



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

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CONVERSION

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Late Pastor of Pine Haven Baptist Church – Columbus, MS

A Radio Message (part of a series) preached in 1976

In John 3:16 we read – **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”**. Our study is the subject of conversion, which we have discussed for a number of weeks now from John 3, verses 4 through 18. And we look at verse 16, in particular this morning. In the closing of the broadcast last Saturday, we were discussing this verse and the fact that God’s love is the cause of conversion. And we continue this theme of conversion this morning and the fact that God’s love is the cause of our conversion.

We said last week, and we repeat again this morning by way of introduction to our study, that there are two words in John 3:16 that are misunderstood, abused and misapplied by the enemies of the truth, who would put their private interpretation upon the Word of God. And they would, in fact, have God loving a world that he condemns and would, in fact, accuse God of condemning many for whom He sent His Son, not to condemn but to save. And they would charge God with loving many upon whom His wrath shall always abide. Therefore, this being true, it behooves us not to put our private interpretation upon John 3:16, neither upon any other portion of God’s Holy, and infallible Word. We should endeavor to explain and interpret it in the light of the revelation of the whole of the Word of God.

Paul, for example, in writing to the

Colossians said, **“The gospel which has come unto you as it is in all the world and bringeth forth fruit”**. Now, the question is this: “Does the gospel bring forth fruit in unbelievers?” The Scriptures state that, *All the world should be taxed, that all the world wondered after the Beast, that deceiveth the whole world, The whole world lies in wickedness*. Thus, beloved, the word “cosmos”, translated “world” in our King James Version of the Bible, is used of the universe. It is used of the earth. It is used of humanity, minus believers. It is used of Gentiles in contrast to Jews. It is used of believers only. The reference to the word “world” in Luke 2:1 refers to the Roman world. The “whole world” in Romans 1:8 refers to the same. In Revelation 13:3 **“the world wondered after the beast”**. Yet, we know, beloved, there are some that will not receive his mark, so they will not wonder after him. The elect cannot be so deceived.

So, the statement, **“the whole world lies in wickedness”** in I John 5:19 does not refer to the saved because they do not belong to this world. The saved are in it, but not of it, according to the words of our Lord in John 17:14. So, beloved, to say that the word “world” means all men without exception, or all men who have, or ever shall live, is an invalid interpretation, and is no more than the doctrine of men. For when interpreted in the light of these other Scriptures just mentioned, then this interpretation of “men”, as is currently held, prevalently propagated, and believed in religious circles, is found wanting.

Now, the word “whosoever” in John 3:16 is

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the other word which is misunderstood, abused, and misapplied by those who would put their private interpretation upon the Word of God. This word, "*whosoever*", is the worldwide application of God's purpose! Thus, salvation is not confined to one particular nation or race. "Whosoever" refers to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews. Someone might raise the question; "Do you not believe in whosoever will?" Yes, beloved, I certainly do, as it is used here and in Revelation 3:17 for example, or Romans 10:13. But the question is, "Who can will?" The "will"

that is to determine, is the same "will" that is to be and must be determined by grace. The disease therefore is in the "will". And how can a diseased will provide the cure for a depraved soul? The great truth, announced here in John 3:16, is to a religious Jew and shows him that the Gentile is included in God's love and that the Jews are not the exclusive object of God's affections.

The "world" in John 3:16 and 17 must be understood to consist of only the elect Jews and Gentiles, of whose salvation and deliverance from condemnation Christ came into the world. If Jesus Christ procured through His death a possibility of salvation only, then He only removed the insuperable obstruction that man might become his own savior. That would exalt, beloved, the goodness and the power of the creature and not the merit and grace of God. Did the Lord Jesus only make salvation possible by His death, and man may make his damnation certain by his unbelief? If the Lord Jesus failed in His purpose, why was He exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, as stated in Acts 5:31. What sense can there be in interpreting the word "world" to mean every individual, when God purposed that none but believers shall benefit from His love, according to our text here in John 3:16?

