



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

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NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH CERTAINTIES

By Wayne Camp

TEXT: Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Let me again remind the reader that, in this series of studies that I have called **New Testament Church Certainties**, my reference to New Testament Churches has to do with churches existing during New Testament times. These churches of New Testament times held to some very specific things. We saw last time that it is abundantly evident that the first NT church on this earth was established during the

personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. We also saw that the church of the NT was a local and visible church; the universal invisible concept of the church is foreign to the Greek word used and to the contextual teaching where the word **ekklesia** is used. The overwhelming evidence is that these churches were taught of local, visible churches and knew nothing of the “**church universal**,” visible or invisible. These concepts must await the origin of the Roman Catholic church and the Protestant Reformation to be read into the New Testament.

In this study and some to follow, I am going to (See **CERTAINTIES, P.6, Rt. Col.**)

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OR ORTHODOXY STARTS AND STOPS HERE

By Jarrel E. Huffman

INTRODUCTION

One is reminded of God's Word to the patriarch Job: “**Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding**” (Job 38:4). Job had complained of his lot, and had more or less blamed God for his situation. Thinking he understood all matters, Job was brought to his senses by the intervention of God. After this great humiliation, he exclaimed, “. . . **therefore have I uttered that I understood not . . .**” (Job 42:3).

Men, sad to say, always have a tendency to see themselves in a better light than those who

look on the situation. Job, as noticed, thought he had searched all the possibilities, and felt that there was no way that he could be wrong. It is an easy thing in religion to put blinders on and be oblivious to one's surroundings.

In Baptist life each group fancies themselves to be the “standard of orthodoxy.” Such act as though that truth originated with them. The following “ditty” describes these self-appointed “standard bearers”:

*I built a little fence,
And closed myself right in;
Outside were all the heretics;
Inside were all my kin.*

This well describes those who exalt

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themselves above the people of God. Such feel that they have "canned" truth under their own specific label. In other words, as the title suggests, "**Orthodoxy starts and stops here.**" Having been a part of this group for many years, I can speak by experience, not hearsay. For example, I remember preaching a series of messages at the third church I pastored on the subject, "What Landmark Baptists Believe." Of course, what I meant was, "What Landmark Baptists in the A.B.A. Believed." I received a lot of "Amens," and was congratulated on the subject matter. Much I said was true, but the

"spirit" of the messages was narrowed by a previous bias.

No one on earth is completely free from prejudice and bias. We are all products, in one sense, of our own particular environment. The majority of people remain with the religious group in which they were raised. This is understandable. A break from one's religious moorings is very difficult. And in most cases, especially when truth is at stake, the move cannot be made without the providence and power of God.

Many Baptists are like those that Jesus condemned for their "know-it-all" spirit: ***Matthew 23:29-31 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, 30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.*** Specifically, these were the Pharisees, the vaunted "separated ones." They made their boasts of loving the prophets of old--Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Daniel and the rest. They made a special effort to build tombs for them and to keep their sepulchres shined up in the cemeteries (verse 29). And these also boasted that had they been living in the days of these great prophets, that they would not have been partakers in their murders (verse 30). Yet, Jesus declared that these very hypocrites were the "children of them which killed the prophets" (verse 31).

The churches which compose the American Baptist Association had their beginning around 1905. The leaders, for the most part, had come out of the Southern Baptist Convention, including the beloved Ben M. Bogard. And as is usually the case, what one comes out of immediately becomes heretical. The cry for many years was: "*We oppose Conventionism because of the board system of missions and their program of tithing.*" O.K. Now let us see where this group is by the year 1996 (about 91 years after the fact). Most within this group preach tithing, as they should. Having

discovered it was a Bible doctrine, not just a part of the "Convention machine," tithing is now generally accepted. But what about the "American Baptist Association"? Has it grown from its humble beginnings? Is it a para-church affair? Is it not just a miniature S.B.C.?

Let us investigate the matter of "orthodoxy."

I. WHAT IS ORTHODOXY?

Well, the etymology of the word is not difficult to ascertain. The word is composed of two Greek words. **Orthos** means "straight," and **doxa** means "opinion." Hence, the word means "to cut a straight path." The word is the opposite of **heterodoxy** (another opinion or path from the norm).

