



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

PUBLISHED AS A MISSION PROJECT OF PILGRIMS HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

Vol. XXIX, No. 8

August 1, 2003

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FEAR NOT, STAND STILL

By Billy Holladay

Scottsboro, Alabama

“ . . . they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.”

“And Moses said unto the people,

- (1) Fear ye not,*
- (2) stand still,*
- (3) and see the salvation of the LORD.”* (Exodus 14:10b, 13a)

When God's people are facing the troubles and trials and perplexities of this life, we would like very much to go directly to item (3) without having to go through (1) and (2). We want the Lord to intervene and give us immediate relief so that we can “see” the results. That would automatically take care of (1) and (2) by allaying our fears and relieving our agitation. But the

Lord tells us in Isaiah 55:8 that our ways are not His ways—we cannot invert the order. If we are ever to see His salvation (relief), it will have to be on His terms.

So far as the Israelites could see, they were in big trouble. In their minds they had good reason to be **“sore afraid.”** They were a bunch of runaway slaves and the number-one army in the world was in hot pursuit of them, to either kill them or return them to slavery. Their progress, which was slow enough anyway because of their children and livestock, has now been stopped altogether at the edge of the Red Sea. They could go no further. They could not even flee along the shore because in this area the beach was more like some in California than those of Florida. To both the right and left was



PLANNING A TRIP TO THAILAND

By Wayne Camp

The picture to the left was actually shot in the year 2001 when Bro. Bill Lee and I, with our wives, were laying plans for the trip to Thailand. We meet at least one time each year before we go to finalize plans for the trip.

We will soon be meeting to plan the trip this year. We will be doing things a little differently this time due to the fact that a doctor (Pediatrician)

THE GRACE PROCLAMATOR AND PROMULGATOR (USPS #000476) is published monthly (subscription free) by the authority of Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church, 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN 38127. Periodical postage paid at Memphis, TN 38101.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **THE GRACE PROCLAMATOR AND PROMULGATOR**, 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN 38127

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PLANNING TO MOVE? If at all possible, please notify us three weeks in advance of your change of address so that we may keep your paper coming. It costs us 70 cents to get your new address from the Postal Service and that may take long enough that two papers are returned at a cost of \$1.40 before we get the correction. This will mean you miss one or two papers. Your help in saving us this expense will be appreciated.

IF YOU ARE IN MEMPHIS we invite you to attend our services:

Bible Study 10:00 A. M. Sunday

Worship Service 11:00 A. M. Sunday

Evening Service 5:00 P. M. Sunday

Mid-Week Service 7:00 P. M. Wednesday

You Are Welcome!

from Tupelo, Mississippi will be going on this trip and his schedule requires that Bro. & Sis. Lee and the Dr. leave a little over a week before the editor will be leaving for the second session of The Sovereign Grace Independent Baptist School of Theology. Since I will be staying for four months, I cannot leave as early as they must to meet the Doctor's schedule.

However, when I arrive we will have a Camp Meeting/Bible Conference with folks from all the churches attending. Bro. Lee and I will do the preaching/teaching during the conference with Bro. Anond doing the translating.

YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE WORK IS DEEPLY APPRECIATED

There are times when Bro. Lee and I begin to wonder if we will have the money to send the regular monthly support for the work. But, it seems that God always moves on the hearts of his people in various places to send offerings. In recent weeks God has blessed abundantly in the support of the work and Bro. Anond Phoothaptim. Several have sent offerings to help with land purchases and building of church buildings as well as additions at the Hill Tribes Children's Center. We have been able to make payments on land for some of the churches and to begin preparing a place for Bro. Anond and Bro. Daniel and his wife to live at the center. This will allow us to stop paying rent on the house where they now live. This work is in progress as I write.

There continue to be villages that have folks in them that contact Bro. Anond and invite him to come and preach the gospel in their villages. One such village is Hoe Mae Yeuin. A little over



a year ago these folks contacted Bro. Anond and he went to preach the gospel there. When we went over last year and had a Bible Conference some of these folks attended. Bro. Lee and I were both very impressed with this group of people. Bro. Anond and I visited their village, preached to them and finally baptized some and organized a church there. We were able to negotiate to buy a nice piece of land totaling 10 acres (Thai acres are not as large as ours). We paid a down payment and arranged to pay the balance in one year. With the recent support we were able to pay a payment of 20,000 bahts on the land this past month. The picture to the left shows Bro. Anond making a payment to the (See **PLANNING TRIP, Cont. Page 6, Bottom Left Column**)

WILL ANY TRUE BELIEVER IN CHRIST EVER BE CAST INTO THE TORMENTS OF HELL?

