



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

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WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

PART I

By Wayne Camp

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" Mk. 16:15.

INTRODUCTION

My subject is set forth in the form of a question: "What is The Gospel?" There seems to be much confusion among Christians (and I use the word Christians loosely) as to what the gospel actually is. Those who hold to the "Christian" religion teach the gospel of works, bodily healing, the social gospel, etc. and still claim to preach the gospel. They really are perverting the gospel of Christ as were those who taught that circumcision is essential to salvation (Gal. 1:6-9).

These heretics bother me very much, but there is another idea that is being set forth in some preaching that also greatly alarms me. In a conference that I attended several years ago one speaker boldly proclaimed it. The speaker was strongly rebuking the preachers present for preaching the "five points" and not preaching the gospel. He strongly urged that we should leave "the five points" alone and "just preach the gospel." He even advocated that the virgin birth, the sinless life, and the death on the cross were not as important as the resurrection of Christ. He declared that the virgin birth is not part of the gospel. If one leaves the five points, as was advocated, to preach **a** gospel that does not include the sinfulness of man, God's gracious

election unto salvation, the atonement that Christ made for the elect, the regenerating power and work of the Spirit, and the preservation and perseverance of the saved, he has an extremely watered down gospel that will save none, I fear.

The question before us is: ***"What Is The Gospel?"*** In this message we will seek a Biblical answer to this question. We will examine the definition of the gospel, the names by which the gospel is called, the explanation given of the gospel, and some declarations concerning the gospel. We will also answer some questions about the gospel.

THE DEFINITION OF THE GOSPEL

The first task that we face in this study is to find the definition of the gospel. Of what do the Scriptures speak when they refer to the gospel? Are there other gospels than the gospel of salvation set forth in the Scriptures?

The Greek word that is translated gospel in the Bible is ***EUAGGELION*** (*ευαγγελιον*). It means "good news" or "glad tidings." The Hebrew counterpart has the same basic meaning.

Our English word "gospel" comes from a combination of "god" which means "good" and "spell" which means "talk." The gospel is "godspell" or "good talk." In the Scriptures it is the message concerning the salvation of the people of Christ as it has been accomplished by

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the blessed Trinity.

When Isaiah wrote of the ministry of John the Baptist (Isa. 40:3) he set him forth as declaring, **"O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" (Isa 40:9).**

As he wrote of those who proclaim the gospel Isaiah said: **"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth**

salvation that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (52:7). It appears that God reigning was a part of the good tidings Isaiah had in mind, or rather, God had in mind when he inspired Isaiah to write this. God reigning refers to Divine sovereignty. Is it unreasonable to suggest that, according to Isaiah, the gospel would include the sovereignty of God—**"Thy God reigneth!"?** Paul quoted Isaiah in his letter to the Romans saying. **"As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Rom. 10:15).**

Dr. John Gill says that the gospel "is called the gospel of salvation . . . because it gives an account of Christ, the author of salvation; of his appointments to it; of his mission, and coming into the world, to effect it; and of his actual performance of it; of his being the able, willing, and only Saviour; and of the salvation itself, as great and glorious, perfect and complete, spirited and everlasting; and because it describes also the persons that share in it, sinners, sensible sinners, and who believe in Christ; and who, according to the declaration of it, shall certainly be saved, and because it is not only the means of revealing, but of applying salvation; for it is to them that believe the power of God unto salvation. It is called the gospel of the grace of God because the several doctrines of it are doctrines of grace, or which exhibit blessings as flowing from the grace of God; as election, redemption, pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life; and particularly, that salvation, from first to last, is all of grace, and not of works, Eph. 2:8. It is called the gospel of peace . . . because it relates the steps taken in council and covenant; to form the scheme of man's peace with God; to lay the foundation of it; and to bring it about; hence called the council of peace, and the covenant of peace, Zech. 6:13; Isa. 54:10. And also relates the actual making of it; by whom, and by what means; by Christ, who is our peace; by the chastisement of our peace being laid upon him; by the shedding of the blood on the cross; and by his suffering death. It is called the gospel of the kingdom, because it (See: Gospel, Page 3, Left Column) **(GOSPEL Continued from**

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN AMERICA

There is some dispute over the origin of the first Baptist Church established in what is now the United States of America. The following inscription from the tombstone of Dr. John Clarke establishes the truth to the claim that he, not Roger Williams, established the first Baptist Church on what is now the United States of America. It was scanned from the book, *The First Baptist Church in America*, by Graves and Adlam.