So, it is one thing to "claim orthodoxy." It is something altogether different to "live orthodoxy." The Pharisees of Jesus' day were "orthodox" among the varied groups such as the Sadducees. They held to the traditions of the fathers (Mark 7). They were very particular and fastidious to "dot all I's" and "cross all T's" correctly. In fact, they were so "orthodox" (in the line of truth) that they missed, rejected, and killed the ONE WHO WAS TRUTH (John 14:6).

My library is filled with books authored by the "fathers." I love these books and enjoy reading history and doctrine. But no book of man is inspired. And if one is honest, there are skeletons in every closet. History, written after the fact, has a way of saying what one wishes that others had believed and done. Good books are a blessing, but if they become the standard of "orthodoxy," great problems arise. Remember that the Pharisees could quote verbatim many of the O.T. books. **But that fact did not make them "orthodox."**

Orthodoxy, then, is not one's own little isolated group which measures itself by itself (2 Cor. 10:12). Religious inbreeding, even among Baptists, leads to ridiculous positions which are totally opposite to the founders. It is as though that one either says or thinks, **"I know where truth is: we have it and you don't."** This is the spirit of Pilate who ignorantly asked, **"What is truth?"** (John 18:38). Had some of these supercilious Baptists of our day been present,

they would have gladly given him a course in their own brand of truth!

Orthodoxy is the straight line of truth as given in the Holy Scriptures. It is subject to no man's ruler or measuring device. It is unchangeable and continues the same as the ages roll. Creedal declarations, pulpit demonstrations, and editorial diatribes alter truth not one iota!

II. WHAT IS THE AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION?

First, this association is composed of a loose-knit group of churches which came out of the old General Association around 1905. Ben Marcus Bogard was one of the Convention leaders who led in the formation of this association. For years he was the leading light among this group. I admire Brother Bogard and revere his memory. It was under his ministry that I was converted in 1944. So there is no animosity here.

Second, this association is composed of churches scattered throughout the United States, primarily in the southern states. This group has missionaries scattered across America and in many foreign countries.

Third, the churches which compose this association have an annual meeting in which elected messengers from the churches meet to discuss business for the churches. This messenger body meeting votes on the missionaries nominated by the churches, sets salaries, elects officers such as moderator, clerk, etc. This association continues throughout the year in the practical sense, as certain ones are elected who function through the year.

Fourth, the churches of the A.B.A. are overwhelmingly **Arminian** in their theology. Not liking the words "Arminian" and "Calvinism," these usually declare themselves "Biblicists." This kind of reasoning, however, answers nothing. In practice many of these churches have a tendency toward "Semi-Pelagianism," rather than "Arminianism."

Fifth, the churches composing the A.B.A. generally fancy themselves to be "orthodox," and all others less so. In most places they receive the baptism of the Fundamentalist Baptists, the Southern Baptists, the B.M.A.

Baptists (Baptist Missionary Association). In some locales, as California, most SBC baptism is rejected. They will not receive Free-Will Baptist, General-Baptist, or Primitive-Baptist baptism. Nor will they receive baptism, generally, from those who label themselves Sovereign-Grace Baptists. Along this line there is another little "ditty" I have composed which fits the situation:

*"Sitting on my pinnacle,
Looking to and fro;
I wondered where the people were,
And saw them all below."*

That is to say, to the average member in a church fellowshipping with the A.B.A., every other Baptist (of whatever stripe) is seen downhill. For, to these formers of "orthodoxy," **anything outside the pale of the A.B.A. is downward!** This is not mere fanciful reasoning on my part; it is the usual practice of this group of churches. For instance, someone wants to start a work in some northern state. The attitude is, "There are no scriptural churches in the whole state." What is meant by this is that there are no "A.B.A." churches in the state. This in itself is quite a statement, but is the usual practice of these churches. In other words, **ORTHODOXY STARTS AND STOPS HERE!**