Part II

IF SALVATION IS OF THE LORD THEN THERE IS NO WAY A TRULY BORN AGAIN BELIEVER COULD EVER END UP IN HELL

(Continued from last issue)

By Wayne Camp

TEXT: *Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

INTRODUCTION

In the last issue we began a study of the fact that salvation is of the Lord and, therefore, this assures that no true believer in Christ can ever go to hell. Not only is this proposition true to God's word, it is the logical conclusion of the fact that salvation is of the Lord. Since salvation is of the Lord, then a true believer's being lost in hell would be a failure on the part of God's salvation, not a failure of the believer.

Paul tells us that we can be confident that the One who has started this good work of salvation in us will perform in until the day of Jesus Christ. What he has started he must finish. God is not a quitter. He does not revoke his calling and gifts. ***Romans 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*** It is God who gives salvation and eternal life. ***Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*** It is God, who in his eternal purpose given us in Christ before the foundation of the world, who calls us to salvation. ***2 Timothy 1:8-9 . . . God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.***

Since salvation is the gift of God it will never be revoked; it is without repentance, as Paul says (Rom. 11:29 above). Since it is God who

begins this work, it is he who will complete it. The believer does not complete it; God does. Though I say it reverently, I say it without reservation that since salvation is wholly of the Lord, there is no way a true believer can ever experience the torments of hell.

Arminians believe that salvation is partially of man in its origination, its execution, its application, its demonstration, and its consummation. Therefore, true Arminians believe a true believer could possibly end up in hell. It is logical and reasonable that if my salvation is partially dependent on Christ and partially dependent on me, then a failure on my part could cause me to go to hell and its awful torments.

On the other hand, if salvation is totally dependent on the merits of Christ and his ability to save and keep saved, then the only way a true believer in Christ could go to hell is if there be a failure on the part of Christ as the shepherd of his sheep. Since it is God who begins this good work in us, it is his failure if he does not complete it. Since the Holy Spirit seals the believer until the day of redemption, it is his failure if he does not stand behind that seal with all the power of the government of heaven.

Since we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, if there is a failure it would indicate a flaw in God's workmanship. But, Dear Reader, there is no flaw in his workmanship. I think of those dying words of Joshua. ***Joshua 23:14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed***

thereof. Before the foundation of the world God promised eternal life to every true believer. **Titus 1:2** *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.* No! Not one thing has failed and not one thing will fail that God has promised. One element of true and saving faith is the persuasion that what God has promised he is able to perform. **Romans 4:20-21** *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

Now, let us continue with further biblical evidence that salvation is of the Lord and it is as secure as the fact that God lives forever.

SALVATION IS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH; NOT OF WORKS

We can be certain that a true believer can never go to hell because his salvation is by grace through God-given faith. **Ephesians 2:8** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.* If salvation and the faith to lay hold of Christ were of ourselves then we might come short of heaven and languish in the torments of hell. There is in this verse a very definite affirmative: We are saved by grace through faith. Grace is unmerited, undeserved favor from God. Then there is a definite, unequivocal negative: Our faith and salvation is not of ourselves. We do not do one thing that is of saving virtue in the eyes of the holy God of heaven. It is definitely not of ourselves. Then there is another definite affirmative: Our faith and salvation is the gift of God. The sentence continues in the next verse with another definite, indisputable negative: Our salvation is not of works. **Ephesians 2:9** *Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, declares that our salvation is not of works. The reason is that there will be no ground for any man boasting. Let's reason on this for a moment. If salvation is not of works then the failure of one to work as faithfully as he should could not be the cause of his going to hell for his salvation is in no way grounded in his own good works.

Paul closes this passage by declaring that we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. **Ephesians 2:10** *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* Since we have already covered this verse earlier I will not be redundant by going over it again.

JESUS IS THE PROPITIATION FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE

It is God who set forth his Son to be a propitiation for all who believe through grace. **Romans 3:25-26** *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* **Acts 18:27** *And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.*

There are things that need to be considered here. It is God who set forth Jesus Christ to be the propitiation for all who believe on his Son. God is the one who chose him and declared him to be the propitiation for our sins. We did not set him forth; we did not choose him as our propitiation. God did.