This verse begins in eternity with God and ends with man in eternity. The love of God comes in time to ransom a host of believing souls. And, beloved, the verb "believeth" here shows the subject of the verb "whosoever" to be acting. It is "Whosoever believeth", not "whosoever without qualification", as the Arminian would have us to believe today. If the eternity of God is understood, one would have no difficulty in interpreting John 3:16. Duration of divine existence is from eternity, according to our finite way of understanding eternity. Divine duration must be considered as wholly permanent, and the ever present "now" not capable of division into parts any more than the divine existence itself. Thus, things future to us, are present with Almighty God. And with this fact properly understood, we know that the Eternal God co-exists with faith, but faith does not co-exist with God. Because of this eternal (See **CONVERSION Continued P. 4, Lft. Col.**)

SOVEREIGN GRACE VERSUS FREEWILLISM

The 5 Points of Free and Sovereign Grace

Total Depravity

Sin controls every part of man. He is spiritually dead and blind, and unable to obey, believe, or repent. He continually sins, for his nature is completely evil.

Unconditional Election

God chose the elect solely on the basis of His free grace, not anything in them. He has a special love for the elect. God left the rest to be damned for their sins.

Limited Atonement

Christ died especially for the elect, and paid a definite price for them that guaranteed their salvation.

Irresistible Grace

Saving grace is irresistible, for the Holy Spirit is invincible and intervenes in man's heart. He sovereignly gives the new birth, faith and repentance to the elect.

Perseverance Of The Saints

God preserves all the elect and causes them to persevere in faith and obedience to the end. None of the elect are continually backslidden or finally lost.

*To The Praise of God's
Free and Sovereign Grace*

The 5 Points of Arminian Freewillism

Free Will

Sin does not control man's will. He is sick and near-sighted, but still able to obey, believe and repent. He does not continually sin, for his nature is not completely evil.

Conditional Election

God chose the elect on the basis of their foreseen faith. He loves all men equally. God passed over no one, but gives everyone an equal chance to be saved.

Universal Atonement

Christ died equally for all men, and paid a provisional price that made salvation possible for all but guaranteed it for none.

Resistible Grace

Saving grace is resistible, for God cannot interfere with man's free will. Man is born again after he believes, for faith and repentance are not gifts of God.

Falling From Grace

Only a few Christians continue in faith and obedience to the end (Arminians are divided over whether one can actually lose his salvation).

*To The Praise of Man's
Alleged Free Will*

Ephesians 1:4-6

⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

(CONVERSION Continued From Page 2) fact, Jeremiah could say, by the divine leadership of the Spirit, ***“The Lord hath appeared of old and is saying ‘Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee’, Jeremiah 31:3.*** Beloved, we have “cause” and “effect”. The cause is God’s everlasting love for His people, and the fruit, or effect, of that cause is God drawing them. That is, unto Himself.

Therefore, our text reveals God’s love. And beloved, noticing the quality or the kind or the nature of this love, we say this morning that God’s love is uninfluenced. Now, God’s love is not limited to those who “will” believe on account of their own innate nature and because of their obedience to the Word of God uninfluenced by grace. No, beloved, God’s love in John 3:16 is a love that is uninfluenced by the objects of it. The Bible says, ***“For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:6-8.***

Notice, beloved, that we have here God’s love being commended toward us while we were without strength, while we were ungodly. Yea, before we had “being” in time God loved us. Therefore, beloved, God’s love is not reciprocal. Human love is! We love because we are loved. But divine love, beloved, is not a response to something outside of itself. God loves because that is His nature. Love is God’s character. Not His characteristic! Therefore, we hear John saying, ***“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.” 1st John 3:16.*** So, beloved, God’s love is uninfluenced. And this so-called Gospel, being preached so prevalently in our day, that suggests at least, that God loves us because we love Him and obey Him, and do things, is beloved, not the love of God revealed in Holy Scriptures. That which makes God’s love something that is incomprehensible; that is adorable and worthy of our consideration, our praise, our prayers and our song, is beloved,

because God’s love is uninfluenced.

