



# The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

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## LORD'S SUPPER: SHOULD WE USE WINE OR GRAPE JUICE?

By Wayne Camp  
PART I

**TEXT: Matthew 26:26-30** *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. (27) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; (28) For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (29) But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. (30) And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

**1 Corinthians 11:26-30** *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (27) Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. (29) For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (30) For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

**INTRO:** Almost everyone I have ever read after or heard preach on the Lord's Supper agreed that unleavened bread is the proper bread to use when observing the Lord's Supper. I did hear one American Baptist Convention preacher

boasting about the fact that his church had scrambled eggs and orange juice to celebrate "**communion**". I also heard of a Southern Baptist Church in Texas that had hamburgers and Pepsi-Cola and called it the Lord's Supper.

In this two our three-part message, I am going to deal with a subject about which there has been some controversy among Baptists in the past 75 or 80 years. It is a controversial one in the minds of many people. I do not believe it is controversial as far as Biblical, historical, and secular evidence is concerned.

While I will quote some men who were not at all involved in the study of the Lord's Supper, I will do so to bring unprejudiced minds to this study. But, most of all, I want to make a biblical study of this question. I do that for several reasons.

First, any true Baptist Church accepts both the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures as the rule of its faith and practice. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Second, God has magnified his word above all his name and we should abide by its teachings and never swerve from them. **Psalms 138:2** *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.* God has commanded that we not take his name in vain; and he has exalted his word above his name; must we not be very careful that we not take his word in vain by refusing to follow its precepts when they are as clear as they are on most

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subjects.

Third, Christ has set two ordinances in his church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Should we not be as careful in following the biblical examples and teaching concerning the Lord's Supper as we are concerning Baptism? Let me illustrate what I am talking about. I have been asked, "What if a small drink of wine makes me sick, should grape juice not be substituted for wine to keep me from getting sick." The person asking the question had admitted that the biblical examples indicated that wine was what

Jesus used and what we ought to use. I replied, "I once baptized a person who was very sick with the flu. I asked her if she wanted to wait and she did not. Knowing that immersing her in cold water might make her sicker and could even mean death (it was early spring and we baptized in a small river). The lady assured me she did not want to wait. She trusted the Lord to take care of her. My question is this, ***Would it have been acceptable to suggest to her that I sprinkle her since there was a potential danger in her being immersed in cold river water?*** After all, we would have been using water if we sprinkled or if we immersed. We dare not tamper with the ordinances, either baptism or the Lord's Supper.

Fourth, we are to declare all the counsel of God on any biblical subject, even if that subject is controversial. ***Acts 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*** If it is unequivocally evident that the Bible teaches immersion in water for baptism, dare I disobey by sprinkling and calling what is truly rantism baptism? If it is obvious that wine was the element which Jesus used when he instituted the Lord's Supper, do I have the prerogative to change it to accommodate anyone? ***Acts 5:29 We ought to obey God rather than men.***

Fifth, I would call on us all to heed the admonition which Paul gave to the Hebrew Christians. ***Hebrews 13:22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer [allow] the word of exhortation.***

There was a time in the years that I have been pastoring that I would have argued that wine was not prohibited in the Lord's Supper but I would have argued passionately that grape juice was as good or better than wine. In short, I held that it was a matter of choice or preference whether a church used wine or grape juice.

What most need to do is sit down and make an unimpassioned, unprejudiced look at the matter. This is what I did about 30 years ago. When I was finished with my study of the matter, I was convinced the drink element in the Lord's Supper should be wine. I would have been perfectly happy if the outcome had been that I was convinced that grape juice should be used. The church I was pastoring used grape

juice so there was no benefit to me to arrive at the conclusion that wine was the Scriptural beverage for the supper. My interest in the study was an arrival at the truth, not an arrival at what would please the people of whom I was pastor.

### SOME DIFFICULTIES OF THIS STUDY

The fact that we are so far removed from the setting and time in which the supper was instituted is one reason many have so many problems. The New Testament does not use the word **wine** in reference to the Lord's Supper. Neither does it use the words **grape juice!** The Temperance movement caused many to espouse the idea that all use of wine, socially, medically, and in the Lord's Supper was wrong.