Since God set him forth to be the propitiation for our sins, let us ask a couple of questions. (1) Did God set forth Christ as the propitiation for all our sins or only some of them? (2) Was God pleased with the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ?

I maintain Christ is the propitiation for all of our sins. I also know that God was fully satisfied with the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son. If these two things be true, then what could happen that God could become dissatisfied enough with the propitiatory work of Christ that he would send some true believers to hell? Even though he is the propitiation for all our sins, is it possible that we might be capable of committing some sin for which he did not propitiate God and, therefore, we would be cast into hell?

Perish the thought! God forbid! Our full sin-debt was paid by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And God was fully satisfied. The propitiation for our sins was fully a work of God the Father in setting forth Christ and God the Son in propitiating God for our sins. Therefore, there is no way God could justly send one of us to hell.

The whole reason for God setting forth his Son as the propitiation for our sins was so that he could be just and the justifier of all who believe. If Christ did fully propitiate for our sins and, if God fully accepted his propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, then a great injustice would be perpetrated if one of those for whom Christ was and is the propitiation were to be cast into hell.

IT IS GOD WHO MADE US ACCEPTED IN CHRIST

It is God who has made us accepted in Jesus Christ, and that acceptance is wholly of grace. ***Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*** It is to the praise of the glory of God's grace that he has made us accepted in the beloved (Jesus Christ). It is not our personal, internal grace but his grace. It is not that we made ourselves accepted; he made us accepted. We are not accepted in ourselves or because of ourselves; we are accepted in the beloved Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the believer, the born-again child of God, has been made accepted in Jesus Christ, how could that acceptance ever be questioned or disannuled? Since it is God who made us accepted, how could we undo that acceptance? Since it all of grace, then it is not of works that we have been made accepted. That being true, how could a lack of works or faithfulness reverse that acceptance? We did not deserve to be made accepted in Christ in the first place. Why should anyone believe that God would treat a believer more harshly after he was saved than before he was saved? That would be the case were God to cast one whom he had made accepted in Christ into hell.

It is God who made Christ the author and finisher of our salvation. ***Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher***

of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus is not only the author of our salvation. He does not save one and set him on the road to heaven and then leave him to himself to make it. He is the finisher of our salvation also. He starts it. He finishes it. God has ordained that he receive all the glory.

Must the believer contribute somewhat in the finishing of his salvation? If we must then there might be the danger of one or all of us failing and thus come short of the work and be cast into hell. But, if Christ has taken all this work upon himself and God has set him forth as the author and finisher of our faith, it seems logical that the only way one or all believers could end up in hell would be for Christ to fail in finishing our salvation.

This salvation of which Christ is the author is eternal salvation and cannot end. ***Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*** What we have said on the previously considered verse may be said again.

Jesus is both author and finisher of this eternal salvation; we are neither author or finisher and could not therefore nullify what he has done. Since this salvation of which Jesus is the author is eternal salvation, how could one with eternal salvation ever end up in the torments of hell?

There is no doubt that the good work of salvation is a work of God in the sinner, not a work of the sinner in himself. The sinner did not plan this good work. The sinner did not desire this good work. The sinner did not deserve this good work. The sinner did not commence this good work. It is God, the blessed Trinity, who initiated this good work of salvation in you. It is the blessed Trinity that continues this good work. It is the Trinity who completes this good work of salvation. And I can assure you that what God starts in his elect in regeneration he perfects forever in them. It is his work, not ours. If it were partially ours, one or all of us could end up in hell. In fact, if it were to any degree dependent on our own efforts, we would all end up in hell. But since it is his work from start to finish there must be a failure with God before

one, even one, of his children could end up in the torments of hell.

But I assure you, Dear Reader, not one thing has failed of all that God has promised. This was the faith of Joshua as I said earlier. **Joshua 23:14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.** This assurance of Joshua is good for this day. God has promised to every true believer eternal life and deliverance from the wrath to come. The idea that a born again believer could end up in hell is foreign to the concept that salvation is of the Lord. It is foreign to the doctrine that salvation is wholly of grace. Cast all your care upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust him fully. He is the only and all-sufficient Saviour of sinners.