Secondly, God’s love is infinite. The question is raised, “Is it possible to know the unknowable?” Paul, under inspiration answers in the affirmative when he says in ***Ephesians 3:19 “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God”.*** Beloved, the love of God is an intriguing subject. It attracts attention by arousing one’s curiosity. God’s love is a subject with many sources of reflection. But Paul speaks of only one, its incomprehensibility. Notice he says, ***“It passeth knowledge”.***

Whatever others may think of themselves, a person who has been born of the Spirit of God readily admits he has done nothing to commend himself to God. He has done nothing to merit God’s love. People who try to convince us that they have been unfortunate, rather than criminal, are not manifesting the fruit of divine grace. That is not a true confession of depravity. How can we really know that which is unknowable? We can, beloved, know by grace what we cannot know by nature. We can know by faith what we cannot know by reason. We can know the effects without comprehending the cause. We can know the reality of God’s existence, without understanding the nature of His existence. We may know that increasingly which cannot be known perfectly. But the Bible says, ***“The path of the just is a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day”.*** The wisdom of God’s people increases, beloved. Our ideas of love may be more clear and consistent in the future than they are at the present. We see so dimly now that our eyes are only half opened, and too often confusion seems to reign in many children of God’s conception of things divine.

Therefore, our hearts need to be established. It is to be lamented that our ideals oftentimes exceed our actions. Is there not a difference in a principle slumbering in the head and being alive in the heart? Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians was that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. Man in his natural condition is empty of God. Man in his glorified state will be full of God. He is all in all! However, beloved, man in his gracious state, that is, a sinner in a state of grace, has a degree of both his original

emptiness and his final fullness. He is not what he was; neither is he what he will be. He is thankful for what he has, but he wants more of the presence and the image of Jesus Christ. Love, therefore, constrains the child of God to a life of holiness and service. So, beloved, God's love is infinite. Oh, the love of God is unfathomable! We perceive His love because he laid down His life for us, but the depths of that love we cannot perceive because of our finiteness, and the like. So, beloved, God's love is uninfluenced by us. God's love is infinite.

And then, beloved, God's love is immutable. Like God Himself who is unchangeable, His love is immutable. ***“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”***, we are told in the Book of God. God does not love all men in the provision of salvation, and hate those who reject it. As we have already stated, beloved, God's love is eternal. Since it had no beginning, it can have no ending. And this prevalent doctrine of our day is that God loves everybody. But it also states if you spurn the love of God, that love will turn to hate, and that love will turn to wrath. Beloved, again, this is no more than a doctrine predicated upon the freewill of man rather than upon the free grace of God in man's salvation. And this doctrine of men is to be totally rejected by the children of God, and the churches of Jesus Christ our Lord. God's love is immutable, unchangeable.

Moreover, God's love is a Holy love. His love is not regulated by passion or sentiment, but by principle. God's love will never conflict with holiness and will never wink at sin. The highest manifestation of God's love is the cross of Jesus Christ, when the sins of His people were laid upon His Son. Then, the justice of God and the holiness of God treated the Son of God and punished our sins in Him. Yea, the degree of the punishment of sin that was owing to us was meted out upon the Lord Jesus Christ who was made sin for us.

So, beloved, the holiness of God and the justice of God, and the holiness and the justice of God's Law, are seen at the cross of Calvary. It is a Holy love. And, the source of love is God Himself. The principle object of the love of God

is Himself. Self-love in all intelligent beings is in us by nature. So, self-love is in all of us, and it is not condemned when it is carried on in its proper channels. Persons are not obligated to love others more than themselves, but as themselves, according to the Words of our Lord in Matthew 22:39 and many other places. God, therefore, first and chiefly, loves Himself. Thus, He has made His glory the chief end of all of his works, in nature, providence, and in grace. This is borne out in so many passages of Scripture. And that is, again beloved, that God's chief end in His work, in nature, in providence and in grace, is His own Glory.

That is the reason, beloved, that everything that you and I do as creatures of God in general, and as a child of God in particular, is to be motivated by His glory and is to have His glory in view. So, whatsoever ye do in deed or word, do all to the glory of God is the command of Holy Scripture. Whether, therefore ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God. So, the chief end in all that God has done, is doing, and shall do, whether in purpose, in providence or in the culmination of all things, is His own glory.

The three divine Persons in the Godhead mutually love each other we are told. For example Jesus said in John 17:24: ***“that they may behold my glory, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world”***. So, the Father loves the Son, the Son and the Father love the Spirit. The Spirit and the Son love the Father. So, the Persons of the Godhead mutually love each other. God is the fountain from whom love proceeds. And the only way that you and I, the sons of Adam, are capable of loving to a degree, in the same nature and essence and means by which God loves us, is that the love of God be shed abroad in our hearts.

