

THE PREDESTINARIAN

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 3

“... to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us ... that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.” **Luke 1:1-4.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Nazarene --- Nazarite, By Elder Grady B. Dearman
Church History, By Elder Gilbert Beebe, 1868
Good Works Are Of God, By Elder Woodrow W. Hudson
Regeneration And Conversion, By W. E. Best
The City Without The Temple, By Elder H. M. Curry
Observations On History, By Isaac Backus, 1777**

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NAZARENE...AND NAZARITE

Satan is fierce in his pursuit of the truth. Not that he would believe it, for he is bound to believe all which God has said; nor does he wish to do homage to the truth in the Lord Jesus Christ. His unrelenting hounding of every step which the Lord made during His days of obedience was so that he might more quickly dash Truth to the ground and stamp it to dust.

This relentless and malevolent adversary intensified his efforts the night before our Lord's betrayal and crucifixion. Indeed, prayerful study of that event, will disclose the frightening dimensions of Satan's hatred for the Son of God. Every detail of that night and day is overflowing with meaning; even the smallest events are significant.

The final spasm of unbridled enmity vented upon the Lord during His ministry began even before the "Passover" had been completely eaten with His disciples. Satan knew the full signification of the vow which the Lord undertook. "But I say unto you, I WILL NOT DRINK HENCEFORTH OF THIS FRUIT OF THE VINE, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matt. 25:29.

There it was. . . the vow!

Satanic purpose now was directed to the immediate shattering of that vow! And the time was short, it must be done in the next few hours, before death intervened. Now, serpent, ". . . thou shalt bruise His heel."

At this point, we must break away and consider the nature of the vow to which the Lord bound Himself. Our vows are to be directed to God; therefore, the Son's vow was to His Father. Yet, of what did the vow consist? A simple declaration of intent not to drink again of the fruit of the vine until a later date? Yes — and much more; for therein is bound up the hope of the Church. The vow was one of separation, a separation from the fruit of the vine from that moment. Yet, much, much more hangs in the balance.

The history of the nation of Israel shines with the account of those persons whom God purposed, called and fitted for a separated purpose. God separated Joseph from his brethren and fulfilled His purpose. Samson was a separated one for whom a work was prepared. Hannah, because of her faith in God's movings, had separated Samuel for a specific ministry. John the Baptist was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel. There were those who were made Nazarites (separated ones) at the hand of God (Samson, John the Baptist); and others, who were made so by their parents (Samuel, Jephthah's daughter); and those who made themselves so through singular vows (Acts 21:23-26). According to Hebrew practice, a vow of separation (root: nezar) was to run until the specified occurrence of an event or time; or if a vow — for thirty days. It was not uncommon for vows to be made by Israelites, men and women alike.

The sixth chapter of Numbers throws much light upon the vowing of a vow of a Nazarite. See Numbers 6:1-21. For the sake of brevity we list only a few of the salient points; things from which the Nazarite must be separated:

1. wine and strong drink
2. vinegar of wine or strong drink
3. he shall approach no dead body
4. a man cannot die very suddenly by him.

Should any of the above strictures (and others) be violated, the "vow" is broken. In the case of an Israelite, it meant a beginning again, but for the Lord, there could be no beginning again.

Jesus was of Nazareth, a Nazarene, and it is of Him, virgin born, that the Scripture speaks expressly when it addresses Him as "the Branch", from "netzer", Netzerath. During the days of His service, the Lord made water into wine, drank wine, and approached many dead bodies.

We see, then, that although He was a Nazarene; a branch, one apart, He most definitely was not a Nazarite . . . according to Numbers, chapter 6.

But He did BECOME a Nazarite, more so than any before or since, when He pledged not to drink of the fruit of the vine. . . until that day!

How then did the Devil seek to nullify that vow? After the last supper, Christ led His disciples into the garden of Gethsemane, where, after His agonizing prayers, He was arrested by the multitude. Peter lifted His sword and

would have smitten off more than an ear, had his sword not been providentially deflected. Matt. 26:51-54. Had Satan been successful, a man would have died suddenly by the Lord, so close that Christ immediately reached forth and restored the ear. Numbers 6:9; and the freshly made vow would have been voided. But, it was not so to be! Observe, now, how meaningful is the “thus” of verse 54.

Then they led Him out to crucify Him. “They gave Him VINEGAR TO DRINK mingled with gall; and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.” Matt. 27:34, and again, “to drink” in verse 48. Compare Mark 15:23 and 36; Luke 23:36; and John 19:29-30 which says “...put it TO HIS MOUTH.” When Jesus had therefore received the vinegar, He said, “it is finished: . . .” He did not drink the vinegar. His vow remained whole every whit. He was faithful unto death.

Satan, having been frustrated by seeing Peter’s sword deflected; and by witnessing Christ’s steadfast refusal to drink the vinegar, was full of fury. Again, he launched another desperate assault upon our Lord so as to overpower the prophesy in the Scriptures. “Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs. . . .” John 19:32-33.

Usually crucifixion was a long drawn out, excruciating means of execution. Victims had lingered for days before expiring. This knowledge, and the fact that the next day was an “high Sabbath”, (not the seventh day Sabbath) motivated the Jews to put a swift end to the affair. Satanic intent (under God’s counsel) directed the soldiers as they went first to the thieves to break their legs, and thus to hasten their deaths. And it was devilish scheming which left to the last the proposed breaking of the Lord’s legs. Should the thieves be put to death in the presence of the Lord of Life the vow would be of none effect.

Did not our Lord consider all this as He surveyed the scene? In His agony He KNEW all things had been accomplished; and thus He said, “It is finished” and He “gave up the ghost.” His life was not twisted and torn from Him, He LAID down His life . . . at the precise moment determined from the beginning. When the soldiers came to break His legs, Lo, He was dead already; no man had “died suddenly by Him,” He was dead already!

The Scripture had been written hundreds of years before, “. . . and a bone of Him shall not be broken.” Psalms 34:20. Consider the dilemma in which Satan now found himself: he intended to kill the Lord, but only after the vow had been broken. Satan had known the Scripture, but the sudden interjection of the Lord’s vow could not be successfully integrated into the Dragon’s plans in time. How great must have been his confusion; how terrible his wrath! The vow

must be made useless! Christ must be killed.. . but in what order is it to be done?

We know the outcome of that dark day: how sin was put away, how the captives were delivered with power and triumph from the hand of the old Deceiver. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”—G.E.D

CHURCH HISTORY By Gilbert Beebe, 1868

Ed. Note: Independent of one another, this editor, Charles Hampton, and James Willingham, each set out in the 1950's and 60's to determine the truth of Baptist history from original resources. In time, our paths crossed, and we each discovered that almost to the writer, all Baptists historians had falsified their histories to prove some preconceived positions. This editor can verify that what Gilbert Beebe discovered, is the same as the original manuscripts show. We reprint this article, since in forthcoming issues, much of the information we will present “flies in the face” of the “standard writers” of modern Baptist historians. At least we wish our readers to know that even the great Predestinarian Old School Baptist, Gilbert Beebe, confirms much of what we shall present.

We do not know of any reliable history of the Baptists from the apostles' days down to the present. Of all the books that have been published on ecclesiastical history, that have come under our observation, we have seen none that traces our history from the organization of the primitive Baptist Church on the day of Pentecost to the present time, as all that we have read, after the Church a few centuries, and basing their account upon very doubtful data, become confused, leaving the track of the true Church, give us account of the nominal church, which usurped the name when the true Church was driven by persecution into the wilderness, and there hidden from sight of her enemies “for a time, and times and half a time.”—Rev. 12:14.