*To the Memory of
DOCTOR JOHN CLARKE,*

One of the original purchasers and proprietors of this island and one of the founders of the First Baptist Church of Newport, its first pastor and munificent benefactor; He was a native of Bedfordshire, England, and a practitioner of physic in London. He, with his associates, came to this island from Mass., in March, 1638, O. S., and on the 24th of the same month obtained a deed thereof from the Indians. He shortly after gathered the church aforesaid and became its pastor. In 1651, he, with Roger Williams, was sent to England, by the people of Rhode Island Colony, to negotiate the business of the Colony with the British ministry. Mr. Clarke was instrumental in obtaining the Charter of 1663 from Charles II., which secured to the people of the State free and full enjoyment of Judgment and conscience in matters of religion. He remained in England to watch over the interests of the Colony until 1664, and then returned to Newport and resumed the pastoral care of his church. Mr. Clarke and Mr. Williams, two fathers of the Colony, strenuously and fearlessly maintained that none but Jesus Christ had authority over the affairs of conscience. He died April 20, 1676, in the 66th year of his age, and is here interred.

Page 2) treats both of the kingdom of grace here, showing wherein it lies; and of the kingdom of glory hereafter, pointing out the proper meetness for it, regeneration by the Spirit of God; and the right and title to it, the righteousness of the Son of God; and that itself, as the Father's free gift to his people, flowing from his good will and pleasure" (Body of

Divinity, P. 373).

As is seen in Dr. Gill's definition of the gospel, it involves much more than three simple facts—that Christ died, that he was buried, and that he arose again—which are so often set forth as the fullness and substance of the gospel. This error is based on an over-simplification of Paul's declaration in I Cor. 15:1-4. It is my purpose in this message to establish the fact that the gospel is the good news of all that pertains to Christ, his life, death, burial, resurrection, his finished work on earth, his present ministry of advocate and intercessor, and future ministry and works such as coming again and changing our vile bodies and fashioning them like unto his glorious body.

THE NAMES OF THE GOSPEL

One of the best ways that I have found in this study to come to a knowledge of the gospel in its fullness is to examine the names by which it is called. It is not by chance or accident that the gospel is called by various names. When the Holy Spirit inspired a writer to refer to the "gospel of Christ," the "gospel of grace," the "gospel of peace," and so on, there was a purpose and significance to that. God did not just use those expressions or names to fill space!

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

From the earliest period in New Testament times the gospel is called the gospel of the kingdom. **"Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Mat. 4:23)**. Mark records this, **"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel". Mk. 1: 14-15)**.

Surely no one will argue that the gospel of the kingdom of God is a different gospel to the one which Paul preached. Did not he pronounce a terrible anathema upon any that dared preach any other gospel? **"But though we, or an angel**

from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). In the event any think that Paul had made a slip of the pen he repeats his declaration.

"As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9). Paul clearly held, by Divine inspiration, that there is one gospel, no more! Any other gospel is a satanically inspired gospel.

What then is the inference of the name the gospel of the kingdom of God? It infers that there is a reign of grace. Divine grace reigns and has a kingdom over which it reigns. It is good news and glad tidings to the convicted sinner that is doomed by the law when we declare to him that grace reigns. **"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ . . . so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" Rom 5:17, 21).** When Jesus came and began his ministry he **"was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24; 10:6).** The religious leaders of Israel did not preach pure grace, but did **"bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be born and lay them upon men's shoulders,"** while they themselves would **"not move them with one of their fingers" (Matt. 23:4).** In their preaching of works they were shutting up the kingdom of heaven and Jesus declared **"Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:13).**