Sixth, the churches composing the A.B.A. are strong on the local, visible church, and rightly so. They are to be commended for holding the true position on the nature of the Lord's **ekklesia**. They are also strong on the matter of "church perpetuity." Certainly this is a Biblical teaching based on the promise of Jesus in Matthew 16:18. But here's where the rub comes in. To trace one's genealogy back to Christ means going through the "fathers." The early American Baptists who adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (John Clarke, etc.) were overwhelmingly Calvinistic. The majority of the prominent theologians in the past century in the Baptist ranks were Calvinistic--A.H. Strong, J.B. Moody, J. P. Boyce, B. H. Carroll, and others. Even J. R. Graves, the darling of the A.B.A. group was a 4-point Calvinist (or Fullerite, as was J.M. Pendleton). Let me here insert a footnote: **When I entered Seminary in 1956 all young preachers were given free copies of**

all of J.R. Graves' books. This included the work on "Seven Dispensations." Graves made no secret of his Calvinistic leanings!

Not only were the early American Baptist Churches Calvinistic, but the English Baptists, from which the American Baptists came, were Calvinistic. These had adopted the First London Confession of 1646 and the Second London Confession of 1689 (almost exact with the Philadelphia). This means that John Gill, Charles Spurgeon, and the leading lights among the Baptists in England were Calvinists.

Now the problem is: "How do you go through these groups in the search for church perpetuity without acknowledging their beliefs?" Much the same way that the Pharisees kept their traditions. You take what you like and reject the rest. First, you keep people in the dark on these matters. Second, you denounce Calvinism as Hardshellism. Third, you say that the "fathers" were in error on these points, but the Baptists of today are more enlightened. This may wash with the non-student of the Bible and history, but it will not wash with those who want to be honest.

III. SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS.

Most Baptist groups are inconsistent when it comes to the matter of exchanging church letters or receiving baptism from other Baptist Churches. In every case, they are a rule to themselves. They have established the standard--this one is "right" and that one is "wrong." We fellowship "here," but we don't fellowship "there." Individual churches, of course, have to set certain guidelines by which they fellowship, grant and receive letters, accept baptisms, etc. But there should be a system of consistency.

First, "On what Scriptural basis are the baptisms of other Baptist groups either accepted or rejected?" If this is on mere personality, the claim is invalid. I know of churches that split over personalities--both believing exactly the same thing doctrinally. But they would not exchange letters, etc. A good case in point here goes back to the division with the A.B.A. around 1950-51. The split formed two separate groups which still exist--the A.B.A. and the N.A.B.A. (North

American Baptist Association). This groups is now known as the B.M.A. (Baptist Missionary Association). Later, I pastored a church in Missouri, and we fellowshiped with churches in the St. Louis area. I remember vividly that the A.B.A. churches would not fellowship, exchange letters, or receive baptisms from the N.A.B.A. group. **They were the same people, with the same doctrines, and generally the same practices. BUT BECAUSE OF PERSONALITIES THEY REFUSED TO EXCHANGE LETTERS! In other words, the N.A.B.A. churches were looked upon as far beneath the standard of orthodoxy! REMEMBER THE LITTLE DITTY GIVEN BEFORE:**

*"Sitting on my pinnacle,
Looking to and fro;
I wondered where the people were,
And saw them all below."*

That is, "We are the standard of orthodoxy. Anyone else wearing the Baptist name (not in our particular group) is suspect." Many within the framework of the A.B.A. are like the witness who was called to testify. When the bailiff held out the Bible and asked, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" the witness was flabbergasted, and said: **"Don't you know me? I always tell the truth."**

Second, "Where is the consistency in taking the letters and baptisms from S.B.C. , B.M.A., and Fundamentalist (Bible Baptist) Churches, and rejecting those from churches which hold the doctrines of the forefathers in the faith?" Well, there is no consistency here. And well the old adage fits, **"Consistency, thou art a jewel."** I suppose it is okay with many to be consistently inconsistent. Remember what Jesus said (Matt. 23:29-31). The Pharisees said, "We love the prophets. We garnish their tombs. We would not have killed them had we been living then." Jesus' answer was that their ilk were exactly like the ones who did kill the prophets. **And why did they kill them? Because of what the prophets said from God!**