From the flight of the Church into the wilderness all the popular historians have lost Her track, and have given us instead, an historical account of the anti-Christian beasts, which had assumed Her name. The most we can glean from historical records, is an occasional allusion made by them to a people, answering to some extent our description: despised, persecuted and derided by all other classes of religionists. This persecuted people described by popular historians as non-conformists to the decrees of Popes, councils or monarchs, in religious things, and holding the doctrine of the Bible, practicing

baptism of believers only, by immersion, and repudiating all popish perversions of that ordinance: a people that could not be exterminated by all the violence of persecution. This is about as much as can be gathered of the history of the Church of God, by any of the uninspired historians of which we have any knowledge. — When we consider, that during the Dark Ages of papal (Catholic) persecution all records and writings of non-conformists were seized, and with their authors committed to the flames, we shall not be surprised that no **DIRECT AUTHENTIC HISTORY** can be found.

Let us suppose at even the present time the world would write a history of the Baptist Church to transmit to the succeeding ages. Would they not all of them, like David Benedict (who knew better — Ed.) and others, represent the popular Missionary Baptists as the true Church, and as a people, opposed to everything that is “good”? Woe unto us, when the world shall speak well of us.

We have good reason to believe that God has not designed that the true Church should be manifested to the world by uninspired history. “Except a man be born again he **CANNOT** see it”. It comes not by observation; it cannot be traced by observation. The sun that shines in the natural heavens was never seen by any other than its own light. No light of history or of nature can reveal the Church of the living God. The Lord God Himself, and the Lamb are the light of it, and until God and the Lamb are revealed in our hearts, the kingdom of Christ is invisible to us.

The true and faithful history of the Church is given in the Scriptures of truth, by Him who has declared the end from the beginning. Prophecy records all that is necessary for the saints to know of Her history, and if we would know whence She is, revelation informs us She is from heaven. If we ask where She is, we are told She is in Christ Jesus, Her Lord. All that we are required to know of Her is found in the inspired record which God has given. John was instructed and commanded to arise and measure the temple (or Church of God), and the altar, and them that worship therein, and for that purpose was given him a reed like unto a rod. — Rev.11:1. If we would know all the proportions of the Church of Christ, the Scriptures are the rule by which we are to ascertain what are her peculiar characteristics, for her height, depth, length and breadth are equal. And all that comes not with the measurement of **SCRIPTURAL RULE**, is given to the heathen, and is not to be measured by any Scripture rule nor recognized as belonging to the temple, altar or people of our God.

As to the Church in the United States, the first Regular, or Old School or Primitive Baptist in America, that we have any knowledge of, was constituted and organized in Wales, and embarked in a ship, the James and Mary in June 1701 and landed in Philadelphia in September the same year. A sailing vessel with pastor, deacons and members (16) all told, and were received by some

Baptists who had preceded them in old Pennepek meeting house, builded in 1688.

(Ed. Note: Beebe refused to recognize the earlier English Baptists, due to their origins in the Protestant Seceder movement. Here, he traces the Predestinarian Old School party from Welsh Tract Church, which in reality was the strong backbone of the doctrinal foundations of the old Baptists. The Welsh churches in America, even as affiliated churches with the Philadelphia, continued their own separate affiliations with each other and their parent bodies in Wales. This may explain Beebe's comments here. He was well aware of the earlier churches, which churches led the Baptists into many modern innovations.)

Later in 1703 a colony settled at Welsh Tract, Newark, Delaware.

Roger Williams came to Massachusetts a member of the Puritan church and state establishment. He became dissatisfied with and protested against the puritanic persecutions, was expelled and banished by them: went to England and obtained a charter for the Providence Plantations which now comprise the State of Rhode Island, effected a treaty with the Indians, and proclaimed full liberty of conscience to all who wished to settle there, to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Subsequently he professed to be a Baptist, but there is much disputation as to the manner and validity of his baptism. On the grounds of difference which led to the separation of the apostolic order, we know of no record extant that will give a more full account than that contained in New School Baptists from the old first book of Editorials, recently published by B.L. Beebe which contain the statements of both parties from, and embracing the separation for ten years thereafter.

We have no disposition to dispute with the New School as to whether they left us, or we left them. It is fully conceded that we are separated, and hold no fellowship for each other. Of our respective claims to antiquity, or to be of the apostolic order of Baptists, nothing can be settled by the discussion of the time and manner of the division. The principle grounds of differences on which we separated were, first that they embraced the doctrine of Andrew Fuller, and we protested against it as heresy. Secondly, they embraced the popular religious institutions such as Theological schools, Sunday schools, Missionary, Bible and Tract Societies, and other modern inventions for the professed object of converting the heathen, and evangelizing the world and ushering in the millennium. We refused to recognize or fellowship any of these new institutions. And after long forbearance and expostulations with them, we in the year 1832 declared a withdrawal of fellowship with them. Thus the division took place and we have from that time been separated from each other.

Now every honest inquirer who desires to know who, if any of us are entitled to be distinguished as apostolic Baptists, should use the “reed” which is like a rod, or in other words, “search the Scriptures” and if it can be found that the old apostles taught Fullerism, and founded Theological seminaries, or instituted Sabbath Schools, and Infant or Bible classes, or Missionary societies or any other religious societies except the Church of God, then it will be clear that the New School Baptist are apostolic Baptists, and we old School Baptists are schismatics. But if it be found that we hold, contend for and practice all the apostolic Church held, taught and practiced, and protest against every innovation on, or departure from, the primitive faith and practice according to the New Testament, it must follow that we are right, and all who differ from us are wrong. “To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isa. 8:20.

Comments: Suppose one did come to the knowledge of the excellency of grace and studied the New Testament, took that rod, and measured us and our churches thereby. Is there any cause that we be found ashamed? As Old Baptists continue to develop new doctrines and new practices, and walk unbecoming the gospel order, should we not give consideration to the **RULE OF THE GOSPEL**, literally. Brethren, we cannot determine any course apostates follow, but surely we must search the Scriptures daily to see if we are truly established in the faith once delivered the saints.

GOOD WORKS ARE OF GOD

By Woodrow W. Hudson

TEXT: *“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew First, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.” (Rom.2:5-11).*

May the Lord bless us with the spirit and wisdom to rightly divide the word of truth and not- attempt to handle the word of God deceitfully. (II Cor.

4:2) Are we afraid to use this text because Arminians handle it deceitfully?

As the Lord blesses us, let us consider the 6th verse: “Who will render to every man according to his deeds.” First, may Almighty God bless us to establish the fact that this text is not conditional: that the blessings in time (Eph. 1:3) and salvation (Eph. 2:8-10) are not conditional.

As for our blessings in time, please consider these Scriptures which support the belief that God works in His people to do that which is acceptable in the sight of the Lord: “*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, MAKE YOU perfect in EVERY GOOD WORK to do His will, WORKING IN YOU that which is WELL PLEASING in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to WHOM be glory for ever and ever. Amen*”. (Heb. 13:20-21). Please notice that it is the Spirit of God who WORKS WITHIN the children of God to walk in good works; THAT is well pleasing in the sight of the Lord. (See Phil. 2:13).

Man, by his efforts, wisdom, etc., cannot do anything that would merit the favor, blessings, grace, etc., of Almighty God. “*0 Lord, I know that the way of man is not IN himself: it is not IN man that walketh to direct his steps.*” (Jer. 10:23). “*The steps of a good man ARE ORDERED by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand.*” (Psa. 37:23-24). “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*” (Rom. 3:10-12). This Scripture shows that man by nature will not seek after righteousness. May the Lord bless you to examine the following Scripture carefully and see that the Lord must enable one to hunger and thirst after righteousness. “*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*” (Matt. 5:6).

“*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*” (Jere. 13:23). There is nothing that man can do to merit the favor or grace of God, whether it is for blessings in time or for heaven.

