS OF DISPENSATIONALISM

1A. ULTRA-DISPENSATIONALISM:

1b. Definition:

It places more than one dispensation between Pentecost and the Rapture.

2b. Development:

Ethelbert Bullinger (1837-1913)

3b. Divisions:

1c. Extreme ultra-dispensationalism:

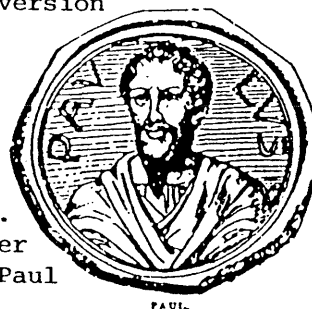
The church began late in Paul's ministry (Bullingerites)

2c. Moderate ultra-dispensationalism:

The Christian church began with Paul's conversion (O'Hare)

3c. Their agreements:

- 1d. Water Baptism is not for this age.
- 2d. The Great Commission is Jewish.
- 3d. The church did not start at Pentecost.
- 4d. Israel is the Bride--started with Peter
The church is the body--started with Paul



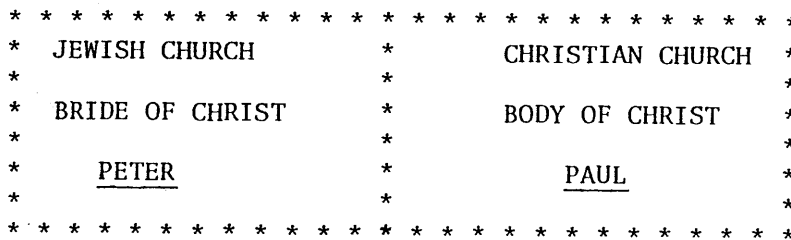
4c. Their disagreements:

- 1d. Extreme Ultra-Dispensationalism also deletes the Lord's Supper.
- 2d. Extreme Ultra-Dispensationalism cannot agree when in Paul's life the church started:

Moderate: Between Acts 9-13
Extreme: After Acts 28

PENTECOST

RAPTURE



4b. Defects of Ultra-Dispensationalism:

- 1c. There is no discernible difference between the church before and after Acts 9.
- 2c. Ultra-dispensationalism fails to understand the nature of a dispensation. It is "a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose."
- 3c. Ultra-dispensationalism fails to be obedient in evangelism and the church ordinances.

2A. COVENANT THEOLOGY:

1b. The definition of Covenant Theology:

"A system of Biblical interpretation expressed in terms of two or three covenants, of which dispensations are merely sub-categories."

2b. The distinctives of Covenant Theology:

1c. The biblical covenants:

1d. The Covenant of Redemption:

A bargain or agreement entered into by the persons of the Godhead before creation and existence of man, including for Christ a body for the incarnation, support during His life and the reward by exaltation and the giving of the elect to him.

2d. The Covenant of Works:

This covenant is made with Adam by God while Adam was innocent. It involved the offer of eternal life for the victorious test and threatened him with death if he failed the trial.

3d. The Covenant of Grace:

This covenant was made by God after the fall of man with Christ as the representative of the elect or with the elect. By it God "freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising them the Holy Spirit."

2c. The basic condition for Covenant Theology:

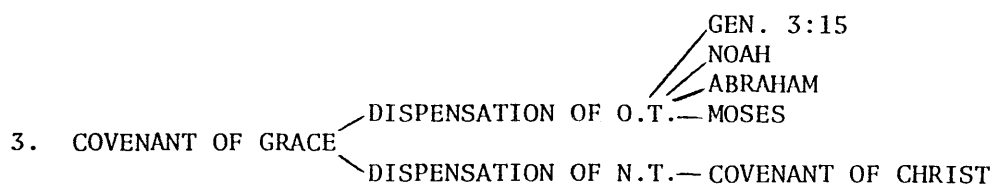
- 1d. Covenant Theology sees a single people of God, the elect.
- 2d. The Covenant of Grace is all encompassing, all inclusive, involving every scriptural dispensation.

- 3b. The development of Covenant of Theology:
 - 1c. Covenant Theology is mentioned neither by the early church nor by the primary leaders of the reformation. It is first mentioned in a church confession in 1647, the Westminster Confession.
 - 2c. Covenant Theology started as a protest to Reformed Theology: Coccius, 1648
Witsius, 1685

- 4b. The defects of Covenant Theology:
 - 1c. It sees covenants where they are not clearly expressed.
 - 2c. It makes the dispensations subservient to the covenant of grace.
 - 3c. It confuses the term "covenant" and "dispensation."
 - 4c. It is guilty of a reductive error: the attempt to make one aspect of God's purpose (salvation) the sole principle. God's over-all purpose is GLORY, all other purposes are subservient to that.
 - 5c. It has not led to a clear understanding of the Bible. Bible institutes were founded primarily by dispensationalists.
 - 6c. It reads the New Testament back into the Old Testament, spiritualizing, for instance, Abraham's promised land by making it equivalent to heaven.

COVENANT THEOLOGY

- 1. COVENANT OF REDEMPTION
- 2. COVENANT OF WORKS



1 COVENANT

2 DISPENSATIONS

5 COVENANTS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Contrasts between the dispensational and the standard anti-dispensational view.

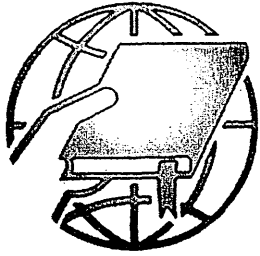
Dispensational

1. Holds to various tests of man or settings-forth of special responsibilities. However, these tests were not the effective cause of salvation, they ended in failure by man, evincing his utter sinfulness, and each terminated in judgement.
2. Holds to various phases of the "eternal purpose," i.e., the choosing of an elect nation, personal redemption, the calling out of the church, His earthly reign, etc.
3. Holds that, in accordance with declarations of Scripture, the "eternal purpose" as related to this age "was kept secret," "was hid in God," and "not known" in "ages and generations past," and is NOW in "The dispensation of the grace of God" made known to us.
4. Holds that Israel is a chosen nation, especially and eternally.
5. Holds that salvation is always by grace, though tests to prove man utterly depraved and hopeless have changed as the will of God has from time to time determined.
6. Holds to a literal and personal reign of Christ to be set up on this earth at His second coming.
7. Holds with Scripture that "law" and "grace" are contrasting and incompatible principles.
8. Holds that a dispensation is a distinctive responsibility for man in a given period of time ranging from man's creation onward, and that all the dispensations end in man's failure and a judgement from God.

Anti-dispensational

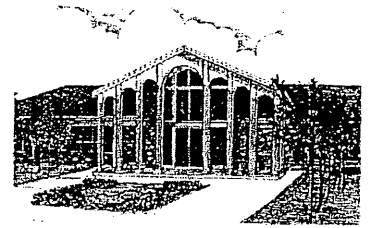
1. Holds to a single responsibility embodied in the Covenant of Grace which they say presents: "always the same promise, the same Redeemer, the same faith, and the same life" as truths fully understood by man before as well as after Christ's coming and death. (A.A.Hodge, p. 395: "faith was the condition of salvation before the advent of Christ in the same sense that it is now.")
2. Apparently interests itself almost wholly in the single purpose of personal redemption.
3. Holds that the so-called "eternal covenant" made as they say between the Persons of the Godhead was extended into time as "the Covenant of Grace," from the fall and ever afterwards, in fullness of purpose and without limitation or intermission.
4. Generally has held and now does hold that Israel has no abiding and distinctive national hope
5. Slyly, and without foundation or reason, accuses the dispensationalist of teaching more than one way of salvation.
6. Usually and originally denied a millennial reign on this earth and holds only to a spiritual kingdom now in existence and progress.
7. Holds that "law" and "grace" are auxiliary principles and that they always co-exist as principles of approach to God.
8. Holds that a dispensation is merely "a mode of administering" (whatever that meaningless phrase signifies) the Covenant of Grace in different epochs. It appears that nowhere in Scripture are men said to be administrators of a covenant.

9. Holds that there are a number of major covenants, each with a distinct purpose, and that they all refer to the nation Israel.
10. Holds that the terms: Israel, Palestine, Jerusalem, Zion throne of David, the kingdom on earth, etc., are literal and conclusive, and are limited in reference to the chosen nation Israel.
11. Holds that the literal coming of Christ to the earth is for the purpose of setting up a reign of righteousness for 1,000 years on this earth.
12. This view harmonizes with Biblical, apostolic, and age-long teaching of sane and devout Christian leaders and teachers.
13. Emphasizes a full prophetic program as it affects the nation Israel, the Church, the Gentile nations, Satan and his hosts, and is cataclysmic in fulfillment.
14. Holds that the purpose of this age and the ministry of the Spirit through the believer is "to call out an elect people by the preaching of the Gospel."
9. Holds that there is only one covenant operative since man's fall, that it is not specially related or limited to the nation Israel, and that the covenant idea is "a constitutive (essential) principle of theology."
10. Holds that these terms are to be spiritualized, that they are synonymous with the church, and that they are typical or symbolic of heavenly conditions.
11. Holds that the coming of Christ is centered upon a coming general judgement and ushers in eternal situations without an earthly reign.
12. Holds that the dispensational and premillennial interpretation is a perpetuation of "a crass Jewish view."
13. Holds to no prophetic program with Israel as a nation in an earthly kingdom and the Church associated with Christ in that kingdom.
14. It increasingly leans: (a) to a social gospel for the uplift of man in this life, or (b) to the building of a kingdom with the Lord now in heaven, as they say, on "David's throne."



Faith Pulpit

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The Problematic Development of Progressive Dispensationalism

by Manfred Kober, Th.D.

(Part 1 of 2)

March 1997

In recent years major changes have occurred within dispensationalism. A new system, known as progressive dispensationalism, has caused major concern among traditional dispensationalists.

I. THE PERIODS OF DISPENSATIONALISM

Several periods of development within dispensationalism have been suggested.

1. The foundational period: 1885 -1920 (John Nelson Darby, 1800-1882).
2. The classical period : 1920-1950 (C.I. Scofield, 1843-1921, Lewis Sperry Chafer, 1871-1952).
3. The defining period: 1950-1990 (Alva J. McClain, John F. Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, Charles C. Ryrie).
4. The progressive period: 1990 and on (Darrell L. Bock, Craig A. Blaising, Robert L. Saucy).

II. THE PRINCIPLES OF DISPENSATIONALISM

Dispensationalists see God's dealing with mankind in distinguishable stewardships to accomplish His sovereign purpose. The *sine qua non*, as succinctly delineated by Ryrie, is the following:

1. A clear distinction between Israel and the Church.
2. The consistent use of literal interpretation.
3. A concerted emphasis on the glory of God as the underlying purpose for His actions. (*Dispensationalism Today* [1965], 43-44).

Traditional dispensationalists have always clearly and consistently distinguished Israel and the Church and God's program for each. An explanation of traditional dispensationalism may be found in my colleague's article, "Progressive Dispensationalism: A Traditional Dispensational Critique" (Myron J. Houghton, *Faith Pulpit*, January 1995, 1).

III. THE PROPONENTS OF PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

1. Craig A. Blaising, until recently at Dallas Theological Seminary (Systematic Theology), presently at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY.
2. Darrell Bock, at Dallas Theological Seminary, (New Testament).
3. Robert L. Saucy, Talbot Theological Seminary (Systematic Theology).

IV. THE PUBLICATIONS OF PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

Besides the publication of numerous periodical articles, progressive dispensationalists have stated their views to date in three major works:

1. *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, 1992 (edited by Bock and Blaising)
2. *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 1993 (written by Bock and Blaising).
3. *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, 1993 (written by Saucy).

V. THE PURPOSE OF PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM:

The movement arose out of the Dispensational Study Group which first met on November 20, 1986, in connection with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta, Georgia. Five years later, at the 1991 meeting, the actual label "progressive dispensationalism" was introduced. The purpose of the study group appears to be to clarify dispensational issues in order to bridge the gap between dispensationalism and covenant theology. Related to this effort of the rapprochement with a totally different theological approach was a rejection of the *sine qua non* of traditional dispensationalism, thus permitting a conscious movement toward covenant theology.

The new dispensationalists appear to desire the following:

1. To develop further the system of dispensationalism.

- A remaking of dispensationalism according to their theological presuppositions, in part adopted from European theologians.
2. To discover similarities between dispensationalism and covenant theology.
A rapprochement with a totally dissimilar system.
 3. To delineate the progressive fulfillment of God's plan in history.
A rejection of God's distinctive purposes for Israel and the church.

It is a sad commentary on the present situation that whereas premillennialism (out of which dispensationalism gradually emerged) arose in America primarily through early Bible conferences held in opposition to the postmillennialism and liberalism of the day, progressive dispensationalism, in following the ecumenical spirit of the times, is seeking common ground with amillennialism.

VI. THE PROPOSITIONS OF PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM:

Ryrie notes that in contrast to his listed *sine qua non* of dispensationalism, "progressive dispensationalism (1) teaches that Christ is already reigning on the throne of David in heaven, thus merging the church with a present phase of the already inaugurated Davidic covenant and kingdom; (2) this is based upon a complementary hermeneutic which allows the New Testament to introduce changes and additions to Old Testament revelation; and (3) the overall purpose of God is Christological; holistic redemption being the focus and goal of history" (*Dispensationalism*, 164).

Interestingly, to date the progressive dispensationalists have neither been successful in their attempt to define dispensationalism nor to state what its essential principles are. By highlighting the basic tenets of progressive dispensationalism, Ryrie shows how far this system, which he rightly labels, "revisionist dispensationalism," has departed from traditional or authentic dispensationalism:

- (1) The kingdom of God is the unifying theme of biblical history.
- (2) Within biblical history there are four dispensational eras.
- (3) Christ has already inaugurated the Davidic reign in heaven at the right hand of the Father which equals the throne of David, though not yet reigning as Davidic king on earth during the millennium.
- (4) Likewise the new covenant has already been inaugurated, though its blessings are not yet fully realized until the millennium.
- (5) The concept of the church as completely distinct from Israel and as a mystery unrevealed in the Old Testament needs revising, making the idea of two purposes and two peoples of God invalid.
- (6) A complementary hermeneutic must be used alongside a literal hermeneutic. This means that the New Testament makes complementary changes to Old Testament promises without jettisoning those original promises.

The one divine plan of holistic redemption encompasses all people and all areas of human life, personal, societal, cultural, and political (Ryrie, *ibid.*, 164 [emphasis in the original]).

VII. THE PROBLEMS OF PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

1. Hermeneutical Problems.

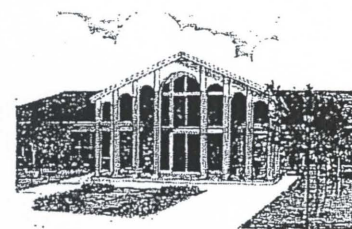
Progressive dispensationalism denies that consistent literal interpretation is a defining essential of dispensationalism. Craig Blaising maintains "that consistent literal exegesis is inadequate to describe the essential distinctive of dispensationalism" ("Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalism," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145, No. 579 [July-September, 1988], 272). Progressive dispensationalism further introduces a new method of interpretation, called "complementary hermeneutics," by reading into Old Testament promises much more than they contain. Progressive dispensationalists teach that "the New Testament does introduce change and advance; it does not merely repeat Old Testament revelation. In making complementary additions, however, it does not jettison old promises. The enhancement is not at the expense of the original promise." (*Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, 392-93.) The Old Testament promises concerning Christ's rule relate to a future millennial kingdom when He would rule on the throne of David. Complementary hermeneutics insists that the New Testament revelation complements the Old Testament promise by revealing Christ presently ruling on the Davidic throne in heaven. The problem of this new method of interpretation is that its limits are not clearly spelled out. Furthermore, who determines how much New Testament truth should be read back into literal Old Testament promises? Does not this destroy the concept of literal interpretation? The apparent reason why the revisionists would like to see the kingdom established now is out of a desire to show their appreciation for this aspect of covenant theology; while at the same time they want to maintain a future fulfillment of the Old Testament promises in the Millennial Kingdom.

Robert L. Thomas, in his incisive study, "A Critique of Progressive Dispensational Hermeneutics," deplores the departure of progressive dispensationalism from traditional historical-grammatical interpretation. He notes that progressive dispensationalism practices "a selective use of passages seemingly in support of their system--avoiding others that do not." He cites ample illustrations of this method and concludes that "thorough-going grammatical-historical interpretation does not condone this kind of superficial treatment of text, particularly when they are critical to support a doctrine being propounded" (Ice and Demi, eds., *When the Trumpet Sounds*, 423-424).



Faith Pulpit

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The Problematic Development of Progressive Dispensationalism

by Manfred Kober, Th.D.

(Part 2 of 2)

April 1997

2. Messianic Problems

Traditional dispensationalists have always understood that the Davidic rule of Christ would be in Jerusalem on the literal throne where his ancestor David ruled. Progressive dispensationalism believes this but also teaches that the Lord already rules on the throne of David in heaven, a rule which began at His ascension. This view ignores the clear scriptural distinction between Christ's present rule on the Father's throne in heaven (Hebrews 12:2) and His future rule on His throne on earth (Revelation 3:21). Traditional dispensationalists reject the notion that Christ's present rule in heaven constitutes an inaugural fulfillment of the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7:14. No wonder John F. Walvoord concludes with other classic dispensationalists "that progressive dispensationalism, as it is called, is built upon a foundation of sand and is lacking specific scriptural proof" (Willis and Masters, eds., *Issues in Dispensationalism*, 90). Progressive dispensationalists have manufactured out of thin air an artificial view that Christ's rule is present and yet future at the same time. This "already/not yet" dialectic is borrowed from George E. Ladd whose slippery slope of subjective hermeneutics led him from a premillennial to a modified covenant theology position. His form of realized eschatology, in turn, was borrowed from European theologians like C.H. Dodd.

3. Ecclesiastical Problems

By magnifying the continuity of various dispensations, revisionists are minimizing the distinctiveness of the church. Their mystery concept of the church is not that it was unrevealed in the Old Testament but it was unrealized. As a corollary, God has no separate program for the church. The church is simply a sub-category of the Kingdom. It is called a "sneak preview" of the Kingdom and a "functional outpost of God's Kingdom" (*Progressive Dispensationalism*, 257). The church is the Kingdom today. In fact, David Turner calls the church "the 'new Israel'" (Blaising and Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, 288). It is not surprising, therefore, that Bruce Waltke observes that Turner's "position is closer to covenant theology than to dispensationalism" (*Ibid.*, 334). With their theological neutering of the church, the revisionists are clearly de-emphasizing the pretribulational rapture, God's distinct event involving the church.

4. Definitional Problems

Progressive dispensationalists are neither able to give a clear definition of a dispensation nor make a convincing case for their number of dispensations. They subscribe to four primary dispensations. The first is the patriarchal, beginning with creation and continuing to Sinai. It is strange that the revisionists do not see the pre-fall stewardship that God sustained with Adam and Eve as a separate dispensation. Ryrie correctly notes, "To lump pre-fall conditions, post-fall conditions and the Abrahamic covenant under common stewardship arrangement or dispensation is artificial, to say the least" (*Dispensationalism*, 166). The second dispensation is labeled the Mosaic (from Sinai to Christ's ascension). The third is called the Ecclesial (from the ascension to Christ's second coming). The fourth dispensation is the Zion which is divided into (1) the millennial kingdom and (2) the eternal state. The practical fusion of the millennium and the eternal state evidences a disregard for the uniqueness of the kingdom age, an emphasis which had always been an integral part of premillennial dispensationalism and which is now an area in which the revisionist dispensationalists have given ground in order to appeal to covenant theologians.

VIII. The Prospects for Progressive Dispensationalism

1. The infiltration of seminaries.

Several seminaries, which once stood forthrightly for traditional dispensational distinctions, have a certain number of faculty espousing the progressive position. Ernest Pickering rightly warns that the dissemination of deviant dispensational doctrines is "not compatible with historic dispensationalism. They move toward covenant theology which identifies the Church with Israel. It would not be surprising to see more and more former dispensationalists embracing the covenant system as some already have" (*Dispensations*, 15).

It is sad to observe what has occurred at Dallas Theological Seminary, the stronghold of dispensationalism, where many of the instructors here at FBBC&TS have studied. While a number of traditional dispensationalists still teach at DTS, their system has not just been modified but totally changed by Bock, Blaising and their followers. And yet, Donald Campbell, in a letter of May 28, 1992, to the alumni, tries to assure the graduates of DTS that all the faculty "are dispensationalists as defined by our Doctrinal Statement." But the progressives do not agree, it seems, with this aspect of the doctrinal statement, which they have signed: "The church which is the body and bride of Christ, which began at Pentecost...is completely distinct from Israel." (CATALOG 1995-1996, 140, italics added). Sadly, there is no sounding of an alarm over a method of biblical interpretation which, according to a former faculty member there, "shakes the very foundation of dispensational hermeneutics, which includes a consistent literalistic interpretation of the Old Testament" (Waltke in *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church*, 348). The new president of Dallas Theological Seminary, Chuck Swindoll, has not helped matters at all. In an interview in *Christianity Today* prior to his stepping into the presidency, he announced that he would no longer emphasize dispensationalism. "I think

dispensations is a scare word. I'm not sure we're going to make dispensationalism a part of our marquis as we talk about our school." When asked whether he thought the term dispensationalism would disappear, Swindoll replied, "It may and perhaps it should." (Oct. 25, 1993, 14, italics in the original). The very distinctive that has made Dallas Theological Seminary such a unique school is now de-emphasized. Who would have thought that Dallas Theological Seminary would ever downplay the system of theology that has made it distinct while at the same time giving encouragement to a group of scholars who take the school toward covenant theology?

Primarily through men trained at Dallas Theological Seminary other schools have adopted this radical departure from traditional dispensationalism. At these institutions whole generations of pastors will be moved away from literal interpretation toward confusing complementary hermeneutics. The students will be exposed to de-emphasis of church age truth and an unclear eschatological framework. Dispensational distinctions are giving way to an unwarranted and unnecessary accommodation with amillennialism.

As an example, in these schools where progressive dispensationalism has taken root, classic dispensationalists like Walvoord are charged with using "a 'hyperliteral' approach to apocalyptic imagery" (Turner, *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church*, 227). Walvoord's description of a literal New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 is countered by Turner with the observation that the gates of the city could not possibly be made from one pearl, neither could the streets be made of gold. "The absence of oysters large enough to produce such pearls and the absence of sufficient gold to pave such a city (viewed as literally 1380 miles square and high) is viewed as sufficient reason not to take these images fully literal!" (Ibid.).

2. The ignoring by laymen.

It must be said to the credit of traditional dispensationalism that in its simplicity it is understood by lay people and unlocks the Scriptures for them. Who knows how many millions of American believers have been blessed by the helpful notes of the Scofield Bible. In contrast to Ryrie's clear and concise writings, the progressive dispensationalists write in such a scholarly and technical style that their books are difficult to read and thus will only reach a limited group of scholars. One can appreciate Thomas Ice's frustration when he says that *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* is "difficult [to] read because of its erudite technical style. . . It is sometimes hard to get a grip on what is precisely being said, even after reading a passage several times" ("A Critical Examination of 'Progressive Dispensationalism,'" *Biblical Perspectives*, Vol. V, No. 6, November-December, 1992, 1).