Jesus came to his lost sheep in the house of Israel as they struggled with these burdens and announced: **"The Kingdom of God' is at hand."** He preached **"the gospel of the kingdom of God."**

He was saying to them: **"Grace reigns! I, who am full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14), walk in your midst. My Father's throne is a throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). Throw off this yoke of bondage and take my yoke upon you for I am meek and lowly and ye shall find rest**

unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). Grace reigns in God's kingdom for his throne is a throne of grace and his kingdom is a kingdom of grace. **"Repent ye and believe the gospel, the good news of the kingdom where sovereign grace reigns."**

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Paul declared, **"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" Rom. 1:16).** The gospel of Christ signifies that everything about Christ is good news. Everything he has accomplished and will yet do is good news. One will begin to get a little grasp of the full import and extent of the gospel of Christ when he realizes that the entire book of Mark is divinely designated as the **"gospel of Christ."** The very first sentence which the Holy Spirit inspired Mark to write was: **"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk. 1:1).**

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST GOOD NEWS

Sometimes one hears a brother declare that the birth of Christ is not a part of the gospel. Yet, in the announcement of his birth, Joseph was instructed: **"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).** He was Jesus the Saviour when he was born! That is good news! That is gospel truth!

Shortly after he was conceived in Mary's womb through the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, Mary traveled into the hill country of Judea to see her cousin Elizabeth who carried John the Baptist in her womb at that time. When she came into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elizabeth and Elizabeth **"heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as**

the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:39-45).

That Christ had been conceived in the womb of Mary was good news; it was a part of the gospel. It was such good news that John the Baptist leaped for joy and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Let us not exclude such good news about Christ from the gospel of Christ.

THE HORN OF SALVATION

Before Christ was ever born he was declared to be the horn of salvation and the redeemer of his people. ***"Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began . . . and thou, child (John), shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of sins, through the tender mercies of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" Lu. 1:67-79.*** I seriously doubt that anyone could convince Zacharias that the birth of Christ is not good news and gospel truth!

GOOD TIDINGS! GREAT JOY!

One of the clearest declarations of gospel truth to be found is in the angelic announcement of the birth of Jesus. When the angel of the Lord appeared to those lonely, fearful shepherds as they guarded their flocks on that glorious night of Christ's birth, ***"The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. (Lu.***

2:10-11).

The angel's message was a gospel message. It was ***"good tidings of great joy!"*** It was gospel truth!

That holy child born in that Bethlehem stable was just as fully the Saviour when he was born as he was when he died, was buried, and rose again! That virgin-born son lying in the manger was just as qualified to be called Jesus Christ the Lord on the night of his birth as he was on the morning after his resurrection.

Look at the angelic declaration again: ***"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."*** Is that not good news? Is not that gospel truth? He employs the very same word that is elsewhere translated ***"gospel"*** when he calls this announcement ***"good tidings."*** It is good news! It is good news of the Saviour's birth!

"MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THY SALVATION"

When Jesus was eight days old he was circumcised and officially named (as was Jewish custom). ***"His name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Lu. 2:21).*** Shortly afterwards he was brought to the temple. Simeon, a saved man who believed the gospel as it had been set forth in the Old Testament, had been assured by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. On the day that Jesus was brought by his mother to the temple, the Holy Spirit led Simeon into the temple also.

When Simeon came into the temple and saw Jesus he took him up in his arms and blessed God, and said, ***"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Lu. 2:21-35).***

To Simeon, the Babe held in his arms was as much the Saviour as he would be when held on the cross by the nails driven by the Roman soldiers. The birth of the Lord's Christ was good news and gospel truth which Simeon had long before believed.

REDEMPTION IN JERUSALEM

An eighty-four year old believer in Christ and his gospel was also in the temple on that day. She too recognized that the Saviour had been born and was in the temple. She gave thanks to the Lord also that the redeemer had been born. She proclaimed the news to other saved Jews **"that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Lu. 2:38)**. It was good news to her and to those to whom she spoke of him.