(TO BE CONTINUED IN A FUTURE ISSUE)

PLANNING TRIP Continued from Page 2 lady from who we purchased the land. By the way, the loan we negotiated on the purchase of the land was interest free.

The folks at Hoe Mae Yeuin church have already built a small house of worship on the land and have built houses for themselves there



also. They had made their homes on another persons land who wanted to sell them his land. At one time he had indicated he would take 10,000 bahts for 10 acres. But when he thought

that we might buy it he went to 20,000. Then, when we were out there looking and land, he suddenly upped the price to 50,000 bahts. When we refused to pay his price since there was no water on the land and he had jacked the price up to five times what he originally asked, he immediately ordered the members of the church off his land. Moreover, he claims to be a Christian.



This congregation built this small building at their own expense though the supporters of the work did supply the money with which we paid and are paying for the land. Eventually, as we are able we will help them build a more permanent type of structure but for now they seem content to worship in this.

I started to ask how many of us would go to church regularly in such a building but, we are far beyond that in this country. I do not say that critically. I believe the place where we worship should be the best possible within reason, with moderation, and in line with the houses in which we live. I am just thankful that these people are willing to worship and serve under these circumstances and do it with joy.

This is a brief story of one of the Lord's churches in the jungles of Thailand. I will tell you the story of other churches in future articles.

THE SOVEREIGN GRACE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

As I mentioned in the last issue I am making plans for the second year of The Sovereign Grace Independent Baptist School of Theology. It appears that this will should be a better year than the last as for as students are concerned.

We expect more than last year but will have to wait and see. With some of the funds that were designated for the school we sent money to construct a new students house for the Lisu students and for repairs and completion of the house for the Lahu students.

As we have said before, due to the financial status of our students it is necessary that we furnish housing for the four days they are in school. We also give them travel expense to and from school so that they can go home for services on the weekend. We furnish their food for the days they are in school and sometimes need to buy a bag of rice for one of them and do other such things because some who have jobs loose some of their income while at school.

It is not like it is here in the United States. When I was in school I worked at a job in the evenings until I started pastoring a church that could pay me a salary on which my family could live. These brethren, being from the Hill Tribes and living in the jungle villages cannot go out and get a job while in school.

I also buy their notebooks and pens and other necessary school supplies. Last year we bought mattresses and blankets for those who were there and will need to buy more this year.

In addition I have my living and travel expenses including my wife's travel expense to come over in January for a two week visit during which she does a good deal of work to help Bro. Anond and me with record keeping, etc.

God has blessed with funds with which we can get the school underway and we are trusting Him to supply what we need either before I go or during the time I am there.

According to Bro. Anond's reports the students are eager for another school term to start. They have been concerned that they might forget some of what they learned last year, especially English, before I get there.

I do sincerely desire your prayers for Bro. Anond, Bro. Daniel and me as we commence this next year. Bro. Daniel is a great help in the school work. Of course, Bro. Anond translates every thing I teach except some of the English lessons. If any of you have questions about the school do not hesitate to ask. I will be reporting at least once each week via e-mail as I did last year. Pray for my wife and the church while I am away.

Bouquets and Brickbats

As a fellow Baptist pastor (SBC) who has long been discouraged by the way most of our leaders add to the word of God and read the prohibition culture into scripture, let me commend you for your article on wine and it's balanced, honest treatment of this controversial issue.

As I read scripture there are three possibilities when it comes to decisions concerning alcohol for the Christian, abstinence, moderation, or abuse. Abstinence, or moderation is permitted by scripture, abuse is not, neither is forced abstinence a Biblical requirement for believers.

Keep up the good work! If you have time please e-mail me about your ministry and affiliations of your church.

ILLINOIS: I have just finished reading your response to the "Minister of Music" and I must say, "Bravo!" There are several who need your answer who will probably never see it, but it is needed.

TENNESSEE: I receive your newsletter. Enjoy it very much. Would like to correspond with you concerning the doctrines of grace.

I am a Southern Baptist. Have been saved around 15 yrs. Born and raised in the Church of Christ...Been studying the doctrines of grace now for a couple of years. Thanks to the writings of men like John Macarthur, R. C. Sproul, A. W. Pink,...and of course yourself....

I am 46 yrs of age. Married to a wonderful Christian lady.