3. The surrender to covenant theology.

One wonders whether the revisionists really espouse a modified dispensationalism or whether they are not closer to a modified form of covenant theology. Thomas Ice's warning is well-placed that "these. . . men are in the process of destroying dispensationalism" (Ibid., 1). Eventually much of eschatology will give way to a vague anticipation of the future. According to Bock, progressive dispensationalism is "less land-centered and less future-centered" (*Christianity Today*, March 9, 1992, 50). The future blessings that are predicted for Israel in the millennial kingdom are suddenly reinterpreted. According to Carl Hoch, the privileges of ethnic Israel "were restricted to Israel before the death of Christ and the creation of the Church" (Blaising and Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, etc.*, 125). It is difficult to see why there is a need for a Millennium. Revisionist dispensationalism, with its de-emphasis on the distinctiveness of the church and the uniqueness of the Millennium has not simply made slight corrections in dispensational theology but significant changes, so significant that it is doubtful whether they can be considered dispensationalists at all as they are more and more warmly embraced by their covenant friends. No wonder Walter E. Ellwell concludes, "The newer dispensationalism looks so much like nondispensationalist premillennialism that one struggles to see any real difference" ("Dispensationalism of the Third Kind," *Christianity Today*, September 12, 1994, 28). Ron Clutter reports on the general sentiment of the 1987 meeting of the Dispensational Study Group, chaired by Craig Blaising. There was common agreement that moderate dispensationalists and moderate covenant theologians are closer to each other than either to classic dispensationalists or classic covenant theologians. "It seems both are moving toward each other in rapprochement" ("Dispensational Study Group discussion," *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol. 10 No. 2, Fall 1989, 161).

It is true that each generation of theologians needs to apply biblical truth to the people of the day. However, in so doing they dare not surrender major areas of doctrine which the progressive dispensationalists are in danger of doing. The biblical injunction to rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15) is important in the area of dispensational theology and especially in light of progressive dispensationalism which appears to be rapidly moving toward covenant theology. May God grant us His discernment in these difficult and challenging times.

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Progressive Dispensationalism: A Traditional Dispensational Critique

by Myron J. Houghton, Ph.D., Th.D.

Faith Pulpit, January 1995

An explanation of Traditional Dispensationalism

As understood by this author, the essence of dispensationalism is that Israel and the Church, as well as God's program for each, are clearly and consistently distinguished. The revelation concerning God's program for each is not dealing with ways of salvation but ways of managing one's life. The resultant features of dispensationalism understood in this way are these:

1. Salvation, in the mind of God, always has been based upon the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (I Peter 1:20). Salvation always has been unmerited as Old Testament animal sacrifices clearly illustrate. And salvation always has been through faith in God's provision, although the content of a believer's faith was determined by the extent to which the gospel had been revealed, as Romans 4:1-2 and Genesis 15:5-6 testify.
2. The Church which is Christ's Body did not begin until the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to create this Body by Spirit baptism (I Cor. 12:13). The Church will be complete when Christ comes for Her (I Thess. 4:13-5:10). The Church which is Christ's Body will continue to exist throughout eternity as the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-27), the dominant, though not the exclusive, inhabitant of the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 19:6-8; 21:1-22:5).
3. The New Testament epistles possess the highest authority for a believer today. This does NOT mean that only the epistles are inspired or profitable, but it DOES mean truth for believers today found in other books of the Bible is recognized as such because it expresses a truth clearly taught in the epistles.
4. The message of the epistles concerning a believer's behavior is that he is "not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14; 7:4; Gal. 2:19; 4:4-7; I Tim. 2:8,9).
5. Included in this concept of grace is an emphasis on the eternal security of a true believer (John 10:27-29) rather than on a believer's responsibility to persevere. Directly related to this idea is the concept of carnality, i.e., believers are capable of yielding to sinful desires within themselves without loss of their salvation (Romans 6:12-13; I Cor. 3:1-9).
6. Finally, the premillennial return of Christ and the pretribulational rapture of the Church are resultant features.

An explanation of Progressive Dispensationalism

Blaising and Bock summarize the views expressed by various authors in the book which they edited: "Ware, Bock, Hoch, Saucy, and Burns all speak of the new state of things in which Gentiles are included with equal standing alongside the remnant of Israel. Both receive blessings from the inaugurated new covenant, blessings that are emphasized as new in biblical theology, being differentiated as an advance over the old covenant. Yet, as Hoch, Saucy, Glenn, Barker, and Ware point out, these blessings are coming in fulfillment of promises about Israel and Gentiles made during the previous dispensation, the dispensation of the Mosaic covenant.

Consequently, there is continuity from promises about Israel and Gentiles under the old covenant to the fulfillment of those promises upon Israel and Gentiles under the new covenant. It is continuity through progress [emphasis theirs]: the progress of promissory fulfillment." ("Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: Assessment and Dialogue," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992, pp. 380-381.)

An evaluation of Progressive Dispensationalism

In this traditional dispensationalist's thinking, the most serious problem of progressive dispensationalism is the blurring of the distinction between Israel and the Church. This can be seen in the following areas:

A. The Church's Relationship to the New Covenant

Some, though not all, traditional dispensationalists have taught that the Church, along with Israel, shares in the new covenant (cf. Scofield Reference Bible at Hebrews 8:8), but they based this, NOT on the Church claiming a promise made to Israel, as Blaising does [cf. *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993) p. 199], but on the new covenant being an amplification of the spiritual blessings promised to Abraham. These spiritual blessings were literally interpreted as being for "all families of the earth." (cf. Scofield Reference Bible at Gen. 15:18).

B. The Church's Relationship to Israel

One progressive dispensationalist describes this present relationship in the following way: "The believing remnant of Israel within the church share in promises that have Old Testament roots. Through the covenants, Messiah, and promises of Israel, they experience promised blessings in which Gentiles also participate." (Carl Hoch, "The New Man of Ephesians 2," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, p. 126.) But what, in fact, does Ephesians 2 teach us? Note well the following facts:

1. Gentiles, who before Christ died were "far off," are now brought near by Christ's blood (v. 13);
2. by His death Christ broke down the law which was a wall that had divided Jews from Gentiles (v. 14-15);
3. by His death Christ created a new entity (v. 15) [I believe Lincoln is absolutely right when he states: "It must be underlined that the nature of Christ's accomplishment is described as a creation and its product as something new. In its newness it is not merely an amalgam of the old in which Gentiles have been combined with the best of Judaism." (A. Lincoln *The Church and Israel in Ephesians 2*, *The Best in Theology* Volume Three [Christianity Today, Inc., 1989], p. 66);
 (4) the "saints" of v. 19 are all believers who comprise the Church, as Eph. 1:1, 15, 18; 3:8; 4:12; 5:3 and 6:18 show; and
 (5) Ephesians 3:1-6 indicate the Church was unknown in the Old Testament (cf. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 629.)

Conclusion

Walter Elwell is right when he comments: "The new dispensationalism looks so much like nondispensationalist premillennialism that one struggles to see any real difference." ("Dispensationalists of the Third Kind," in *Christianity Today*, September 22, 1994, p. 28.)

*Divine Election
Or
Human Effort?*



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

FOREWORD

The following paper is based on a faculty workshop given by the writer on October 25, 1971, in a faculty meeting at Faith Baptist Bible College. Frequent questions by students in the area of the sovereignty of God have prompted the writer to put his notes into a more permanent form. Although recognizing the differences that exist among evangelicals, the author believes that the position stated herein approximates most closely the Biblical and historically Baptist view. This paper must not be construed as the official position of the school. However, it is sent forth with the prayer that it might generate more light than heat and be found profitable by the ever inquiring students who, like "the infernal peers,

'Reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate;
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute;
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.'

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Chapter I

THE DUTY OF THE THEOLOGIAN

INTERPRETATION

The primary task for the theologian is to interpret God's Word for man. But interpretation is both an art and a science. This means that any exposition of the Bible is guided by specific rules and checks which guard against the personal whims and prejudices of the interpreter. The application of these rules demands the greatest care in judgment that the godly and dedicated interpreter can bring to bear upon the text. In that sense interpretation is an art.

In the area of the doctrine of Salvation, one of the greatest sins committed by the expositor is the failure to apply the most basic principle of hermeneutics, that of the study of key words. Terms such as election, foreknowledge and foreordination are crucial to a proper understanding of Soteriology, and yet, in discussions of man's freedom and God's sovereignty scant attention is given to these terms. Many hours of fruitless debate would be saved if the theologian lived up to his basic responsibility, to interpret the text, which includes the detailed study of key terms. But unfortunately, theologians repeatedly skirt this obligation, either because of ignorance of the biblical languages or because of certain basic biases.

SYSTEMATIZING

Once biblical texts have been interpreted on a given doctrine, they need to be systematized for the purpose of presenting divine truth in an attractive logical manner.

BALANCE

The interpreter is under obligation to keep that balance in his system of doctrine which the Holy Spirit Himself evinces in His inspired Word. In the area of the doctrine of Salvation, the question of balance is of the utmost importance. Which aspect of salvation does God the Holy Spirit accent? Is it God's sovereignty in salvation or the effort of man? Or does the Spirit place equal emphasis on divine election and human freedom? In other words, does the Bible present a parallel view, as it is commonly called? This brief study hopes to clarify this issue.

The conscientious Bible student will keep the emphasis where the Holy Spirit placed it. He is not free to proffer his pet prejudices. He must not major in minors nor minor in majors. Doctrinal hobby horses have no place in theology, though we all are guilty of riding them from time to time. Someone has rightly observed that the only difference between a horse and a hobby horse is that a person can always get off a hobby horse.

COMMUNICATION

Once the proper meaning of a portion of the inspired Word has been determined the servant of God has the responsibility to communicate this truth to others. What is a matter of revelation must be made a matter of proclamation. Frequently one encounters a strangely resigned

attitude on the part of believers toward certain areas of God's truth, especially that of election, such as: "Oh, well, we will know it all by and by!" This is true of course. But the point is that God has revealed more about His majestic plan of redemption than Christians sometimes realize. Many things can indeed be known "here and now" instead of in the "by and by." Believers must study all that God has revealed and communicate it faithfully, not relegating truth to the future when it could be our possession now.

Chapter 2

THE DECREES OF GOD

THE SYSTEMS OF THEOLOGY

The Divisions among Theologians

There are two basic ways of approaching the doctrine of salvation. One way is to stress the importance of man and his free will to choose for or against Christ; this school of interpretation is called Arminianism, named after James Arminius. The other way of approaching salvation is to stress the importance of God and His sovereign will in bringing men to Himself through Christ; this school of interpretation is called Calvinism, named after John Calvin. It is unfortunate that one must call himself an Arminian or Calvinist but for theological purposes every Christian is either one or the other. However, the issues involved in this historic controversy are indeed grave, for they vitally affect the Christian's concept of God, of sin, and of salvation. J. I. Packer has rightly observed:

The difference between them is not primarily one of emphasis, but of content. One proclaims a God Who saves; the other speaks of a God Who enables man to save himself. One view [Calvinism] presents the three great acts of the Holy Trinity for the recovering of lost mankind--election by the Father, redemption by the Son, calling by the Spirit--as directed towards the same persons, and as securing their salvation infallibly. The other view [Arminianism] gives each act a different reference (the objects of redemption being all mankind, of calling, those who hear the gospel, and of election, those hearers who respond), and denies that any man's salvation is secured by any of them. The two theologies thus conceive the plan of salvation in quite different terms. One makes salvation depend on the work of God, the other

on a work of man; one regards faith as a part of God's gift of salvation, the other as man's contribution to salvation; one gives all the glory of saving believers to God, the other divides the praise between God, Who, so to speak, built the machinery of salvation, and man, who by believing operated it. Plainly these differences are important, and the permanent value of the 'five points,' as a summary of Calvinism, is that they make clear the points at which, and the extent to which, these two conceptions are at variance.¹

Development of the Calvinistic and Arminian Systems

After the death of Arminius, one of his followers, Simon Episcopus, developed the Arminian system of theology as it is known today. Because Arminius was not the systematic theologian that John Calvin was, he did not clearly define his thinking on salvation. As a result, the followers of Arminius distorted his system with views Arminius did not hold. However, one must say that the followers of Arminius simply carried the viewpoint of limited sovereignty of God to its logical conclusion.

After the death of Arminius, his followers set forth the Remonstrance which expounds the straight Arminian position. The Calvinists then set forth their Contra-Remonstrance which set forth the five points of Calvinism. At the Synod of Dort, the synod concluded that Arminius and his followers were teaching heresy, and they were put out of the Presbytery. The Arminians were occasionally persecuted for five years and then given freedom by the government to establish their own churches and schools.

The Distinctions between Arminianism and Calvinism²

These points may be found listed in Steele as:

¹David N. Steele, The Five Points of Calvinism (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1963), p. 22.

²ibid., pp. 16-23.

The "Five Points" of Arminianism

(1) Free Will or Human Ability

Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.

(2) Conditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man's will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

(3) Universal Redemption or General Atonement

Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.

(4) The Holy Spirit Can be Effectively Resisted

The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.

(5) Falling from Grace

Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc. All Arminians have not been agreed on this point; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ--that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.

According to Arminianism:

Salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond)--man's response being the determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point, man's will plays a decisive role; thus man, not God, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.

The "Five Points" of Calvinism³

(1) Total Inability or Total Depravity

Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free; it is in bondage to his evil nature. Therefore, he will not--indeed cannot--choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ--it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation--it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.

(2) Unconditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

(3) Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement

Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and

³The basis of Calvinism is popularly expressed by the flower TULIP: (1) total depravity; (2) unconditional election; (3) limited atonement; (4) irrresistible grace; and (5) the perseverance of the saints. Similarly, a joker has suggested that the Arminian has a flower too. It is a DAISY: "he loves me...he loves me not...he loves me..."

actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation.

(4) The Efficacious Call of the Spirit or Irresistible Grace

In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws the sinner to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

(5) Perseverance of the Saints

All who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.

According to Calvinism:

Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.

The Origin of the Two Systems.

(1) The Controversy between Pelagius and Augustine

Neither John Calvin nor James Arminius originated the basic concepts which undergird the two systems that bear their names. The fundamental principles of each system can be traced back many centuries prior to the time these two men lived. For example, the basic doctrines of the Calvinistic position had been vigorously defended by Augustine against Pelagius during the fifth century. The doctrines of Arminius can be traced back as far as the time of Clemens Alexandrinus, and seem to have been held by many of the fathers of the third and fourth centuries, having been diffused in the church through the corrupting influence of pagan philosophy. Pelagius denied that human nature had been corrupted by sin. He maintained that the only ill effects which the race had suffered

as the result of Adam's transgression was the bad example which he had set for mankind. His leading principle was that man's will is absolutely free. Hence everyone has the power, within himself, to believe the gospel as well as to perfectly keep the law of God. Augustine, on the other hand, maintained that human nature had been so completely corrupted by Adam's fall that no one, in himself, has the ability to obey either the law or the gospel. Divine grace is essential if sinners are to believe and be saved, and this grace is extended only to those whom God predestined to eternal life before the foundation of the world. The act of faith, therefore, results, not from the sinner's free will (as Pelagius taught) but from God's free grace which is bestowed on the elect only.

(2) Semi-Pelagianism, the Forerunner of Arminianism

Augustine's unanswerable polemic had so fully discredited Pelagianism in the field of argument, that it could no longer be made plausible to the Christian mind. It collapsed. But a new system soon presented itself, teaching that man with his own natural powers is able to take the first step toward his conversion, and that this obtains or merits the Spirit's assistance. Cassian... was the founder of this middle way, which came to be called SEMI-PELAGIANISM, because it occupied intermediate ground between Pelagianism and Augustinianism, and took in elements from both. He acknowledged that Adam's sin extended to his posterity and that human nature was corrupted by original sin. But, on the other hand, he held a system of universal grace for all men alike, making the final decision in the case of every individual dependent on the exercise of free-will. Their maxim was: "It is mine to be willing to believe, and it is the part of God's grace to assist."

(3) Calvinism, the Theology of the Reformation

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century rejected Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism on the ground that both systems were unscriptural. Like Augustine, the Reformers held to the doctrines of the sovereignty of God, the total depravity of man, and of unconditional election. To the Reformers, the crucial question was not simply whether God justifies believers without works of law, but the crucial issue was whether God is the author, not merely of justification, but also of faith; whether, in the last analysis, Christianity is a religion of utter reliance on God for salvation and all things necessary to it, or of self-reliance and self-effort.

The Main Point of Calvinism.

To Calvinism there is really only one point to be made in the field of soteriology: the point that God saves sinners. God--the Triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; three persons working together in sovereign wisdom, power and love to achieve the salvation of a chosen people, the Father, electing, the Son fulfilling the Father's will by redeeming, the Spirit executing the purpose of Father and Son by renewing. Saves--does everything, first to last,

that is involved in bringing man from death in sin to life in glory: plans, achieves and communicates redemption, calls and keeps, justifies, sanctifies, glorifies. Sinners--men as God finds them, guilty, vile, helpless, powerless, unable to lift a finger to do God's will or better their spiritual lot. God saves sinners--and the force of this confession may not be weakened by disrupting the unity of the work of the Trinity, or by dividing the achievement of salvation between God and man and making the decisive part man's own or by soft-peddling the sinner's inability so as to allow him to share the praise of his salvation with his Saviour.

THE FOUR BASIC SYSTEMS CONCERNING SALVATION

Pure Arminianism (Remonstrance).

Sin. Man is never so completely corrupted by sin that he cannot savingly believe the Gospel when it is put before him (John 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 1:14).

Resistible Grace. Man is never so completely controlled by God that he cannot reject the Gospel (Acts 7:51; Matt. 23:37).

Limited Sovereignty. God's election of those who shall be saved is prompted by His foreseeing that they will of their own accord believe (1 Pet. 1:2). God limited His sovereignty so as to give man a free will.

Unlimited Atonement. Christ in His death died for the sins of the whole world and now all men are rendered savable if they will believe (John 3:16; 1:29; 1 John 2:1,2; 2 Cor. 5:14).

Conditional Salvation. It rests with believers to keep themselves saved by keeping up their faith; those who fail to do so, fall away and are lost (Heb. 6:1-4; Gal. 5:4; 1 Pet. 1:5; John 15:6).

Modified Arminianism.

This group accepts the first four points of Arminianism but denies

the fifth. This group believes in the doctrine of eternal security (John 6:37; 10:28,29; 2 Tim. 2:13). Once a man has believed then God is obligated to keep this person saved. This was probably the view of Arminius, but we cannot be sure.

In summary the theological basis for Arminianism may be stated as follows. (1) The Bible regards faith as a free and responsible human act. It cannot be caused of God, but is exercised independently of Him; (2) Divine sovereignty is incompatible with free will and therefore God's sovereignty must be limited; (3) the Bible regards faith as obligatory on the part of all who hear the Gospel; therefore ability to believe must be universal or God would not be fair to make an offer of salvation if man couldn't believe it.

Pure Calvinism (Contra-Remonstrance).

Total Depravity. Fallen man in his natural state lacks all power to believe the gospel without supernatural enablement (1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 3:10,11; Eph. 2:1-3).

Unconditional Election. God's election is a free, sovereign, unconditional choice of sinners as sinners, to be redeemed by Christ, given faith and brought to glory (John 6:37, 39, 40; 1:13; 10:27; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 8:29, 30; Rom. 9:23).

Limited Atonement. The redeeming work of Christ has as its end and goal the salvation of the elect, not the world (Matt. 1:21; John 10:11, 14; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25; Rom. 5:8,9; 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:21; Titus 3:5,6; Isa. 53:5,6; 1 Pet. 1:18,19; Matt. 26:28).

Irresistible Grace. The work of the Holy Spirit in bringing

men to faith and salvation never fails to achieve its object (Rom. 8:29,30; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 4:4).

Perseverance of the Saints. Believers are kept in faith and grace by the unconquerable power of God until they come to glory. The elect will persevere in faith (1 Pet. 1:5; John 10:27-29).

Modified Calvinism.

This group accepts all the points of Calvinism except limited atonement. This group believes that Christ died for the sins of the world to secure forgiveness specifically for the elect.

A summary of the theological basis for Calvinism includes that: (1) God is the first cause of salvation; (2) men are sinners in a helpless and hopeless condition and can never be brought out of this state apart from divine enablement; (3) salvation is supernatural because God truly initiates it. Thus, a Calvinist is a Christian who confesses before men in his theology what every Christian believes in his heart when he prays. A Calvinist cries for Biblical and theological accuracy and an objective approach to Scripture.

THE SEQUENCE OF THE DECREES

How salvation is applied in the scheme of Arminian and Calvinistic theology can best be shown by listing the various lapsarian views. They center around the logical, not the temporal, order of God's decrees of election and the permission of the fall (lapse). While there is some confusion of terms and disagreement among theologians as to what is embraced in each view, the following classifications are generally

accepted. They are conveniently listed by H. C. Thiessen.⁴

1. Supralapsarian view (generally called "hyper-Calvinistic"):
 - a. Decree to save some and reprobate the rest (double election)
 - b. Decree to create both groups
 - c. Decree to permit (some say secure) the fall of both groups
 - d. Decree to provide salvation for the elect (limited atonement)
 - e. Decree to apply salvation to the elect (irresistible grace)

2. Infralapsarian view (Calvinism, with some justification of being called "hyper-Calvinism"):
 - a. Decree to create all men
 - b. Decree to permit the fall of all men
 - c. Decree to elect some and leave the rest to condemnation (unconditional election)
 - d. Decree to provide salvation for the elect only (limited atonement)
 - e. Decree to apply salvation to the elect (irresistible grace)

3. Sublapsarian view (modified Calvinism, Chafer):
 - a. Decree to create all men
 - b. Decree to permit the fall
 - c. Decree to provide salvation for all men (unlimited atonement)
 - d. Decree to elect some to salvation (unconditionally)
 - e. Decree to apply salvation to elect (irresistibly)

4. Modified Sublapsarian view

Henry C. Thiessen, in his Lectures in Systematic Theology, espouses a modified sublapsarian view. In his scheme the last two points of the sublapsarian view would stand as follows:

- d. Decree to elect to salvation all who will believe (conditionally)
- e. Decree to apply salvation to those who will believe.

In reality then, Thiessen is a modified Arminian. Charles M. Horne, in his recent study on Salvation rightly labels Thiessen's views as Arminian and summarizes them thus:

1. Election is a sovereign act of God in that He was under no obligation to elect anyone. All stand equally condemned before God because of sin and therefore all could have been justly damned.
2. It was an act of grace in that he chose those who were utterly undeserving.

⁴Henry Clarence Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 343-344.

3. It was "in Christ;" He (the Father) chose in the merits of His Son.

4. He chose those whom He foreknew would believe. On this point appeal is made to Romans 8:29-30 and I Peter 1:1-2.

5. It is understood that God graciously grants to all men sufficient ability to accept Christ. "This is the salvation--bringing the grace of God that has appeared to all men. In His foreknowledge He perceives what each one will do with this restored ability, and elects men to salvation in harmony with His knowledge of their choice of Him."⁵

THE SUPPORT OF SCRIPTURE FOR MODIFIED CALVINISM

The Description of Moderate Calvinism.

Dr. Chafer gives an excellent summary of moderate Calvinism:

The men who belong to this school of interpretation defend all of the five points of Calvinism excepting one, namely, "Limited Atonement," or what has been termed "the weakest point in the Calvinistic system of doctrine." This form of moderate Calvinism is more the belief of Bible expositors than of the theologians, which fact is doubtless due to the truth that the Bible, taken in its natural terminology and apart from those strained interpretations which are required to defend a theory, seems to teach an unlimited redemption. Men of this group believe that Christ died actually and fully for all men of this age alike, that God has ordained that the gospel shall be preached to all for whom Christ died, and that through the proclamation of the gospel He will exercise His sovereign power in saving His elect. This group believe in the absolute depravity of man and his total inability to believe apart from the enabling power of the Spirit, and that the death of Christ, being forensic, is a sufficient ground for any and every man to be saved, should the Spirit of God choose to draw him. They contend that the death of Christ of itself saves no man, either actually or potentially, but that it does render all men savable; that salvation is wrought of God alone, and at the time the individual believes.⁶

The Discussion of Limited Atonement.