Therefore, the next in the attributes which belong to God as a Holy and intelligent Spirit, we may consider those which may be called affections. There are some things done by Him, which are similar to affections in intelligent beings. They are ascribed to Him as love, hatred, anger and the like. From these, everything carnal, sensual, or has any degree of imperfection in it, must be removed. Here love stands first in the affections, because God is

love, but love is not God's chief attribute. Both holiness and justice precede love in the divine order of things. God is so Holy that He cannot look upon sin, we are told in Habakkuk 1:13

Justice protects His holiness. God's justice must be satisfied in order for holiness to manifest love to the sinner. God's love has a specific object. We are told here in our text of John 3:16 that object is the world. The statement "love is of God" does not mean that it comes from God in the same way that light comes from God. God said, "**Let there be light, and there was light**". It does not say, "Let there be love, and there was love". God's love does not shine upon the whole world, that is, all people without exception as the light of nature does. This love of God is a saving love. It is not a love which merely tends toward salvation.

God gave, that is the expression. God gave, expresses the freeness of the gift. Giving and receiving are relative terms, and one presupposes the other. God never gives something that is not received. The gift, however, is not to every man, for to whomsoever He gives His Son, He gives all things freely with Him, according to Romans 8:32. Since love is God's gift, whomsoever God loves receives His gift. The world which Jesus Christ came to save is not completed as yet. And this is the reason that God is longsuffering and the reason that God has not returned again the second time, according to II Peter 3:9.

There is no marvel so great, beloved, no mystery so unfathomable, as this: That the great and good God, whose perfect righteousness claims an indignation at the sight of every iniquity, and whose absolute holiness recoils in the presence of every impurity, loves this sinful world and has so loved it that He gave His only begotten Son to die for it. Oh, amazing love, Oh, the Love of God. Who can understand the love of God? Who can comprehend the length, and the height, and the breadth of the love of God which passeth all knowledge?

Oh beloved, the Lord willing, we will continue this study that God's love is the cause of our conversion. But until then, "May the Lord bless each of you" is our prayer.

AN APOLOGY AND AN EXPLANATION

From Wayne Camp

In the February issue of *The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator* I somehow failed to get the entire article on the **ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST** into my desktop publishing document. I also, and I have no idea how it happened, got a paragraph at the end of the article that had nothing to do with the article. For this I am truly sorry. My apologies to the readers and also to Brother Daniel Chamberlain. I am therefore re-publishing the entire message.

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST

By Daniel Chamberlain

The doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is an important, biblical, historical truth. It is one that needs to be reaffirmed in our day.

Let us define the issue. The question I seek to answer is, "Is the relationship of Father and Son eternal and essential in the Godhead; or is it temporal, incarnational and pertaining only to the economy of redemption?" I believe the Scriptures teach the former: that the paternal-filial relationship in the Godhead stands from eternity. The Son is eternally the Son. He is eternally begotten, or generated, of the Father. There is no point in eternity in which the Son began to be the Son, and there is no point in eternity in which the Son was not begotten of the Father.

Obviously, our earthly ideas of begetting must be set aside when we consider the eternal existence of the Persons of the Godhead. There is no posteriority; each Person is coeternal. There is no subordination; each Person is coequal. There is no sexual reproduction. Some have jested, "Who was the eternal mother?" But such sophists will soon be asking, "Who was the mother of Adam or the angels?" After all, they too are called sons of God (Luke 3:38; Job 1:6, etc.). We creatures want to think of our Creator in terms of our own limitations. But the finite can never fully comprehend the infinite. Eternal concepts are unfathomable for creatures of

time. We simply must be content to believe what Scripture says about this admittedly complex subject. The Father and Son and Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal, and at the same time these personal distinctions are sustained.

Why is this subject important?

1. We ought to be faithful to the Scripture in what is revealed to us. Certainly there is much about God that is incomprehensible to us. Furthermore we all have our individual "blind spots" and must be patient with one another. But we must go as far as we can in the knowledge of the Holy.