Third, "If every way from us is down, how did we get on the pinnacle to start with?" Church groups who claim this superiority are usually "Johnny-come-latelys," who evolved, withdrew,

or came out of other established Baptist works. Contrary to popular thought, God did not create the A.B.A. or any other group in Genesis 1. In other words, here is how the reasoning goes: (1) We came out of another group; hence, we have their baptism; (2) But they are not as scriptural as we are; thus, we cannot exchange letters or receive their baptisms; (3) In fact, in some cases these churches are heretical. **Now there is some good reasoning for you!**

Fourth, "Why are doctrines hated now that our forefathers loved?" Specifically, I refer to the following called the "doctrines of grace." (1) Total Hereditary Depravity and Spiritual Inability of the Sinner. Most all Baptists, on paper, will give mouth service to this doctrine--if you let them explain it to suit the brethren; (2) Unconditional Election by God in eternity, based on nothing but His good pleasure (Ephesians 1). This doctrine is today rejected by the vast majority of Baptists, who of course, trace their roots through the American Baptists and English Baptists. **Must be quite a thorny trip through these woods, as most were thoroughly Calvinistic!** (3) Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption. Christ made a definite atonement for those chosen by the Father (John 17). Again, overwhelmingly the Baptists of the present are thoroughly Arminian, and believe in conditional election (if indeed any election at all). (4) Irresistible Grace or Effectual Calling. That God the Holy Spirit does effectually apply the redemption wrought by Christ for the elect to them experientially (Eph. 2:1). This doctrine evokes yells, catcalls, and utter denunciations from modern-day Baptists. (5) Perseverance and preservation of the saints. That God keeps His own from falling. While many modern-day Baptists love this truth, they have just rejected the truths which confirm such (Romans 8:28-38). Oh, well, if you are at the top of the pile on your own little pinnacle, who cares about the opinions of others?

IV. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.

First, this article is not sent out to merely criticize. It is meant, however, to show utter inconsistencies in the practice of some Baptists.

Second, this article is not advocating that any local church fellowship or not fellowship, receive letters or not receive letters, or receive or reject baptisms. This matter is up to each local church. But, again, should there not be consistency? Do we have a right, under God, to set ourselves up as "standards of orthodoxy," and reject those outside the "umbrella" as heretics? Again, this little ditty is fitting:

*"I built me a little fence,
And closed myself right in;
Outside were all the heretics,
Inside were all my kin."*

This reminds me of the days of my "superior" (ignorant) thinking. When pastoring in Missouri years ago, a preacher brother from a B.M.A. (then the N.A.B.A.) church attended one Sunday morning. Afraid that he might be a heretic of the worst sort, I did not ask him to preach. Of course, had he been a member of an A.B.A. church, no thought would have been given to the matter. **It's always good to know that someone is checking just how you cross your "T's" and dot your "I's."**

Third, this article is not an attempt to make any one group either orthodox or heterodox. The Scriptures do this. I am merely attempting to point out the spirit of "Phariseeism" which prevails among Baptists of our day. When a church rejects baptism from a church that believes what the forefathers taught, something is badly wrong in Zion!

Fourth, this article is an attempt to unmask hypocrisy. And if such exists, in any Baptist group, it needs unmasking. Jesus seemed to detest hypocrisy from the religionists of His day as a great sin. Some groups are so enthralled and captivated by their own worth, they can almost be heard answering the question: "Who is called by God to love truth, exalt truth, and promulgate truth?" WE ARE! Be that as it may, the Judge is at the door. And He judges according to truth, not what we say about truth!

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(CERTAINTIES, Continued from Page 1)

show that these churches held to what is commonly known as the **doctrines of grace** and erroneously called the **five points of Calvinism**. These doctrines were taught and believed long before Calvin was ever born. And, they were taught and believed long before Augustine ever set them forth. These are New Testament doctrines taught and believed by New Testament churches.

THE CHURCHES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES HELD TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND INABILITY OF THE NATURAL MAN

Perhaps we should discuss the matter briefly before setting forth the evidence. Many will claim they hold to the doctrine of total hereditary depravity while denying the doctrine of total inability. One reason for this is a misunderstanding of what is meant by total inability. The other reason is that some **claim** to believe the doctrine of total depravity, when, in fact, they do not.