Before passing from this aspect of the gospel I would declare to our readers that I detest the Pagan holiday Saturnalia which has been pawned off on much of the "Christian" world as the mass of Christ and the time of his birth. On the other hand I fear that in our zeal to reveal the truth about this pagan holiday wearing a Christian mask, we just may have relegated the good news of Christ's wondrous birth to a place of unimportance. Have we, in our effort to destroy a pagan practice among Christians, committed the even more serious error of eliminating the glorious gospel truth, the good tidings of the birth of the Saviour, from our gospel message?

THE SINLESS LIFE OF CHRIST GOOD NEWS

Is the sinless life of Jesus Christ to have a place in our gospel message? If it doesn't then our gospel is not complete. It was the holy, sinless life of Jesus Christ that qualified him to be our Saviour. **"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's" (Heb. 7:26-27)**. The cleansing power of the blood of Christ lies in the fact that he, **"through the eternal Spirit offered himself WITHOUT SPOT to God" (Heb. 9:14)**.

When we read the gospel according to Isaiah we read of the sinlessness of Christ. **"He had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth" (Isa. 53:9)**, was the message. Again he recorded, **"By his**

knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquity" (Isa. 53:11).

Paul preached the good news of the sinlessness of Christ that made it possible for sinners to have his righteousness imputed to their account. **"For he hath made him to be, sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21)**. It is certainly good news and gospel truth that Christ was sinless.

The sinlessness of Christ, the fact that he is a **"lamb without spot or blemish"** was included in the gospel as preached by the apostle Peter. The death on the cross, the burial in the grave, and the resurrection from the dead would be to no avail if he were **not "the just dying for the unjust"** and the sinless bearing the sins of the sinful.

THE MIRACULOUS WORKS OF CHRIST GOOD NEWS

Before objecting to the miraculous works of Christ being declared a part of the gospel of Christ, the reader is encouraged to consider a few Biblical facts about Christ's miracles. They served many purposes but all were designed to set forth the fact that he was the Christ and the Saviour of sinners. **John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**

The very first miracle of Jesus **"manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (Jn. 2:11)**. Peter declared, **Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.**

The healing of a **"certain man"** at the pool Bethesda was designed, among other things, to set forth the sovereignty of Christ in the bestowal of his favors. Though there was **"a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, and withered" (Jn. 5:1-9)**, Jesus, as far as the record is concerned, healed that one

man only out of all that were in need of healing. He ask no other, ***"Wilt thou be made whole?"*** When the Jews sought to kill Jesus for healing this man on the Sabbath, Jesus, among other things, set forth his sovereignty in these words, ***"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (Jn. 5:21).***

The raising of Lazarus from the dead was designed to teach a very great lesson about Christ. He would show that he had the keys of death and the grave. He declared ***"I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn. 11:25-26).***

The miracles of Christ were designed to cause men to believe on him and be saved. ***"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Jn. 20:30-31).***

It is interesting that the preaching of the gospel has the same purpose as the recording of Christ's miracles had—instrumentally producing the faith that results in salvation. Faith is a gift of God imparted in regeneration but is never produced without the instrument of the word of God. ***"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring good tidings of good things! So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:14-17).*** Does this not strongly indicate that the miracles of Jesus have an important place in the gospel that we preach?

DEATH OF CHRIST GOOD NEWS

Certainly, none will deny that the death of Christ is included and should occupy a very important place in our gospel preaching. It is good news that Christ died for our sins. Every aspect of the death of Christ must be considered an important part of our evangelistic proclamations.

FOREORDAINED DEATH

It is good news and gospel truth that the death of Christ was no after-thought with God. One learned Baptist preacher whom I know once prayed in my presence, ***"Lord, we thank you that about two thousand years ago you decided to send your Son into the world to die for our sins."*** I have good tidings of great joy for you, Dear Reader. Christ's death was not decided upon only a mere 2,000 years ago. If you can, cast your mental tents back into the eternal ages when there were no seas or mountains, when there was no earth or planets, when as yet none of the great constellations had been spoken into existence. Come back to a time when there existed only three co-eternal, co-equal, co-existent Persons who compose the Triune Godhead. As they counsel with and among themselves it is ordained, determined and predestined that Christ, the second Person of the Godhead will come to die for the sins of a yet uncreated people. ***"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" (1 Cor. 2:7-8). 1 Peter 1:18-20 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.***