The present writer feels that a moderate Calvinism is a more Biblically tenable position than the position of limited atonement.

As Dr. Chafer points out, an important difference exists between limited

⁵Charles M. Horne, Salvation (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 15-16.

⁶Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), III, 184-185.

and unlimited atonement:

The limited redemptionist considers the death of Christ as actual for the elect and of no saving benefit for the nonelect, while the unlimited redemptionist considers the death of Christ as actual for the elect and potential and provisional for the nonelect. The notion is without foundation which assumes that a thing is less real because its acceptance may be uncertain or conditional.

The human estimation of the immeasurable value of Christ's death in behalf of lost men is in no way lessened or discredited by the belief that its value is received at the time that saving faith is exercised, rather than at the time the Savior died. The unlimited redemptionist is in no way forced, because of his belief, to take a second place in magnifying the glorious saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁷

Strict Calvinists insist that if Christ died for all men, then God would actually demand from those who will never be saved that they pay the penalty for their sins again as they are consigned to hell, even though Christ already did pay for their redemption. But, as Dr. Chafer shows, one must make a clear distinction between that particular aspect of the saving work of God in providing a Savior, and the saving work of God in which the mighty transformations which constitute a Christian what he is, are accomplished. Personal salvation is not automatic because of Christ's death, but it is effected only through saving faith. Despite the fact that strict Calvinists emphasize Christ's death for the elect only, they do not minimize the infinite value which accrues to men from the death of Christ in general.⁸

Some insist that even Calvin accepted the unlimited theory of the atonement later in life. How else, for instance, can one explain

⁷ Ibid., pp. 186-187.

⁸ See the discussion in John Murray's Redemption Accomplished and Applied (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids Book Manufactures, Inc., 1970), pp. 61-62.

his comment on 1 John 2:2 which reads as follows:

Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and in the goodness of God offered unto all men without distinction, his blood being shed not for a part of the world only, but for the whole human race; for although in the world nothing is found worthy of the favor of God, yet he holds out the propitiation to the whole world, since without exception he summons all to the faith of Christ, which is nothing else than the door unto hope.⁹

The Defense of Unlimited Atonement.

Some passages of scripture relating to the death of Christ are simply too universal in scope than to be explained away by the limited redemptionists as referring to the elect only.

Christ's death is universal. "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

Christ's salvation is universal. "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).

Christ's redemption is universal. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1). It should be noted that these false teachers, who are obviously unsaved ("damnation," v. 3), were bought by the Lord.

⁹A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1907), p. 778.

Language cannot be plainer than this.

Christ's reconciliation is universal. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Christ's propitiation is universal. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). Advocates of the limited atonement are very adapt in destroying the real meaning of these verses so that they can be made to apply to the elect. And then they proceed to challenge moderate Calvinists to show them a single verse in which the word all must definitely mean every person on earth. This challenge can easily be met. Thomas W. Jenkyn, in an old volume on the atonement, has a statement worth quoting:

The word "ALL" has often been most candidly and dishonorably tortured and wrested, to mean a generality of kinds and degrees, and not a universality of the mass of the human race. Prophecy, however, supplies us with one text at least, that has bid stubborn defiance to all theological tortures. It is Isa. 53:6, "ALL we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned EVERY ONE to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Some of the advocates of particular atonement have challenged their opponents to present one single text in which the word "all" means indisputably every individual of the human race. Here it is. The word "all" in the last part of the sentence means the "all" mentioned in the first part; and both mean the "every one," in the middle portion of the verse. If you apply to the word "all" in the first sentence, the torturous criticisms which are generally employed on the "all" in the last sentence, you offend equally against sound interpretation, theological fairness, and logical deduction.¹⁰

¹⁰Thomas Jenkyn, Extent of the Atonement (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1833), p. 196.

Chapter 3

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

THE DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In order to understand the doctrine of election, there are a number of key terms with which a person needs to be familiar. (1) Omniscience: God's knowledge of all things actual and possible. (2) Decree: The decree of God is His one eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has unconditionally foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. Such words in the Bible as counsel, will, and purpose refer to the divine decree. Often the word foreordination is used theologically to speak of the preplanning of all events. (3) Election: Election has been defined as "God's unconditional and pretemporal choice of those individuals whom He would save."

Election is an active word whereby God picks out certain individuals among the mass of humanity for Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. Election comes from the Greek eklego (ἐκλέγω) which means to choose or to call out of. The word is always middle in the New Testament, indicating that God chose for Himself. In Ephesians 1:4, the word is in the aorist and it thus looks at an event rather than a process.

a. Different Elections Mentioned in Scripture

1) Election of Christ; 1 Pet. 2:6

- 2) Election of Israel; Isa. 45:4
- 3) Election of the Apostle Paul; Acts 9:15
- 4) Election of certain individuals; Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Thess. 2:13,14.
- 5) Election that is negative; John 6:70

b. Different Terminology Having the Same Meaning as Election

- 1) Appointed; John 15:16
- 2) Ordained; Acts 13:48
- 3) Choose; Eph. 1:4

c. Different Views of Election

Thiessen's view. Thiessen bases election on God's foreknowledge of what man would do instead of on God's eternal counsel. Thus, he defines election to "mean that sovereign act of God in grace whereby He chose in Christ Jesus for salvation all those whom He foreknew would accept Him."¹ How unbiblical such a view is will be demonstrated shortly.

Thieme's view. Robert Thieme, pastor of Berachah Bible Church in Houston, Texas, offers a rather novel interpretation of the Biblical concept of election. According to him, and some pastors in the Iowa area, individuals are not elected, only Christ (Isa. 42:1). This completely contradicts the teaching of 2 Thessalonians 2:13, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." According to Thieme, an individual is elect because he is in Christ and this happens at the moment of salvation.

(4) Predestination: An active word which indicates a predetermining of the destiny of the elect and looks to the end of God's choices, the glorification of the saint (Eph. 1:5, 11; Rom. 8:29, 30). The word predestination is used only of the destiny of the elect.

¹Henry Clarence Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), p. 344.

Predestination comes from the Greek word prooritzo (προορίζω), which means literally "to mark a boundary." God, therefore, marks off certain individuals out of the mass of humanity for a certain end which is, according to Ephesians 1:5, that of adoption which involves certain privileges. Another end is that God might bring glory to Himself.

(5) Foreknowledge: An active word to indicate a loving relationship, based on the deliberate judgment of God in the eternal plan, which God sustains with certain individuals which results in His choice of them for salvation. Foreknowledge is only used of persons, not events.

Definition. Defined Biblically, foreknowledge refers to a loving relationship which God sustains to certain individuals by choosing them. Theologically, it indicates prior knowledge of actual things, involving conscious relationship and certainty.

Usage. As to usage, the verb "to foreknow" is employed five times in the New Testament (Rom. 8:29; 11:2; Acts 26:5; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:20). The noun foreknowledge occurs twice (1 Pet. 1:2; Acts 2:23).

The Arminian interprets these passages relating to salvation as God's foreknowledge or prescience of what man would do and on which basis God could elect or predestine the person to salvation. But here is one of the basic errors of Arminianism: a failure to do justice to the Greek word. Arminians say that because God knows all things, He looked down to the corridors of time and saw how men would believe and then elected and predestined them on that basis (i.e. He saved those who would of their own free will repent of their sins and believe the gospel) and thus elected these.

The Greek verb form of foreknowledge is proginosko (προγινώσκω)

and the noun form is prognosis (πρόγνωσις). Pro (πρό) means "before" and ginosko (γινώσκω) means "an active or experimental knowledge."

Proginosko denotes a selective knowledge beforehand. It is not equivalent to omniscience. Prognosis acknowledges a special relationship beforehand (cf. Acts 2:23; 26:5; Rom. 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1:20). While 1 Peter 1:2, in the KJV, speaks of believers as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," the same word is used in verse 20 in reference to Christ, but with this more correct rendering: "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." It would be totally meaningless to say that God simply foreknew Christ, since the two coexisted eternally. Foreknowledge must therefore mean more than just knowing beforehand.

The Hebrew verb know (yadah, יָדָע) has likewise a much deeper meaning than the English word. In Amos 3:2, God speaks to Israel, saying: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." The Lord certainly knew about all the families of the earth, but He knew Israel in a special way. His knowledge is one of a special loving relationship. This is disclosed explicitly to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah. Yahweh speaks: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3).

God, in speaking to Jeremiah, said: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jer. 1:5). The meaning here is not that God knew about Jeremiah but that He had special regard for the prophet before He formed him in his mother's womb.

The Relationship Between Election, Predestination, and Fore-knowledge. While the three concepts are definitely related to each

other, they nevertheless emphasize different aspects of God's redemptive program. Election deals with the method or process, the choice from a mass. Predestination, or foreordination has in view the goal in salvation. The immediate goal is that of salvation (2 Thess. 2:13); the intermediate goal is holiness in the sight of God and adoption (Eph. 1:4,5); and the ultimate goal is that it brings glory to God (Eph. 1:6). Foreknowledge looks at the relationship which God is establishing. It is the love of God toward those whom He predestines to be saved.

The Defense of Our Meaning of Foreknowledge. It is a basic rule of hermeneutics that the first mentioning of a word or concept must always receive careful consideration. And so it is with the word "foreknowledge," first mentioned in the New Testament in Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Wuest demonstrates that foreknowledge here is closely connected to God's counsel, it is causative. Through foreknowledge God does not simply know something but He effects something. An extended quote from Wuest will clear up any misconceived ideas the reader might still have concerning this crucial term:

There is a rule in Greek syntax that is connected with the presence and absence of the article, called Granville Sharp's rule. It is as follows: "When the copulative $\kappa\alpha\iota$ connects two nouns of the same case, if the article δ or any of its cases precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and it is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle, denoting a further description of the first-named person." In other words, when two nouns in the same case are connected by $\kappa\alpha\iota$, and the first noun is articular, and the second is anarthrous, the second noun refers, and is a further description of it.

This rule is of invaluable assistance to the exegete. For instance, the word "foreknowledge" occurs first in the New Testament, in Acts 2:23. Its usage here should throw a flood of light upon the usage of the word in other places where it is found. The word πρόγνωσις in classical Greek meant merely previous knowledge. But here it means more than that, as our rule of syntax brings out. The words, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," in the Greek text τοῦτον τῆ ὠρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ. βουλῇ is articular, προγνώσει anarthrous. The latter word refers to the same act that the former refers to. This will give us our clue to the New Testament usage of πρόγνωσις when it is used in connection with God. βουλῇ refers to the counsel which is the result of the deliberations of a council; here, a council composed of the three members of the Triune God. The participle describing βουλῇ is perfect in tense, indicating that the deliberations of the council had been concluded and the members had come to a decision. The verb ὀρίζω, means "to fix limits upon, to mark out the boundaries of, to determine, appoint." Thus, the purpose of the council was to appoint the member of the Triune God who would become the Lamb to be slain. πρόγνωσις in classical Greek, we noted, meant merely "foreknowledge." But here it partakes of the nature of the noun with which it is grammatically connected, βουλῇ, and is a further description of it. The βουλή was one in which the Lord Jesus was appointed to a certain destiny. That act is also referred to by the word προγνώσει, which by this association has added to itself in the New Testament, the idea of foreordination, where it is used in connection with an act of God. Thus, a rule of Greek syntax has opened up to us the New Testament content of the meaning of this word.²

Another crucial passage in the discussion of foreknowledge is Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." It does not say "what" but "who." In fact, foreknowledge is never used in Scripture in connection with events or actions; instead, it always has reference to persons. It is persons God is said to "foreknow," not the actions of those persons. For example, Scripture never speaks of repentance and faith as *being* foreseen or foreknown by God. Truly, He did know from all eternity

²Kenneth S. Wuest, The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1946), pp. 22-24.

that certain ones would repent and believe because of His decree, yet this is not what Scripture refers to as the object of God's foreknowledge. The word uniformly refers to God's foreknowing persons. From all eternity the Father foreknew the Christian as a person, and based on that loving, deliberate, personal foreknowledge He chose, and predestined the Christian. It must be concluded, then, that faith cannot be the cause of foreknowledge, because foreknowledge is before predestination, and faith is the effect of predestination. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48).

Murray, in rejecting the view that foreknew in Romans 8:29 refers to the foresight of faith, is certainly correct in stating that:

It needs to be emphasized that the rejection of this interpretation is not dictated by a predestinarian interest. Even if it were granted that "foreknew" means the foresight of faith, the biblical doctrine of sovereign election is not thereby eliminated or disproven. For it is certainly true that God foresees faith; he foresees all that come to pass. The question would then simply be: whence proceeds this faith which God foresees? The only Biblical answer is that the faith which God foresees is the faith he himself creates (cf. Jn. 3:3-8; 6:44,45,65; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29; 2 Pet. 1:2). Hence His eternal foresight of faith is preconditioned by His decree to generate this faith in those whom he foresees as believing, and we are thrown back upon the differentiation which proceeds from God's own eternal and sovereign election to faith and its consequents. The interest, therefore, is simply one of interpretation as it should be applied to this passage. On exegetical grounds we shall have to reject the view that 'foreknew' refers to the foresight of faith.³

Spurgeon, in his superb sermon on election, has an interesting observation on the same problem:

'But; say others, 'God elected them on the foresight of their faith.' Now, God gives faith, therefore He could not have elected

³John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), I, p. 316.

them on account of faith, which He foresaw. There shall be twenty beggars in the street, and I determine to give one of them a shilling; but will any one say that I determined to give that one a shilling, that I elected him to have the shilling, because I foresaw that he would have it? That would be talking nonsense. In like manner, to say that God elected men because He foresaw they would have faith, which is salvation in the germ, would be too absurd for us to listen to for a moment. Faith is the gift of God. Every virtue comes from Him. Therefore it cannot have caused Him to elect men, because it is His gift.⁴

Ultimately, the meaning of foreknowledge cannot be ascertained through dogmatic or theological considerations, but only through grammatical and exegetical study of the language. Rudolf Bultmann, whose theology is as bad as his knowledge of Greek is good, should not be ignored in this important discussion. He writes the article on γινώσκω in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. As a superlative Greek scholar, his conclusions should be given careful consideration:

Thus knowledge [in the Old Testament] has an element of acknowledgement. . . . Finally, the element of will in יָדָה [yadah] emerges with particular emphasis when it is used of God, whose knowing established the significance of what is known. In this connection, יָדָה [yadah] can mean "to elect," i.e., to make an object of concern and acknowledgement. Gen. 18:19; Ex. 33:12; Amos 3:2; Hosea 13:5; Jer. 1:5.

In the New Testament προγινώσκειν [proginoskein] is referred to God. His foreknowledge, however, is an election or foreordination of His people (Rom. 8:29; 11:2) or Christ (1 Pet. 1:20)

⁴Charles H. Spurgeon, Election (Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, 1964), p. 13. Other detailed discussions of the true meaning of foreknowledge can be found in the following sources: J. Dwight Pentecost, Things Which Become Sound Doctrine pp. 138-139; David N. Steele, The Five Points of Calvinism, pp. 85-91; Bibliotheca Sacra, July, 1965, p. 215-219, "Is Foreknowledge Equivalent to Foreordination?"

The corresponding use for knowledge on God's part in the sense of election, which is so characteristic of the Old Testament, is occasionally found most clearly in 2 Tim. 2:19. . .but also 1 Cor. 18:3; 13:12; Gal. 4:19.⁵

Lexical evidence of this meaning of foreknowledge could be multiplied. One other quote must suffice to demonstrate that God's foreknowledge is more than just a knowing beforehand of something. Cremer writes:

It is simplest to take προγιν, . . .as denoting a knowing . . .equivalent to "unite oneself before with someone."

προγινώσκειν , [to foreknow] denotes the divine γινώσκειν [to know] as already present in the divine decree before its manifestation in history, i.e. the union between God and the objects of His sovereign grace implied in His decree of salvation, and accordingly already in existence before its accomplishment; . . .[it] essentially includes a self-determining on God's part to this fellowship (Rom. 8:29, whom God had beforehand entered into fellowship with).

Πρόγνωσις, η, [noun, foreknowledge]...denotes the foreordained relation of fellowship of God with the objects of His saving counsel; God's self-determining towards fellowship with the objects of His sovereign counsel preceding the realization thereof. . . .a resolution formed beforehand. . . .or, quite generally, as foreknowledge. . .⁶

In the light of these grammatical and exegetical considerations, one can understand Dr. H. O. Van Gilder's righteous indignation over the Arminian view of foreknowledge:

Let me repeat that statement: 'Scripture nowhere declares what it is in the divine foreknowledge which determines the divine election and predestination.' Therefore, it is the

⁵Rudolf Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds.), Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964) trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, I, 689-715.

⁶Hermann Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880) trans. William Urwick, pp. 161-162.

height of presumption for any man to say what it is in the divine foreknowledge which determines the election. The Arminian who says that God foresaw who would believe, and, on that basis, elected them to salvation, is reading beyond what is written, and is guilty of as great presumption as ever the infra-super-hypo-ultra Calvinist was guilty of, for God has not said what it was in His divine foreknowledge which determined His election.⁷

THE DEFENSE OF MODIFIED CALVINISM

Divine Sovereignty.

Both the Calvinist and Arminian subscribe to the sovereignty of God and yet when sovereignty is applied to specific situations, the difference between the two systems becomes very pronounced. J. K. S. Reid, in his introduction to Calvin's treatise, Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God, rightly observes:

The point at issue between Calvin and his opponents is thus simple, but it is of course fundamental. Substantially what they do is to wrest the ground of salvation out of God's own hand where alone, Calvin holds, it rightly belongs, and to deposit it within the contingent realm of human volition and freewill. Clearly this is to derogate from the sovereignty of God.⁸

Arminians vehemently deny this, of course, but it is true nonetheless. The Scripture teaches that the ultimate destiny of every individual is decided by the will of God. Arminians assert that God permits man to exercise his own freewill in the matter of salvation.

Two passages of Scripture especially emphasize God's sovereignty in salvation and as long as they remain part of the inspired canon, God's absolute sovereignty must be maintained. The passages are Romans 9 and Ephesians 1.

⁷H. O. Van Gilder, "Election and . . ." p. 3. (This unpublished paper is an excellent brief statement of the historic Baptist position on election.)

⁸John Calvin, Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God (London: Camelot Press Ltd., 1961), p. 11.

In Romans 9, Paul points out that God's selection for salvation is not according to natural generation (9:7-9) or human merit (9:10-13) but rather according to His mercy (9:14-18) and power (9:19-24). Election is never related to man's wish or desire but to God's omnipotence. Two individuals, Jacob and Esau, experienced God's sovereign activity. Jacob is loved by God, but Esau is hated by Him (Rom. 9:14). Paul anticipates immediately the charge against his assertion, that therefore God is unrighteous. It is interesting to note that Paul does not reply as the Arminians would have him reply, that God simply foreknew what they would do, and therefore the charge of unrighteousness is false, but rather he answers with a strong expletive, "God forbid," and then continues to anchor God's elective decree in His sovereignty, not man's free choice: "For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Paul introduces this objection to God's election with good reason. Were election based on the foreknowledge as to which man would believe once the gospel was presented, then such an objection of unrighteousness would be totally inane. And it cannot be too strongly emphasized that unless the Bible student today gets a similar response to his preaching, he is not preaching the true Biblical doctrine of election. The Arminians, unlike the Apostle Paul, would never be charged with preaching that God is unrighteous, for if God simply foresees what man would do and acts in accordance to this foreknowledge, then of course God is not acting unrighteously.

A second important objection that Paul anticipates is that God cannot find fault with those whom He bypassed with His elective decree,

those who are reprobate. The objection is formulated thus: "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?" (Rom. 9:19). Paul answers very simply but firmly, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom. 9:20,21). To paraphrase verse 20, Paul is saying, "It is none of your business." Creatures do not have the right to ask why their Creator has elected some and bypassed others any more than a symphony by Beethoven has the right to ask, "Why have you written me thus?" Charles Hodge has some pertinent comments on Romans 9:19:

If the fact that one believes and is saved, and another remains impenitent and is lost, depends on God, how can we be blamed? Can we resist his will? It will at once be perceived that this plausible and formidable objection to the apostle's doctrine is precisely the one which is commonly and confidently urged against the doctrine of election. There would be no room either for this objection, or for that contained in the 14th verse, if Paul had merely said that God chooses those whom he foresees would repent and believe; or that the ground of distinction was in the different conduct of men. It is very evident, therefore, that he taught no such doctrine.⁹

A second major passage dealing with God's sovereignty in election is Ephesians chapter 1. The basis of election, the reason why God chose some to eternal bliss, is shrouded in eternal mystery. But Paul relates it to God's will, purpose, and good pleasure (Eph. 1:5,11). He works all things after the counsel of His own will. He does nothing arbitrary. If the believer asks about the motive behind his election,

⁹Charles Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), p. 317.

then he is brought to the goodness and love of God, the good pleasure or the kind intention of His will. But why God foreloved some and gave others over to their just punishment is not revealed. We know from Ephesians 1 that the source of our election is the Father (1:4), that the sphere of election is Christ, and that the time of election is before the foundations of the world (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3).

Human Effort.

A. W. Pink, in his significant volume, The Sovereignty of God, has correctly placed the emphasis where it belongs. God makes the effort to save man. Man never decides on his own to come to God.

Why is it that all are not saved, particularly all who hear the Gospel? Do you still answer, because the majority refuse to believe? Well, that is true, but it is only a part of the truth. It is the truth from the human side. But there is a Divine side too, and this side of the truth needs to be stressed or God will be robbed of His glory. The unsaved are lost because they refuse to believe; the others are saved because they believe. But why do these others believe? What is it that causes them to put their trust in Christ? Is it because they are more intelligent than their fellows, and quicker to discern their need of salvation? Perish the thought, 'Who maketh thee to differ from another?' And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?' (1 Cor. 4:7). It is God himself who makes the difference between the elect and the non-elect, for of His own it is written, 'And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true' (1 John 5:20).¹⁰

Two passages of Scripture which completely refute the Arminian assertion that each man has been given sufficient grace to believe and that therefore man on his own makes an effort to come to God are John 1:13 and Romans 9:16.

¹⁰A. W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1961), p. 46.

John writes that those who are the sons of God "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). This verse refutes Arminianism once and for all, because here, in unmistakable language, is told what is excluded in man's salvation: (1) human means--"of blood", i.e., salvation is not a physical process; (2) human urge--"of the will of the flesh"--not an emotional response; (3) human decision--"of the will of man"--salvation is not due to man's mental activity. Man is not saved because he decides to be saved, because he wants to be saved, but because of the effort on God's part on his behalf.

In the well-known passage of Romans 9:16, Paul shows that salvation is not by the will of man: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy." Man is saved because God shows mercy, not because man decided to be saved or wanted to be saved. The verse excludes any human volition or active assertion for salvation.

If the two verses prove anything, it is that man does not have a free will when it comes to the matter of salvation. Man is so totally depraved and so dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-5) that he is a spiritual corpse. This state, as any concept of death, includes the two ideas of separation and inability. Every man born into the world is separated from God and eternal life and is unable to respond in the area of the spiritual. And so Jonah was correct when he prayed from the belly of the fish: "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). Total depravity makes human efforts impossible in salvation, as Spurgeon has so well illustrated:

Now, the reason why man cannot come to Christ, is not because he can not come, so far as his body or his mere power of mind is concerned, but because his nature is so corrupt that he has neither the will nor the power to come to Christ unless drawn by the Spirit.