Grace is the gift of God! Now “*to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*” (Rom. 4:4). If we worked for our blessings or earned them by our deeds, then the reward would be by debt, and not by grace. (And IF we could by our “good” deeds place God under bondage... in debt . . . to us, then surely Christ would be more a servant to the adopted children than to the Father; for Christ said “*...I and my Father are one.*” But He left no doubt as to our relationship to Him when He said, “*Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.*” John 13-13. Christ has the pre-eminence in all things. He is

not under obligation to the Holy angels, much less to man. —G.E.D.)

In connection with the text, let us consider the fact that the children of God DO walk in good works and bring forth good fruit. *“Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.”* (Isa. 54:17). *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.”* (John 15:16) *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that NOT OF YOURSELVES; it is a gift of God: not OF WORKS, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS, which GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED that we SHOULD WALK IN THEM.”* (Eph. 2:8-11) This quotation has reference to the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. *“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, . . . “* (Isa. 61:10). This is the righteousness that Jesus gives to His people. *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and CAUSE YOU TO WALK in my statutes, and ye SHALL KEEP my judgments AND DO THEM.”* (Ezekiel 36:26-27). *“For it is God which WORKETH IN YOU both to will and TO DO of His good pleasure.”* (Phil.2:13). It is good to read and prove by the Scriptures that God CAUSES His people to WALK IN GOOD WORKS, and man has nothing of which to boast.

“Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast WROUGHT ALL OUR WORKS IN US.” (Isa. 26:12). Would any argue that the good which the child of grace does is motivated by his flesh? — G.E.D.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the MAN OF GOD may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”(II Tim. 3:16-17).

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds.” We trust the Lord has blessed us to establish the fact that the good works of God’s people are produced by the Spirit of God, and their slips, falls, shortcomings, etc., are products of the works of the flesh. It is the spirit of Satan that leads the children of God astray. *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* (I John 4:1) The false prophets are led by the wrong spirit. What is the source of the wrong spirit which leads the false prophets? The prince of the power of the air (or Satan) is the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. *“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT THAT NOW WORKETH IN THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE.”* (Eph. 2:2). *“Now the Spirit*

speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” (I Tim. 4:1). Notice carefully this has reference to events Almighty God has purposed that must take place in the latter days. Satan is the source of the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. I believe that Satan is very cunning and brings forth an element of truth in order to interject error. We have heard it said that the most dangerous man against the truth is the one who comes the closest before he misses it. Satan misuses the wonderful doctrine of predestination to upset exhortations, reproofs, rebukes, practices, etc. Those who are caught in this error accuse one of being a conditionalists, or Arminian, when he is blessed to use exhortations, reproofs, rebukes, etc. Paul says, “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” (II Tim.4:2). “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God might be **CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS**. These things are good and profitable unto men.” (Titus 3:8). “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye **WALK WORTHY** of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”(Eph. 4:1-3). I believe that Almighty God has a purpose in the exhortations which He has inspired His ones to write. “.... Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (II Peter 1-21). Exhortations have an effect upon the hearers when one is moved by the Holy Spirit of God to use them, whether this is, in private conversation among brethren or when a minister is preaching. One should keep in mind that Satan uses exhortations in the Scriptures to bring forth that Arminian concept which attempts to rob God of the honor, praise and glory that belong unto His Holy Name. (See Titus 3:8 and Gal. 6:7) “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a **DOER** of the work, this man shall be **BLESSED IN HIS DEED.**’ James 1:25). So you see, it is the Lord who blesses one to be a “doer of the word” and they **DO** it. “But whosoever hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but **IN DEED** and in truth.” (I John 3:17-18; Rom. 2:13).

Webster gives this definition of Antinomian: “One who holds that, under the gospel dispensation, the moral law is of no use or obligation, faith alone being necessary to salvation.” Compare this definition with James 2:17-18: “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, “Thou hast faith, and I have works: Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith **BY MY WORKS.**”

Again, observe how cunning Satan is. Some who grieve over the false

doctrine of antinomianism . . . of “hiding one’s sins, faults, shortcomings, etc., behind the Providence of the Lord (In reality they are never hid.. “Be SURE thy sin will find thee out”.) may be tempted to shun preaching predestination; or Satan may tempt one to go a little too far in the other direction and into conditionalism, or Arminianism (freewillism). “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: Remove thy foot from evil.” (Prov. 4:26-27; Deut. 5-32; Ezek. 1:12)

May the Lord bless us to keep this Scripture fresh in our minds: “Who will render to every man according to his deeds.” Render means to give, deliver, to pay back, etc. Compare with Gal. 6:7, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” This is a heart-searching matter between one and the Lord: we reap what we sow.

Let us examine a portion of God’s message to the angel of the CHURCH in Thyatira: “and I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill HER CHILDREN with death; and ALL THE CHURCHES shall KNOW that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I WILL GIVE UNTO EVERY ONE OF YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS.” (Rev. 2:21-23) Are we going to call the Bible language conditional? We believe the above Scriptures are in harmony with our text.

If our deeds have been evil, what will we reap — and do the Scriptures give us the answer? “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” (Col. 3:25). There is no way of hiding from the Lord. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” (Prov. 15:3).

Read Romans 2:8-9 already quoted. Why does God bring tribulations and anguish upon His people? This is one of the Lord’s ways to chasten His people, humble them, and to cause them to bring forth good fruit. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” (Heb. 12:11) “. . . the Almighty hath afflicted me.” (Ruth 1:21). “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.” (Psalm 119:67). “I know, O Lord that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” (Psa. 119:75).

What do the Scriptures say about God “trying” His people? “But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath TRIED me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10). “For Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast TRIED us, as silver is tried.” (Psa. 66:10-11). “And I will turn my hand upon thee, and surely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.” (Isa. 1:25). “Behold, I have re-

fined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of afflictions” (Isa. 48:10). “. . . Behold, I will melt them, and TRY them. . .” (Jere. 9:7). “...though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:” meaning it is the Lord’s purpose that it is necessary for you to be cast down in darkness for a season. “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” (II Cor. 4:8-9). “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be TRIED with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (I Peter 1:6-7).

These trials, afflictions, tribulations, etc., are not pleasant to the flesh and we would desire to miss them, but it is not for us to determine our course, and this wise God of heaven and earth has purposed the pathway we must travel. In the midst of these trials, it pleases the Lord to bless us with a taste of heaven from time to time and this gives us sufficient strength and grace to press on in this wilderness of sin and sorrow.

“...the rebellious dwell in a dry land.” (Psa. 68-6). How long? Until it pleases the Lord to bless them to be content with their condition or reconciled to the will of Almighty God.

One is brought very low when the chastening hand of Almighty God is upon him, and all this causes him to plead and cry unto the Lord for mercy. “Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name... “(Psa. 142:7). All one can do is to wait and pray unto the Lord for deliverance. “My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.” (Psa. 130:6). “I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.” (Psa. 40:1). It is wonderful to know the Lord hears the cries of His people. “Thou knoweth my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandeth my thought afar off. Thou compasseth my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.” (Psa. 139:2-4). It causes us to rejoice that our God has an “all seeing eye” and is tenderly watching over us. “I will keep thee as the apple of mine eye.” (Psa. 17:8) “...for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.” (Zech. 2:8).

When one is delivered from the prison of darkness, this causes him to sing praises unto the Lord for His tender mercies. “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings, and He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” (Psa. 40:2-3). This causes you to speak to yourselves in hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (See Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

If our deeds have been acceptable unto the Lord, what do we reap? “But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.” (Rom. 2:10). Man has nothing to boast about because one must be led and directed by the Spirit of God before he can produce deeds, good works, etc., that are acceptable to the Lord. Therefore, the Arminians believing in conditionalism cannot truthfully use this text in support of their theory; which is contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. Nor can the antinomian doubt for a moment that he shall not receive a full rendering for his fleshly deeds. (James 1:13; Rom. 3:8; 6:1-2).