PRECISE DEATH

When we preach the good news of the death of Christ we should declare the good news that it transpired precisely as predetermined and predestined before the foundation of the world. There were no slip-ups, changes, or substitutions. There were no foul-ups, bleeps, or bloopers. They tried to kill him ahead of the Divine schedule ***"but no man laid hand on him***

because his hour was not yet come" (Jn. 7:30). At Nazareth they tried to kill him in a different manner but could not. They **"thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way" (Lu. 4:29-30).**

Every minute detail of the death of Christ was predestined in eternity. When all was fulfilled as planned and purposed, the church at Jerusalem could truthfully pray, **"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27-28).**

PROPHESIED DEATH

The good news of the substitutionary death of Christ was very much the subject of the prophets. **"To him give all the prophets witness," (Acts 10:43).** Of all the prophets, Isaiah probably gives the most detailed description and exposition of the death of Christ (See Isa. 53:1-12). But, remember that all the prophets gave witness to the coming of Christ and his great work of redemption.

DIED FOR A SPECIFIC PEOPLE

The Bible does not leave us to wonder about the objects of Christ's atoning death. **"He shall save his people from their sins,"** the angel had declared (Mat. 1:21). **"Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him,"** declared Jesus in his high priestly prayer (Jn. 17:2). As he unfolded the gospel of his atoning death Jesus declared, **"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Again he said, "I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:11, 15).**

Though they are his sheep they are without strength, helpless and ungodly in their natural state (Rom. 5:6). It is good news that God commendeth his love toward us, his sheep, and

while we were yet sinners **"Christ died for or us."**

THE BURIAL AND RESURRECTION GOOD NEWS

I have been in the tomb that many believe to be the tomb in which Jesus was buried. On one occasion (the first of three) a couple of superstitious people (preachers at that) in the group enthusiastically remarked: "Oh, can't you just feel his presence in here." Without thinking I said to them: **"He is not here, he is risen. Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (Lu. 24:4-6).**

I do not know if that was truly the tomb of Jesus but I do know that wherever that tomb is his body will not be found there. Praise the Lord, the tomb is now empty! Let us herald the good news to sinners everywhere.

INTERCESSORY WORK OF CHRIST GOOD NEWS

Another glorious and blessed aspect of gospel truth is the fact of the intercessory work of Christ. It is good news that **"we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jn. 2:1).** It is wonderful news that Christ **"is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34).** It is good news and good tidings that **"he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:26).**

SECOND COMING GOOD NEWS

In this day of perilous times there is hope. We can trumpet forth the good news that Jesus is coming again. **"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (Jn. 14:3).** **"Ye are saved by hope,"** and the hope of every child of God is **"that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Rom. 8:25; Titus 2:13).**

Before proceeding to our next thought (which will have to wait for the next issue) I must pose

this question: "Is there anything about Christ that could be shown to not be a part of and essential to the gospel of Christ?"

A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ at Horsely-down, under the Pastoral Care of Mr. John Gill, &c.

[Editor's Note: I had never heard of this confession of faith until recently. There may be others of you who are in the same boat. I thought I would share it with you.]

Having been enabled, through divine grace, to give up ourselves to the Lord, and likewise to one another by the will of God; we account it a duty incumbent upon us to make a declaration of our faith and practice, to the honour of Christ, and the glory of his name; knowing, that as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation—our declaration is as follows:

I. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

II. We believe that there is but one only living and true God; that there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are equal in nature, power, and glory; and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are as truly and as properly God as the Father.

III. We believe that, before the world began, God did elect a certain number of men unto everlasting salvation, whom he did predestinate to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, of his own free grace, and according to the good pleasure of his will: and that, in pursuance of this gracious design, he did contrive and make a covenant of grace and peace with his Son Jesus Christ, on the behalf of those persons, wherein a Saviour was appointed, and all spiritual blessings provided for them; as also that their

persons, with all their grace and glory, were put into the hands of Christ, and made his care and charge.