By **total inability** we do not mean that a person is not able to think a **religious** thought. He may even have a zeal for God but not know God and Jesus Christ. The religious Jews had a zeal for God but it was not according to knowledge. They were lost, in spite of their zeal for God. **Total inability** means that one who is unregenerate has no ability to come to Christ, to believe on Christ, or to know God and Christ.

In this message I will show that these churches of the New Testament were taught the doctrine of total inability and total depravity. They believed the doctrine for many of them walked in truth. Other doctrines they believed also support the proposition that they held to this basic, fundamental doctrine of total depravity and inability.

THEY WERE THOROUGHLY TAUGHT THE

DOCTRINE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Jesus taught them that no one could see nor enter the kingdom of God except God regenerate him. **John 3:3-5** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* This necessity, this **absolute** necessity of the new birth obviously indicates that men are born in a state of sinfulness in their original birth, their fleshly birth. The word **cannot** in this passage has reference to ability. The Greek word is **dunatai (dunatai)** with a negative prefixed to it. Without the negative it means "to be able, to have power to do." The word is a form of the Greek word **dunamai (dunamai)**. Without the negative it is used of God's ability to raise up children to Abraham from stones (Luke 3:8). With the negative Jesus used the word when he said, **"If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35).** A thorough study of this word shows clearly that Jesus referred to man's inability to enter or even see (comprehend) the kingdom of God without regeneration. The inability of Nicodemus to see the kingdom of God is evidence by his question, **"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John 3:4).**

Jesus further taught them that no one had the ability to come to Christ but must be drawn to Christ by the Father. **John 6:44** *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* **John 6:65** *And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.* There is more in this verse than a man merely being unwilling to come to Christ. Man is incapable of willing to come to Christ

unless drawn to Christ by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word we just discussed in used here to denote the lack of ability. No one has the ability to come to Christ unless drawn by the Father. And (v-65) no man is able to come to Christ unless God gives him the ability to do so.

Jesus also spoke of man's natural inability to hear his word. **John 8:43** *Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.* This reminds me of what is recorded of Lydia in the book of Acts. **Acts 16:14** *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.* God had to open the heart of Lydia so that she was able to attend to the things spoken by Paul. Jesus says to these folks that they could not hear his word. Their hearts had not been opened. And, contrary to what is erroneously taught on Revelation 3:21, he is not knocking at the door of the heart of the unregenerate begging them to open their heart. If one is ever able to hear the word and believe **God** must open his heart for him.

Jesus also set forth the inability of men to believe, establishing the fact that God must give faith if any are to believe. All men do not have faith. **2 Thessalonians 3:2** *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.* Faith is a gift of God. **Philippians 1:29** *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* Having established that men do not naturally have faith, and that faith is a gift of God, let us notice that Jesus extends this inability of unregenerate men to faith. **John 12:39-40** *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.* Man is, by nature, spiritually blind. This gives him the inability to discern spiritual truth, truth which must be understood if he is to believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ. The seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the understanding heart are gifts of God given in regeneration. No man has them naturally. And, no man can believe on Christ or understand spiritual matters essential to salvation, unless God regenerates him. Again, it is evident that Jesus taught the first church of the New Testament the doctrine of total inability and total depravity.

That the first New Testament church believed this is evident from the teaching of the Apostles on this matter and related doctrines. It is incontrovertible. It is irrefutable. They were taught and believed man's total inability in the first church ever established on this earth, the church organized by Christ himself and taught by Christ himself in person.

PAUL TAUGHT THE CHURCHES OF NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND TOTAL INABILITY

Paul, who wrote epistles to a number of New Testament churches and preachers, and who established other churches and grounded them in the faith, certainly taught them the doctrine of total depravity. He also taught young preachers such as Timothy and Titus. He taught them these doctrines and admonished them in his epistles to give attendance to and teach these doctrines.

He taught that the carnal mind is enmity against God and does not have the ability to subject itself to the law of God. **Romans 8:7** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* The Greek word we have previously studied (*dunamai*) comes into play again. Paul sets forth three things in this verse that establish the doctrine of total depravity and total inability. *First*, he tells the church at Rome that the carnal mind, the mind of the unregenerate, is enmity against God. Note that he does not merely say it is *at* enmity with God. He declares that it is the very embodiment of enmity; it *is* enmity against God. Its very essence and nature is enmity against God. Scripture says, "God is love." Scripture also says, "The carnal mind is enmity."