2. The glory of Christ is a paramount doctrine. If Scripture reveals Him as the eternal Son, then it is detracting from His glory to believe otherwise.

3. The Sonship of Christ is vitally involved with our salvation, as the following verses declare:

(1) **John 3:18** *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

(2) **John 6:40** *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

(3) **John 6:69** *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*

(4) **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.*

(5) **Acts 8:37** *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

(6) **1 John 4:15** *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*

Error concerning His Sonship implies error about salvation altogether.

4. Our whole Christian experience, our whole walk with God, is based on the Trinity (John 16:23-24; 1John 5:5, 13). A lack of clear definition of the Persons in the Godhead will

lead to a lack of clarity in our own personal experience.

Though some good men have denied this doctrine, let us endeavor, as Isaac Backus said, to "leave good men and bad men out of the question, and inquire: What saith the Scripture?"

What Scripture Says About Eternal Sonship

1. **John 1:14** *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* His glory as eternal Logos is the same as His glory as only begotten Son. Compare 1 John 1:1-3 where three terms are used to speak of the Second Person of the Trinity—"Word, eternal life, Son"—without any apparent distinction.

2. **John 1:18** *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Under the title of "Son" He is in the bosom of the Father. That is, He possesses perfect and intimate knowledge of God the Father.

3. **Matthew 11:27** *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* The knowledge between the Persons as Father and Son is exclusive and is essential to their Being. It is not an acquired knowledge, as is ours by revelation.

4. **Hebrews 7:28** *For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* God's oath was made to the Son, appointing Him to be the great High Priest. Christ is not the Son because He is the High Priest; rather, He is the High Priest because He is the Son. He is not the Son because He is Mediator; rather, He is Mediator because He is the Son. His eternal glory as the Son qualifies and fits Him for the office.

5. **John 17:5** *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Christ's glory as the Son with the Father was

His before creation.

6. **John 17:24** *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.* The Fatherly love for the Son pertains to the realm of eternity and is without beginning.

7. **Colossians 1:16** *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.* In the context, the "him" is the "dear Son" of the "Father" (v. 12-13). Under the designation of "Son" He created all things, including things in heaven. Therefore, His Sonship is not a created relationship, but one of eternal standing.

8. Some verses speak of the **Father** sending the **Son** into the world.

(1) **John 5:23** *He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.*

(2) **1 John 4:14** *And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.* This implies that He was the Son before He was sent. We never read that the Father sent into the world the One who became the Son.

9. Similarly, we read of **God** sending His **Son** into the world or giving His **Son**.

(1) **1 John 4:9-10** *God sent his only begotten Son into the world.* The wording here, as elsewhere, points to the Son existing as the Son prior to His arrival into this world.

(2) **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.*

10. Again, we read of the **Father** sending **Christ**:

(1) **John 10:36** *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

(2) **John 16:28** *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

(3) **John 20:21** *as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Fatherhood necessitates Sonship in the deity. There was a Father*

already existing as Father who sent Christ. Therefore, there must have been a Son existing as Son before He came into this world. Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 8:6 speaks of God's Fatherhood as synonymous with His Godhood. **But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.**

11. **Galatians 4:4** *But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.* His being made of a woman did no more make Him to be the Son than did His being made under the law. Consider the parallel construction of **John 1:14** *And the Word was made flesh.* Inasmuch as He was the Word before He was made flesh, He was the Son before He was made of a woman. Similarly we read in **Romans 8:3** that **God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.** He was the Son before He took human flesh.

12. **1 John 3:8** *the Son of God was manifested.* Consider the parallel construction of **1 Timothy 3:16** *God was manifest in the flesh,* and **1 John 1:2** *the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.* In each case the thing said to be manifest existed before its manifestation.

13. **John 11:4** *This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.* The glory of God as God and the glory of the Son as God is one and the same.

14. **Acts 9:20** *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* The newly converted Saul of Tarsus preached Christ in His highest glory in terms of Sonship. He was the One who had confronted him, spoken to him and blinded him with His glory while he was en route to Damascus.