May the Lord bless us to look unto Him for all of our needs and keep us from seeking after vain glory and keep us from bowing down before the scorn of men. “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: What can man do unto me?” (Psa. 118:6). “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psa. 27:1). “. . . fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.” (Isa. 51:7). “. . .do I seek to please men? for if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” (Gal. 1:10).

May the Lord bless this article for the edification of the readers who will render all honor, praise, and glory to Almighty God. — W.W. Hudson.

Ed. Note: The above article is very needed in our careless generation. Bro. Hudson did a good work between the most difficult extremes on this subject. We appreciate him taking on so difficult a subject. — S.C. Phillips

“Good Works are the fruit of faith, and follow after justification, and are the evidences of a gracious state.”

REGENERATION AND CONVERSION

By W. E. Best

“The religious world is staggering under the influence of a depraved intellectualism which denies God His right to operate, among the peoples of the world, as He pleases. No one can believe in “free will” and “free grace” at the same time. These subjects are as diametrically opposed as light and darkness, heaven and hell, or a Holy God and an unholy man. To believe in “free will” dethrones the Sovereign God; to believe in “free grace” dethrones depraved man. Who is on the throne in your concept of salvation?”

The most familiar chapter in the Bible on the new birth is John, chapter three. Christ uncompromisingly asserted the need of regeneration. **THE NEW BIRTH IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY BECAUSE:**

(1) **GOD IS HOLY.** His holiness gives beauty and honor to all His other attributes. God is essentially holy; therefore, He is immutably holy. If man is to have intercourse with the Holy God; he must be regenerated, by the Holy Spirit, and thus become holy in the imputed and imparted righteousness of Jesus Christ.

(2) **MAN IS UNHOLY.** He is corrupt and sinful throughout. Natural man is totally unable to do anything spiritually good. He is dead in sin, and his will is enslaved to his evil nature. Man by nature, can no more live in the presence of God than he can live on the moon, Mercury, or Neptune. I purposely referred to the moon. Someone may say, 'The astronauts lived on the moon.' Yes, but they were unable to live without the atmosphere of earth to sustain them; even so, men cannot live in God's presence without possessing the holy atmosphere of heaven.

(3) **JESUS CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE.** He did not die in vain. The transgressions He bore were those of His people; the wounds and death He suffered were His. Therefore, Jesus Christ suffered vicariously for unregenerate people the Father had given Him. His substitutionary suffering provided redemption to be applied by the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

(4) **THE WORD OF GOD CONSTANTLY AFFIRMS IT.** Unregenerate people are spiritually blind, deaf, dumb, and dead. The magicians who withstood Moses are named by Paul. "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (II Tim. 8:8). A counterfeit miracle is a "lying wonder and sign" (II Thess. 2:9). Its object is to teach and accredit a lie. Thus, Jannes and Jambres imitated, as far as possible, the miracles of Moses, so do the self-loving and pleasure-seeking professors of Christianity "resist the truth". They would not think of being without a form of godliness because this is the best way to cover their deception. Paul warns against such false apostles, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (II Cor. 11:13-14). Depraved men must look, not to miracles, but to the **GRACE** of God for saving faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the **GIFT** of God."

The mere fact that a teacher works wonders and signs is not proof that he "come from God". The commendation of Nicodemus was not so complimentary after all, since "lying wonders and signs" were performed by false teachers.

There is great danger of one being misled by the sound of Biblical expressions, without understanding their true meaning. I shall give several examples:

(1) The Scriptures represent God as omnipotent, yet there are some things He cannot do. He cannot lie, be deceived, or go back on His promises. Omnipotence, therefore, does not mean that God can do everything; but He can do all that does not involve self-contradiction.

(2) The Word of God states that Jesus, in dying for His people, took their infirmities, and bare their sicknesses. (Matt. 8:17). All that some sincere, but deceived, souls see in this verse is that Jesus Christ carried all the physical infirmities of people into His Calvary experience. Thus, their concept of physical healing is as faulty as their views of spiritual healing. If Jesus Christ stood in the place of the sick, as He stood in the place of sinners, our sicknesses would be as far removed from us as our sins. Christ's atoning work is absolutely perfect and FINISHED — Godward — so that He is the propitiation for our sins, but its application to our bodies remains yet to be accomplished (II Cor. 4:16; Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21).

(3) The Bible says that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (II Cor.5:19), while the same Book declares there are many APPOINTED to eternal destruction. Thus, all men of the world are not reconciled to God. Only believers, (the elect) are reconciled to God.

(4) God's Word says that Christ died for all; it also states that He died for only some—His Church, His people, His sheep. That all men have received some benefit from the death of Christ cannot be denied. His death has served as a dam, or barrier, to hold back God's wrath. God's longsuffering is the barrier, but it is salvation to those for whom Christ died (II Peter 3:9-15).

(5) The Word of God invites (SIC) men to come to Jesus Christ; but the Bible nowhere implies that natural man, unaided and undrawn, can come to Christ. These are only a few examples of Scriptures often misunderstood.”

REGENERATION PRESUPPOSES DEPRAVITY OF MAN

Man's inability to recover himself is vividly portrayed in Ezekiel 16. The helpless infant, exposed in the field, would die without help from some other source. Israel is represented under the figure of a woman, who was taken when she was a forsaken and helpless baby, made vulnerable to the vultures of the world. The Lord found her in her own blood — her natural, lost condition. He

entered into covenant for Israel, and made her His own.

The covenant PRECEDED Israel's deliverance, just as God's choice of His own in Christ Jesus PRECEDES the provision and application of redemption. The reason religionists frown upon this fact is because it dethrones them as gods. The statement, "We need to let God be God in our lives is ridiculous. What is man? Is he a god greater than the God of creation, providence, and redemption? Christians should be afraid of anyone who thinks unworthy thoughts about God. David said, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?". (Psa 8:4). It has been said that man is nothing more than a little air and dust tempered together, a pile of dust and puff of wind with no solidity in either.

God's eternal purpose is ridiculed by uninformed people. Some advocate, with fleshly fervor, that calling precedes God's eternal election. This is as logical as a contractor building a house before he has the plans drawn.

There was a debate some years ago between a liberal preacher and an evangelical minister. The liberal's subject was entitled, "Fanning the Spark into a Flame." He taught that there is, in every person, a Divine spark which only needs fanning by good influence and works. The evangelical minister took the position that there is no Divine spark in natural man. Therefore, his rebuttal was, "There is No Spark To Fan." At the conclusion of the rebuttal address, the liberal preacher stood up and said, "I commend you on your reply, but I have a question to ask you. Do you believe that man has the ability, in himself, to either accept or reject the gospel? The evangelical minister, without a moment's hesitation, replied, "Yes, I surely do." The liberal then asked. "What is this ability in man?" The evangelical replied, "That ability is man's free will". Then the liberal smiled and said, "You call it free will, and I call it a spark of goodness." Actually, there was no difference between these men when it came to the subject of man's condition by nature. They both denied depravity, which is essential to the proper concept of regeneration and conversion.

REGENERATION PRECEDES THE SANCTIFYING INFLUENCE OF THE GOSPEL

All men are, by nature, spiritually blind; but if men had their just punishment, they would all be physically blind. Only an act of mercy prevents all from being born physically blind. The complaint should not be why this man was born blind, but why were any of us born with physical sight? It has been said that sentences of providence are very long, and we must read a great way before we shall understand.