But let me give you a better illustration. You see a mother with a babe in her arms. You put a knife into her hand, and tell her to stab that babe in the heart. She replies, and very truthfully, "I can not." Now, as far as her bodily power is concerned, she can, if she pleases; there is the knife, and there is the child. The child can not resist, and she has quite sufficient strength in her hand immediately to stab it to its heart. But she is quite correct when she says she can not do it. As a mere act of the mind, it is quite possible she might think of such a thing as killing the child, and yet she says she can not think of such a thing; and she does not say falsely, for her nature as a mother forbids her doing a thing from which her soul revolts. Simply because she is that child's parent she feels she can not kill it.

It is even so with a sinner. Coming to Christ is so obnoxious to human nature that, although, so far as physical and mental forces are concerned (and these have but a very narrow sphere in salvation) men could come if they would: it is strictly correct to say that they can not and will not unless the Father who hath sent Christ doth draw them. Let us enter a little more deeply into the subject, and try to show you wherein this inability of man consists, in its more minute particulars.

(1). First, it lies in the obstinacy of the human will. "Oh!" saith the Arminian, "men may be saved if they will." We reply, "My dear sir, we all believe that; but it is just the if they will that is the difficulty. We assert that no man will come to Christ unless he is drawn; nay, we do not assert it, but Christ Himself declares it--'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;' and as long as that 'ye will not come' stands on record in Holy Scripture, we shall not be brought to believe in any doctrine of the freedom of the human will."

It is strange how people, when talking about free-will, talk of things which they do not at all understand. "Now," says one, "I believe men can be saved if they will." My dear sir, that is not the question at all. The question is, are men ever found naturally willing to submit to the humbling terms of the gospel of Christ? We declare, upon Scriptural authority, that the human will is so desperately set on mischief, so depraved, and so inclined to everything that is evil and so disinclined to everything that is good, that without the powerful supernatural, irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit, no human will ever be constrained toward Christ.¹¹

¹¹Charles H. Spurgeon, Spurgeon's Sermons on Sovereignty (Ashland, Ky.: Baptist Examiner Book Shop, 1959), pp. 123, 124.

Human Responsibility.

In discussing the doctrine of election, theologians frequently fall into the logical error of assuming that man cannot be held responsible unless he has a free will. But while the Bible plainly teaches that man does not have a free will in salvation, it teaches just as plainly that man is a free moral agent. Free agency and free will are not the same, as Hodge points out. He writes.

The doctrine of man's inability, therefore, does not assume that man has ceased to be a free moral agent. He is free because he determines his own acts. Every volition is an act of free self-determination. He is a moral agent because he has the consciousness of moral obligation, and whenever he sins he acts freely against the convictions of conscience or the precepts of the moral law. That a man is in such a state that he uniformly prefers and chooses evil instead of good, as do the fallen angels, is no more inconsistent with his free moral agency than his being in such a state as that he prefers and chooses good with the same uniformity that the holy angels do.¹²

It is commonly assumed that responsibility implies ability. The fallacy of this has been shown repeatedly, but the error seems to live on. Pink has well written:

The assumption that responsibility implies ability is a philosophical argument and not a biblical one. It was nevertheless popularized in the last century by such evangelists as C. G. Finney and has become almost universally accepted. Reviewing Finney's position, Charles Hodge wrote:

'With him it is a 'first truth' that freedom of the will is essential to moral obligation, and that no man is bound to do what is not in his own power.'

The fallacy of which he is guilty is very obvious. He transfers a maxim which is an axiom in one department, to another in which it has no legitimate force. It is a first truth that a man without eyes cannot be under an obligation to see, or a man without ears to hear. Within the sphere therefore of physical impossibilities, the maxim that obligation is limited by ability,

¹²Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), II, 260-261.

is undoubtedly true. But it is no less obviously true that an inability which has its origin in sin, which consists in what is sinful, and relates to moral action, is perfectly consistent with continued obligation. It is one of the most familiar facts of consciousness, that a sense of obligation is consistent with a conviction of entire inability. It is a dictum of philosophers, 'I ought, therefore, I can.' To which every heart burdened with a sense of sin replies, 'I ought to be able, but I am not.' Such is the testimony of conscience and such is the plain doctrine of the Bible. . . .It was, says Neander, the radical principle of Pelagius' system that he assumed moral liberty to consist in the ability to choose between good and evil.¹³

The publishers of Pink's book have also shown how man can be held responsible although he is incapable of choosing Christ. In a footnote they declare:

It may be asked why, if this is the true condition of man, do the Scriptures address themselves to man's will? Is it not written, 'And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely?' (Rev. 22:17) This fact is readily acknowledged. Such exhortations show that man is responsible to repent, believe and receive Christ, and all these duties involve a response of the will, but, as other Scriptures show, whether or not men do thus respond depends on the state of the nature of which the will is the expression. The will is the immediate cause of man's actions, not the primary cause.

It is often assumed that man cannot be held responsible for his response to the Gospel unless he is capable of choosing Christ; thus it is generally taken for granted that 'freewill' and human responsibility are synonymous and that you cannot deny one without denying the other. On the basis of this confusion and Reformed Faith is frequently charged with not doing justice to man's responsibility because it denies his 'freewill.'

The Biblical and Reformed view of man's responsibility is in fact much more profound than the popular Arminian conception. Man is responsible not merely for his will, but for his whole nature, and as long as his nature remains what sin (not God) has made it, he 'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. 2:14) and he 'will not come' to Christ that he might have life (John 5:40).¹⁴

¹³A. W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1961), p. 108.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 99.

Saving Faith.

The faith which leads to salvation is God's gift to man. Man never cooperates with God in salvation, in the Arminian sense, because no man ever has the desire or willingness to come to God unless God draws him and then gives him the faith to believe. No one was more emphatic on this "Calvinistic" doctrine than Christ. "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:65). Leon Morris has well stated the matter in his new commentary:

People do not come to Christ because it seems to them a good idea. It never does seem a good idea to natural man. Apart from a divine work in their souls. . . men remain contentedly in their sins. Before men can come to Christ it is necessary that the Father give them to Him.¹⁵

Faith is God's gift, and "all men have not faith" (2 Thess. 3:2) to come to Christ; therefore, it is seen that God does not bestow this gift upon all. Upon whom then does He bestow this saving favor? The clear Biblical answer is: "Upon His own elect." The reason some people do not believe is because they are not elect. "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you" (John 10:26). It is not that they are not Christ's sheep because they do not believe. Rather, they do not believe because they are not

¹⁵Leon Morris, Commentary on the Gospel of John (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), p. 367.

His sheep. It is imperative that the Bible student note the divine order. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts. 13:48). Paul does not say: "As many as God foresaw would believe he ordained to eternal life." God first ordains certain individuals to be the special objects of His favor. Then He draws them to Himself and enables them to believe. "For 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). What is the gift of God? Salvation, which includes faith. "For unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29). "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

The Biblical approach, therefore, is that God so works in the person, drawing him to the Savior and giving him faith, that man desires this gift of salvation. Man's enabled will responds because God willed to bring this person to salvation. The correct view is this: "Faith is worked by God then willed by man."

THE DENIALS OF UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

Even the Apostle Paul expected opposition to such a doctrine from men who were deceived by the impulses of their depraved minds. Both the natural man and the old nature in believers have no regard for divine things and ever oppose God and His plan. Thus it should not come as a surprise that the Biblical doctrine of election is assailed on every hand.

Ness' words are not too strong when he asserts:

The Arminians deal with this doctrine as the heathen Emperors did with the primitive Christians in the ten first persecutions, who wrapped them up in the skins of beasts, and then exposed them to be torn to pieces by their fierce ban-dogs; so do the Arminians with this great truth. They first dress it up in an ugly shape, with their own false glosses upon it, and then they let fly at it one cynical sarcasm after another, saying, 'This doctrine of absolute predestination goes to accuse and charge God with injustice, dissimulation, hypocrisy," etc., etc.'¹⁶

God is Unjust.

This objection has already been partially answered under the section of Romans 9. Ness observes:

God's decree is not an act of justice, but of lordship and sovereignty. Justice always presupposes debt; but God (who was perfect in Himself from all eternity) could not be a debtor to man, who had his all from God; the decree is not a matter of right and wrong, but of free favour: grace is God's own, He may do what He will with it. 'Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own? is thine eye evil, because I am good?' (Matt. 20:15). If He gives grace to some and not to others, it is no wrong in Him that is not bound to give it to any.¹⁷

While election secures the salvation of some, preterition or the bypassing of the non-elect does not procure the damnation of others. Sin is the cause of damnation, but reprobation is not the cause of sin. God, as the sovereign of the universe, does as He pleases. Supposing there are 100 women equally suitable for marriage. Is it unjust to marry one unless a man marries all? Does Christ have the right to choose His bride from the larger mass? The poet has well expressed

¹⁶Christopher Ness, An Antidote to Arminianism (Millersville, Pa.: Classic-A-Month Books, 1964), p. 34. (Ness proceeds to answer some of the questions and charges concerning unconditional election. Various other works deal in detail with the problems of election. One of the most thorough is Loraine Boettner's The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination. The interested reader is urged to consult works like Ness or Boettner. The bounds of this paper allow only brief attention to the major objections against God's sovereign predestination.)

¹⁷Ibid., p. 36.

this truth:

God's ways are just, His counsels wise,
No darkness can prevent His eyes;
No thought can fly, nor thing can move,
Unknown to Him that sits above.

He in the thickest darkness dwells,
Performs His works, the cause conceals,
But though His methods are unknown,
Judgment and Truth support His throne.

In heaven, and earth, and air, and seas,
He executes His firm decrees;
And by His saints it stands confess'd,
That what he does is ever best.

Wait then, my soul, submissive wait,
Prostrate before His awful seat,
And, midst the terrors of His rod,
Trust in a wise and gracious God.

God is Arbitrary.

It is true that we do not know the reason why God selected some and bypassed others. But to charge God with arbitrariness is to do Him an enormous injustice. Does not God say of Himself, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). His is a well-thoughtout, wonderful plan rather than an arbitrary act of will.

May not the Sov'reign Lord on high
Dispense His favours as He will;
Choose some to life, while others die,
And yet be just and gracious still?

Shall man reply against the Lord,
And call his Maker's ways unjust?
The thunder of whose dreadful word
Can crush a thousand worlds to dust.

But, O my soul, if truths so bright
Should dazzle and confound thy sight,
Yet still His written will obey,
And wait the great decisive day!

God Wishes All Men to be Saved.

In 1 Timothy 2:3,4 Paul refers to "God our Saviour, who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And Peter informs the Christian that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

The word for will used in the first passage (θέλω, thelo) is to be understood as God's wish or desire, not His decretive will (boulomai, βούλομαι), which is that will which invariably comes to pass. The fact is that God includes some things in His plan which are not His desire. God specifically planned the crucifixion of His own Son by His "determinate counsel and foreknowledge" (Acts 2:23). Yet did He want Him slain by these "wicked hands"? God's plan included the fall of His creatures and their ultimate salvation. Yet did He want Eve to willfully disobey Him? The obvious answer is a resounding, "NO!" God is never the author of sin, nor can any creature ever blame Him for his own sin. If any man had the right, it would have been Judas, the predetermined Son of Perdition. And yet what were Judas' words?" I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt.27:4).

In 2 Peter 3:9 the strong word, bulomai, is used. In the context here the any have to be the elect. God is holding back His eschatological judgment until that time when everyone on the earth, written in the Lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world, will be saved. It is not God's will that any of His own should perish. This is why Christ has not yet returned for judgment.

Implied here is also the fact that God does not directly decree the damnation of the lost. They are responsible for their own destiny.

God does not bulomai that any should be damned. Double predestination is a Biblically untenable view. While God exercises His decretive will to accomplish the salvation of some, He thereby does not predestine the others to hell. The unsaved are simply left to go to their justly deserved eternal destiny. This is preterition, the bypassing of the non-elect.

Boettner, in summarizing passages like the two above, comments:

These verses simply teach that God is benevolent, and that He does not delight in the sufferings of His creatures any more than a human father delights in the punishment which he must inflict upon his son. God does not decretively will the salvation of all men, no matter how much He may desire it; and if any verses taught that He decretively willed or intended the salvation of all men, they would contradict those other parts of the Scripture which teach that God sovereignly rules and that it is His purposes to leave some to be punished.¹⁸

The Gospel Cannot be Offered Sincerely to All.

The Arminians, too, should have a problem with this. According to them God foreknows who will believe. How can the offer of salvation be sincerely made to those who God foreknows will despise and reject it, especially when their guilt and condemnation will only be increased by their refusal? But Arminians also know themselves to be under a divine command to preach to all men, and they do not feel that they act insincerely in doing so.

Several lengthy quotations from Boettner answer this charge very ably:

God commanded Moses to gather together the elders of Israel, to go to Pharaoh and demand that they be allowed to go three days' journey into the wilderness to hold a feast and offer sacrifices. Yet in the very next verse God Himself says, "I know that the king of Egypt will not give you leave to go, no, not by a mighty

¹⁸Lorraine Boettner, The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), p. 287.

hand," (Ex. 3:18,19). If it is not inconsistent with God's sincerity for Him to command all men to love Him, or to be perfect (Luke 10:27; Matt. 5:48), it is not inconsistent with His sincerity for Him to command them to repent and believe the Gospel. A man may be altogether sincere in giving an invitation which he knows will be refused. A father who knows that his boys are going to do wrong feels constrained to tell them what is right. His warnings and pleadings are sincere; the trouble is in the boys.

Will any one contend that God cannot sincerely offer salvation to a free moral agent unless in addition to the invitation He exerts a special influence which will induce the person to accept it? After a civil war in a country it often happens that the victorious general offers free pardon to all those in the opposing army, provided they will lay down their arms, through pride or malice many will refuse. He makes the offer in good faith even though for wise reason he determines not to constrain their assent, supposing him possessed of such power.

We may imagine the case of a ship with many passengers on board sinking some distance from shore. A man hires a boat from a near-by port and goes to rescue his family. Incidentally it happens that the boat which he takes is large enough to carry all the passengers, so he invites all those on the sinking vessel to come on board, although he knows that many of them, either through lack of appreciation of their danger, or because of personal spite toward him, or for other reasons, will not accept. Yet does that make his offer any less sincere?

.....

Arminians object that God could not offer the Gospel to those who in His secret counsel were not designed to accept it; yet we find the Scriptures declaring that He does this very thing. His commands to Pharaoh have already been referred to. Isaiah was commissioned to preach to the Jews, and in 1:18, 19, we find that he extended a gracious offer of pardon and cleansing. But in 6:9-13, immediately following his glorious vision and official appointment, he is informed that this preaching is destined to harden his countrymen to their almost universal destruction. Ezekiel was sent to speak to the house of Israel, but was told beforehand that they would not hear, Ezek. 3:4-11. Matt. 23:33-37 presents the same teaching. In these passages God declares that He does the very thing which Arminians say He must not do. Hence the objection now under consideration has arisen not because of any Calvinistic misstatement of the divine plan, but through erroneous assumptions made by Arminians themselves.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 283-285.

Boettner continues, and his words should be given utmost attention by those who are puzzled by the "whosoever will" passages:

The decree of election is a secret decree. And since no revelation has been given to the preacher as to which ones among his hearers are elect and which are non-elect, it is not possible for him to present the Gospel to the elect only. It is his duty to look with hope on all those to whom he is preaching, and to pray for them that they may each be among the elect. In order to offer the message to the elect, he must offer it to all; and the Scripture command is plain to the effect that it should be offered to all. Even the elect must hear before they can believe and accept, Rom. 10:13-17. The attentive reader, however, will perceive that the invitations are not, in the strict sense, general, but that they are addressed to "weary," the "thirsty," the "hungry," the "willing," those who "labor and are heavy laden," and not to those who are unconscious of any need and unwilling to be reformed. While the message is preached to all, it is God who chooses among the hearers those to whom He is speaking, and He makes the selection known to them through the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit. The elect thus receive the message as the promise of salvation, but to the non-elect it appears only as foolishness, or if their conscience is aroused, as a judgment to condemnation.²⁰

Calvinism Quenches Missionary Zeal.

This objection to predestination is the least substantial of them all. No one was a stronger believer in election than the Apostle Paul. And no one was engaged in more zealous missionary activities than Paul. The Calvinism of Spurgeon and Whitfield certainly did not quench their zeal for the salvation of the lost. The Calvinist knows that while not all will be saved, at least some will come to the Savior. The Arminian really has no assurance that any will be saved, for all may actively resist the will of the Lord. A Calvinist will not fall into despair when he preaches his heart out and none will respond. An Arminian will blame himself and his message for the lack of response.

²⁰Loc. cit.

"If God wishes to save every person on earth, then it is up to us to see that they are converted. When they do not come to Christ it is our fault," says the Arminian. "Some person may be eternally lost because I have failed." The Calvinist, on the other hand, realizes that while he is commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, no one will be lost because of his personal failure. "All that the Father hath given me will come unto me" (John 6:37). Election gives purpose and direction to one's ministry. A Calvinist will not use gimmicks or tricks to coax men to Christ. He realizes that the Holy Spirit will effectively draw those to the Savior whose names are written in heaven.

It should be perfectly plain by now that one's view of election determines one's method of evangelism. The latter is a direct result of the former. Sound practice is always based on sound doctrine. Orthodoxy precedes orthopraxy, even in Soteriology.

Chapter 4

THE DEMARCATION OF MODIFIED CALVINISM AND HISTORIC BAPTIST BELIEFS

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MODIFIED CALVINISM AND MODIFIED ARMINIANISM

In any discussion or debate it is helpful to see just where the two positions coincide or disagree. Problems and disagreements, whether doctrinal or otherwise, will never be resolved when very real differences are ignored or brushed under the proverbial carpet. Below are the writer's basic disagreements with Thiessen's modified Arminianism.

Election and Faith.

The Arminian, whether strict, or moderate like Thiessen, will say that man is elect because he believes. The Calvinist asserts that man believes because he is elect. As long as Acts 13:48 and John 10:26 are part of the Bible, the Arminian definition of election which bases that election upon God's foreknowledge of faith can never be maintained.

Salvation and Mankind.

The Arminian insists that all men can be saved. The Calvinist holds that not all men can be saved. This is the fundamental difference between Arminianism and Calvinism. Ask a person what he believes about the salvation of mankind. Immediately it will be evident to which of the two categories he belongs. If election (calling out of) and predestination (marking beforehand, "pre-horizoning") mean anything,

it is that in eternity past God selected some, and only some, to be the special objects of His divine favor.

Freedom and Sovereignty.

The Arminian teaches that man has a free will to come to Christ or to reject the grace of God. The Calvinist maintains that man, while not possessing a free will, is nevertheless a free moral agent. None of the elect can ever ultimately reject efficacious grace. God so works through the faculties of man that he is drawn insensibly to God. The words of a song in the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship Hymnal (#78) beautifully express this fact:

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;
It was not that I found, O Savior true;
No, I was found of Thee.

Thou didst reach forth Thy hand and mine enfold;
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea;
'Twas not so much that I on Thee took hold,
As Thou, dear Lord, on me.

I find, I walk, I love; but O the whole
Of love is but my answer, Lord to Thee;
For Thou wert long beforehand with my soul;
Always Thou lovedst me.

THE DISTINCTIVES OF BAPTISTS

The Concept of Sovereignty.

Historically the Baptists have been divided into two groups.

Schaff, the famous church historian, describes them:

The great body of Baptists are called REGULAR or PARTICULAR or CALVINISTIC BAPTISTS, in distinction from the smaller body of General or Arminian or Free-Will Baptists. They are Calvinists in doctrine and Independents in Church polity.

.....

The GENERAL or ARMINIAN BAPTISTS differ from the Particular or Calvinistic Baptists in rejecting unconditional election and the perseverance of saints, and in maintaining the freedom of will and the possibility of falling from grace. So far they followed the Mennonites.¹

There is thus no uniformity among Baptists. However, the majority of Baptists have historically been Calvinistic, especially those in the United States. Hiscox, in his authoritative work on Baptist polity, lists eight historic distinctives of Baptists. One of these is their Calvinistic view of salvation. He writes:

In doctrine, Baptists agree very nearly with other evangelical Christians. They are what is usually called Calvinistic, as opposed to Arminian views of free-will and the sovereignty of grace. They hold. . .the Holy Spirit and the author and finisher of saving faith and sanctification; the personal election of believers; the perseverance of the saints by upholding grace.²

The Creeds of the Baptists.

Dr. Osgood writes that among Baptists confessions of faith have never been held as tests of orthodoxy, as of any authoritative or binding force; they merely reflect the existing harmony of the views and the scriptural interpretations of the churches assenting to them.³ It should not be forgotten, however, that Baptists in the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches have a heritage to guard. It is never safe nor wise to suddenly overturn hundreds of years of tradition. As can be seen from the appended paper,⁴ the GARBC has historic ties to the great Calvinistic confessions of days gone by.

¹Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), I, 845, 857.

²Edward T. Hiscox, The New Directory for Baptist Churches (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1954), p. 19.

³Schaff, op. cit. p. 853.

⁴See Appendix I

Is it safe to sever those ties and to turn our backs on our rich heritage? The GARBC church bulletin announcing the Fortieth Annual Conference on June 27-July 2, 1971, at Winona Lake, Indiana, relates on the back cover that the following objectives listed here characterized the founding of the GARBC and are still at the heart of the reason for its existence.

And one of these original purposes of the GARBC is the following:

We purposed to reaffirm the truths of Scripture historically believed by Baptists and expressed through the Baptist Confessions of Faith of London 1689, the New Hampshire, Philadelphia or the Baptist Bible Union Confessions of Faith, or any such which enunciates the same truth though in other words.

The GARBC has therefore from its inception subscribed to various biblical creeds. It should be noted what, for example, The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, one of the creeds to which the GARBC subscribes, says relative to effectual calling and foreknowledge. Chapter X, "Of Effectual Calling," begins thus:

(1) Those whom God hath predestined unto life he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call (Rom. 8:30; Rom. 11:7; Eph. 1:10,11; 2 Thess. 2:13,14) by his word and Spirit, out of the state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation (Eph. 1:1-6) by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to (Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:17,18) understand the things of God; taking away their (Ezek. 36:26) heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them (Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27; Eph. 1:19) to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come (Ps. 110:3; Cant. 1:4) most freely, being made willing by his grace.

(2) This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:8), not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, co-working with his special grace (1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:5; John 5:25), the creature being wholly passive therein, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less (Eph. 1:19,20) power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.⁵ [Emphasis added.]

⁵The Philadelphia Confessions of Faith with Catechism (Marshallton, Del.: The National Foundation for Christian Education, n.d.), pp. 29-30.

The old London Confession is even more explicit in defining Baptist beliefs on election:

'3d Article: By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sins to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it can not be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto.'

While these human authorities do not determine the rightness or wrongness of a doctrine, they do, however, confirm that view of election which this paper defends. Moreover, it is that position to which the GARBC has historically subscribed. Is it wise to ignore this fact in discussing the doctrine of election?

⁶Charles H. Spurgeon, Election (Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, 1964), p. 6.

Chapter 5

THE DEMAND UPON THE EXPOSITOR

This paper opened with the duty of the theologian and it closes with an exhortation to the expositor of God's Word. What is the expositor's task in light of this awesome doctrine?

A FAITHFUL EXPOSITION OF GOD'S WORD

It is true that God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out (Rom. 11:33). But some things are revealed about His plan. The expositor is obligated to expound these truths, not to appeal to human emotions, as Thiessen has done, for example, in his doctrine of election.