IV. We believe that God created the first man, Adam, after his own image, and in his likeness; an upright, holy, and innocent creature, capable of serving and glorifying him; but, he sinning, all his posterity sinned in him, and came short of the glory of God: the guilt of whose sin is imputed, and a corrupt nature derived, to all his offspring, descending from him by ordinary and natural generation: that they are by their first birth carnal and unclean, averse to all that is good, incapable of doing any, and prone to every sin; and are also by nature children of wrath, and under a sentence of condemnation, and so are subject not only to a corporal death, and involved in a moral one, commonly called spiritual, but are also liable to an eternal death, as considered in the first Adam, fallen and sinners; from all which there is no deliverance but by Christ, the second Adam.

V. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, being set up from everlasting as the Mediator of the new covenant, and he, having engaged to be the surety of his people, did, in the fulness of time, really assume human nature, and not before, neither in whole nor in part, his human soul, being a creature, existed not from eternity, but was created and formed in his body by him that forms the spirit of man within him, when that was conceived in the womb of the virgin; and so his human nature consists of a true body and a reasonable soul; both which, together, and at once, the Son of God assumed into union with his divine Person, when made of a woman, and not before; in which nature he really suffered and died as their substitute, in their room and stead, whereby he made all that satisfaction for their sins, which the law and justice of God could require, as well as made way for all those blessings, which are needful for them both for time and eternity.

VI. We believe that that eternal redemption which Christ has obtained, by the shedding of his blood, is special and particular, that is to say, that it was only intentionally designed for the elect of God, and sheep of Christ, who only share the special and peculiar blessings of it.

VII. We believe that the justification of God's elect is only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, without the consideration of any works of righteousness done by them; and that the full and free pardon of all their sins and transgressions, past, present, and to come, is only through the blood of Christ, according to the riches of his grace.

VIII. We believe that the work of regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and faith, is not an act of man's free will and power, but of the mighty, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God.

IX. We believe that all those who are chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Spirit, shall certainly and finally persevere, so that not one of

them shall ever perish, but shall have everlasting life.

X. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; and that Christ will come a second time to judge both quick and dead, when he will take vengeance on the wicked, and introduce his own people into his kingdom and glory, where they shall be for ever with him.

XI. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Christ, to be continued until his second coming; and that the former is absolutely requisite to the latter; that is to say, that those only are to be admitted into the communion of the church, and to participate of all ordinances in it, who upon profession of their faith, have been baptized by immersion, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

XII We also believe that singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, vocally, is an ordinance of the Gospel to be performed by believers; but that as to time, place, and manner, every one ought to be left to their liberty in using it.

Now all, and each of these doctrines and ordinances, we look upon ourselves under the greatest obligations to embrace, maintain, and defend believing it to be our duty to stand fast, in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

And whereas we are very sensible, that our conversation, both in the world and in the church, ought to be as cometh the Gospel of Christ, we judge it our incumbent duty to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men, by living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

And as to our regards to each other, in our church-communion, we esteem it our duty to walk with each other in all humility and brotherly love; to watch over each other's conversation; to stir up one another to love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as we have opportunity, to worship God according to his revealed will; and, when the case requires, to warn, rebuke, and admonish one another, according to the rules of the Gospel.

Moreover, we think ourselves obliged to sympathize with each other, in all conditions, both inward and outward, which God, in his providence, may bring us into; as also to bear with one another's weaknesses, failings, and infirmities, and particularly to pray for one another, and that the Gospel and the ordinances thereof might be blessed to the edification and comfort of each other's souls, and for the gathering in of others to Christ, besides those who are already gathered—all which duties we desire to be found in the performance of, through the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, whilst we both admire and adore the grace which has given us a place

and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of 6209 Denver Avenue, Pensacola, FL. 32526, is seeking a pastor. The contact number is Brother Leonard Burrell, (334) 987-1512.