It is vain to say that men are regenerated by the power of the gospel. The brightness of the noonday sun has no effect on a blind man any more that the flickering of a match. Nicodemus stood in the presence of not only "Incarnate"

but “spoken” truth. He saw neither the Person of Jesus Christ, nor the truth of what He was saying. “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath REVEALED them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

REGENERATION IS A NECESSITY

Some important distinctions between regeneration and conversion are:

1. Regeneration is the **IMMEDIATE ACT OF GOD**, in imparting the principle of **LIFE**; conversion is the **ACT OF MAN**, by the power of the indwelling Spirit, in repenting and believing. “...turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the Lord my God. Surely **AFTER** that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed. . .“(Jer. 31:18,19). “. . . helped them much which had believed **THROUGH** grace.” (Acts 18:27). Since regeneration is presented as the act of the Sovereign God, it is **NEVER** presented as a **DUTY** of the sinner. The demands of the gospel, upon sinners, are limited to the terms of repentance and faith (both of which are gifts of the Spirit — Ed.). “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts.20:21).

2. Regeneration is a **SINGLE ACT OF GOD**, and is never repeated; conversion is the beginning of a holy life, but there are **MANY CONVERSION EXPERIENCES** throughout one’s earthly pilgrimage. The **POSITION** of the believer in Jesus Christ, by virtue of regeneration, can be neither increased nor decreased by anything in the recipient. (Heb.10:10-14; Col. 3:1-4). Condition of the Christian (sic) life, however, will vary according to one’s conversion experiences. (Luke 22:31-34).

3. Regeneration is **NOT IN ITSELF AN EXPERIENCE**; conversion is a **SERIES** of **EXPERIENCES**. As there is no consciousness at the time of conception in the womb, so regeneration is not a matter of consciousness to its recipient. A person knows nothing of the beginning of his existence. Conversion, however is always an awareness of something taking place; therefore, it is experimental. Repentance and faith are experiences of the person born of God.

4. Regeneration is the **CAUSE** of an individual turning to the Lord; Conversion is the regenerate person **ACTUALLY** turning. God does not repent and believe for man, but He enables man to do what he **COULD NOT DO** by nature.

5. Regeneration is the Lord **OPENING THE HEART**; Conversion is the

person, whose heart has been opened, **TURNING** to Jesus Christ in faith and following the Lord in baptism. (Acts 16:14-15)

6. **Regeneration is a ONCE FOR ALL CLEANSING; Conversion is the CONTINUATION OF THE RENEWAL** which began in regeneration. (John 13:10; I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5).

7. In regeneration we have **GOD’S POWER**, the power of the indwelling Spirit; in conversion the power is **NOT OF US** but **IN US** by God’s Sovereign choice. An understanding of this Biblical fact will remove all pride and boasting from preachers and other Christians about **THEIR** successes.

REGENERATION IS THE CREATIVE ACT OF GOD

Satan is the author of confusion. Confusion, however, must exist that the approved may be made manifest. “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are **APPROVED** may be made manifest among you.” (I Cor.11:19). God has been pleased to make known a method in which His presence is brought into the souls of men. How is His presence to be brought into souls of those chosen in Jesus Christ, that is, those for whom the Son of God died? God’s initial presence is affected by being **BORN OF THE SPIRIT**. As the ordinances of God are nothing more than empty sepulchers, apart from order; so the series of acts, in redemption’s application are devoid of God’s presence unless they are performed in proper sequence. Now, so you see the serious error of placing repentance, faith, baptism, and works before the beginning of life? This would be as foolish as placing a five course meal before a dead man.

— Excerpts selected by Elder V.C. Mayes, in “Leaves, Worms, Butterflies, & Tulips”, Splendora, Texas. Used by permission.

THE CITY WITHOUT A TEMPLE

By H. M. Curry

Ed. Note: We are often amazed when one finds we are Predestinarian Baptists and responds: “Oh, you are one of those that do not believe in education”. Where they got that foolish notion, we can’t ascertain.

Elder H.M. Curry is listed as an important figure in laying the foundations of secondary education in the post-Civil War South. Retained by the Peabody Foundation, he taught public school at the Rodger’s School in Pike County, Alabama near Troy. Many of our old brethren at Beulah Church, and churches of the Conecuh River recall him vividly, and hold him to high esteem as a servant of God. Originally, he was from Lebanon, Ohio, where he gained great respect among the saints of God. We trust our readers will once again en-

joy this selection from the SIGNS, 1964.

“And I saw no temple therein.” (Revelations 21:22)

We have read this morning from the inspired record a striking description of the city of God; the city of which we have heard, and read, and sung from our earliest childhood; but we have heard that it was far away above the skies; we have sung that it is among the stars; we have read in popular religious fiction that it is the place where good people go when they die. All these notions are no better than the various heathen fabrications of heaven, and are foreign to the true location and nature of the city as the sensual paradise of Mahomet, or the happy hunting grounds of the American Indian. Our eyes have been so long blinded by tradition that we scarcely see the plainest facts of Bible truth; our ears have been so completely stuffed with fables from our early youth that we are deaf to the plain declarations of the inspired record; and our understanding is so darkened by material affections that it is indeed difficult for us to conceive the most prominent principles of the doctrine of Christ. May the God of all grace enlighten our eyes, unstop our ears and open our understanding this morning, that we may hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

First, let us have a proper understanding of the location of this city. It is not in heaven, for John saw it coming down from God out of heaven. It is declared to be the tabernacle of God with men; God dwelling with men, and not men gone above the sky to dwell with God. This city then is in the world, though not of the world; it is the present abode and inheritance of the saints, and not something they come in possession of at the close of their mortal pilgrimage. It is the New Jerusalem, arrayed in the splendor of the covenant of grace revealed in living contrast with the old Jerusalem, clothed in the blackness of legal servitude. It is the gospel church revealed in the perfection of her living worship, contrasted with all humanly devised and conditional systems of religion.

The jeweled walls, sparkling, gleaming and glittering with all manner of precious stones; the new earth upon which it stands, stretching away in all the beauty of its virgin landscape; the new heaven spread above like a tent of righteousness; the pure, peaceful, gladdening river; the tree of life in the midst of its street of gold, each furnishes a theme for a thousand volumes; but more significant to me than all these this morning, is the absence of the temple:” I saw no temple there.”

What a novel sight to a Jew was a city without a temple! And what would a modern Arminian think of a city without a church? The religious prosperity, the state of morals, the degree of intelligence, and even the social and business

advantages of a village, town, or city, are all estimated by the number and height of its steeples; and if a community could be found without a church, the unfortunate inhabitants would be stigmatized as heathens, notwithstanding they may have attained to a high standard of morals, intelligence, piety and virtue. But the gospel church, walking in the Spirit, is the perfection of society; and the perfect society is revealed from heaven under the similitude of a city without a temple, or, in modern parlance, a city without a church.

The absence of the temple suggests, first, the complete removal of the law of Moses. The temple was a symbol of the law, and an almost necessary attendant of all law worship. Jerusalem was the pride of the Jews; and the glory of Jerusalem was the temple. The carnal Jews were less boastful of their temple privileges as a mark of special distinction, than of their fleshly relation to Abraham. They saw nothing in the goodly stones of the temple but the gratification of their own pride; they saw nothing in the streaming blood and quivering of the evening sacrifice but the things which Moses commanded; they beheld nothing more in the gorgeous trappings and imposing ceremonies of the high priest than the pomp and splendor of an earthly priesthood. But to the remnant according to the election of grace, “who were born, not of blood nor the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God”, the temple with all its service spoke a different language. They looked beyond the matchless pile of stones, to that temple that was to be thrown down and in three days raised up again; they saw beyond the blood that daily drenched the Jewish altars, the blood of the everlasting covenant that was to be shed for the remission of the sins of the many; they recognized in their high priest the type of Him who should “offer Himself without spot to God, and by that one offering perfect them forever”; they heard in the tinkling of the golden bells upon the high priest’s garment the joyful sound of the gospel of their salvation.