ALABAMA: Hope all is well with you, your family, and your church. I am writing requesting a copy of The Grace P & P be sent to me and my Mom and Dad. I recently visited a church in our area that are involved with the Promise Keepers, so I got on your site concerning that topic and printed everything I could find on the subject and present to their pastor. I appreciate your teachings. God Bless you.

(See FEAR NOT, Continued Page. 8, L. Col.) **"the wilderness"** (Exodus 14:3) -- with rugged, rocky cliffs coming right down to the water. Not that that mattered much because they could not have outrun the army anyhow.

They were cornered. All escape was cut off. There was nowhere to go. **"They were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD."** That sounds good! When God's people find themselves in a desperate situation they ought to cry out to the Lord for help and guidance and protection and preservation, with humble confidence in Him. However, the next two verses show plainly that their crying was more of a whiney complaining and a blaming of Moses for leading them into such dire straits, than it was an honest and humble appeal to God.

"And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?"

Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." (Exodus 14:11-12)

Doesn't that sound more like a case of unbelief than of faith? It is very humbling to realize that, all too often, such despair and murmuring and whining still come out of God's people; that we have the same hearts within us!

Fear and anxiety are the opposite of faith, as seen in Jesus' chiding comment to the disciples, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" (Matthew 8:26) The sheer number of times God's people are admonished to "fear not" and "be not afraid" tell us that fear is a common failing among believers—perhaps the most common fruit of unbelief. Fear of the future, fear of what might happen, fear of what might not happen, fear of what somebody might or might not do or think or . . . I won't attempt even a partial listing of things that cause fear and anxiety to rise in the bosoms of God's people, but none of them could have that effect on us except for a lack of faith in us.

"Fear not -- stand still." We know the

sequel to this scene at the Red Sea, so we can look back at Moses' words and see the wisdom in them for those people in their situation. In recent weeks they had seen multiple displays of God's power, as well as the Egyptians' utter impotence against Him. At this point, fear was as out of character for them as was Elijah's unwarranted fear of Jezebel following his triumph over the 450 prophets of Baal! Knowing, therefore, the Lord's power on their behalf, the most logical thing in the world was for them to cast off fear, stand still, and wait on Him. Right? Yes, it is easy for us to see the wisdom in Moses' advice—for them! But if you have ever faced a severe trial (and I've no doubt that everybody who has read this far has), you know how difficult it is to apply Moses' instructions to a real-life situation. **"Fear not"** when (figuratively) an Egyptian army is bearing down on us to do heaven-only-knows-what to us? **"Stand still"** when we are facing this Red Sea of difficulties? We've *got* to do something!

How prone we are "to interpret God in the presence of the difficulty, instead of interpreting the difficulty in the presence of God." (C.H. Mackintosh in *Notes on Exodus*) For example, how did the Israelites ever come to be in such a predicament? Who was it that led them into this "trap"? Who sic'ed Pharaoh and his invincible army on them? The people blamed Moses. (Preachers provide such a convenient foil, don't they?) But we read that it was God Himself who led them through the wilderness to the Red Sea and commanded them to encamp at this very spot by the sea! (See Exodus 13:17, 18, 21; 14:1-2) Ah, we must ever "beware of brooding over second causes." (J.R. MacDuff in *The Bow In The Cloud*)

Pharaoh *thought* he had the Israelites right where he wanted them. In fact, God had both the Hebrews *and* the Egyptians right where *He* wanted them! The people *thought* they were in a bad way. In fact, they could not possibly have been in a better position or place on earth to see the glory of their God demonstrated. As pastor Jay Wimberly once said, "Sometimes God paints Himself in a corner to let you and

me see how He can get Himself out without our help." Hence, "**Stand still and see . . .**"

What a lesson for all of us! We may not see a pillar of cloud by day nor a fire pillar at night (indeed, I hope we don't!), but in-truth the old song says, "God leads His dear children along," today no less than He did those Hebrews of old. "Some thru the water, some thru the flood, some thru the fire, but all thru the blood—some thru great sorrow . . ." As another said, when God's people are in a corner, God is in the corner with them! Isn't that encouraging?!

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way." (Psalm 37:23) As another song writer put it:

"All the way my Savior leads me -
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who thru life has been my guide?"