In the minds of some people, election is a choice that God makes for which we can see no reason and which we can hardly harmonize with His justice. . . . We are asked to accept the theory . . . which does (not) commend itself to our sense of justice.¹

Nothing is served by saying, as Thiessen does, that because of the "demands of the heart" we believe such and such. Thiessen and others reject the biblical doctrine of election in general and lexical meaning of foreknowledge in particular not because they are convinced by the testimony of Scripture but swayed by their own emotions. At least Thiessen is frank enough to admit that his theology is determined by

¹Henry Clarence Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), p. 345.

the "demands of the heart." With him, as with others, this subjective approach has led to a misunderstanding of God's sovereignty in unconditional election to a misconception of the human role in salvation and to a misinterpretation of basic theological terms such as foreknowledge. These men are actually guilty of adding to the Scriptures. God's Word nowhere discloses on what this predestining foreknowledge is based. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate" (Rom. 8:29) is changed by the Arminians to "Of whom he did foreknow that they would believe, he also did predestinate." God declares that He foreknew certain persons, that is, that He established a loving relationship with a special few. Arminian theologians deny this. They know better. They assert that God foresaw something about the person, not the person himself. This difference might seem minor but is actually of momentous importance.

A FAIR PRESENTATION OF THE OPPONENT'S VIEW

It is never right to misrepresent an opposing view in order that a person's position may be enhanced. The God of the Calvinist is not an arbitrary God but one who in His infinite wisdom plans every detail of the universe. Neither is the God of the Calvinist a hard God. The Calvinist is quite convinced that a merciful God will redeem as many sinners as possible without violating His justice and righteousness. The Calvinist is not trying to keep people out of heaven. Election is not a matter of what he wished God would do but rather, what He has revealed He would do.

God said that He is sovereign in the dispensing of efficacious grace. It will not do to claim that God is sovereign in salvation, but that, on the other hand, man is free to accept or reject salvation. This

so-called PARALLEL VIEW, espoused in Fitzwater's Christian Theology,² which sees man's freedom and sovereignty meeting somewhere in the mind of God but appearing contradictory to man, simply will not hold up under close scrutiny. This position not only violates the clear assertions of Scripture but also the most basic laws of logic. A can never be B, if the laws of identity and contradiction means anything. A is not B, neither on earth nor in heaven. Even Spurgeon is sometimes cited in support of the PARALLEL VIEW, but while this great Baptist preacher asserted the free moral agency of man on the one hand and God's sovereignty on the other, he does not subscribe to the Arminian notion that fallen man has a free will. Spurgeon writes for example:

Free-will somebody believes in. Free-will many dream of. Free-will! Wherever is that to be found? Once there was Free-will in Paradise, and a terrible mess Free-will made there; for it spoiled all Paradise and turned Adam out of the garden. Free-will was once in Heaven; but it turned the glorious arch-angel out, and a third part of the stars of Heaven fell into the abyss. I want nothing to do with Free-will, but I will try to see whether I have got a Free-will within.

And I find I have. Very free will to evil but very poor will to that which is good. Free-will enough when I sin, but when I

²Perry Fitzwater, Christian Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948).

In the preface of his book (p. 7) Fitzwater gives this description of the popular parallel view:

Divine sovereignty and human freedom are given their proper recognition. A system of theology should maintain the same balance as do the Scriptures. Divine sovereignty and human freedom are clearly set forth therein, but never explained. It will be the inflexible policy of this book to recognize this principle. When dealing with man's freedom, its factuality will be given the same emphasis as it is given in the Scriptures. The truths of Calvinism and Arminianism will be maintained, and their errors will be avoided. The truths concerning these matters cannot be found in the middle, but in the extremes. There is no mediating position between Calvinism and Arminianism. We shall not vacillate but oscillate between them. Sometimes the viewpoint will be that of a high Calvinist and sometimes that of a low Arminian. [Emphasis added.]

would do good, evil is present with me, and how to do that which I would I find not. Yet some boast of Free-will.³

A FORCEFUL PROCLAMATION OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

Unfortunately, many pastors shy away from the doctrine of election, so that most Christians have never been clearly instructed in this precious truth. Should such a difficult and deep doctrine be proclaimed from the pulpit? Is it not better to skirt such controversial doctrines? In regard to preaching election, it is impossible to improve on C. H. Spurgeon's comments. In preaching from 1 Thessalonians 1:4, he said:

At the very announcement of the text, some will be ready to say, 'Why preach upon so profound a doctrine as election?' I answer, because it is in God's Word, and whatever is in God's Word is to be preached. 'But,' says the objector, 'some truths should be kept back from the people lest they make an ill use thereof.' That is popish doctrine! It was upon that very theory that priests kept back the Bible from the people. They did not give it to them lest they should misuse it. 'But,' says the objector, 'are not some doctrines dangerous?' Not if they are true and rightly handled. Truth is never dangerous, it is error and reticence, that are fraught with peril! 'But,' says the objector, 'do not men abuse the doctrines of grace?' I grant you that they do, but if we destroy everything that men abuse, we should have nothing left. What, are there to be no ropes because some use them as weapons of destruction? Decidedly not! And, besides all this remember that men do read the Scriptures and think about these doctrines, and therefore make mistakes about them. Who then shall set them right if we who preach the Word hold our tongues about the matter?⁴

Did not the greatest preacher of the Christian church, the Apostle Paul, observe that he had not shunned to declare to his flock the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27)? And part of that counsel was the forceful proclamation of God's sovereign selection in eternity past

³C. H. Spurgeon, "Free-Will," The Baptist Examiner, May 11, 1957, p. 3.

⁴Cited by Van Gilder, "Election and. . .," p. 8.

of certain individuals who through spiritual enablement and divinely bestowed faith would become His own (2 Thess. 2:13). Were people offended at the doctrine? Indeed they were! Was Paul silenced by their foolish charges against God (Rom. 9)? Of course not! Paul left a pattern for future pastors, both in decorum and doctrine. May God give the pastors of today grace to preach with like force the blessed doctrine of election and with like balance the fact of human responsibility.

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40th Annual Conference

General Association of Regular Baptist Churches

This year marks the beginning of the 40th year since the foundation of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches was laid back in May of 1932.

The Association is holding its annual conference at Winona Lake Bible Conference grounds near Warsaw, Indiana. Why not plan your vacation around these dates and plan to attend the conference sessions.

For further information write for free literature items, GARBC, 1800 Oakton Boulevard, Des Plaines, Illinois, 60018



The experiences that make up our history are varied and exciting, but these objectives listed here characterized the founding of the GARBC and are still at the heart of our reason for existence.

- *We became an Association of churches in order to maintain a testimony to the supernaturalism of Christianity as opposed to the modernist's antisupernaturalism.*
- *We determined to do our work independent of and separated from the Northern Baptist Convention and all of its auxiliaries. Our determination has met with success and blessing from God.*
- *We purposed to reaffirm the truths of Scripture historically believed by Baptists and expressed through the Baptist Confessions of Faith of London 1689, the New Hampshire, Philadelphia or the Baptist Bible Union Confessions of Faith, or any such which enunciates the same truth though in other words.*
- *We are an organization designed to promote a missionary spirit among Baptist churches for the spread of the gospel to all the world and to "contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints."*
- *Assistance to churches in needy places and those in search of sound and satisfactory pastors for the proclamation of the gospel and the work of the ministry is still a primary objective of the Association.*

Philadelphia Confession

CHAPTER X Of Effectual Calling

1. Those whom God hath predestinated unto life he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call (Rom. viii. 30; Rom. xi. 7; Eph. i. 10,11; 2 Thess. ii. 13,14) by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation (Eph. i. 1-6) by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to (Acts xxvi. 18; Eph. i. 17,18) understand the things of God; taking away their (Ezek. xxxvi. 26) heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them (Deut. xxx. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 27; Eph. i. 19) to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come (Ps. cx. 3; Cant. i. 4) most freely, being made willing by his grace.

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone (2 Tim. i. 9; Eph. ii. 8), not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, co-working with his special grace (1 Cor. ii. 14; Eph. ii. 5; John v. 25), the creature being wholly passive therein, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less (Eph. i. 19,20) power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.

3. Elect infants dying in infancy, are (John iii. 3,5,6) regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and (John iii. 8) how he pleaseth; so also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.

4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word (Matt. xxii. 14; xiii. 20,21; Heb. vi. 4,5) and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly (John vi. 44,45,65; 1 John ii. 24,25) come to Christ,* and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men that receive not the Christian religion (Acts iv. 12; John iv. 22; John xvii. 3) be saved;** be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess.

DIVINE ELECTION OR HUMAN EFFORT? STUDY QUESTIONS, pps. 14-53.

by Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

Name _____

1. How does moderate Calvinism differ from traditional Calvinism?
2. Why do some say that Calvin did not really believe in limited atonement?
3. What texts indicate the universality of Christ's
 - a. death?
 - b. salvation?
 - c. redemption?
 - d. reconciliation?
 - e. propitiation?
4. What is the best text showing that Christ died for all, i.e. every person on earth?
5. What is the difference between God's election and decree?
6. What is the Greek word for "elect" and what does it mean?
7. What three other biblical words mean the same as elect?
8. What is Bob Thieme's strange view of election?
9. What is the meaning of the Greek word for "predestinate."
10. What is the Arminian definition of foreknowledge?
11. What is the Calvinistic definition of foreknowledge?
12. What is the difference between God's omniscience and His foreknowledge?
13. What does the usage of foreknowledge in 1 Peter 1:20 teach us?
14. What do Amos 3:2, Jeremiah 31:3 and Jeremiah 1:5 contribute to the meaning of foreknowledge?

15. What important rule of grammar is involved in the interpretation of Acts 2:23?
16. What is the only possible meaning of foreknowledge in Acts 2:23?
17. Why can the foreknowledge of Romans 8:29 not be a reference to a person's faith?
18. According to Murray and Spurgeon, why is the foreknowing of Romans 8:29 not the same as foresight?
19. What is the definition of foreknowledge according to standard grammatical reference works?
 - a. Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the N.T.:
 - b. Cremer's Lexicon of N.T. Greek:
20. What is Dr. H.O. Van Gilder's major criticism of the Arminian definition of foreknowledge?
21. What are the 4 major areas that must be covered in a balanced view of modified Calvinism (see subheadings)?
22. What are the 2 major objections to Paul's doctrine of election in Romans 9, and how does he reply to them?
 - a.
 - b.

23. What are the 2 major chapters on election?
24. What is God's motive behind election?
25. Which 2 clear passages exclude man's free will as the source of his salvation?
26. What are the two ideas involved in spiritual or physical death?
27. According to Spurgeon, what is the condition of the human will in the unsaved?

28. What is the difference between free agency and free will?

29. How can God hold a person responsible though the person is unable to choose Christ on his own?

30. Where is Christ's doctrine of election found?
31. What does the Bible say about the origin of man's saving faith?

32. What are the 5 most common objections to the doctrine of unconditional election and, briefly, what should be our reply:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

33. How would you explain Paul's statement in 1 Tim. 2:3-4 that God "would have all men to be saved?"

34. Explain the statement of 2 Peter 3:9: "God is not willing that any should perish!"

35. According to Dr. Boettner, how does the illustration of a sinking ship show the sincerity of the gospel offer of all?
36. Name 3 individuals who taught unconditional election but were filled with missionary zeal?
37. Explain the 3 major areas of disagreement between modified Calvinism and modified Arminianism.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
38. Historically, what does the word regular stand for in the name GARBC?
39. The truths of what 4 basic confessions of faith were reaffirmed by the GARBC since its founding?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
40. What are the 3 demand upon the preacher who wants to be true to God's Word?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
41. Why does Thiessen reject unconditional election?
42. What are the Arminian misunderstandings, misconceptions and misinterpretations concerning election?
43. Why did Spurgeon say that we should preach on election?

LORDSHIP SALVATION:

A Forgotten Truth or a False Doctrine?



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

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LORDSHIP SALVATION: A FORGOTTEN TRUTH OR A FALSE DOCTRINE?

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.
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INTRODUCTION

If you were Satan, which doctrine would you want to undermine? Which area of theology would you pervert, thus preventing people from turning to Christ? An individual may be wrong about the doctrine of the church and still be saved. A person may deny the pretribulational rapture or Millennial Kingdom and yet be gloriously redeemed. However, if a person is wrong on the doctrine of salvation, specifically, the prerequisites for salvation, he is eternally lost. One would indeed expect Satan to attack in the area of soteriology.

The Apostle Paul enjoins the Corinthians not to let Satan get an advantage over them, "For we are not ignorant concerning his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11). Satan's device is to counterfeit the work of God. Satan is expert in counterfeiting the Gospel of Grace with a gospel that is so close to the real Gospel and yet is a counterfeit one leading to eternal condemnation. Whereas several decades ago Satan used liberalism to undermine the truth, more recently Satan appears to have penetrated evangelicalism with his false gospel.

1A. THE CONTEMPORARY PROBLEM OF LORDSHIP SALVATION

1b. The situation:

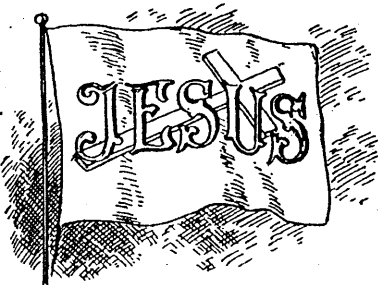
The informed and discerning believer soon realizes that there is a battle raging in American Christendom over the matter of the prerequisites for salvation. On the one hand, there are those who insist that salvation is God's gift and that trust in Christ is the only requirement for salvation. On the other hand, there are respected pastors and theologians who teach that unless an individual submits also to the Lordship of Christ at the moment he believes, he is not really saved.

1c. The issue at stake:

A great many peripheral issues, important as they are, have clouded many times the real issue in the discussion.

1d. What the issue is not:

- 1e. The issue is not whether the recognition of Christ's Lordship in the believer's life is important. All would agree that the matter is of crucial significance for the Christian life.
- 2e. The issue is not whether Lordship is desirable at the moment of salvation or as soon as possible after salvation. A commitment of



obedience to Christ early in the Christian experience is most commendable.

- 3e. The issue is not whether individuals claiming to be Christians but showing no evidence of salvation were actually ever saved. This perplexing question is important but not primary to the discussion.
- 4e. The issue is not whether repentance is part of saving faith. All admit that the Bible clearly teaches the necessity of repentance for salvation (Lk. 24:47), but there is a decided difference of opinion how repentance should be defined.
- 5e. The issue is not simply one of semantics with individuals on both sides of the issue really speaking about the same thing, though expressing it differently. At stake is a deep doctrinal difference.

2d. What the issue is:

At stake is the essence of the evangel. The basic question relates to the sine qua non of saving faith. What does an individual have to believe or do to be genuinely saved? Is faith the only requirement for salvation or are Lordship advocates correct when they say that a recognition of Christ's absolute control is necessary to salvation?

2c. The importance of the question:

Zondervan Publishing House, in advertising on its display rack both MacArthur's *The Gospel According to Jesus* and Hodges' *Absolutely Free!*, put the matter very succinctly by asking the following: DOES SALVATION REQUIRE MORE THAN BELIEF IN CHRIST? MacArthur says YES. Hodges says NO.

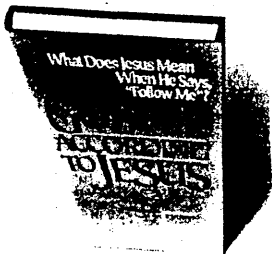
Is MacArthur correct with his unequivocal statement?

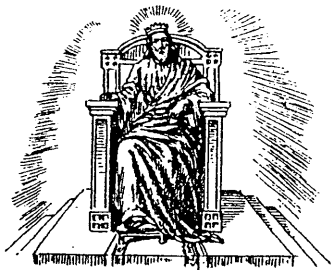
"The call to Calvary must be recognized for what it is: a call to discipleship under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. To respond to that call is to become a believer. Anything less is simply unbelief" (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, p. 30).

MacArthur maintains: "Thus there is no salvation except 'lordship' salvation" (*Ibid.*, p. 28).

Or is Hodges correct who numbers himself "among those who believe that the moment of simple faith in Christ for eternal life is the very point at which God and human beings can meet. And in that moment of meeting, one's destiny is permanently settled and the miraculous life of eternity itself is created within" (*Absolutely Free!*, p. xiv).

3c. The immediacy of the problem:





Both positions cannot be correct. Either salvation is absolutely free or it costs everything. There is no more important question for man than the one posed by the contemporary debate: How is an individual saved?

1d. Evangelicalism is divided on Lordship:

James Montgomery Boice advocates Lordship salvation in *Moody Monthly*. Michael Cocoris refutes it in *Realife*.

2d. Fundamentalism differs on Lordship salvation:

On the one hand, the *Biblical Evangelist* publishes articles espousing Lordship salvation; on the other hand, the editor of the *Sword of the Lord*, Curtis Hutson, rejects Lordship salvation as a false gospel.

3d. The GARBC disagrees over the matter of Lordship salvation:



John Balyo and Paul Tassell, both writing for the *Baptist Bulletin*, espouse different positions.

John Balyo equates the Saviorhood of Christ with His Lordship:

"If there is no submission to the will of God and no performance of the will of God, a person is not a genuine believer." He holds that "saving faith properly understood always is both trusting Christ with one's life. . . (and) confidence in Christ to both save and manage one's life. Superficial faith never saved anyone" (*Baptist Bulletin*, March 1987, p. 7).

In contrast, Paul Tassell pleads that we not confuse "the instantaneous act of salvation with the long progress of progressive sanctification. We must not confuse our deliverance from sin with discipleship. We must not make saviorship and lordship synonymous" (*Baptist Bulletin*, Feb. 1989, p. 46).



The problem is immediate. It has not just affected evangelicalism, but fundamentalism, indeed our beloved GARBC fellowship. The question is important. Charles Ryrie sees the issue clearly:

"Confusion about salvation means disaster, for the message of the Gospel is a matter of eternal life or eternal death. 'What is the Gospel?' is not an academic question. It affects the destiny of every lost sinner as well as the activity of every witnessing Christian, every soul-winning ministry" (*So Great Salvation*, p. 9).

2b. The sides:

The listing below of representatives of Lordship salvation and free grace proponents is by no means exhaustive. Both sides can boast outstanding theologians. Their dedication is not the issue. The total difference in their definition of the Gospel is.

1c. Lordship salvation:



J.I. PACKER

1d. J. I. Packer:

In his well-known volume, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, the British theologian asks this concerning erroneous ways of salvation:

"Or will it leave them supposing that all they have to do is to trust Christ as a sin-bearer, not realizing that they must also deny themselves and enthrone Him as their Lord (the error which we might call only-believism)?" (p. 89)

2d. Walter J. Chantry:

Chantry says that salvation without Lordship is impossible:

"Practical acknowledgement of Jesus' Lordship, yielding to His rule by following, is the very fibre of saving faith. It is only those who 'confess with the mouth the *Lord Jesus*' (Romans 10:9) that shall be saved. . . . Without obedience, you shall not see life! Unless you bow to Christ's scepter, you will not receive the benefits of Christ's sacrifice" (*Today's Gospel Authentic or Synthetic?* p. 60, italics in the original).

His words concerning those who preach simple faith in Christ are very strong:

"This heretical and soul-destroying practice is the logical conclusion of a system that thinks little of God, preaches no law, calls for no repentance, waters down faith to 'accepting a gift,' and never mentions bowing to Christ's rule or bearing a cross" (p. 68).

3d. John R. Stott:

Stott suggests a person who does not recognize the Lordship of Christ at salvation cannot be saved:

"I am suggesting, therefore, that it is as unbiblical as it is unrealistic to divorce the Lordship from the Saviorhood of Jesus Christ" ("Must Christ Be Lord to Be Savior?—Yes," *Eternity*, Sept. 1959, p. 37).

4d. James Montgomery Boice:

Boice calls the concept of salvation through faith alone "a defective theology that has crept over us like a deadening fog. This theology separates faith from discipleship and grace from obedience. It teaches that Jesus can be received as one's Savior without being received as one's Lord" ("The Meaning of Discipleship," *Moody Monthly*, Feb. 1986, p. 34).





R.C. SPROUL

5d. R. C. Sproul:

Sproul speaks of a false dichotomy that threatens evangelical theology. He is glad that "MacArthur exposes the current departure from the orthodox Christian view of justification, which fosters a widespread epidemic of antinomianism" (MacArthur, *The Gospel*. . . , back flap).

6d. A. W. Tozer:

Tozer labels the view of salvation by grace alone "a notable heresy": "I must be frank in saying that a notable heresy has permeated our evangelical Christian circles. The widely-accepted concept that we can choose to accept Christ only because we need Him as Savior and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to Him as Lord as long as we want to" ("I Call It Heresy!" *Masterpiece*, Fall 1988, p. 22; cf. the book by the same title, pp. 9,19).

I CALL IT HERESY!

B Y A . W . T O Z E R

7d. Vance Havner:

This gifted preacher, commenting on Romans 10:9, says that Saviorhood and Lordship are inseparable:

"When an early Christian said Jesus was Lord, he meant it. They had never partitioned saviorhood from lordship in those days. You did not take Jesus as Saviour and then 25 years later in a dedication meeting take Him as Lord. They didn't know anything about that. It happened all at once" ("Jesus Christ Is Lord," *Fundamentalist Journal*, April 1987, p. 25).

8d. D. James Kennedy:

This well-known pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, takes a firm Lordship position. In a printed sermon entitled, "The Lordship of Christ" he states:

"Jesus will not be the Saviour where He is not Lord. Do not be deceived. He will not be Lord at all if He cannot be Lord of all. . . . My friends, Jesus is not Savior where Jesus is not Lord" (pp. 4,7).

9d. John MacArthur:

In *The Gospel According to Jesus*, MacArthur states very clearly that Lordship is a requirement for salvation:

"Forsaking one's self for Christ's sake is not an optional step of discipleship subsequent to conversion: it is the *sine qua non* of saving faith" (p. 135).



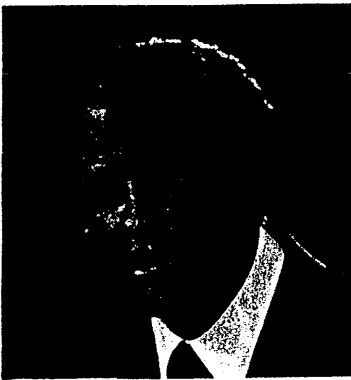
MacArthur: Opposes "easy believism."

In the respected periodical, *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, MacArthur writes on "Faith According to the Apostle James." Robert Saucy and Earl Radmacher give their response—both of them documenting their disappointment over MacArthur's mishandling of Scripture. Radmacher sadly concludes:

"I fear that some current definitions of faith and repentance are not paving the road back to Wittenberg but, rather, paving the road back to Rome. Justification is becoming 'to make righteous' rather than 'to declare righteous.' Repentance is becoming 'penitence' (if not 'penance') rather than 'changing the mind.' And 'faith' is receiving more analysis and scrutinizing rather than the 'object of faith'" (*JETS*, March 1990, pp. 40-41).

10d. Billy Graham:

Attentive listeners will note that Dr. Graham concludes almost every one of his broadcasts or telecasts with words such as these:



"Unless you make Jesus the Savior, Lord and Master of your life, you cannot be saved. Accept Him now as your Savior and Lord, give your life over to Him, and He will save you."

Virtually any of Dr. Graham's sermons reproduced in *Decision* conclude with an offer of the Gospel which involves submission to Christ as the necessary prerequisite for salvation. Here is the conclusion of a typical message:

"There is also a form of hell in this life . . . that is because you are separated from God's love. You haven't totally surrendered to him as Savior and Lord. . . . Many people ask me how they can know Christ and how they can be sure that they are saved. . . . Can you say, 'I am going to heaven'? If you have any doubt about it, you can settle it by surrendering your life to him. You can do that right now" ("Not Drugs . . . Christ!" *Decision*, July-August 1990 p. 3).