They groaned under the bondage of temple service, and waited and longed for “the consolation of Israel”. There was no hope for the flesh in the deeds of the law, and no rest for the spirit in the earthly Jerusalem. But God had provided some better things for them, and in the fullness of time the new Jerusalem was revealed from heaven, arrayed in bridal splendor, enshrouded in gospel glory, clothed in vestments of peace, with gates wide open to receive all those predestined to enter its walls of salvation, its towers of refuge and palaces of peace.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, spiritual Israel was redeemed from the law of Moses, having become dead to it by the body of Christ, and by Him were led out of bondage, and brought with singing unto Zion, which is the new Jerusalem. They saw from afar the heavenly city. Joyous welcomes greeted them, written above the gates in letters of gold, “Come, ye

blesed of My Father.” “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden.” They gladly entered, and, to their increased delight, they find no temple therein. No more sacrifices, no more burnt offerings, no more Sabbath keeping, no more observance of new moons, feasts and holy days. Even the sun and moon which mark times and seasons, days and months, are obliterated from the sky. No Easter celebration, no Christmas frolics. Every vestige of the law removed, and no temple to bring these buried things to remembrance. The justified inhabitants find themselves possessing what angels have desired to look into, and what the prophets of their fathers had searched diligently concerning.

The absence of the temple signifies the perfect deliverance of the elect Gentiles from every species of vain philosophy and esteemed and cherished idolatry. The Gentile Christians (sic) were under equally a galling bondage as were the Jews, although they owed no allegiance to the law of Moses. They were under the law of sin and death, and were by nature alienated from the life of God through their ignorance, and were brought into bondage by the lusts of the flesh and the wiles of their priest craft. The temple is not only a symbol of the law of Moses, but is a universal attendant of every form of Gentile idolatry. Stupendous temples adorned the cities of Egypt five thousand years ago. These temples were the homes of Egypt’s gods, sources of revenue to Egyptian priests, and the oppressors, enslavers and robbers of Egypt’s people. Marble shrines of exquisite beauty brightened the cities of ancient Greece; massive temples of costliest design contributed to the imposing grandeur of the once mighty Rome; and gorgeous temples of gold, of fabulous wealth, dazzled the eyes of Spanish robbers in the far away mountain recesses of Mexico and Peru. The gigantic remains found in every quarter of the earth proclaim in tongues of crumbling stone, the universal reign of temple service over the benighted sons of men. The reign of grace has broken the reign of sin, and the Gentiles have seen the salvation of God. Grace searched the dark places of heathen idolatry, and brought forth to the light of the glorious gospel of the hidden objects of electing love.

Many of the saints at Ephesus had served in the bondage in the temple of Diana; many of the “washed, justified and sanctified” ones of the Corinthian church had been gathered from the temples of Olympian Zeus, which adorned and burdened that opulent city; and many of the called saints of Rome had been led out of the temples of Jupiter. When Paul declared to the Athenians of Mars Hill that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, some who worshipped at the altar of the unknown god clave unto him and believed. All the inhabitants of this city, whether Jew or Greek, bond or free, have learned that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but that He is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit. They have found to the joy of their hearts, that

where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The truly spiritually minded seek no temple, but God Himself. In Him they live and move and have their being, and in this gracious environment they enjoy all the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

The absence of the temple signifies the breaking down of the “middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles”. The Jewish temple was the great objective distinction between the Jews and all other nations, and stood as an outward evidence of God’s favor to the Jews and rejection of the Gentiles. But, as an outward evidence that God is not respecter of persons, and that the Gentiles are ”brought nigh by the blood of Christ” and reconciled in the same body with the Jews, the temple of Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, completely thrown down, so that “not even one stone remained” upon another, as Christ had said before should be done. In addition to this outward evidence, the New Jerusalem was revealed to the eye of faith with no temple in it, so that the believing Jew can no more be offended by bringing Gentiles into the temple. The grounds of disputes concerning Jewish prerogatives have been completely removed from the church under the gospel dispensation, and now representatives of every nation dwell together in unity in this spiritual commonwealth, each esteeming others better than himself, all hearts having been purified by faith which works by love. All have God for their Father, having been born again; all washed in the same blood, and all possessing one life, live together in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace.

The absence of the temple signifies the absence of priestcraft. There is but one city in which priestcraft is not to be found, and that is the city of God. Priests have sought to rule the world; and are still seeking. A priesthood is a necessary element of all formulated religions, whether Jewish, Mohammedan, Catholic or Protestant. The priesthood of all will-worshipping idolaters has always pretended to stand between the people and their gods, and that in some way or other they are instrumental in bringing about reconciliation between offending men and offended gods. This important element is common to all carnal religious systems; it is found alike in heathen, Catholic and Protestant, and is plain evidence of the common origin and common interest of all religious enterprises. The Catholic priest assumes to forgive sins for a stipulated sum, and pray souls out of purgatory for wages. The different Protestant hirelings will not exactly promise to do this, but they are equally cunning, and as little to be trusted. They hold out that men cannot be saved unless they hear them preach, and believe them; and some even go so far in their blasphemous presumption as to say that the heathen cannot be saved, neither can God justly damn them, until they preach to them. They array themselves in hypocritical robes of false christs, and profess to be commissioned to evangelize the world and bring it to Christ.

They even ascribe the salvation of their children to their incantations, to penny tracts (Not now...with billions of dollars collected annually. . . pennies are not welcome anymore! Ed.) and religious fiction. They have invented hundreds of schemes and tricks to delude the people, and are meeting in conventions from year to year to devise new fables, to send out their agents with new demands for money.

The absence of the temple implies the absence of all these workers of darkness and propagators of iniquity. The inhabitants of this city have been delivered from the base deception of both Catholic and Protestant priesthoods. They have learned that there is but one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. They are themselves a royal priesthood in Christ, prepared by grace to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. In this new creation they worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh. They have no need of a candle, or the light of the sun or moon, all of which are emblems of worldly wisdom, as claimed by the carnal priesthoods; but the Lord God giveth them light, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Carnal worshippers seek a temple, but the spiritually minded seek no temple but God Himself; the carnal worshipper delights in rites and ceremonies, but the spiritual seeks the secrecy of his closet; the carnal worshipper seeks the intercession of priests, but the spiritual is satisfied with no intercession outside of the unutterable groanings of the Spirit Himself.

The absence of the temple signifies the absence of all fraud, deceit and violence. All the great temples of the world, from Thebes to Athens, from Athens to heathen Rome, from heathen Rome to Catholic Rome, from Catholic Rome to Protestant London, have been intimately connected with the blackest crimes of history; they have been the cradles of superstition, folly and vice, the nurseries of the antichrist in every phase and form, the despots of hypocrisy, the resorts of religious deceivers and oppressors: the sepulchers of liberty, prison house of saints, and the high seats of spiritual wickedness. The absence of the temple from the city of God is evidence that all the works of the flesh are unknown either to Jew or Greek in pure spiritual worship. This city is redeemed from all iniquity, and in this spiritual city, the true gospel church, no guile is found. The deeds of the body are mortified, and the fruit of the Spirit abounds. The inhabitants are blessed with good and upright hearts and are in possession of charity which thinketh no ill of his neighbor.

The contrast was no greater between this city and old Jerusalem, than between this city and the communities of carnal religionists now. This is an age of extravagant temple worship. The chief ambition of the different sects is to surpass each other in temple building. Religious societies in every place from the country cross-roads to the metropolis of the nation, render themselves a pest to

their neighborhood and a disgrace to the name of Christianity, in going beyond their means to gratify the foolish, wicked, antichristian pride in erecting fine places of worship. The huge piles of stone and stained glass, thrown together in all the fantastic forms of heathen architecture that adorn our towns and cities, are regarded with quite as much reverence and admiration by their benighted votaries, as the temples of any of the ancient heathen nations.