Or, in the words of 1 Corinthians 10:13, **"There hath no temptation (trial) taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation (trial) also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."** This entire verse is beautifully illustrated in the experiences of the children of Israel, here at the Red Sea and also in the path they took to arrive here: **"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt" (Exodus 13:17).**

As C. H. Spurgeon remarked, "Blessed be God, our troubles shall not be ready for us till we are ready for them!" The faith that is of God must be tested by God—we must learn the all-sufficiency of our God in all things. And He brings us along gently, at just the right pace to teach us that lesson.

"Fear not." Remember, fear and faith cannot coexist—they are mutually exclusive. John tells us **"Fear hath torment" (1 John 4:18c).** As Shakespeare expressed it,

"Cowards die many times before their deaths." You can imagine the torment that gripped those people. You may, perhaps, fellowship in it if you have ever been really afraid. But it is terribly dishonoring and displeasing to the Lord for His people to become tormented with fear. It says we don't trust Him! Remember our Lord's gentle words to the poor, fearful woman with the issue of blood? **"Fear not: believe only . . ." (Luke 8:50).**

The display of God's power witnessed by the Israelites in Egypt was marvelous indeed, but was little more than God's "finger power" (Exodus 8:19) compared to the saving power God puts forth in behalf of every real Christian. Ephesians 1:19-20 tells us that **"the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe"** is no less than the power **"wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead"**! Remember that when anything comes up that might provoke fear. **"If God be for us, who can be (successfully) against us?" (Rom 8:31b)** Set your mind on Christ, and fear will be cast out: **"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Isaiah 26:3)** Song writers seem to have such a knack for expressing great truths. As another wrote:

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow
strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace."

Heart's occupation with Christ will put things in their proper perspective.

"Stand still." Fallen human nature is so restless. It is the hardest matter in the world to just stand still and wait, most especially in a crisis. "Do something -- do anything -- but don't just stand there!" But what could those Israelites have done? That was no self-help project—they had been brought to the end of self-help. (Just supposing they could have prescribed to God what to do, what would it have been? Very likely they would have prayed for God to stop those Egyptians—turn them

around—send them back home—make them leave us alone. Ah, just as Romans 8:26 tells us, we don't know *what* we should pray for as we ought, for God had a better plan. One that ultimately resulted in a greater blessing to His people and one that brought greater glory to His own name.) Then, the very best thing for them to have done was to stop all fleshly activity and "stand still" before the Lord!

"Unbelief creates or magnifies difficulties, and then sets us about removing them by our own bustling and fruitless actions, which in reality, do but raise a dust around us which prevents our seeing God's salvation.

"Faith, on the contrary, raises the soul above the difficulty, straight to God Himself, and enables one to 'stand still.' We gain nothing by our restless and anxious efforts." (C. H. Mackintosh in Notes on Exodus)

"Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid" is a command from the Lord (John 14:27b). It is therefore the bounden responsibility of all true believers to keep their hearts from being troubled and to be fearless in the face of all circumstances. How? Stand still and set your mind upon Christ: ***"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."*** (Isaiah 40:31) They won't be afraid either. Read Isaiah 26:3 again: ***"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."***

Our lives and our times are in the hands of the Lord—the hands of Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Infinite Love.

- The hands of Omniscience: He knows all our needs, all the desires of our heart, all about our circumstances—everything, perfectly. (Matthew 6:8)
- The hands of Omnipotence: Nothing is beyond His ability to provide or overcome. He controls minds, motives, actions, results (Proverbs 21:1). He can stop the earth in its orbit or even make it make it spin backwards for the benefit of His people—He's done it! (Joshua 10; 2 Kings 20)
- The hands of Infinite Love: No good thing will He withhold from faithful believers (Psalm 84:11). Despite our failings, in love He causes all things to work together for our good!

DOES BAPTISM ADMIT TO MEMBERSHIP IN A GOSPEL CHURCH?

By Samuel K. Ford

1899

We must turn to the other general misconception of what constitutes a person a member of the church of Christ.

The Reformers, and Protestants generally, with all their apologies for and explanations of the term invisible as meaning the unseen work or "door" into that church, fell back on the patristic doctrine that "The Sacrament of Baptism was the door into the church" with no term to distinguish it. "In baptism wherein I was made a member of the Church," read the Episcopal Catechism, "whereby they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church." But we need not quote from the confessions and disciplines of the Protestant communions to prove this. It is admitted by {them} that Baptism admits into, or is the door into the Church.