ANNUAL SOVEREIGN GRACE CONFERENCE

**Victory Baptist Church
Kansas City, MO
August 4-6, 1998.**

**Theme: The Doctrines Of Grace And The Church
Growth Movement.**

**Our preachers and their topics will be as
follows:**

Brother Royce Smith: What is the Church Growth Movement? and What Should Be Our Response To The Church Growth Movement?

Brother Wayne Camp: The Sufficiency Of Scripture For Doing God's Work and The Primacy Of Preaching

Brother Paul Brown: What Is The Work Of Th Church? and What Is Biblical Evangelism?

Brother Howard Carter: Do Numbers Equal Success In God's Work? and Psychology And The Gospel

Brother Jack Duplechain: What Kind Of Music Shall We Use? and The Influence Of God's Character On Worship

Brother Cecil Fayard: The Regulative Principle and All Things To All Men

Bouquets and Brickbats

TENNESSEE: I have really enjoyed your articles on Promise Keepers. They are much needed in this day of increasing apostasy.

NEW MEXICO: We continue to appreciate your paper. The articles on PKs have been informative and beneficial. Keep up the good work.

WWW: Your beliefs are very wrong!!! I believe the Promise Keepers are a great movement for God and anyone who opposes their outstanding ministry and mocks them, displays many falsehoods about them, and mixes the truth about these great men of God is in a way mocking God himself!!! Why do you continue to preach your blasphemy when you know that **you are wrong!!!!** This page and everyone who supports it should learn the

real facts about this ministry before they attempt to criticize one of the largest **God centered** movements this country has ever experienced!!! **Why do you continue to spit God in the face and lie about his work!!**

MINNESOTA: I read your article on the Promise Keepers. I agree! When I first looked into the movement (about three years ago), I sensed (through the indwelling Holy Spirit) caution. I stayed away...and am glad I did. In fact, I wrote to one major publisher (Rick Joyner of the Morning Star Journal) and expressed my concern. You might want to include my letter to him in one of your internet presentations. Just let me know if you would like to read it. Looking forward to hearing from you.

CALIFORNIA: You guys are as much in error as PK. You don't baptize for remission of sins as is the biblical model. It is as much a part of salvation as belief and repentance. It is not a work, it is the accepting of God's grace and God does the work in baptism. You follow Calvin as some in the Bible followed Cephas and Apollos. We all must follow Christ which is at least what PK attempts to do. You only follow Calvin

WWW: You seem quick to criticize Dobson by citing quotes from the King James Bible. Have you done your research on Kings James? He was a worse character than Dobson ever could have been.

WWW: God's judgement may be directed to you if your not careful about what you write about especially the Promise Keepers. We can argue this to the bitter end but let God confict Christians whats right or wrong not you or any other man. I Personally am living a better Christian life a closer walk with God, thanks to PK and their effort to disciple men according to God's Word the Bible. We need more Christian organizations willing to take a stand for Christ to help lead people to Christ or help Christians mature their Christian lives. I feel sorry for you and your hatred for PK and Dobson and I will pray for you.

WWW: Would you rather instead these men walk the streets drinking, murdering, raping and living the ways of the world. I cannot say I agree with all that is taught by the men who speak at these events but I do believe in their purpose. I have seen too many lives changed from these events and

have seen the very people who committed the acts above delivered and made anew. If you truly believe in the words God has given us then what happened to the basics? Such as "to love thy neighbor as thyself" and "Judge not, that you be not judged." I was raised in a bible believing, Pentecostal church and I have seen blind eyes opened, cancer disappear, and within the last year have seen someone dead come back to life. I can't say that all men preaching the gospel are right but as for me I think I would rather God be the judge rather than for me to be judged.

[Editor to Randy: It appears that you are saying that all the men in Promise Keepers were "walk(ing) the streets drinking, murdering, raping and living the ways of the world," before Promise Keepers came along. Isn't it strange that the Apostle Paul did not have to have Promise Keepers to help him in the wicked city of Corinth?

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (I Cor. 6:9-11).