This city is the whole election of grace, as they in one body worship the Father in spirit, as they stand holy and without blame before Him in love. God Himself dwells in them and with them and He is their temple, and they are His.

The glory of the city is seen only by faith; the carnal senses of the saints themselves have never seen it. But the time shall come when still more grace shall be brought to them. The city shall be unveiled until all shall see it plainly and all earthly cities with all their temples and idolatry shall be finally and forever overthrown, and the city of God shall stand a living, enduring, eternal monument to the love, mercy and power of God, and the victory of Christ over all enemies. — H.M. Curry, May 14, 1893

OBSERVATIONS ON HISTORY

By Isaac Backus — 1777

How clearly has the word of God been fulfilled! For He says, “That day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doeth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God SHALL SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION that they should BELIEVE A LIE; that they all MIGHT BE DAMNED who BELIEVED NOT THE TRUTH, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God HATH FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU to salvation, through SANCTIFICATION of the Spirit AND BELIEF of the truth: whereunto HE CALLED you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II Thess. 2:3-14.)

Here ALL men are described as in TWO parties. So our Lord says, “Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. But he that doeth truth COMETH to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that THEY ARE WROUGHT IN GOD.” (John 3:20-21). It is IMPOSSIBLE for God to violate His promise, or His oath, or to ENTICE any INTO SIN. (Heb.6:13-18; James 1:13-14) But all men are guilty of these evils, more or less, who are not born again.

And when Constantine removed the seat of his empire from Rome, and then divide it at his death, the way was made for the bishop of Rome to exalt himself above God in his church, and above all the kings of Europe, who gave their power unto him. And forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, was held in that church for many centuries before Luther’s reformation. (I Tim. 4:1-3). Yet an EXTERNAL SUCCESSION OF BAPTISMS, and of MINISTERIAL POWER, through all those abominations, IS NOW HELD FAST IN OUR LAND (Ed.—both in 1777, as well as today), as we have before proved. Yea, and the doctrines of original sin, particular election, efficacious grace in conversion, justification wholly by faith in the perfect righteousness of Christ, and the final perseverance of His saints, are denied by multitudes in Europe and America. And are they not LEFT TO STRONG DELUSION TO BELIEVE A LIE? For all the holy priesthood that God has under heaven are, “ELECT according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of THE SPIRIT, UNTO OBEDIENCE, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ.” (I Pet 1:2; 2:5-9).

Yet ministers and parents still imagine, that THEY can make children holy members of the church BEFORE they can choose for themselves, and holy ministers by an EXTERNAL SUCCESSION OF ORDINATIONS. And a minister once says, ‘When you re-baptize those in adult years, which WE have baptized in their infancy, you and they jointly renounce that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whom WE adore and worship as the only living and true God, and on whom we depend for all our salvation.’ So some Jewish teachers said, “Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” But the Holy Ghost, in the Church at Jerusalem, said, “Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our Fathers nor we were able to bear?” (Acts 15:1-10) The Sinai covenant yoked believers and unbelievers together. And another minister says, “Some who are NOT INWARDLY sanctified, are yet so far IN covenant, that THEY ARE RIGHTFUL members of the visible church, as all but the Anabaptists must grant.” And again he says, “It is certain that the rule of admission is such, that some, yea, MANY UNSANCTIFIED persons may be, AND ARE regularly admitted. All the congregation of Israel were admitted or recognized as members of the visible church of God Himself at

Mount Sinai; yet who will say that one in ten of them were saints in heart? The children of believers are **REPUTED SAINTS**, and as such, **HAVE A RIGHT** of admission; yet we are not **SURE** that the greater part of them are **INWARDLY** sanctified from the womb, **OR EVEN AFTERWARDS.**” Yea, we are so far from seeing any evidence of inward sanctification in most of the children of professors, that they generally evidence the contrary in their lives as much as other men. And when the church of Israel were entering upon the promised land, Moses said, “The Lord **HATH NOT GIVEN** you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day.” (Deut. 29:4). So far was He from giving them any idea that all their national church were inwardly sanctified.

But a little before the Babylonian captivity, it was said, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I **WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; **NOT ACCORDING** to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord;) but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, ‘I will **PUT** my law in their **INWARD** parts, and **WRITE IT IN** their hearts, and will be their God, and **THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE:** and they shall teach **NO MORE EVERY MAN HIS NEIGHBOR**, and every man his brother, saying, **KNOW YE THE LORD:** for they **SHALL ALL KNOW ME**, from the least of them unto the greatest of them’, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.” (Jere. 31:31-34). And **THIS IS** the covenant upon which the gospel church is built. (Heb. 8:8-12). And it is as distinct from the covenant of circumcision with the nation of Israel, as Sarah was from Hagar, or Zion from Sinai; yea, as distinct as Jerusalem which is above, and is free, being the mother of all the children of God, is from Jerusalem below, which is in bondage with her children. (Gal. 4:22-26). And the language cannot make a clearer distinction, than is here made, between the national covenant with Israel, and the covenant of grace with the church of Christ.

When the Jews returned from Babylon, and began to build the temple, their enemies sent false accusations against them to the court of Persia, and procured an order from thence to force them to cease from that work. But after another king came to the throne, two prophets were raised up, to reprove the Jews for their negligence, and to encourage them to finish the house of God. (Ezra 4:11-24; 5:1-2). And because the old men wept to see, how much inferior this house was, to the glorious temple which was built by Solomon, one prophet said to them, “I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts; according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, ‘Yet once, it is a little

while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all Nations SHALL COME, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts'." (Hag. 2:4-7). And after the Son of God (the Desire of all Nations) came and taught in THAT HOUSE, as no other man ever did before, and then offered Himself a sacrifice to God for the sins OF HIS PEOPLE, and arose and ascended to Heaven, and gave the Holy Ghost from thence, to enable HIS ministers to preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, an inspired apostle said, "Yet once more, signifieth the REMOVING of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which CANNOT BE SHAKEN may remain. Wherefore, WE receiving a kingdom which CANNOT BE MOVED, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:27-29).

The other prophet had a candle-stick all of gold, set before him, with mediums to convey oil into it for light; and upon his inquiry what was meant thereby, the answer was, "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the Headstone thereof, with shoutings, crying, GRACE, GRACE unto it! (Zech. 4:1-7). And when they obeyed this call of God, their enemies wrote again to the court of Persia against them, but a decree in their favor was procured thereby, and all was plain before them. (Ezra 5:7-17; 6:1-16).

The golden candlestick represented the church of God, and the two olive trees were His precepts and promises, whereby He poured the oil of grace into His church, to hold up light to world, who hated it because it tormented their consciences. Before the coming of Christ there was but ONE candlestick, with TWO olive trees to pour oil into it; but when Christ came He broke down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and built His church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. 2:14-22).

And when antichrist arose, God said, "I will give power unto my TWO witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the TWO olive trees, and the TWO candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And it is to be observed, that the church is in the wilderness, and the beast CONTINUES all the time that these witnesses prophecy in sackcloth. (Rev. 11:34; 12:6; 13:5). The TWO Testaments, BELIEVED AND OBEYED by the children of God, appear to be the TWO witnesses.

And a being anointed by the Spirit of Christ, is ESSENTIAL to the name

“Christian”. For the disciples were not called by His name, until after the Gentiles were received into the church without circumcision. (Acts 11:26). And it is said, **“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the SPIRIT of glory, and of God resteth upon you; on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busy body in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a “Christian”, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”** (I Peter 4:14-16). **“Ye are not in the flesh, but in the SPIRIT, if so be that the SPIRIT of God DWELL IN you. Now if any man have NOT the SPIRIT of Christ, he is none of His.”** (Romans 8:9). Again it is said, **“Hereby we know that He abideth IN us, by the SPIRIT which He hath given us.”** (I John 3:24). And Jesus said, **“If a man love me he WILL KEEP My words, and My Father will love him, and WE will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”** (John 14:23). **“Whosoever transgresseth, and abide not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”** (II John 9-11).