15. **Matthew 4:3, 6** *If [or since] thou be the Son of God...* The devil was seeking to flatter Christ by calling Him by His loftiest name. If it were merely an incarnational name bespeaking humiliation, it would have defeated the devil's purpose to call him "Son of God."

16. **Matthew 28:19 baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.** If we understand “Father” and “Holy Spirit” to be eternal Persons in those designations, then it follows that the same is true of the Son. The same order is given in 1John 5:7 **For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.** The One who is essentially the “Word” is essentially the “Son.”

17. **1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.** The true God is the One who is defined in terms of Fatherhood and Sonship.

18. **Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.** His Sonship is spoken of as the height of His glory, not the depth of humiliation in His incarnation. If incarnational Sonship is true, we would expect the verse to read, **“Because he was a Son He learned obedience...”** But the verse intends a contrast of His glorious Sonship with the depth of His humiliation in incarnational sufferings.

19. **John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.** It does not say, “making himself inferior to, or subject to, God.” That would not have angered the Jews. The Father-Son relationship in the deity is not one of superior-inferior, but rather of **equality**. Christ’s Sonship is an essential perfection (i.e. perfection in the very essence of the divine Being, not a mere incarnational, incidental feature).

20. **Hebrews 1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.** This quotation from Psalm 45 is the Father speaking to the Son long before His incarnation.

21. **Proverbs 8:22-24 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was**

brought forth. Wisdom personified is Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). These verses speak of His being possessed, set up and brought forth from eternity.

22. **Proverbs 30:4 who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell?** Here the Son of God is referred to long before His incarnation. He is spoken of as creating the earth along with the One who must necessarily be considered as His “Father.”

23. **Micah 5:2 whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.** The “goings forth” here most naturally refers to origin or **generation**. It is said to be from **everlasting**, hence the concept of “eternal generation.”

Objections to the Doctrine

Objection 1. “What about Luke 1:35, **And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God?”**

Answer: This verse does not say that Christ’s incarnation made Him to become the Son of God. Instead, it tells us why He is *called* by that title. Following the method of this objection, we might also say that His resurrection made Him to become the Son, according to Acts 13:33 **God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.** I understand Paul here to refer to the **human** nature of Christ being “begotten” in resurrection from the grave. The other citations of Psalm 2:7 in the New Testament (Hebrews 1:5 **For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?** and Hebrews 5:5 **So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee**) seem to refer to the **divine** nature which was begotten on the eternal “day” or “eternal now.” This is the same idea that is in view in the context of Psalm 2:7. Perhaps this same

distinction of human and divine natures in the Person of Christ accounts for the phraseology of Isaiah 9:6 ***For unto us a child is born [humanity], unto us a son is given [deity].***

Romans 1:4 tells us that His resurrection ***declared Him to be the Son of God.*** So did His birth. These earthly acts proved and acknowledged Him to be what He already was, but they did not constitute Him as such.

Objection 2. Some object on the ground that we do not find the terms “eternal Sonship” and “eternal generation” in Scripture. But this argument is only employed when it is convenient. Lack of biblical terminology to define a doctrine does not necessarily determine the validity of the doctrine. The terms “trinity,” “penal substitution” and “church perpetuity” are not used, but these principles are certainly found in Scripture. While we ought to use Scriptural terminology as much as we can, the use of non-biblical terminology is no solid objection.

Objection 3. Some stumble at the doctrine because they think it implies some inferiority in the Person of Christ. But Sonship in the essential divine relationship does not imply such. The Son and the Spirit are equal in glory to the Father. As to their essence they are eternally self-existent; as to their Persons they are eternally derived—the Son from the Father, and the Spirit from the Father and the Son. There is order in the Trinity, but not inferiority.

In the economy of redemption, the Son did assume a subordinate, submissive role in His state of humiliation and death. But this humbling did not make Him the Son. It made Him a Servant (Philippians 2:7), but not a Son. The concepts of Servant and Son are very distinct.

Concluding Observations

The doctrine of eternal Sonship spares us from confusion in the Trinity. Without Father, Son and Spirit as eternal designations we have no biblical way to differentiate the Persons of the Trinity. What is there to know about the Trinity apart from these designations? Without them we are left with featureless, indistinguishable Persons in their essential

glory. The Father could have been the Son or the Spirit, etc. In fact, we could not rightly speak of the “First Person” or “Second Person” or “Third Person.” There would be no identifiable structure in the Trinity at all. If there is any differentiation between the Persons, it must be essential and eternal, not merely economical and temporal.