Second, Paul tells them that the carnal mind is **not subject** to the law of God. Man, in his unregenerate state will never subject himself to the law of God. The carnal mind has a natural hatred of the law of God. Even those who try to submit themselves to that law and go about to establish their own righteousness by the law show their enmity. They miss the whole message of the law which points them to Christ. But, Paul does not stop there. He tells us *third* that the carnal mind does not have the ability to be subject to God's holy law. Note his words, "**neither indeed can be.**" There is our word again, the word **can**, which has reference to ability. In the negative, as it is used here, it speaks of **inability**. The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, does it have the ability to be subject to the law of God. The totally depraved man is totally incapable of subjecting himself to the law of God because of his carnal mind which is enmity against God. He is incapacitated. He is disabled. He has no ability to be subject to the law of God unless God renews his mind and gives him a new heart, a heart to know God. **Jeremiah 24:7** *And I will give them an heart to know me, that I [am] the LORD.*

In the same chapter, next verse, Paul taught that an unregenerated man is incapable of doing that which pleases God. **Romans 8:8** *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* A sinner coming to Christ pleases God but the natural man cannot do that. Believing on Christ is pleasing to God but the natural man cannot do that. Repenting toward God is pleasing to God but the natural man cannot do that. Keeping the law of God pleases God but the natural man cannot do that. Jesus said, "**That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit**" (**John 3:6**). They that are in the flesh; they who have not experienced the new birth are in the flesh; and they cannot please God. They do not have the ability to please God. That is a New Testament Church certainty. The New Testament church in Rome was taught that by an inspired apostle by the name of Paul.

Paul also taught that the unregenerate person is spiritually dead. **Ephesians 2:1** *And you*

hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. We have seen that Jesus indicated that the unregenerate are spiritually blind and deaf and void of spiritual understanding. Now we see that the cause of this is that they are spiritually dead, ***dead in trespasses and sins.*** They are dead as far as spiritual matters are concerned.

When a man experiences physical death, he loses all of his ability. He cannot breathe, he cannot see, he cannot hear, he cannot do anything. I was reading just recently about the death of Vincent Foster. The temperature was pretty high and flies were prevalent. Though his blood was still warm, the agent said the flies were crawling all over his face. I thought, "He could not even brush the flies away because he was dead." He had lost all ability to do anything physical because he was dead physically.

Men are by nature spiritually dead. They are dead to the spiritual things of God; the spiritual truth of God. They may respond to deceitful spirits; under the influence of these false and lying spirits, they may even make a profession of faith in Christ. They may express certain spiritual desires and make declarations that make it appear they are saved, as did Judas. But, unless God regenerates them, they are still spiritually dead, regardless of how spiritually alive they may seem to be. They have not the ability nor will to come to Christ. They have not the ability nor will to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. They have not the ability nor will to repent toward God. They are dead. And, it is a certainty that the church at Ephesus knew this for Paul wrote to them and affirmed it.

Paul taught that the unregenerate walk according to the course of this world under the power of Satan and are, by nature, children of wrath. ***Ephesians 2:2-3 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: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as***

others. Notice that the regenerate, saved members of the church at Ephesus were, before their regeneration, in the same state as the reprobate. We who are saved walked according to the course of this world. We who are saved walked in subjection to Satan, the prince and the power of the air. We who are saved were by nature children of wrath, even as others. It sounds very certain that Paul was teaching this New Testament church in Ephesus the doctrine of man's total depravity.

Now, let us travel to another New Testament church. It is located in the city of Colosse. This was a great church, an exemplary church. Paul taught this church that before regeneration and conversion, all, including the elect, are in the kingdom of darkness. ***Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*** The first thing that is obvious from this passage is that all men, by nature, are in the kingdom of darkness. They are not born in the kingdom of God's dear Son, then, when they first reject Christ, cast into the kingdom of darkness where they remain until translated out. Men are by nature children of wrath in the kingdom of darkness because they are naturally blind and dead to true spiritual things.