2c. Salvation by faith alone:

1d. Lewis Sperry Chafer:

Chafer writes that Lordship salvation is a seemingly pious but subtle error that in addition to believing in Christ "the unsaved must dedicate themselves to the will of God" (*Systematic Theology*, III, 384).

2d. Zane Hodges:

Hodges clearly distinguishes between salvation and discipleship: "Eternal life is free. Discipleship is immeasurably hard. The former is attained by faith



alone, the latter by a faith that works" (*The Hungry Inherit*, p. 114, underscore in the original).

3d. Charles C. Ryrie:



Ryrie cautions that "To teach that Christ must be Lord of Life in order to be Savior is to confuse certain aspects of discipleship" and confuses the gospel of the Grace of God with the words of men. (*Balancing the Christian Life*, p. 178).

4d. J. Dwight Pentecost:

Pentecost, answering the question about how one becomes a Christian, very clearly states that salvation is by faith alone: "When one receives Jesus Christ as Savior he is receiving One who is already Lord. That's why we address Him as 'Lord Jesus Christ.' Salvation, however, is in no way dependent on making Christ Lord in every area of one's life and then living under that Lordship. That would require a 'newborn babe' (1 Pet. 2:2) to assume a role he is incapable of fulfilling in order to 'prove' he qualifies for salvation. One must make a distinction between salvation and discipleship, just as Paul did when he wrote to young believers and encouraged them to make personal discipleship decisions based on the salvation they already possessed (see Eph. 4:17-24). The requirements for the two are different" (*Kindred Spirit*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Winter 1988) pp. 3,11).

5d. Curtis Hutson:



The editor of the *Sword of the Lord* has published a book of evangelistic sermons, with one chapter entitled "Lordship Salvation, A Perversion of the Gospel." After opening with Galatians 1:1-9, Hutson begins as follows:

"Lordship salvation is an unscriptural teaching regarding the doctrine of salvation and is confusing to Christians" (*Salvation Crystal Clear*, p. 301). He calls Lordship salvation "another gospel" which contradicts the teaching of salvation by grace through faith (p. 302).

6d. Michael Cocoris:

Cocoris, after discussing the concepts of repentance, faith, Lord, disciple and the story of the rich young ruler, asks in conclusion:

"What must I do to be saved? Is Lordship salvation the answer? No. The biblical answer is, 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved' (Acts 16:31). That is the good news we are to preach, that others may come to know the gift of God and the God of the gift of eternal life. Don't confuse the issue and thus mislead sinners. Make the message clear and plain that

sinners may be saved by grace through faith" ("Lordship Salvation—Is It Biblical?" *Realife*, May/June 1980, p. 11).

7d. Renald Showers:

Showers, writing in the *Word of Life 1990 Annual*, states:

"Some claim salvation requires a person to receive Christ as Savior and make Him Master over his life. But in light of the distinction between Christ's functions as Savior and Master, this claim comes dangerously close to the idea that salvation is not through the redemptive work of Christ alone" ("The Trouble With Lordship Salvation," p. 19).

3b. The seriousness:

Which side is right; which is wrong? There seems to be no middle ground possible (although Darrel L. Bock, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April-June 1986, attempts such in his article, "Jesus as Lord in Acts and in the Gospel Message.")

Charles C. Ryrie shows the seriousness of the issue:

"The importance of this question cannot be overestimated in relation to both salvation and sanctification. The message of faith only and the message of faith plus commitment of life cannot both be the gospel; therefore, one of them is a false gospel and comes under the curse of perverting the gospel or preaching another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9), and this is a very serious matter. As far as sanctification is concerned, if only committed people are saved people, then where is there room for carnal Christians? Or if willingness alone is required at the moment of salvation, to what extent is this willingness necessary?" (*Balancing the Christian Life*, p. 170).

2A. THE CENTRAL PROOFS AGAINST LORDSHIP SALVATION:

1b. The example of uncommitted believers:

1c. Lot: A life-long rejection of the Lordship of God.

Abraham's nephew Lot is an example of a selfish, unyielded kind of life. His compromise in Sodom, his questioning of God's message of warning, his drunkenness and incest do not suggest that he was a believer. If it were not for the reference to Lot in 2 Peter 2:7-8 where three times he is called righteous (translated "just" in v. 7), one could seriously question his salvation. Life-long disobedience does not prevent a man from being positionally righteous.

2c. The Ephesian believers: Unyieldedness at the time of salvation.

During Paul's third missionary journey, many were converted from a life of paganism, superstition and witchcraft. According to Acts 19:18-19 more than two



years elapsed after Paul had gone to Ephesus when many who had believed earlier (perfect tense), burned their books of magic. The burning did not take place as soon as they believed. As believers they had continued their pagan practices for at least one and a half years. "Yet their unwillingness to give it up did not prevent their becoming believers. Their salvation did not depend on faith plus willingness to submit to the lordship of Christ in the matter of using magical arts. Their salvation came through faith alone even though for months and years afterward many of them practiced that which they knew to be wrong" (*Balancing the Christian Life*, p. 172).

3c. Peter: A definite lapse from total dedication.

Peter's words in Acts 10:14, "Not so, Lord" show at least a temporary lapse in his yieldedness. That lapse took place after his being Spirit-filled on the day of Pentecost. If Christ must be Lord of the life in order for one to be saved, then one might well conclude that Peter was never genuinely saved or that he lost his salvation when he rejected the Lordship of Christ in this specific instance. Ryrie observes that "Such examples would seem to settle the issue clearly by indicating that faith alone is the requirement for eternal life. This is not to say that dedication of life is not expected of believers, but it is to say that it is not one of the conditions for salvation" (*Ibid.*, 170).

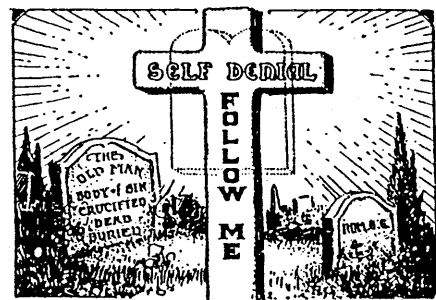
2b. The meaning of the title "Lord":

Ryrie's summary of the various meanings of the term "lord" is very helpful:

"But, someone may ask, doesn't Lord mean Master, and doesn't receiving Jesus as Lord mean as Master of one's life? To be sure, Lord does mean Master, but in the New Testament it also means God (Acts 3:22), owner (Luke 19:33), sir (John 4:11), man-made idols (1 Cor. 8:5), and even one's husband (1 Peter 3:6). When it is used in relation to Jesus in the New Testament, it can have an ordinary meaning of a title of respect (as in John 4), but it must also have had some unusual connotation which caused some to question its validity. And such a meaning could only be God" (*Ibid.*, p. 173).

Paul says in 1 Cor. 12:3 that "no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." Lord in context must mean Jehovah-God since unsaved people can call Jesus "Lord," meaning Sir.

No one but a God-Man can save. But deity and humanity must be combined to provide an effective salvation. It is the confession of Jesus as Lord, that is, Jesus the God-Man, that saves. The Jews needed to put their faith in one who was more than man, One who by His resurrection and ascension demonstrated that He is both Lord, God and Christ, the Messiah. Romans 10:9-10 emphasizes this truth: "That if thou shalt confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus. . . thou shalt be saved." The Jews needed to believe in the God-Man, their promised Messiah. When Lord is used in a soteriological context, the meaning is clearly God rather than Master.



THE LAW OF THE CROSS

3b. The exhortation of Romans 12:1-2:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The Apostle Paul pleads with believers to submit to the Lordship of Christ. These individuals had been justified by faith (Rom. 5:1), were being led by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14) and would never be separated from the love of God (Rom. 8:39). Yet these believers were enjoined to "present their bodies a living sacrifice." Paul presumed that these who had received the plentiful mercies of God needed to present themselves to be used of the Master. *If Lordship were a requirement for salvation, these individuals would not have been saved until the moment of dedication.* Clearly, the Rom. 12:1-2 passage is addressed to believers. It is strange that this key passage on discipleship and dedication is nowhere discussed by MacArthur in *The Gospel According to Jesus*, a book dealing with commitment and consecration. This passage argues most forcefully against the Lordship position. Believers are addressed to present their bodies. The Greek tense of "present" refers to a once-for-all action. They are clearly saved but have not absolutely surrendered. In contrast to what Paul clearly teaches, MacArthur says:

"Forsaking oneself for Christ's sake is not an optional step of discipleship subsequent to conversion: it is the *sina qua non* of saving faith" (*The Gospel. . .*, p. 135).



Paul says, Because you have been saved and abundantly blessed by God, surrender yourself to Him. MacArthur says, "Unconditional surrender, a complete resignation of self and absolute submission . . . is the essence of saving faith" (*ibid.*, p. 153). Paul says, Because God saved you, be willing to submit to Him. Who is right, MacArthur or Paul? In a sense, the whole issue of Lordship salvation can be decided on the interpretation of this classic passage. Does Paul address unbelievers? If so, Lordship salvation stands. If he addresses believers, then discipleship is not a prerequisite for but a product of salvation.

Some believers may dedicate their lives to the Lord at the moment of salvation. The Apostle Paul immediately after salvation asks the question: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). With most believers—and we all know this from personal experience—dedication takes place after a fuller understanding of our spiritual responsibility. With dedication we begin our path of discipleship leading to Christlikeness.

4b. The expression "easy believism":

Those who insist on Lordship salvation maintain that those who teach salvation through faith alone advocate "easy believism" or "cheap grace" (Boice, p. 35).

The New Testament contains over 200 references in which the requirement for salvation is given as faith alone in Christ as our substitute. But while faith is the only condition for salvation, it is not easy to believe. Dr. Ryrie shows why "easy believism" is a totally misapplied term:



Ryrie

"Though my view has been dubbed 'easy believism,' it is not easy to believe, because what we ask the unsaved person to believe is not easy. We ask that they trust a person who lived 2,000 years ago, whom he can only know through the Bible, to forgive his sins. We are asking that he stake his eternal destiny on this. Remember the example of Evangelist Jesus. He did not require the Samaritan woman to set her sinful life in order, or even be willing to, so that she could be saved. He did not set out before her what would be expected by way of changes in her life if she believed. He simply said she needs to know who He is and to ask for the gift of eternal life" (John 4:10). (*Basic Theology*, p. 339)

5b. The fact of spiritual inability:

It should be noted that the Lordship salvation view has a very watered-down view of the sinfulness of man. It assumes that unregenerate man has the power to respond with total commitment before salvation, something which only the Holy Spirit can accomplish through the new nature.

Hodges observes correctly that, "MacArthur apparently holds the Reformed view that regeneration logically *precedes* saving faith" (*Absolutely Free!*, p. 219. Italics in the original). MacArthur has spiritual sight logically preceding saving faith, for he says, "Spiritual sight is a gift from God that makes one willing and able to believe" (*The Gospel*. . . , p. 75).

Despite MacArthur's claim that he is "a traditional premillennial dispensationalist" (*Ibid.*, p. 25), in his doctrine of salvation he evidences tendencies of Reformed theology. Pickering also agrees with this appraisal:

"There is a pre-salvation work of the Holy Spirit which may be called a quickening. In Lydia's case, the Lord opened her heart to believe (Acts 16:14). An awareness of sin is vastly different from an ability and a desire to submit, as Reformed theologians posit, who suggest a presalvation regeneration" (*Lordship Salvation*, p. 2).

In this matter of human inability before salvation, it would be well to heed Chafer's words:

"The unregenerate person, because of his condition in spiritual death, has no ability to desire the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14), or to anticipate what his outlook on life will be after he is saved. It is therefore an error of the first magnitude to divert that feeble ability of the unsaved to exercise a God-given faith for salvation into the unknown and complex spheres of self-dedication, which dedication is the Christian's greatest problem" (cited in the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Autumn 1988, p. 50).

Similarly, Renald Showers writes:

"The unsaved cannot and do not submit to the divine rule (Romans 8:7). Just as a tree cannot have apples unless it already has the nature of an apple tree, so a person cannot have a willingness and desire to submit to Christ's rule unless he already possesses the new nature received by regeneration at salvation (2 Peter 1:3-4). Thus, even the

willingness and desire to submit to Christ's rule are the result of, and not a requirement for, salvation" (*Word of Life 1990 Annual*, "The Trouble With Lordship Salvation," p. 19).

6b. The difference between a saint and a disciple:

It costs absolutely nothing to be a Christian. It costs everything to be a disciple. In Luke 14 the Lord distinguished between salvation and discipleship while teaching two parables, side by side. In Luke 14:16-24 he related the parable of the great supper into which the entrance was free and unrestricted for all who followed the invitation. In Luke 14:25-33 Christ taught that discipleship was only for those who gave up all.

Ryrie underscores the sharp contrast between the two parables of Luke 14:

"Whereas the story of the banquet says 'come' and 'free,' the next says 'stop' and 'costly.' What is free? The invitation to enter the Father's kingdom. What is costly? A certain kind of discipleship. . . . The contrast between these two sayings of our Lord could not be more vivid. Come to the banquet. It's free. Don't rush into discipleship. It's costly" (*So Great Salvation*, 75-76). Being a Christian means following an invitation. Being a disciple means forsaking all. To confuse these two aspects of the Christian life is to confound the grace of God and the works of man. The Gospel of grace is scriptural. The gospel that adds the works of man to salvation is a counterfeit gospel.

3A. THE CURRENT PUBLICATIONS ON LORDSHIP SALVATION:

1b. Books on Lordship salvation:

1c. John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*.

The cover jacket states the basic premise of the book: "*The Gospel According to Jesus* clearly teaches that there is no eternal life without surrender to the Lordship of Christ." The well-known Bible expositor also taught essentially the content of his book on the "Grace to You" Hour. The evangelical world is, in a sense, indebted to MacArthur for bringing national attention to the confusion in the Church concerning this most important issue, the nature of the Gospel. MacArthur rightly sees that there are "two conflicting messages from the same conservative, fundamentalist, and evangelical camp" (xiv). He agrees that "whoever is wrong on this question is proclaiming a message that can send people to hell" (Ibid.).

Some reviewers of MacArthur's book have understood him to say that a believer needs to be willing to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ at the moment of salvation. Hodges sees very clearly that MacArthur's main point is that submission to Christ, not a willingness to submit, is a prerequisite for salvation and gives the following quotations from MacArthur's book:

This radical redefinition of saving faith is illustrated by such statements as these from MacArthur:

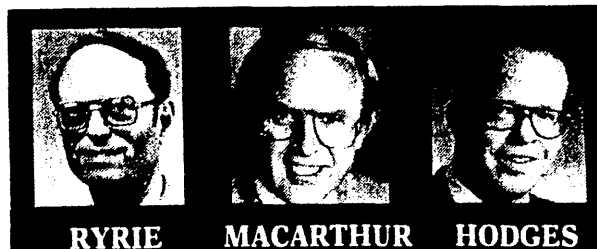
"Forsaking oneself for Christ's sake is not an optional step of discipleship subsequent to conversion: it is the sine qua non of saving faith" (p. 135).

SO GREAT SALVATION
by Charles C. Ryrie; Victor Books,
166 pages, \$12.95

ABSOLUTELY FREE!
by Zane C. Hodges; Zondervan,
240 pages, \$14.95

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS

by John F. MacArthur; Zondervan,
240 pages, paper, \$9.95





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"He is glad to give up all for the kingdom. That is the nature of saving faith" (p. 139).

"His demeanor was one of unconditional surrender, a complete resignation of self and absolute submission to his father. That is the essence of saving faith" (p. 153).

"A concept of faith that excludes obedience corrupts the message of salvation" (p. 174).

"So-called 'faith' in God that does not produce this yearning to submit to His will is not faith at all. The state of mind that refuses obedience is pure and simple unbelief" (p. 176).

Not one of these statements is a true reflection of the biblical doctrine of saving faith. What these claims in fact reveal is a deep-seated fear of the total freeness of God's saving grace, as though that freeness subverted morality. On the contrary, it is precisely the wondrous unconditional love of God that is the root and cause of all New Testament holiness.

(Hodges, p. 250)

2c. Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free!*:

The book, as Hodges sees it, "is first and foremost a tribute to the perfect freeness of God's saving grace" and an effort "to set this gospel in clear relief" (xiv).

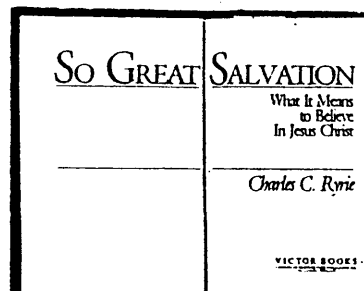
Hodges is clearly agitated by the treatment he receives in MacArthur's book. He resents being misquoted, misunderstood and misrepresented (pp. 205-206). Here is his burden:

"Let it be clearly said: *lordship salvation holds a doctrine of saving faith that is in conflict with that of Luther and Calvin and, most importantly, in conflict with God's Word*" (p. 209, italics in original).

3c. Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*:

Ryrie's book is not a direct rebuttal of MacArthur, but it certainly deals with the issues raised by Lordship salvation. Concepts like grace, the Gospel, faith, Lordship repentance, discipleship and security are treated in Ryrie's typically clear, concise and courteous style. Most helpful is his treatment of carnality, especially since MacArthur accuses dispensationalists of inventing "this dichotomy carnal/spiritual Christian" (p. 30). "Contemporary theologians have fabricated an entire category for this type of person—'Carnal Christian'" (p. 129).

Ryrie distinguishes between Saviorhood and Lordship. He correctly differentiates between the two ideas by observing that "Saved people need to be dedicated, but dedication is not a requirement for being saved" (p. 74).



Ryrie further notes that "the issue of mastery over life is not involved in receiving the gift of eternal life. It is very much involved in God's desire for His children, but facing and deciding that issue does not bring us into the family of God" (p. 109).

4c. John MacArthur, *Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles*:

In this sequel to his earlier book, MacArthur interacts with the responses to *The Gospel According to Jesus*. He continues to defend the view that commitment of one's life to Christ is a condition of eternal salvation (pp. 204-205, 110). Further, despite his claim to be a dispensationalist, he evidences Reformed tendencies as he suggests that regeneration precedes faith (pp. 61, 67), as he rejects the concept that the believer has an old and a new nature and as he writes of "The Myth of the Carnal Christian" (p. 125). He concludes that the "no-Lordship" position leads "to a sub-Christian antinomianism" (p. 233).

2b. Reviews of *The Gospel According to Jesus*:

It is most informative to read various reviews of MacArthur's book, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, in the theological journals. Perhaps it is safe to assume that the review generally represents the position of the organization or institution which sponsors the publication. The reviews are listed in the order of agreement with, to disagreement with, MacArthur's position on the issue of Lordship salvation. The list is obviously selective.

1c. Homer A. Kent, *Grace Theological Journal* (Spring 1989), pp. 67-77.

Surprisingly this respected professor at Grace Theological Seminary agrees that Acts 16:31 and Romans 10:9 "seem to support his (MacArthur's) contention that anything less than a belief in Jesus as one's Lord does not fulfill the Biblical instruction" (p. 69). He also joins MacArthur in his criticism of Ryrie because the latter "does not seem to view commitment as an integral part of faith" (Ibid.).

2c. Rolland D. McCune, *The Sentinel* (Spring 1989), p. 3.

The President of Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary concurs with MacArthur's position and thinks that he makes a convincing case that saving faith . . . involves a volitional surrender and submission to Him as the sovereign Savior. McCune appears to agree with MacArthur's attack on L. S. Chafer, Charles Ryrie and Zane Hodges whose "rather recent approach to salvation and Christian living . . . is really a divergent view of salvation that offers a false hope, and that much of our weak Christianity today can be attributed to it."



ROLLAND D. McCUNE

3c. Darrell L. Bock, *Bibliotheca Sacra* (January-March 1989), pp. 21-39.

Bock is Associate Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. He is somewhat critical but primarily sympathetic in his evaluation of MacArthur's book. His main effort seems to be to explain MacArthur because, says Bock, "there is often a difference between what MacArthur says and what he



apparently means" (p. 22, italics in the original). Bock attempts a synthesis between the two sides of the issue and places MacArthur and Chafer basically in the same camp.

Zane Hodges, reviewing Bock's review, notes that Bock's position in the review, which was elevated to the status of a major article, "is a clear and distinct departure from the seminary's prevailing historical position on salvation" (*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, (Spring 1989), p. 83).

It must be said by way of balancing the picture of Dallas Theological Seminary that Roy B. Zuck, Academic Dean and editor of *Bibliotheca Sacra*, takes a strong position against Lordship salvation:

"The Lordship view does not clarify the distinction between sanctification and justification, or between discipleship and sonship. It mixes the condition with the consequences. It confuses *becoming* a Christian with *being* a Christian. . . . Regeneration pertains to one's relationship to Christ as Savior from sin. Sanctification, on the other hand, pertains to one's relationship to Christ as his Lord and Master. In the new birth a person is made a new creation in Christ; in sanctification he grows in that relationship. . . . If a person must *do* something to be saved, he is adding to salvation. . . . Repeatedly the Bible clearly states that salvation comes only by receiving it by faith. . . . To add to faith, to add to receiving God's gift of eternal life is to alter the gospel" (*Kindred Spirits*, Summer 1989, p. 6).

- 4c. Harold Freeman, *Calvary Review* (Fall 1988), pp. 13-14.

Freeman, who is Vice President for Public Ministries and Alumni Affairs at Calvary Bible College in Kansas City, Missouri, rightly notes the various straw men attacked by MacArthur and shows MacArthur's dispensational inconsistency manifested in his failure to distinguish between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace. However, Freeman does not address the main issue at stake, that of MacArthur making submission and discipleship a prerequisite for salvation.

- 5c. J. Kevin Butcher, *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (Spring 1989), pp. 27-43.

Butcher, who is pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, writes a critique of *The Gospel According to Jesus*, dealing with the numerous technical and theological problems raised by the book. His criticisms are grouped under the categories of "Inaccurate Understanding of the Free Grace Position," "Inadequate and Improper Methods of Validation," "Theological Weaknesses," "Practical Errors" and "Logical Difficulties."

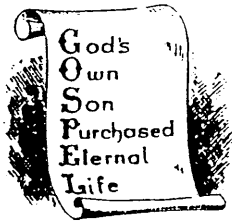
- 6c. Ernest Pickering, *Lordship Salvation*. Central Press, p. 7.

The former president of Central Baptist Seminary and pastor of Fourth Baptist Church in Minneapolis and present Deputation Director of Baptist World Mission



Ernest Pickering

was possibly the first person in print with a critical review of MacArthur's book. It is a well-written and well-reasoned review of the controversial work. His concluding remarks best summarize his position:



"None of us are happy with shoddy, fleshly, and disobedient Christians. But the remedy for this condition is not found in changing the terms of the gospel. Well over 100 times in the New Testament, we are told that salvation is by faith or through believing. It is a very serious matter to add an ingredient to the gospel of salvation which is not found in the New Testament. While one may argue that 'faith,' if properly understood, includes the ingredient of 'submission' or 'enthronement,' we believe the Scriptures do not support this contention. Our task is to keep preaching the plain, simple gospel of free grace. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to produce in true believers those qualities of righteousness which we all devoutly long to see" (p. 7).

- 7c. Robbins, John W. "The Gospel According to John MacArthur," *The Trinity Review*. Part 1, No. 98 (April 1993), pp. 1-4. Part 2, No. 99 (May 1993), pp. 1-4.

Robbins offers a critique of MacArthur's book from a Reformed perspective. He correctly observes that "MacArthur attacks justification by faith alone and suggests that works be understood as part of faith." He thus "rejects the Biblical view of justification and adopts the Roman Catholic view" (Part 1, pp. 1,2).

3b. Articles on the issue:

Since the publication of MacArthur's book, a number of articles have appeared in apparent response to the widely read work.