And how clearly do these things shew, that no person can be a Christian **WITHOUT A CHANGE OF HEART** by the Spirit of Christ! Yea, and that receiving and supporting true ministers, and refusing to receive false teachers, is ever a matter between God and individuals, as much as faith in Christ is for eternal salvation! And no men can have any more right to support religious teachers by the sword, than they have power to pull down the Son of God from His throne in heaven. For He says, **“All they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.”** (Matt. 26:52). **“My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence.”** (John 18:36).

How then will any men dare to support religious ministers by the sword of the magistrate? For His power is to punish none but those who work ill to their neighbors; and it is a matter of conscience with Christians to be subject to such rulers, who are not a tenor to good works, but to the evil. (Rom.13:140). But the royal prophet says of wicked rulers, **“They break in pieces Thy people O Lord, and afflict Thine heritage. They slay the widow and stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.”** (Psa. 94:5-7, 20). **“Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by law? . . . The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies, He shall wound the heads over many countries.”** (Psa.110:5-6). And how awfully is He now doing it! (and still is —

Ed.). (Rev. 19:11-21).

And is it not evident that the LATE increase of Baptist churches has been CAUSED by the influence of the Spirit of God? For before He poured out HIS SPIRIT in the county of Hampshire, (now the state of New Hampshire) in and after 1734, there were but SIX Baptist churches IN ALL NEW ENGLAND, except in Rhode Island government, wherein are NOW TWO HUNDRED and EIGHTY-FIVE churches. And in these four States, where ministers have been supported BY LAW, all the power of such ministers and rulers has been AGAINST the Baptist churches; and they have found so much difficulty in supporting their own ministers, and in guarding against oppression from others, that some societies have OBTAINED INCORPORATIONS BY THE LAWS OF MEN. (Ed. Note: It is totally contrary of true gospel order, as held by Old Baptists, to intermix the laws of Christ with the State in any way whatsoever. Yet, even now, it is being required by law, which is a growing power of the State over the conscience of believers. It is this, Backus has reference to above. Churches were doing so to obtain toleration by the magistrates.)

But our Associations (all of them) have published testimonies AGAINST all such incorporations, as THEY IMPLICITLY DENY that the laws and Spirit of Christ are SUFFICIENT to govern His Church, and to support His ministers. And while they act all the affairs of their Associations openly, before all men who have a mind to hear them, and then publish their conclusions to the world, how can they hope for any EARTHLY ADVANTAGE thereby? If heavenly influence has NOT increased their churches, what CAUSE can be assigned therefor? (Keep in mind, this was before any missionary organizations — Ed.)

All true believers in Christ are born again, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13). Natural descent, the power of OUR OWN WILLS, and of the WILLS OF OTHER MEN, are all EXCLUDED from this affair. And where the OPPOSITE principles have CREPT INTO Baptist churches, their welfare has been obstructed thereby, and many such churches have been dissolved. Yet the Word and Spirit of God have REFORMED old churches, and raised many new ones in all parts of America.

There was but ONE Baptist Church in Virginia, and a few in the Carolinas seventy years ago; but they were dark and feeble societies (General or Freewill Baptists) until some spiritual preachers were sent among them, in and after 1753. The elders (from the Philadelphia) Benjamin Miller, Isaac Stelle, Peter Peterson Vanhorne, and John Gano, went from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and labored in those parts (Kehukee of N.C) to good purpose. And Elder Shubael Steams, Daniel Marshall (Separates), and others, went from Connecticut, and spent their lives in those parts (Sandy Creek in N.C., and Georgia and South Carolina); and how great has been the increase of the Baptist

churches in those southern States! And though vast pains have been taken, by men who have supported their worship by force, to make the people believe that the Baptists were enemies to good government, yet how are they now confounded in those attempts! For it now appears that government and liberty are united in their plan of conduct, which tends to bring all wars to an end. And in a prophecy concerning that glorious event, it is said, “All people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.” (Micah 4:5). All men who love any creature above the Creator are idolaters.

But our Lord says, “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandment, and abide in His love... If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are NOT OF THE WORLD, but I have CHOSEN YOU out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:10-19). How then will any men dare to confound the church and world together in religious affairs? For as long as natural birth could bring the children of Israel into the church, and into the priesthood, God said to them, “The man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” (Lev. 20:10). And He now says to all the world, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a FRIEND OF THE WORLD, is the ENEMY OF GOD.... There is one lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?” (James 4:4-12).

Yet men in general have assumed the power of lawgivers and judges for the church of Christ, and of bringing children into it before they could choose for themselves; and they have invented a multitude of other names and denominations of men, besides the righteous and the wicked; the church and the world. Though the word of revelation says, “Whosoever is BORN OF GOD, doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this, the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is NOT OF GOD, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: and wherefore slew he him? BECAUSE his OWN WORKS were evil, and his brother’s righteousness:’ (I John 3:9-12). “Woe unto them; for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam FOR REWARD, and perished in the gainsayings of Core.” (Jude 11).

Because the worship of Abel, by faith in the blood of Christ, was accepted of God, and the worship of Cain without such faith was not accepted, he was filled with envy against his brother. But the Lord said unto Cain, “If thou doest

well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.” (Gen. 4:4-7) True believers have **EVER BEEN** the best subjects of civil government; but men have discovered enmity against them in every age, because of the light of holiness which God hath caused to shine in their lives, to expose hypocrisy and wickedness of others. But every man *is* guilty of adultery, who hath not been **MADE DEAD** to the works of the law. **IN ORDER TO** be married to Jesus Christ. (Rom. 7:1-6). For every true Christian hath been presented **AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO HIM**. (II Cor. 11:2).

But after God had consecrated Moses as the lawgiver to His church, and Aaron and his lawful posterity to be the only priests therein, to offer sacrifices for iniquity, until Jesus came and offered Himself without spot to God for sinners, Korah gathered a large company against them, saying, “Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift you up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?” But for this they perished most terribly. (Num. 16:1-3, 32-33). This gives a plain view of the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the gainsaying of Korah, which evils many have charged upon believers, because they held to salvation by faith in the perfect righteousness of Christ, and to have **HIS** church governed by **HIS LAWS**, which admit **NONE** into it without a credible profession of the new birth. Thus men have called evil good, and good evil; have put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. (Isa. 5:20).

But an inspired apostle says. “We have not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (I Cor.2:12-13). And let us now attend to this rule. For Cod says, “Thy Maker is thine husband and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called.... And **ALL** thy children shall be **TAUGHT OF THE LORD**, and great shall be the peace of thy children.”(Isa. 54:5-13). And Jesus says, “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. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall be **ALL TAUGHT OF GOD**.’ Every man therefore that **HATH HEARD**, and **HATH LEARNED** of the Father, **COMETH TO ME**.” (John 6:44-45). The “children” of the church of Christ, are “men”, who have been taught of God, and have learned of the Father, so as to come to the Son.

So Paul says, “Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all.” (Gal.4:26). And John says, “I saw the holy city, Jerusalem, coming **DOWN**

from God OUT OF HEAVEN, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Rev. 21:2). And Jesus says, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you... The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls; who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” (Matt.7:6; 13:45-46). “So likewise, whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh NOT ALL that he hath, he CANNOT be My disciple.” (Luk. 14:23). “Except a man be born again, he CANNOT see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3).

“Blessed are they that do HIS commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers and adulterers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. . . .” — Isaac Backus