The second thing is that ***God*** must translate one out of this kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his Son if he is to leave that awful kingdom for the blessed kingdom of the Son. He cannot translate himself. Enoch was translated that he should not see death, but God had to do the translating. Try translating yourself as Enoch was translated and see if it happens. No! Man does not have the ability to do it. Nor, with his carnal mind that is enmity against God, does he have the inclination to translate himself into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The very fact that Paul taught that God is the one who translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son is the positive way of teaching a negative truth to this church. We cannot translate ourselves; God must translate us.

JOHN TAUGHT THE DOCTRINE OF THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND THE TOTAL INABILITY OF UNREGENERATE MEN

John is sometimes called “the disciple of love” because of his apparent mellowness of spirit and all that he wrote about love in the Scriptures. But, John also taught the doctrine of total depravity. He taught that there is nothing that runs in the blood that causes one to be regenerated, contrary to the Jews notion that they did not need to be regenerated because they were blood descendants of Abraham. ***John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.***

He taught that men are not born of the will of the flesh, indicating that the natural, unregenerate man neither could, nor would ever will his own regeneration. ***John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*** May I remind you again that the first birth is a birth that is of the flesh (Jn. 3:6). There is nothing good in the flesh (Rom. 7:18). It is therefore all bad, no good! Since there is no good in the flesh, and since the will to come to Christ in faith is something good, one wonders why so many who are otherwise pretty sound in the faith, believe that man has it within himself to will the new birth for himself. The new birth is not of the will of the flesh. Nothing in the flesh will cause one to will to come to Christ.

John also taught that there is no man capable of willing the new birth for a person, neither the person, nor a friend or loved one. ***John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*** I know parents who, if they could, would will the new birth for their children. I know grandparents, who, if they could, would will the new birth for their grandchildren. I would will the new birth for many if it were my prerogative to do so. But, I have no license to regenerate. Neither do any men. It is not a product of the will of man. Man cannot and does not will the new birth for himself. That is the prerogative of God. It is totally out of the limits of any man’s ability or will. It is of God, as John asserts. It is he who wills

the new birth for any and all who are regenerated. In short, John wrote that the only one who can will and accomplish the new birth is God. ***John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.***

CONCLUSION

Other scribes of the Word of God could be cited and additional references from these already cited could be given. But, these will suffice to show that the churches of the New Testament period were definitely taught the doctrine of total depravity. They were taught it by the Lord Jesus Christ and by those whom he taught. This seems to be one doctrine to which they firmly held for none are ever rebuked for denying it. Errors on other matters were corrected but this doctrine was only affirmed and affirmed and affirmed. It is basic. It is fundamental. It is the real battle ground. If you truly believe this doctrine, the doctrines of unconditional election, perseverance and preservation, particular redemption, and effectual call will pose no problem for you. The real battle ground is total hereditary depravity. Do you believe it? Does your church believe it? Does your preacher preach it? Do you preach it if you are a preacher?

New Testament preachers preached it. And, you can be certain of this New Testament church certainty, the churches of the New Testament believed and taught this doctrine of total inability and total depravity. That is for certain ***a New Testament Church Certainty!***

Bouquets and Brickbats

INDIANA: I continue to enjoy the **GP&P**. We remember you in our prayers.

PENNSYLVANIA: While visiting a friend in Georgia I came across your paper “**The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator.**” The friend who gave me the paper is a Five Point Southern Baptist layman. (There are such, but few and far between). He is interested in becoming

acquainted with others in the SBC who share his beliefs. I am aware of fellowships within the SBC who meet at Convention time. I do not know of names, publications, meetings, etc. Could you please send me more information re same as it would be a great source of encouragement for this lone brother in Georgia. I read your September issue of the **GP&P**. Keep up the good work.

MISSOURI: I receive your paper "**The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator**" and enjoy it very much. I would like to receive six copies of the wine issue. Also, I have some names I would like the paper sent to.

IOWA: Greetings! We trust that all is well and the blessings of God are upon you and the assembly there.

I very much enjoyed the most recent issue of the **GP&P**. I wonder if you wouldn't mind adding a name to your mailing list for me . . .

OHIO: I recently read a copy of "**The Grace Promulgator**" and would appreciate being placed on your permanent mailing list. Am enclosing a small amount to help cover mailing costs.