**Illustration:** A few years ago I was on the Historic Baptist Symposium. There was a man on that symposium who was vehemently opposed to any use of wine. He said he refused to take any alcohol into his body. I pointed out that broccoli contains a small amount of alcohol naturally. I asked him if he ever ate broccoli. Other vegetables and fruits have small amounts of alcohol naturally. I asked him if he ate vegetables and fruit. I also pointed out that such things as Vaseline hand lotion has alcohol in it and when you rub it on your hands and arms your body absorbs alcohol from it.

Another problem we face in this study is the many verses of Scripture that appear to condemn the use of wine totally. Wine is declared to be a mocker and any who drink any of it are deemed unwise. **Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.** All kinds of trouble lie in wait for those who use wine. **Proverbs 23:29-35 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter**

**perverse things. 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. 35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.** Paul admonished Christians to not be drunk with wine. **Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.** There are several other Scriptures which could be cited that can be construed to mean that one should never, ever, under any circumstances, or for any purpose use wine.

In two previous issues I have dealt with the fact that it is the abuse of wine and not the use of wine that the Bible condemns. If in the rest of this message I use more verses commending the use of wine than I have cited that condemn the use of wine, I want you to know that I am aware of those other verses. I am not attempting to imply that the weight of evidence is heavily on the positive side in this matter.

One other difficulty I will cite is the fact that since prohibition days many churches have been using grape juice rather than wine. That was not so before the temperance movement and prohibition. **But, many believe that long usage makes a thing right.** But, using that argument I can prove that murder is all right. Cain killed Abel several thousand years ago. Since that time there have been many murders. But that does not make it right. It is what the Bible says on murder and on the matter of wine, its use and abuse, that is the final authority on the matter.

### IT IS THE ABUSE, NOT THE USE OF WINE, WHICH THE BIBLE CONDEMNS

I would remind you again that it is the abuse, not the use of wine, that the Bible condemns.

When Melchizedek, who was a type of Jesus Christ, went out to meet Abraham one of the things he brought to Abraham was a gift of wine. **Genesis 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.**

Melchizedek was a priest of the most high God and apparently did not see any sin in the

use of wine, and he did bring wine. The Hebrew word used here for wine is **yayin** which, according to Strong, refers to fermented wine that intoxicates.

Abraham was a man of God and of great faith and he apparently accepted and drank the wine brought to him by this godly king-priest.

Isaac was a godly man, a man of faith, yet he drank wine when it was brought to him by his son, Jacob. **Genesis 27:25** *And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.* The word used for wine here is the same as that referred to above. Jacob was practically blind but his taste buds and his sense of smell would've told him immediately that this was wine not grape juice. Yet this great man of faith drank the wine.

When Isaac blessed Jacob, among the things he prayed for was that Jacob be blessed by God with wine. **Genesis 27:28** *Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.*

In other articles I have previously pointed out that the morning and evening sacrifice required that a fourth of a hin of wine be offered each time. These offerings were to be made every morning and every evening. **Exodus 29:40** *And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. Numbers 28:1-14* *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. 3 And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering. 4 The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even; 5 And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil. 6 It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a*

*sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 7 And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD for a drink offering. 8 And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 9 And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: 10 This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering. 11 And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; 12 And three tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; 13 And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil for a meat offering unto one lamb; for a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 14 And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year.*

The strong wine that was required in these sacrifices comes from the word **shêkâr** and refers to fully fermented and intensely intoxicating wine.

Several of the other offerings required wine as a drink offering to accompany them. I covered these in a message called **Strong Wine and Powerful Blood** but for those who may have missed that message I will refer to just a few offerings and verses of Scripture. The meat offering. **Leviticus 23:13** *And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin.* The whole burnt offering. **Numbers 15:8-10** *And when*

**thou preparest a bullock for a burnt offering, or for a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace offerings unto the LORD: 9 Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat offering of three tenth deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oil. 10 And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.** The heave offerings included wine and these offerings were for the priests to eat and drink of. **Numbers 18:8-12 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever. 9 This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. 10 In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. 11 And this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. 12 All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee.**

During the days of his separation the Nazarite was to drink no wine, but after the time of his separation was over he could drink wine. **Numbers 6:20 And the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD: this is holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.**

God promised to bless Israel in the new land and among those blessings was a promise to bless their wine. **Deuteronomy 7:13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land**

**which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.**

God causes wine to be had to gladden the heart. **Psalms 104:14-15 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; 15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.**

God even likens his salvation to good wine. **Isaiah 55:1-2 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.** Here again the Hebrew word *yayin* which means intoxicating wine is used.