- 1c. *The Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*:

This periodical has appeared semi-annually since Autumn 1988. It represents the Grace Evangelical Society, whose purpose it is "to promote the clear proclamation of God's free salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, which is properly correlated with and distinguished from issues related to discipleship" (Autumn 1988, p. 4). Its articles, review of magazine articles and books relate primarily to grace and salvation and a clear Gospel presentation.

- 2c. *Word of Life 1990 Annual*:

Renald Showers, quoted above, writes on "The Trouble With Lordship Salvation" (pp. 18-19).

- 3c. *Realife*, Tennessee Temple University's magazine, published "Lordship Salvation—Is It Biblical?" by Michael Cocoris (May/June 1988), pp. 8-9, 11.

- 4c. *Bibliotheca Sacra*. "Has Lordship Salvation Been Taught throughout Church History?" by Thomas G. Lewellen (Jan-March 1990), pp. 55-69. Lewellen refutes

MacArthur's claim that Lordship salvation was uniformly taught in the ancient church and the concept of free grace is recent, therefore wrong.

- 5c. *The Biblical Evangelist* in its November 1, 1989 issue reproduced two chapters from the book *Defective Evangelism* by James Alexander Stewart, dealing with "both repentance and Lordship as ingredients in salvation" (p. 1). The editor of the *Biblical Evangelist* introduces the article with a warm endorsement: "We highly recommend this work."

In the article the contemporary deviation from Lordship salvation is called, "A complete perversion of the blessed evangel" which leads "to an adulterous gospel" and amounts to "SATAN'S MASTERPIECE" (p. 16, capitals in the original).

The Gospel is at the very core of our Christian faith. Lordship salvation offers one Gospel, free grace another. Each side calls the other position a perversion of the Gospel.

If it were ever necessary for believers to rightly divide the Word of truth, it is now—and it is in this area!

THE FORMULA OF FAITH

<p style="text-align: center;">EPHESIANS 2</p> <p>8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: <i>it is</i> the gift of God:</p> <p>9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.</p> <p>10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>8 τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι - For by grace ye are having been saved</p> <p>διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, through faith; and this not of you,</p> <p>θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· 9 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μὴ of [is] the gift; not of works, lest</p> <p>God</p> <p>τις καυχῆσθαι. 10 αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν anyone should boast. For of him we are</p> <p>ποίημα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ a product, created in Christ Jesus</p> <p>ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς, οἷς προητοίμασεν unto works good, which 'previously prepared</p> <p>ὁ θεὸς ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν. - 'God in order that in them we might walk.</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>correct view: Grace + Faith = Salvation + Works</p> <p>corrupt view: Grace + Faith + Works = Salvation</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>8 τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι - For by grace ye are having been saved</p> <p>διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, through faith; and this not of you,</p> <p>θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· 9 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μὴ of [is] the gift; not of works, lest</p> <p>God</p> <p>τις καυχῆσθαι. 10 αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν anyone should boast. For of him we are</p> <p>ποίημα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ a product, created in Christ Jesus</p> <p>ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς, οἷς προητοίμασεν unto works good, which 'previously prepared</p> <p>ὁ θεὸς ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν. - 'God in order that in them we might walk.</p>	<p>correct view: Grace + Faith = Salvation + Works</p> <p>corrupt view: Grace + Faith + Works = Salvation</p>
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MK

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Lord of All?

by John G. Balyo

Is Jesus Christ the Lord of all Christians, or is He the Lord only of those who have acknowledged His lordship sometime after conversion? I confess that I am somewhat surprised that the issue has been raised at all. I never expected anyone to understand the Bible to teach that Jesus is the Savior of all Christians but the Lord of only a more spiritual group.

Is not the Word of God clear that no Christian is autonomous? If you have been saved by Christ, you are not your own because you are "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20). No Christian owns himself; he is the property of the Lord Who bought him and is, therefore, obligated to function under the lordship of Jesus Christ and obey Him. Are we to believe that a genuine convert can say, "Jesus is Lord, but He is not *my* Lord"?

Perhaps we need to give more serious heed to the Savior's words in Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." We understand that no one does the will of God completely and that occasions of rebellion may occur in a true believer's life; but if there is no submission to the will of God and no performance of the will of God, a person is not a genuine believer. "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). There should be no confusion here about mixing faith with works as a condition of salvation. Of course salvation is by God's grace and faith alone.

Faith, however, is something more than trusting Christ for the benefits of salvation; it is sufficient confidence in Christ to commit one's life to Him. How can one receive Christ and the salvation He offers, and at the same time have no thought of obeying Him? He will not perfectly obey Christ anymore than

married persons perfectly honor their marriage vows, but obedience to Christ should be his intent and should be demonstrated in a significant way in his life. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new (creation)" (2 Cor. 5:17). Surely that newness must eventually manifest itself in a meaningful way. If old things never pass away and nothing becomes new in a person's life, obviously nothing happened.

The effort to separate salvation and discipleship is futile. "My sheep hear my voice . . . and they follow me," said Jesus. Yes, we know that true believers wander at times, but "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not (as the practice of his life); but he that is begotten of God (guards) himself . . ." (1 John 5:18). It will not do to say that a saved person need never accept the lordship of his God by citing examples of backsliders. It has been said that Lot was a righteous man who is "an example of a lifelong rejection of God's lordship over his life." Surely there was a submission to God's authority earlier in his life, and he was vexed every day he was in Sodom because he knew he was living in disobedience to his Lord. Also, it is presumptuous to say that his rebellion was lifelong. Is it not more reasonable to believe that God's discipline was effective in restoring him to fellowship and obedience?

It has been too long overlooked that a number of the verses in the

New Testament regarding salvation emphasize the necessity of a person's submission to Christ as Lord. Romans 10:9 and 13 tell us plainly that: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as *Lord* (as the Greek text puts it), and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Romans 6:23 informs us that the "wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ *our Lord*." Acts 2:21 reads: ". . . Whosoever shall call on the name of *the Lord* shall be saved." Does not Peter here mean to emphasize the lordship of Christ?

If some salvation verses do not mention Christ's lordship, it is because saving faith properly understood always involves trusting Christ with one's life. It means the believer transfers confidence in himself to confidence in Christ to both save him and manage his life. Superficial faith never saved anyone. Christ is more than a means of escaping hell. He is the "great shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13:20). Is not the shepherd the "lord" of the sheep? Christ is also the "head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18). Does not the head control the body? And Christ is, like Melchisedec, both a priest and a king to whom each Christian owes the utmost loyalty and obedience.

To say that the above are mere titles that do not involve the believer in a relationship of submission to the Lord's authority hardly makes sense. And to admit that believers sometimes rebel against the Lord does not contradict the believer's initial surrender to Christ. Whatever the spiritual state of the believer, Jesus Christ is his Lord. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8). And we wouldn't have it any other way! ■

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Paul N. Tassell

BIBLICAL SALVATION

Paul penned the classic definition of Biblical salvation in Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostle John concurs with Paul: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

The key words are "faith" and "believe." In the GARBC Articles of Faith, Article VIII on salvation declares our agreement with Paul and John: "We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation."

We reject any teaching that ultimately leads to salvation by works. Religious systems such as Roman Catholicism and the well-known cults like Mormonism are repudiated by Regular Baptists because such systems deny the clear teaching of the Bible; namely, salvation is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10). We must call into serious question any preacher or teacher who departs from such basic, foundational Scriptural truth.

In 1879, Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached on Romans 5:1. His sermon was entitled "Peace: A Fact and a Feeling." He said:

None of us will ever experience true peace with God except through Jesus Christ. I like that strong expression of Luther, bold and bare as it is, when, in commenting on the epistle to the Galatians, he says, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God." If you have anything to do with God absolutely, you will be destroyed. There cannot be any point of contact between absolute deity and fallen humanity except

through Jesus Christ, the appointed Mediator. That is God's door; all else is a wall of fire. You can by Christ approach the Lord, but this is the sole bridge across the gulf. Whenever you, dear soul, begin to deal with God according to your own experience, according to your own frames and feelings, or even according to the exercises of your own faith, unless that faith keeps its eye on Christ, you will lose your peace.



Spurgeon was right! We are saved solely by personal faith in the crucified, buried, risen, ascended Christ. We must not confuse the instantaneous act of salvation with the long process of progressive sanctification. We must not confuse our deliverance from sin with discipleship. We must not make saviorship and lordship synonymous. We are declared, as far as our *standing* is concerned, righteous at the moment of personal faith in Christ. We may not be very righteous as far as our *state* of actual being is concerned, but we are, thank God, *saved*.

Charles Hodge correctly concluded: "It is not through ourselves in any way, neither by our own merit, nor our own efforts. It is all of grace. It is all through Jesus Christ. And this the justified soul is ever anxious to acknowledge" (p. 132, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* published by Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1955).

The mixing of law and grace, works and faith, has ever been the bane of true salvation doctrine. Dispensational distinctives are ignored at our own peril. Salvation has always been by faith. Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, David and all other saved people were saved by grace through faith. That is why Paul wrote: "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:2, 3).

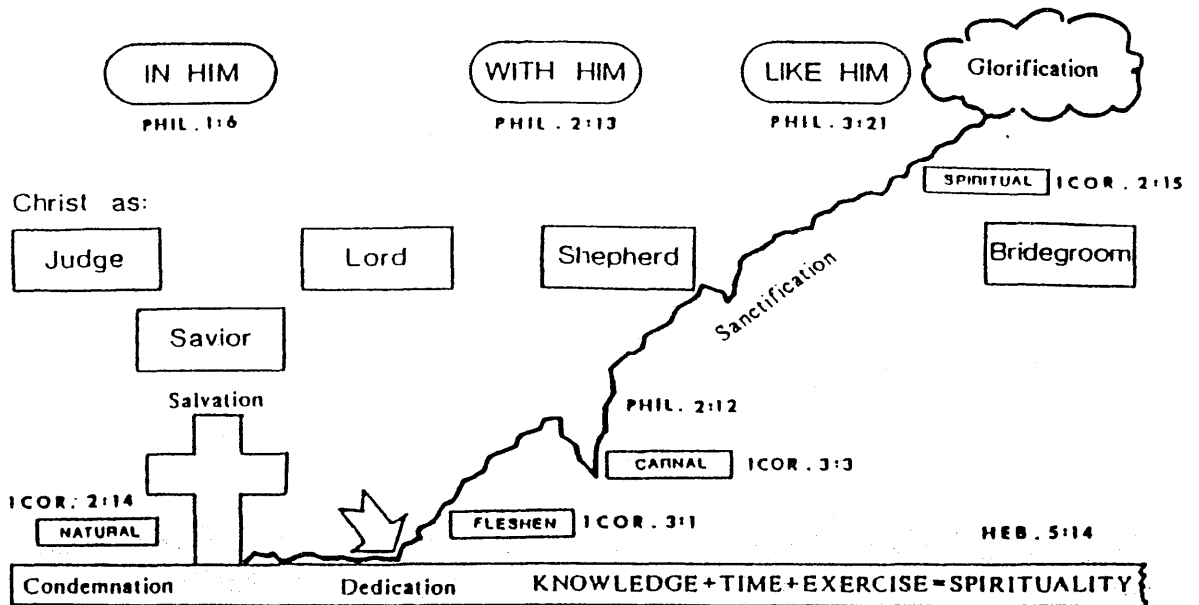
NO PAIN, NO GAIN

Recently I read of an Ohio girl who almost never cried. She never wept when she fell down. She never cried when she bumped her head or skinned her knee. She did not even let out a yelp when she burned her hand on a hot stove. She cried only when she was angry or hungry.

Medical personnel quickly discovered she had a defect in the central nervous system for which no cure is known. She simply could not feel pain. The doctor told her mother she must watch her daughter constantly. The girl might break a bone and continue using it until it could not be set properly. She might develop appendicitis without the usual

(turn back to page 39)

THE SPIRITUAL MAN



M

MUST CHRIST BE LORD TO BE SAVIOUR?

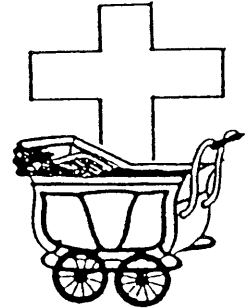
	Salvation	Discipleship
1. Cost	Nothing	Everything
2. Center:	Jesus as Savior	Jesus as Master
3. Commencement:	Salvation	Dedication
4. Conception:	Born	Made
5. Concept:	Deliverance from	Following after
6. Content:	Deliverance	Duty
7. Course:	Believe	Do
8. Consequence:	Forgiveness	Fruit
9. Confirmation:	Life	Love
10. Commandment:	Invitation	Imperative
11. Company:	Unbelievers	Believers

MK

Infant Salvation: Biblical Basis or Sentimental Supposition?



INFANT SALVATION: *Biblical Basis or Sentimental Supposition?*



1A. THE IMPORTANCE OF INFANT SALVATION:

1b. Its importance for the world:

2b. Its importance for the weeping:

Rom. 12:15 "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

3b. Its importance for our witness:

I Pet. 3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and 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:"

2A. THE IMPLICATIONS OF INFANT SALVATION:

1b. Infant similarities with adults:

1c. All infants have a sin nature:

Ps. 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Rom 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

2c. All infants need grace:

Eph. 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

3c. All infants need God's election:

John 6:44 "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

4c. All infants need redemption:

John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."



2A. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR INFANT SALVATION:

- 2b. Infant differences from adults:
- 1c. Infants have not knowingly sinned:
- 2c. Infants have not rejected Christ:
- 3c. Infants do not need to believe:

3A. THE INFERENCES FROM SCRIPTURE:

- 1b. The comprehensiveness of the atonement:

Christ died for all, not simply for the elect:

2 Pet. 2:1 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

Is. 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

- 2b. The character of God:

I Jn 4:8 "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Jonah 4:11 "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

Ps. 36:6

- 3b. The comments of the Savior:

Mt. 19:13-14 "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Mt. 18:3-5 (NASB) "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives me (italics added)."

3A. THE INFERENCES FROM SCRIPTURE:

3b. The comments of the Savior:

Mt. 18:10 (NASB) "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven (italics added)."

Mt. 18:14 (NASB) "Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

John Sproule has the following observations on these references from Matthew 18:

1. Little children (not just those in His immediate presence in the Matthean account) are very precious to our Lord.
2. Child-like trust, characteristic of little children, identifies the quality of individual who shall be great in the kingdom of heaven.
3. It is not God's will that any little child should perish. It would be difficult to believe that Christ had in mind only those few children who were in His immediate presence when He made the statement recorded in Matt. 18:14.
4. Little children are said to have their angels in heaven (Matt. 18:10). They are represented before God. This also supports the belief that infants or children who die enter into eternal life with God. (p. 5)

4b. The case of David:

II Sam. 18:33

When David's son, Absalom, died he had no hope of ever seeing him again. When his infant son of Bethsheba died as a punishment for David's offense, David was comforted and by his comfort and conduct he evidenced his firm conviction that he would see his child again.

II Sam. 12:23

We agree with Sproule:

In conclusion, II Samuel 12:22, 23 is strong implicit evidence that David believed that his infant son was eternally secure with God. Further, if such was true of that particular infant then why is it not also true for all such infants? (p. 4)

II. SAMUEL 18

32 And the king said unto Cū-shī, *Is the young man Ab'-sā-lqm safe?* And Cū-shī answered, "The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*."

33 ¶ And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, "O my son Ab'-sā-lqm, my son, my son Ab'-sā-lqm! would God I had died for thee, O Ab'-sā-lqm, my son, my son!"

II. SAMUEL 12

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: "for I said, Who can tell *whether* GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?"

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but "he shall not return to me."

3A. THE INFERENCES FROM SCRIPTURE:

5b. The conclusion from Scripture:

Since the Bible is silent on the fate of infants, we need not worry about their destiny.

Strong cites Hovey (p. 62) who very fittingly comments on the silence of the Scriptures concerning the fate of the infants:

"Though the sacred writers say nothing in respect to the future condition of those who die in infancy, one can scarcely err in deriving from this silence a favorable conclusion. That no prophet or apostle, that no devout father or mother, should have expressed any solicitude as to those who die before they are able to discern good from evil is surprising, unless such solicitude was prevented by the Spirit of God. There are no instances of prayer for children taken away in infancy. The Savior nowhere teaches that they are in danger of being lost. We therefore heartily and confidently believe that they are redeemed by the blood of Christ and sanctified by his Spirit, so that when they enter the unseen world they will be found with the saints."

"I closely held within my arms
A jewel rare;
Never had one so rich and pure
Engaged my care;
'Twas my own, my precious jewel,
God gave it me;
'Twas mine, who else could care for it,
So tenderly?

"But the Master came one day
My gem to take;
I cannot let it go! I cried,
My heart would break:
Nay, but the Master comes for it,
To bear above
To deck His royal diadem,
He comes in love.

"But Master, it is my treasure,
My jewel rare,
I'll safely guard and keep it pure,
And very fair;
If thou keep'st my gem, He said,
It may be lost;
The threshold of My home, no thief
Has ever crossed.

"And where the heart's rich treasure is,
The heart will be;
Thy jewel will be safe above,
Gone before thee.
The Master said these words and gazed
With pitying look,
While in the early hush of morn,
My gem He took.

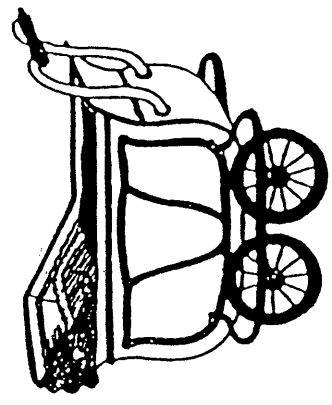
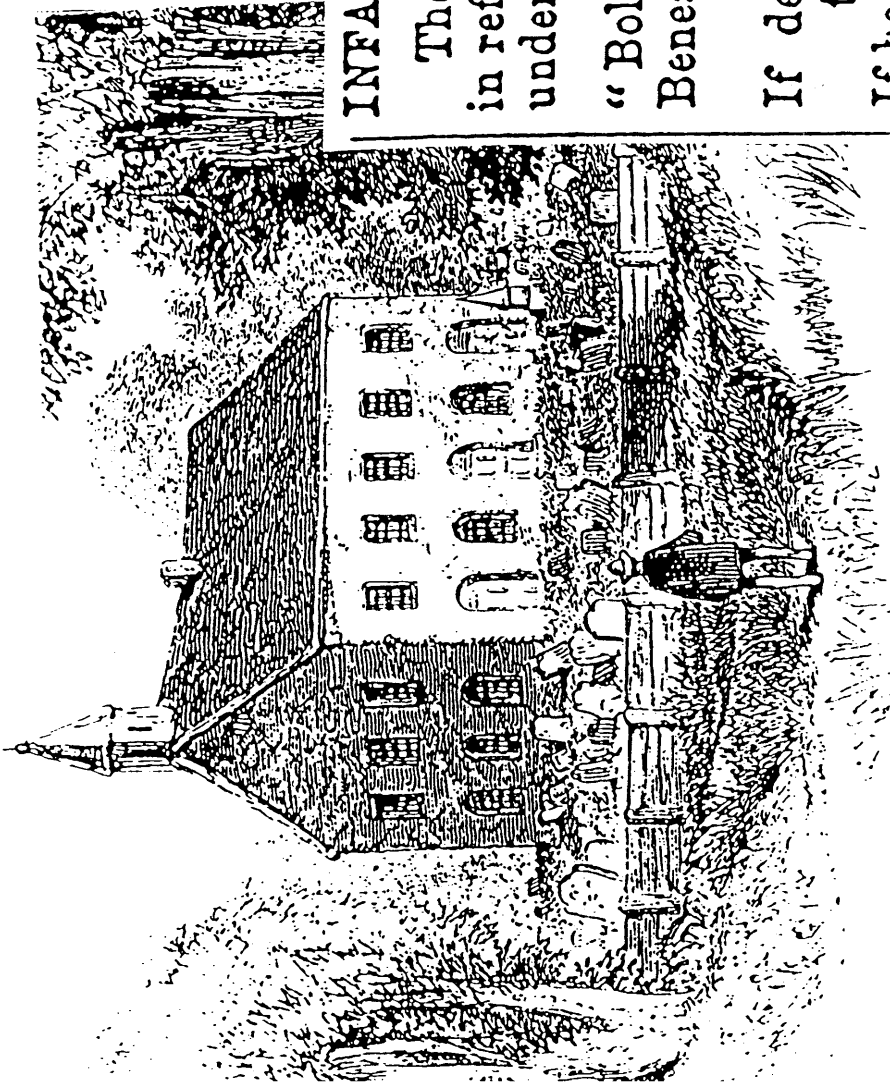
"Close to my heart that morn I held,
Tears falling fast,
An empty casket—the bright gem
Was safe at last.
Yes, Master, thou may'st keep my own,
For it is Thine;
Safe in the house not made with hands,
'Tis Thine and mine."

**INFANT SALVATION.**

The following epitaph is very striking in reference to this subject; it is found, I understand, in Cambridge churchyard—

"Bold infidelity, turn pale and die!
Beneath this stone four infants' ashes lie:
Say, are they lost or saved?
If death's by sin, they sinned, because
they're here;
If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't
appear:
Reason, ah! how depraved!
Revere the sacred page; the knot's untied:
They died, for Adam sinned; they live, for
Jesus died!"

W. O'Neill.



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Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

INFANT SALVATION.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 1861, BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.”—2 Kings iv. 26.

THE subject of this morning's discourse will be “Infant Salvation.” It may not possibly be interesting to all present, but I do not remember to have preached upon this subject to this congregation, and I am anxious moreover that the printed series should contain sermons upon the whole range of theology. I think there is no one point which ought to be left out in our ministry, even though it may only yield comfort to a class. Perhaps the larger proportion of this audience have at some time or other had to shed the briny tear over the child's little coffin;—it may be that through this subject consolation may be afforded to them. This good Shunammite was asked by Gehazi, whether it was well with herself. She was mourning over a lost child, and yet she said, “It is well;” she felt that the trial would surely be blessed. “Is it well with thy husband?” He was old and stricken in years, and was ripening for death, yet she said, “Yes, it is well.” Then came the question about her child, it was dead at home, and the enquiry would renew her griefs, “Is it well with the child?” Yet she said, “It is well,” perhaps so answering because she had a faith that soon it should be restored to her, and that its temporary absence was well; or I think rather because she was persuaded that whatever might have become of its spirit, it was safe in the keeping of God, happy beneath the shadow of his wings. Therefore, not fearing that it was lost, having no suspicion whatever that it was cast away from the place of bliss—for that suspicion would have quite prevented her giving such answer—she said “Yes, the child is dead, but ‘it is well.’”

Now, let every mother and father here present know assuredly that it is well with the child, if God hath taken it away from you in its infant days. You never heard its declaration of faith—it was not capable of such a thing—it was not baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ, not buried with him in baptism; it was not capable of giving that “answer of a good conscience towards God;” nevertheless, you may rest assured that it is well with the child, well in a higher and a better sense than it is well with yourselves; well without limitation, well without exception, well infinitely, “well” eternally. Perhaps you will say, “What reasons have we for believing that it is well with the child?” Before I enter upon that I would make one observation. It has been wickedly, lyingly, and slanderously said of Calvinists, that we believe that some little children perish. Those who make the accusation know that their charge is false. I cannot even dare to hope, though I would wish to do so, that they ignorantly misrepresent us. They wickedly repeat what has been denied a thousand times, what they know is not true. In Calvin's advice to Knox, he interprets the second commandment,

No. 411.

The New Park Street and Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit,
Vol. VII, Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena, Texas, 1969.

"showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me," as referring to generations, and hence he seems to teach that infants who have had pious ancestors, no matter how remotely, dying as infants are saved. This would certainly take in the whole race. As for modern Calvinists, I know of no exception, but we all hope and believe that all persons dying in infancy are elect. Dr. Gill, who has been looked upon in late times as being a very standard of Calvinism, not to say of ultra-Calvinism, himself never hints for a moment the supposition that any infant has perished, but affirms of it that it is a dark and mysterious subject, but that it is his belief, and he thinks he has Scripture to warrant it, that they who have fallen asleep in infancy have not perished, but have been numbered with the chosen of God, and so have entered into eternal rest. We have never taught the contrary, and when the charge is brought, I repudiate it and say, "You may have said so, we never did, and you know we never did. If you dare to repeat the slander again, let the lie stand in scarlet on your very cheek if you be capable of a blush." We have never dreamed of such a thing. With very few and rare exceptions, so rare that I never heard of them except from the lips of slanderers, we have never imagined that infants dying as infants have perished, but we have believed that they enter into the paradise of God.

First, then, this morning, I shall endeavour to explain *the way in which we believe infants are saved*; secondly, give *reasons for so believing*; and then, thirdly, seek to bring out a *practical use of the subject*.

I. First of all, THE WAY IN WHICH WE BELIEVE INFANTS TO BE SAVED.

Some ground the idea of the eternal blessedness of the infant upon its *innocence*. We do no such thing; we believe that the infant fell in the first Adam, "for in Adam all died." All Adam's posterity, whether infant or adult, were represented by him—he stood for them all, and when he fell, he fell for them all. There was no exception made at all in the covenant of works made with Adam as to infants dying; and inasmuch as they were included in Adam, though they have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, they have original guilt. They are "born in sin and shapen in iniquity; in sin do their mothers conceive them;" so saith David of himself, and (by inference) of the whole human race. If they be saved, we believe it is not because of any natural innocence. They enter heaven by the very same way that we do; they are received in the name of Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid," and I do not think nor dream that there is a different foundation for the infant than that which is laid for the adult. And equally is it far from our minds to believe that infants go to heaven through *baptism*—not to say, in the first place, that we believe infant sprinkling to be a human and carnal invention, an addition to the Word of God, and therefore wicked and injurious. When we reflect that it is rendered into something worse than superstition by being accompanied with falsehood, when children are taught that in their baptism they are made the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, which is as base a lie as ever was forged in hell, or uttered beneath the copes of heaven; our spirit sinks at the fearful errors which have crept into the Church, through the one little door of infant sprinkling. No; children are not saved because they are baptized, for if so, the Puseyite is quite right in refusing to bury our little children if they die unbaptized. Yes, the barbarian is quite right in driving the parent, as he does to this day, from the churchyard of his own national Church, and telling him that his child may rot above-ground, and that it shall not be buried except it be at the dead of night, because the superstitious drops have never fallen on its brow. He is right enough if that baptism made the child a Christian, and if that child could not be saved without it. But a thing so revolting to feeling, is at once to be eschewed by Christian men. The child is saved, if snatched away by death as we are, on another ground than that of rites and ceremonies, and the will of man.

On what ground, then, do we believe the child to be saved? We believe it to be as lost as the rest of mankind, and as truly condemned by the sentence which said, "In

the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." It is saved because it is *elect*. In the compass of election, in the Lamb's Book of Life, we believe there shall be found written millions of souls who are only shown on earth, and then stretch their wings for heaven. They are saved, too, because they were *redeemed* by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He who shed his blood for all his people, bought them with the same price with which he redeemed their parents, and therefore are they saved because Christ was sponsor for them, and suffered in their room and stead. They are saved, again, not without *regeneration*, for, "except a man"—the text does not mean an adult man, but a person, a being of the human race—"except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." No doubt, in some mysterious manner the Spirit of God regenerates the infant soul, and it enters into glory made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. That this is possible is proved from Scripture instances. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. We read of Jeremiah also, that the same had occurred to him; and of Samuel we find that while yet a babe the Lord called him. We believe, therefore, that even before the intellect can work, God, who worketh not by the will of man, nor by blood, but by the mysterious agency of his Holy Spirit, creates the infant soul a new creature in Christ Jesus, and then it enters into the "rest which remaineth for the people of God." By election, by redemption, by regeneration, the child enters into glory, by the selfsame door by which every believer in Christ Jesus hopes to enter, and in no other way. If we could not suppose that children could be saved in the same way as adults, if it would be necessary to suppose that God's justice must be infringed, or that his plan of salvation must be altered to suit their cases, then we should be in doubt; but we can see that with the same appliances, by the same plan, on precisely the same grounds, and through the same agencies, the infant soul can behold the Saviour's face in glory everlasting, and therefore we are at ease upon the matter.

II. This brings me now to note THE REASONS WHY WE THUS THINK INFANTS ARE SAVED.

First, we ground our conviction very much upon the *goodness of the nature of God*. We say that the opposite doctrine that some infants perish and are lost, is altogether repugnant to the idea which we have of Him whose name is love. If we had a God whose name was Moloch, if God were an arbitrary tyrant, without benevolence or grace, we could suppose some infants being cast into hell; but our God, who heareth the young ravens when they cry, certainly will find no delight in the shrieks and cries of infants cast away from his presence. We read of him that he is so tender, that he careth for oxen, that he would not have the mouth of the ox muzzled, that treadeth out the corn. Nay, he careth for the bird upon the nest, and would not have the mother bird killed while sitting upon its nest with its little ones. He made ordinances and commands even for irrational creatures. He finds food for the most loathsome animal, nor does he neglect the worm any more than the angel, and shall we believe with such universal goodness as this, that he would cast away the infant soul? I say it would be clean contrary to all that we have ever read or ever believed of Him, that our faith would stagger before a revelation which should display a fact so singularly exceptional to the tenor of his other deeds. We have learned humbly to submit our judgments to his will, and we dare not criticise or accuse the Lord of All; we believe him to be just, let him do as he may, and therefore, whatever he might reveal we would accept; but he never has, and I think he never will require of us so desperate a stretch of faith as to see goodness in the eternal misery of an infant cast into hell. You remember when Jonah—petulant, quick-tempered Jonah—would have Nineveh perish, God gave it as the reason why Nineveh should not be destroyed, that there were in it more than six score thousand infants,—persons, he said, who knew not their right hand from their left. If he spared Nineveh that their mortal life might be spared, think you that their immortal souls shall be needlessly cast away? I only put it to your own

reason. It is not a case where we need much argument. Would *your* God cast away an infant? If yours could, I am happy to say he is not the God that I adore.

Again, we think it would be inconsistent utterly with *the known character of our Lord Jesus Christ*. When his disciples put away the little children whom their anxious mothers brought to him, Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forb. them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven," by which he taught, as John Newton very properly says, that such as these made up a very great part of the kingdom of heaven. And when we consider that upon the best statistics it is calculated that more than one third of the human race die in infancy, and probably if we take into calculation those districts where infanticide prevails, as in heathen countries, such as China and the like, perhaps one half of the population of the world die before they reach adult years,—the saying of the Saviour derives great force indeed, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." If some remind me that the kingdom of heaven means the dispensation of grace on earth, I answer, yes, it does, and it means the same dispensation in heaven too; for while part of the kingdom of heaven is on earth in the Church, since the Church is always one, that other part of the Church which is above is also the kingdom of heaven. We know this text is constantly used as a proof of baptism, but in the first place, Christ did not baptize them, for "Jesus Christ baptized not;" in the second place, his disciples did not baptize them, for they withstood their coming, and would have driven them away. Then if Jesus did not, and his disciples did not, who did? It has no more to do with baptism than with circumcision. There is not the slightest allusion to baptism in the text, or in the context; and I can prove the circumcision of infants from it with quite as fair logic as others attempt to prove infant baptism. However, it does prove this, that infants compose a great part of the family of Christ, and that Jesus Christ is known to have had a love and amiableness towards the little ones. When they shouted in the temple, "Hosanna!" did he rebuke them? No; but rejoiced in their boyish shouts. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath God ordained strength," and does not that text seem to say that in heaven there shall be "perfect praise" rendered to God by multitudes of cherubs who were here on earth—your little ones fondled in your bosom—and then suddenly snatched away to heaven. I could not believe it of Jesus, that he would say to little children, "Depart, ye accursed, into everlasting fire in hell!" I cannot conceive it possible of him as the loving and tender one, that when he shall sit to judge all nations, he should put the little ones on the left hand, and should banish them for ever from his presence. Could he address them, and say to them, "I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not?" How *could* they do it? And if the main reason of damnation lie in sins of omission like these, which it was not possible for them to commit, for want of power to perform the duty, how, then, shall he condemn and cast them away?

Furthermore, we think that *the ways of grace*, if we consider them, render it highly improbable, not to say impossible, that an infant soul should be destroyed. What saith Scripture? "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Such a thing as that could not be said of an infant cast away. We know that God is so abundantly gracious that such expressions as the "unsearchable riches of Christ," "God who is rich in mercy," "A God full of compassion," "The exceeding riches of his grace," and the like, are truly applicable without exaggeration or hyperbole. We know that he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, and that in grace he is able to do "exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or even think." The grace of God has sought out in the world the greatest sinners. It has not passed by the vilest of the vile. He who called himself the chief of sinners was a partaker of the love of Christ. All manner of sin and of blasphemy have been forgiven unto man. He has been able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Christ, and does it seem consistent with such grace as this that it should pass by the myriads upon myriads of little ones, who wear the image of the earthy Adam, and never stamp upon them the image of the heavenly? I cannot conceive such a thing. He that has tasted, and felt, and handled the grace of God, will, I think, shrink instinctively from any other doctrine than this, that infants dying such, are most assuredly saved.

Once again, one of the strongest inferential arguments is to be found in the fact that Scripture positively states that *the number of saved souls at the last will be very great*. In the Revelation we read of a number that no man can number. The Psalmist speaks of them as numerous as dew drops from the womb of the morning. Many passages give to Abraham, as the father of the faithful, a seed as many as the stars of heaven, or as the sand on the sea shore. Christ is to see of the travail of his soul

and be satisfied ; surely it is not a little that will satisfy him. The virtue of the precious redemption involves a great host who were redeemed. All Scripture seems to teach that heaven will not be a narrow world, that its population will not be like a handful gleaned out of a vintage, but that Christ shall be glorified by ten thousand times ten thousand, whom he hath redeemed with his blood. Now where are they to come from ? How small a part of the map could be called Christian ! Look at it. Out of that part which could be called Christian, how small a portion of them would bear the name of believer ! How few could be said to have even a nominal attachment to the Church of Christ ! Out of this, how many are hypocrites, and know not the truth ! I do not see it possible, unless indeed the millennium age should soon come, and then far exceed a thousand years ; I do not see how it is possible that so vast a number should enter heaven, unless it be on the supposition that infant souls constitute the great majority. It is a sweet belief to my own mind that there will be more saved than lost, for in all things Christ is to have the pre-eminence, and why not in this ? It was the thought of a great divine that perhaps at the last the number of the lost would not bear a greater proportion to the number of the saved, than do the number of criminals in gaols to those who are abroad in a properly-conducted state. I hope it may be found to be so. At any rate, it is not my business to be asking, " Lord, are there few that shall be saved ? " The gate is strait, but the Lord knows how to bring thousands through it without making it any wider, and we ought not to seek to shut any out by seeking to make it narrower. Oh ! I do know that Christ will have the victory, and that as he is followed by streaming hosts, the black prince of hell will never be able to count so many followers in his dreary train as Christ in his resplendent triumph. And if so, we *must* have the children saved ; yea, brethren, if not so, we *must have them*, because we feel anyhow they must be numbered with the blessed, and dwell with Christ hereafter.

Now for one or two *incidental matters which occur in Scripture*, which seem to throw a little light also on the subject. You have not forgotten the case of David. His child by Bathsheba was to die as a punishment for the father's offence. David prayed, and fasted, and vexed his soul ; at last they tell him the child is dead. He fasted no more, but he said, " I shall go to him, he shall not return to me." Now, where did David expect to go to ? Why, to heaven surely. Then his child must have been there, for he said, " I shall go to him." I do not hear him say the same of Absalom. He did not stand over his corpse, and say, " I shall go to him ; " he had no hope for that rebellious son. Over this child it was not—" O my son ! would to God I had died for thee ! " No, he could let this babe go with perfect confidence, for he said, " I shall go to him." " I know," he might have said, " that He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil, for he is with me ; I shall go to my child, and in heaven we shall be re-united with each other." You remember, too, those instances which I have already quoted, where children are said to have been sanctified from the womb. It casts this light upon the subject, it shows it not to be impossible that a child should be a partaker of grace while yet a babe. Then you have the passage, " Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he hath perfected praise." The coming out of Egypt was a type of the redemption of the chosen seed, and you know that in that case the little ones were to go forth ; nay, not even a hoof was to be left behind. Why not children in the greater deliverance to join in the song of Moses and of the Lamb ? And there is a passage in Ezekiel, for where we have but little, we must pick up even the crumbs, and do as our Master did—gather up the fragments that nothing be lost—there is a passage in Ezekiel, sixteenth chapter, twenty-first verse, where God is censuring his people for having given up their little infants to Moloch, having caused them to pass through the fire, and he says of these little ones, " Thou hast slain *my* children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire ; " so, then, they were God's children ; those little ones who died in the red-hot arms of Moloch while babes, God calls " my children." We may, therefore, believe concerning all those who have fallen asleep in these early days of life, that Jesus said of them, " These are my children," and that he now to-day, while he leads his sheep unto living fountains of water, does not forget still to carry out his own injunction, " Feed my lambs." Yea, to-day even he carrieth " the lambs in his bosom," and even before the eternal throne he is not ashamed to say, " Behold I and the children whom thou hast given me." There is another passage in Scripture which I think may be used. In the first chapter of Deuteronomy there had been a threatening pronounced upon the children of Israel in the wilderness, that, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, they should never see the promised land ;

nevertheless, it is added, "Your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it." To you, fathers and mothers, who fear not God, who live and die unbelieving, I would say, "your unbelief cannot shut your children out of heaven, and I bless God for that. While you cannot lay hold on that text which says, "The promise is unto us and our children, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call," yet inasmuch as the sin of the generation in the wilderness did not shut the next generation out of Canaan, but they did surely enter in, so the sin of unbelieving parents shall not necessarily be the ruin of their children, but they shall still, through God's sovereign grace and his overflowing mercy, be made partakers of the rest which he hath reserved for his people. Understand that this morning I have not made a distinction between the children of godly and ungodly parents. If they die in infancy, I do not mind who is father nor who their mother, they are saved; I do not even endorse the theory of a good Presbyterian minister who supposes that the children of godly parents will have a better place in heaven than those who happen to be sprung from ungodly ones. I do not believe in any such thing. I am not certain that there are any degrees in heaven at all; and even if there were, I am not clear that even that would prove our children to have any higher rights than others. All of them without exception, from whosoever loins they may have sprung, will, we believe, not by baptism, not by their parents' faith, but simply as we are all saved through the election of God, through the precious blood of Christ, through the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, attain to glory and immortality, and wear the image of the heavenly as they have worn the image of the earthy.

III. I now come to make a PRACTICAL USE OF THE DOCTRINE.

First, let it be a *comfort to bereaved parents*. You say it is a heavy cross that you have to carry. Remember, *it is easier to carry a dead cross than a living one*. To have a living cross is indeed a tribulation,—to have a child who is rebellious in his childhood, vicious in his youth, debauched in his manhood! Ah, would God that he had died from the birth; would God that he had never seen the light! Many a father's hairs have been brought with sorrow to the grave through his living children, but I think never through his dead babes; certainly not if he were a Christian, and were able to take the comfort of the apostle's words—"We sorrow not as they that are without hope." So you would have your child live! Ah, if you could have drawn aside the veil of destiny, and have seen to what he might have lived! Would you have had him live to ripen for the gallows? Would you have him live to curse his father's God? Would you have him live to make your home wretched, to make you wet your pillow with tears, and send you to your daily work with your hands upon your loins because of sorrow! Such might have been the case; it is not so now, for your little one sings before the throne of God. Do you know from what sorrows your little one has escaped? You have had enough yourself. It was born of woman, it would have been of few days and full of trouble as you are. It has escaped those sorrows; do you lament that? Remember, too, your own sins, and the deep sorrow of repentance. Had that child lived,—it would have been a sinner, and it must have known the bitterness of conviction of sin. It has escaped that; it rejoices now in the glory of God. Then would you have it back again? Bereaved parents, could you for a moment see your own offspring above, I think you would very speedily wipe away your tears. There among the sweet voices which sing the perpetual carol may be heard the voice of your own child—an angel now, and you the mother of a songster before the throne of God. You might not have murmured had you received the promise that your child should have been elevated to the peerage; it has been elevated higher than that—to the peerage of heaven. It has received the dignity of the immortals; it is robed in better than royal garments; it is more rich and more blessed than it could have been if all the crowns of earth could have been put upon its head. Wherefore, then, could you complain? An old poet has penned a verse well fitted for an infant's epitaph;—

"Short was my life, the longer is my rest,
 God takes those soonest whom he loveth best,
 Who's born to-day, and dies to-morrow,
 Loses some hours of joy, but months of sorrow.
 Other diseases often come to grieve us,
 Death strikes but once, and that stroke doth relieve us."

Your child has had that one stroke and has been relieved from all these pains, and you may say of it, this much we know, he is supremely blessed, has escaped from sin, and care, and woe, and with the Saviour rests. "Happy the babe," says Hervey, "who,

Privileged by faith, a shorter labour and a lighter weight,
Received but yesterday the gift of breath,
Ordered to-morrow to return to death."

While another says, looking upward to the skies,

"O blest exchange, O envied lot,
Without a conflict crowned,
Stranger to pain, in pleasure bless'd
And without fame, renowned."

So is it. It is well to fight and win, but to win as fairly without the fight! It is well to sing the song of triumph after we have passed the Red Sea with all its terrors; but to sing the song without the sea is glorious still! I do not know that I would prefer the lot of a child in heaven myself. I think it is nobler to have borne the storm, and to have struggled against the wind and the rain. I think it will be a subject of congratulation through eternity, for you and me, that we did not come so easy a way to heaven, for it is only a pin's prick after all, this mortal life; then there is exceeding great glory hereafter. But yet I think we may still thank God for those little ones, that they have been spared our sins, and spared our infirmities, and spared our pains, and are entered into the rest above. Thus saith the Lord unto thee, O Rachel, if thou weepst for thy children, and refuseth to be comforted because they are not: "Restrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy."

The next and perhaps more useful and profitable inference to be drawn from the text is this: many of you are parents who have children in heaven. Is it not a desirable thing that you should go there, too? And yet have I not in these galleries and in this area some, perhaps many, who have no hope hereafter? In fact, you have left that which is beyond the grave to be thought of another day, you have given all your time and thoughts to the short, brief, and unsatisfactory pursuits of mortal life. Mother, unconverted mother, from the battlements of heaven your child beckons you to Paradise. Father, ungodly, impenitent father, the little eyes that once looked joyously on you, look down upon you now, and the lips which had scarcely learned to call you father, ere they were sealed by the silence of death, may be heard as with a still small voice, saying to you this morning, "Father, must we be for ever divided by the great gulf which no man can pass?" Doth not nature itself put a kind of louging in your soul that you may be bound in the bundle of life with your own children? Then stop and think. As you are at present, you cannot hope for that; for your way is sinful, you have forgotten Christ, you have not repented of sin, you have loved the wages of iniquity. I pray thee go to thy chamber this morning and think of thyself as being driven from thy little ones, banished for ever from the presence of God, cast "where their worm dieth not and where their fire is not quenched." If thou wilt think of these matters, perhaps the heart will begin to move, and the eyes may begin to flow, and then may the Holy Spirit put before thine eyes the cross of the Saviour, the holy child Jesus! And remember, if thou wilt turn thine eye to him thou shalt live: if thou believest on him with all thy heart thou shalt be with him where He is,—with all those whom the Father gave him who have gone before. Thou needest not to be shut out. Wilt thou sign thine own doom, and write thine own death warrant? Neglect not this great salvation, but may the grace of God work with thee to make thee seek, for thou shalt find—to make thee knock, for the door shall be opened—to make thee ask, for he that asketh shall receive! O might I take you by the hand—perhaps you have come from a newly-made grave, or left the child at home dead, and God has made me a messenger to you this morning; O might I take you by the hand and say, "We cannot bring him back again, the spirit is gone beyond recall, but you may follow!" Behold the ladder of light before you! The first step upon it is repentance, out of thyself; the next step is faith, into Christ, and when thou art there, thou art fairly and safely on thy way, and ere long thou shalt be received at heaven's gates by those very little ones who have gone before. that they may come to welcome thee when thou shouldst land upon the eternal shores.

Yet another lesson of instruction, and I will not detain you much longer. What shall we say to parents who have living children? We have spoken of those that are dead, what shall we say of the living? I think I might say, reserve your tears,

bereaved parents, for the children that live. You may go to the little grave, you may look upon it and say, "This my child is saved; it resteth for ever beyond all fear of harm." You may come back to those who are sitting round your table, and you can look from one to the other and say, "These my children, many of them are unsaved." Out of God, out of Christ, some of them are just ripening into manhood and into womanhood, and you can plainly see that their heart is like every natural heart, desperately wicked. There is subject for weeping for you. I pray you never cease to weep for them until they have ceased to sin; never cease to hope for them until they have ceased to live; never cease to pray for them until you yourself cease to breathe. Carry them before God in the arms of faith, and do not be desponding because they are not what you want them to be. They will be won yet if you have but faith in God. Do not think that it is hopeless. He that saved *you* can save *them*. Take them one by one constantly to God's mercy-seat and wrestle with Him, and say, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." The promise is unto you and to your child, even to as many as the Lord your God shall call. Pray, strive, wrestle, and it shall yet be your happy lot to see your household saved. This was the word which the apostle gave to the gaoler, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." We have had many proofs of it, for in this pool under here I have baptised not only the father and the mother, but in many cases all the children too, who one after another have been brought by grace even to put their trust in Jesus. It should be the longing of every parent's heart to see all his offspring Christ's, and all that have sprung from his loins numbered in the host of those who shall sing around the throne of God. We may pray in faith, for we have a promise about it; we may pray in faith, for we have many precedents in Scripture, the God of Abraham is the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob; but for this good thing he will be inquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them. Inquire of Him, plead with Him, go before Him with the power of faith and earnestness, and He will surely hear you.

One word to all the congregation. A little child was saying the other day—and children will sometimes say strange things—"Papa, I cannot go back again." When he was asked what he meant, he explained that he was here, he had begun his life, and it seemed such a thought to him that he could not cease to be,—he could not go back again. You and I may say the same; here we are; we have grown up, we cannot go back again to that childhood in which we once were; we have therefore no door of escape there. Good John Bunyan used to wish that he had died when he was a child. Then again, he hoped he might be descended from some Jew, for he had a notion that the Hebrews might be saved. That door God has closed. Every door is closed to you and me except the one that is just in front of us, and that has the mark of the cross upon it. There is the golden knocker of prayer: do we choose to turn aside from that to find another,—a gate of ceremonies, or of blood, or of birth? We shall never enter that way. There is that knocker! By faith, great God, I will lift it now. "I, the chief of sinners am, have mercy upon me!" Jesus stands there. "Come in," saith he, "thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" He receives me to his arms, washes, clothes, glorifies me, when I come to him. Am I such a fool that I do not knock? Yes, such I am by nature—then what a fool! O Spirit of God! make me wise to know my danger and my refuge! And now, sinner, in the name of him that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, lay hold upon that knocker, lift it, give it a blow, and let your prayer be, ere thou leavest this sanctuary, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" May the Lord hear and bless, for his name's sake!