FLORIDA: I enjoy your paper that we get.

ILLINOIS: I really enjoy the **GP&P**. I consider it top priority of all my periodicals. I appreciated your article on how we ought to preach the Word

FLORIDA: Thank you for your comments on woman's apparel. This has become a hobby-horse for some in our area. I appreciate some written refutation on the subject. Once again you have not been afraid to tackle a subject that others shun. It is this that keeps your paper fresh and interesting. God Bless your ministry.

KENTUCKY: Please place me on your mailing list for **The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator**. A pastor friend gave me copies

of the December and September, 1994, issues, and I found them to be well done and much needed.

MISSISSIPPI: I have read some of your papers, **The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator**, and would like very much to be put on your mailing list for each month's paper.

Thanks so much for your kindness and keep writing the good articles. Good papers are hard to find.

SPECIAL SERVICES

FELLOWSHIP MEETING

FAITH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

407 South Main Street
St. Joseph, IL 61873

April 27, 1996 10:00 AM

Speaker: Eld. John Hinson, Missionary to Greece from Oak Trail Baptist Church, Granbury, Texas

Lunch Served at the Church at Noon

Pastor: Eld. Jud Paul Travis

Phone: (217) 469-7344

UNION GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Highway 25 South
Fulton, Mississippi

May 10-12, 1996

Friday-Saturday 7:30 PM Sunday 11:00 AM

Eld. Jack Green, Speaker

Eld. Bill Lee, Pastor

SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

West Jefferson St.
Duncan, Oklahoma
June 14-16, 1996

Eld. Jarrel E. Huffman, Pastor

For further information call (405) 255-9667

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

285 Whiskey Ridge Rd
Paris, TN 38242-5053

SEMINAR ON THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

June 29, 1996 9:30 AM

Eld. D. C. (Don) Shockey, Pastor

The church will furnish lunch.

For further information call 1-901-644-1244

VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH

9601 Blue Ridge Extension
Kansas City, MO 64134
August 6-8, 1996

Eld. Laurence Justice, Pastor

For further information call (816) 761-7184

SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

2400 E WALNUT ST
SEGUIN, TX 78155-8570

June 7-9, 1996

For Further Information Call (210) 379-3036
 Fax Number (210) 379-3040

Pilgrims' Hope Baptist Church

3084 Woodrow MEMPHIS, TN 38127-6658

October 4-6, 1996

Eld. Wayne Camp, Pastor

Church (901) 357-0215 Home: (901) 876-5015 or 876-6053

Prophecy Seminar Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church

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 50 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 \$1.00 before we get the correction. This will mean you miss one or two papers. Your help in saving us this expense will be appreciated.

**POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to:
 The Grace Proclamator & Promulgator
 3084 Woodrow
 Memphis, TN 38127
 (USPS #000476)**

3084 Woodrow

MEMPHIS, TN 38127

MAY 3-5, 1996

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Friday Evening

- 7:00 Singing
- 7:20 This Age, Its Characteristics
 Eld. Wayne Camp
- 8:10 The Rapture of the Saints
 Eld. Jimmie Davis

Saturday Morning

- 10:00 Singing
- 10:20 God's Great Fishing/Hunting Expedition
 Eld. Wayne Camp
- 11:10 Daniel's Seventieth Week
 Eld. Jimmie Davis

Saturday Evening

- 7:00 Singing
- 7:20 The Return of Christ-The Battle of
 Armageddon
 Eld. Wayne Camp
- 8:10 The Millennial Reign of Christ
 Eld. Jimmie Davis

Sunday Morning

- 10:00 Singing
 - 10:20 The Bride in Glory-The New
 Jerusalem
 Wayne Camp
 - 11:10 The New Heaven and the New Earth
 Eld. Jimmie Davis
- For further information call Pastor Wayne Camp
 (901) 876-5015 357-0215 876-6053

You are cordially invited to these services!

SPECIAL SERVICES

Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
 Fulton, MS 38843

JUNE 7-9, 1996

Speaker: Eld. Wayne Camp

Pastor: Eld. Jimmie Davis

For Further Information call 1 (601) 862-4902