Jesus' very first miracle during his ministry on earth was turning water into wine. **John 2:1-11** He did not turn the water into grape juice. According to the governor of the feast, the wine that Jesus made was the best, the strongest, the finest served at the feast. This marvelous miracle was performed by the sinless Son of Man and was the beginning of the miracles he performed to show forth his glory. If making wine was a means of Christ showing forth his glory, should we worry that our using wine in the Lord's Supper might be used to criticize us?

Based on his own words, I am forced to believe that Jesus himself drank wine during the days of his flesh, his earthly life. **Luke 7:33-34 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. 34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!** When the good Samaritan cleaned the wounds of the Jew injured and left for dead on the road to Jericho, he poured in oil and wine. Oil has a soothing effect. Wine cleanses and disinfects. He did not slice olives and grapes and lay them on the wound. He did not pour in olive juice and grape juice. He poured oil on it to sooth and wine to disinfect and cleanse.

To be continued next issue, the Lord willing.

## *Bouquets and Brickbats*

**FLORIDA:** I just read the July 1, 2010, Grace Proclamator and Promulgator and really did appreciate the article on wine. How can I get 10 copies of that issue? I want to mail them to a number of people whom I know.

**ALASKA:** Greetings in Jesus' blessed name. Finished reading your article on the Excogitations Concerning Wine in the July 1, 2010, Grace P&P, a few days ago. Question: Do you have this in a file you can attach and send to me. I want to copy, print, and distribute it – and post it on the church web site. Great job!

**ARKANSAS:** I would love to see more written about the use of wine in the Lord's Supper. So many do not believe this important truth in this day and time. Thank you very much for standing for the truth on this matter.

**INDIANA:** Thank you for the articles on Wine. They are good and timely. Here is something which I just ran across which I had not seen before and thought you might be interested in it:

### **WATER FOR WINE IN THE COMMUNION.**

But these innovations in early times were not confined to baptism. The Communion suffered much in the same way. As early as the time of Tatian a disciple of Justin Martyr, and leader of a sect of the Gnostics, who died near the close of the second century, water was used by the anti-Judaistic Encratites in place of wine in celebrating the Communion. They did not understand Christ to have commanded the use of water at the Communion, but they held the use of wine at any time to be sinful, and hence were called *Hydroparastates* [*the water-drinkers Editor*]. And because of this opinion they boldly rejected the example and precept of the Master, and changed a solemn institution of his word (*Guericke's Ch. Hist.*, Vol. I, p. 177). The Ebionites did the same. Once a year, on the feast of the Passover, they partook of the Communion, in remembrance of the last supper

of Christ, using unleavened bread and water only (*Epiphanius*, XXX, 16). [C. H. Forney, *The Ordinances*, (A Church of God minister). 1883].

**LOUISIANA:** I hope this note finds you well.

I remember reading "Baptist Barnacles Without Biblical Basis" while attending LMBIS, Minden, La., circa 1975. I surfed the internet for that booklet today and found it on your website. Thank The Lord for what you are doing.

I see you have changed camps since you wrote the book. I too have changed--mostly because of Soteriology--aka: Calvin and Arminius. I hasten to say that Sovereign Grace was taught and practiced long before they were born.

I have also noticed that some "Baptist" churches have been overthrown by the Free and Accepted Masons. (deeds of the Nicolaitans).

I am strongly persuaded about sovereign grace; yet find a tendency toward anti-missions is creeping into this work--especially on the local level. We seem to be content with considering how sound we must be--so sound that we are falling asleep. There are still lost sheep--right here in "River City", so to speak.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

**ILLINOIS:** Greetings in the wonderful name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am sure that you him high esteem in the Lord as a faithful servant of our God, but I am greatly disappointed in your latest issue of The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator. It has been a publication which I have eagerly read for some time.

In this latest issue, rather than speak that which is for edification you have chosen rather to speak on that which is divisive. It is an issue that has caused much harm among the Churches of the Lord. I am not upset because I do not agree with your opinions and theories on the issue of "wine" at the Lord's Table. I have fellowship with many brethren with whom I disagree on the subject. You have every right to interpret the Scriptures according to your own conscience. I believe I could if I was so inclined give an adequate response to every argument made in favor of using fermented (corrupted)

"wine" at the Lord's Table, but I have neither the time nor the inclination to attempt to altar your mind on issue.