The doctrine of eternal Sonship is a safeguard against outright denials of the Trinity and the many Christological errors of the cults, such as:

- Arianism, a denial of the full deity of Christ,
- Socinianism, a denial of the pre-existence of Christ altogether,
- Unitarianism, a denial of the Trinity,
- Sabellianism or Modalism, which teaches that there is but one Person manifested in three modes of existence.

The doctrine of eternal Sonship shows forth the glory of the gospel. Without these eternal relations much of the richness of redemption is lost. Instead of a Father giving His only and dearly beloved Son for us, we merely have one undefined Person giving another undefined Person. Does not Romans 8:32 teach otherwise? ***He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*** Calling Christ His ***own Son*** points to the tenderness and intimacy of the relation between the Father and the Son, the amazing love of the Father for us, and the preciousness of the sacrifice of Christ whom the Father delivered up. Likewise in Mark 12:6, in the parable of the vineyard, we read concerning the husbandman: ***Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them.*** These paternal and filial designations grip our hearts deeply, filling us with wonder and worship. They lie at the very heart of redemption.

The Scripture teaches eternal Fatherhood and Sonship in a divine dimension. Let us hold fast to this revelation for the glory of the triune God and for the preservation of His glorious gospel!

NOTE: Brother Chamberlain plans to print this message in a tract as soon as possible.

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JOHN GILL ON THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE GOSPEL IN REGENERATION

The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

The doctrines which Christ had then been delivering concerning himself, his flesh and blood, being spiritually understood, are the means of quickening souls. The Gospel, and the truths of it, which are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, are the means of conveying the Spirit of God, as a spirit of illumination and sanctification, into the hearts of men, and of quickening sinners dead in trespasses and sins: the Gospel is the Spirit that giveth life, and is the savour of life unto life, when it comes not in word only, or in the bare ministry of it, but with the energy of the Holy Ghost, and the power of divine grace.

A BRIEF REPORT ON THE 2009- 2010 SCHOOL TERM

By Wayne Camp

This will be a brief report on the just-closed term of the Sovereign Grace Independent Baptist School Of Theology. I am waiting for some pictures of the closing exercises. In the next issue I hope to publish a more detailed report with some pictures from the past term, especially of the closing exercises.

This was a good school year but different in several always. We were blessed with having four different brethren help out with the teaching at the school this year. I hope to get each of these brethren to write a report on their impressions of the school during the time he was there.

Ruth and I arrived on October 30, 2009. We moved into our condo on November 2, 2009. Our first day of school was on Wednesday, November 4. The first day was given to orientation and greetings from the students and their wives. I'll have pictures of this in the next issue. I taught five hours on Thursday and five hours on Friday. Ruth also taught beginning English while I taught the advanced English the first hour and one half of each day. On Saturday I preached at a Thanksgiving service and on Sunday in one of the churches.

Brother Galen Haegele arrived for the second week of school. Ruth and I continued to teach English classes the first period on Tuesdays and Wednesdays of each week. On the first day Bro. Haegele was in class I also taught one Bible class so that he could see how we conducted classes. On Thursdays and Fridays I taught Biblical Typology. Brother Haegele taught on the book of Ephesians.

When Brother Haegele left to return home Brother Mike McCoskey came and I continued my schedule of teaching and he taught from the book of Romans. On December 21, 2009, Brother Mike, Ruth and I all departed to return to the states. School was recessed until after the first of the year.

Brother Paul Brown and his wife arrived the first week of January and commenced teaching

on January 7, 2010. The first period each day Brother Brown taught advanced English while Sister Brown taught first-year English. The remainder of the day Brother Brown taught on the various Aspects of Salvation.

A few days before Brother Brown and his wife returned to the states Brother Billy Holladay and his wife Pat arrived. They followed the same pattern of classes as had been conducted previously with Brother Holladay teaching from the book of Acts. They stayed until the closing of school.

I'll give more information in another report. I might also tell you that God willing Ruth and I will be going for the full four months next term.

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