Now, according to the teachings of the {New} Testament and the essential nature of and obligations of church membership, this (which some Baptists hold) is a misconception.

Dr. Dagg has well said: "Baptism is not like the Lord's Supper, a sacred rite. It signifies the fellowship of individual believers with Christ, not the fellowship of believers with one another. The obligation to be baptized is independent of the obligations to form sacred relations, and is prior [to it]. Baptism is therefore a qualification for admission into a church of external organization, but it does not confer membership. (in J. L. Reynolds', *Church Polity*..., p.48.)

The plain statement in regard to the church in Jerusalem should at once end all controversy about this: ***"They that gladly received the word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."*** Not that all these were baptized on that same day. Many, perhaps most of them, may have been baptized previously, but they were added to the church in fellowship. Baptism, as well as conversion, or receiving the word, was an indispensable prerequisite, but neither the one nor the other added these thousands, nor Lydia, nor the Jailer, nor the Eunuch, to the church. This was a distinct thing—the expression of fellowship and assumption of mutual covenant obligations.

If the following condensed objection to the general record, especially of pedo-baptists, be considered, we feel assured that the dogma of baptism, as the door into the church, will be abandoned.

1st. If baptism be the door into the Christian church, then all whom John baptized (allowing his baptism to be Gospel baptism) were, by the reception of this ordinance, made members of some church; but no such intimation is given in the Scriptures. The object of John's baptism is declared to be, ***"to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."***

2nd. If baptism be the door into the church then there

is no such thing as putting a person out of the church; for in order to do this, he must be unbaptized, But his cannot be done.

3rd. If baptism be the door into the church, can one person constitute a church? The Christian public have answered, "no." And, "no" responds every passage of the divine oracles, wherever the name church is mentioned. To what church, then, did the first disciple, whom John baptized, belong? To what church, the first, in every instance, where none had been previously constituted? The answer is obvious, "to no church." If then, the first person, whom John baptized, was not, by the reception of this ordinance, constituted a member of some church; the second was not, nor the third, nor any subsequent subject.

4th. In the account of the Eunuch's baptism, Acts 8, no mention is made of his being added to any particular church; nor have we any reason to believe, that he considered the ordinance in this light. Indeed, as he was traveling, and at considerable distance from his own country, such a relation, if we suppose it to have been consummated at that time, could be of but little avail to him. Nor, is there anything in the account of other baptisms, which make this an initiatory ordinance, or door into the church. It is said, **Acts 2:41: "Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."** In the 47th verse: **"And the Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved."** But how were they added? Here we are not informed. We are told, **"they that gladly received the word were baptized,"** that, **"they were added to the disciples"** and the Lord, **"added to the church;"** but, it is not said, that they were added "by baptism," any more than "by gladly receiving the word." Both were prerequisites; but neither initiatory.

If then, baptism be not the door into the visible church of Christ, it may be asked, "What is? We answer, nothing more nor less, than fellowship. By fellowship we are admitted; and by disfellowship, we are excluded. "Is then a person, who is received into fellowship as a Christian, to be considered as a church member?" We answer, no; but he must be fellowshiped, as an orthodox, baptized, and regular Christian.

We have endeavored to state as clearly and briefly as we could the two errors—the one of the Protestants, the other of the Romanists, in regard to what constitutes any one a member of a church. The one affirmed that it was the internal work of grace, the other that it was the sacrament—baptism. The first, however, was so explained as to mean admission into an "invisible church," because the "door," or that which conferred membership, was invisible. This was borne out by the presence of sponsors, who answered for the infant: "I believe, I renounce the devil," etc., and then as by this profession of faith FOR the infant, who, already a member of the invisible church, was baptized as the door into the actual one.

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O, it's all wrong, unscriptural, misleading, and absurd. A church of Christ is a company of baptized believers in faith and fellowship, united to edify each other, and advance the cause and kingdom of Christ. Nothing else is a church.

{Taken from a microfilm copy of the *Christian Repository*, November 1899, pp. 652-4.} {}designates additions – jrd

EDITOR'S NOTE: I am indebted to Eld. James R. Duvall who has scanned several old Baptist History documents and has posted them on his WebSite. He is posting more articles as time allows. Those who love Baptist History should check out his site at this URL:

http://www.geocities.com/baptist_documents/

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