How in the world was Paul able to reach these people? He was only a God-called preacher and missionary sent out by the lowly, local church of the Lord Jesus Christ at Antioch. He had no PK rallies, no loud boisterous musicians, no coaches telling men when to fall on their faces in arenas. My, all he had was the simple gospel of Jesus Christ to preach and the backing of a local church assisted at times by other churches.

(I Cor. 4:15) For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. (II Cor. 11:8). I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.

Randy, have you ever considered that God used the ministry of these despised preachers (not popular coaches) and lowly churches for almost two thousand years to reach people for Christ. Yes, God was able to wash people from their sins in the blood of his Son all that time without Promise Keepers. Your blindness to these facts caused you to write as if the whole world would go to hell and would be a hell of raping, murdering, etc. if we did not have Promise Keepers.

Would you please send me the name and address of the person whom you saw raised from the dead? I would like to seek some verification of this.]

WWW: I sadly read your article about Promise Keepers. In a Christian spirit of love and meekness, I would like to voice some objections to your accusations about this group.

First of all, I am a Calvinist and a Progressive Primitive Baptist minister. I feel that it is imperative for you to

understand that my doctrinal foundation is sound. So here is my understanding of the Promise Keepers.

You say that pentecostalism is the same as mormonism, and basically is not of God. Well, my conversion to Christianity came about under the preaching of a pentecostal preacher. So I am able to say with all confidence that they are truly godly people. No, I do not agree with everything that they believe. But I feel that they have some important truths that we sometimes overlook, such as prophesy and speaking in tongues. These surely did not cease after the apostolic era. However, I do not believe that everyone will speak in tongues and I believe that all Christians have the Holy Spirit. But I do not disallow these signs.

Next, the Vineyard movement is not "charismatic". Many of these humble and holy people have reformed backgrounds. Even if they were they are still beloved by the Father. They simply believe the Bible. Many people say that the Bible is the only rule for doctrine, to which I whole heartedly agree. But many do not believe that it is the rule for how people experience God. David danced. Saul prophesied. The psalmists played stringed instruments and shouted aloud for joy. The vineyard movement simply is a move that does not limit the sovereignty of God. How ironic that many Calvinists do. God can still give dreams, and visions, and healings. He is in the heavens, He has done whatsoever He hath pleased.

Next, I have attended the Promise Keepers

meetings in Atlanta. I heard the authentic Gospel of Jesus Christ. There was nothing there that was "New Age" or of the devil. It was simply holy men being told of their responsibility to love and honor their wives. Something that many ministers are too spineless or heartless to do.

I feel that I need to warn you of your conclusions. Do not be hasty to judge. God will hold you accountable. Make sure that you are looking at the entire Bible and not only a portion.

[Editor's Note: This Primitive Baptist Preacher is not representative of most PB with whom I am acquainted. I posted this message on the Historic Baptist Symposium and heard from several PB preachers declaring their non-agreement with this man. This man errs also in saying that I equate Mormons and Pentecostals. They are far from the being the same. They err in different directions but I believe both to be Satanic in their origin and unscriptural in their doctrines. Also, I was dumbfounded when he claimed the Vineyard movement was not charismatic. My research on this movement indicates they are extreme in that area including some who will fall out on the floor and laugh, roar like a lion, cackle like a hen, bark like a dog, and make other sounds that have nothing to do with true spirituality. On an official Vineyard WebSite in an article titled *What Do Vineyard Churches Believe* there was this statement, *We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who among His various ministries regenerates, sanctifies, guides and empowers through His gifts all believers (1Cor. 12:4-11; Gal.5:16-23; Titus 3:5).* 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 names the spiritual gifts that were set in the church, including those which ceased with the completion of the word of God—the gifts of tongues, prophecy, etc. *1 Corinthians 12:4-11 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.* Vineyard churches believe those are still in effect today and are for *all believers*. On this point the Vineyard fellowship does not differ from other charismatic churches, contrary to what the writer claims. John Wimber, the recently deceased founder of the Vineyard Movement, claimed the gift of prophecy. On one occasion he prophesied that a western city would be destroyed in a very short time. His prophesied destruction date is long past; he is dead; the city still stands.]

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