Indeed that is my point exactly. It is an issue that Satan has used to harm the work of God. It is a subject that always divides and causes strife. Many Churches have been split and many of the Lord's children have felt compelled to leave one of the Lord's Churches and wander homeless because they could not find a "pure" Church that was right on the "wine issue." Every pastor has the right and the obligation to study the issue and to teach, the flock over which God has made him overseer, that which he believes to be right according to the leading of the Spirit of God. But when another "elder" begins to influence that flock to doubt the scripturalness of his Churches practice and of the rightness of his pastor he is wrong and has become a tool of the devil, even as Peter was.

Is this an issue over which you would break fellowship? I doubt it. Then why cause strife and controversy. Is this not an issue that we can agree to disagree about and work together for the glory of God? My own opinion is that many in our ranks [Independent, Missionary, Baptist Churches] make way too much of the issue of what is in the cup. The only Scriptural designation is "the fruit of the vine." Let us leave it there. The NT does not make an issue of the contents of the cup, and neither should we. Two men held in great respect among Baptists for many years agree that it is a non-issue. They are no less than Dr. Gill and Dr. A. H. Strong. Even though we neither one would agree with either man on all issues, I nevertheless quote them as men of high regard. Both are in agreement that the issue simply is of no importance.

Dr. Strong, for example, says, "Although the 'wine' (Quotation marks are mine, as the word wine is never used in connection with the Lord's Supper in the Scripture.) which Jesus poured out was doubtless the ordinary fermented juice of the grape, ( I do not agree.) there is nothing in the symbolism of the ordinance which forbids the use of unfermented juice of the grape,—obedience to the command "This do in remembrance of me" requires only that we should use the "fruit of the vine." Strong's

Systematic Theology. Page 960. Dr. Gill even says that he does not consider it a matter of importance if the bread is leavened or not. See Dr. Gill, Body of Divinity - The Lord's Supper 2a. (My only copy is in The On Line Bible.) My only point is that we should not make this an issue. It has become an issue used of our enemy to cause divisions and strife and harm the work of God. I plead with you my brother to use your gifts and your paper for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. There are a host of issues that do need to be spoken about, and could be done so to great benefit. Our nation is in need of revival. Many of our Churches have become complacent and do not spend enough time, effort and recourses in evangelism. Some have lowered the Biblical standards of separation from the world on entertainment and divorce. These need to be addressed. But whether or not a Church uses fermented or unfermented juice at the Lord's Table is not important.

I am returning the extra issues of the latest paper as I will not set them out and encourage our folks to read them. Please do not send us more than one copy (I do read it myself.) until you have chosen to speak on a more edifying topic. Please understand, my Brother, I am not so much angry as I am disappointed. I hope and pray that you will receive this letter in the spirit in which it is sent. I am only angry at the enemy of our soul who delights in having men of God side-tracked from the important work of winning souls, establishing Churches and seeing the saints edified.

## **EDITOR'S ANSWER TO THE LETTER ABOVE SHALL WE AVOID ALL THAT IS DIVISIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL?**

I do not know the brother writing the letter above although he says we met at some conferences. I appreciate his spirit and attitude in writing the letter but I am concerned that he thinks we ought to avoid that which is divisive or controversial. Before I critique his letter I would like to lay a scriptural foundation for dealing with that which is divisive and controversial.

Luke recorded the clear declaration of Jesus



that he had come to bring division on the earth. **Luke 12:51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division. Matthew 10:34-36 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. (35) For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. (36) And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.** It is clear that Jesus was willing to be divisive in what he preached and what he taught. He did not draw back from division. Jesus declared that he would even divide a man against his father and daughter against her mother. Some people would criticize him for the statement that he made in Luke 12:51 and Matthew 10:34-36.

When Jesus was at the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem he was teaching the people. When the people heard him, some declared that he was a prophet. Others thought him to be the Christ. Others questioned his identity. The result was that they were divided by his teaching. **John 7:43 So there was a division among the people because of him.** Do we need to avoid teaching what Jesus taught because it is divisive and sets people at variance with one another?

On another occasion Jesus healed a blind man. Surely folks would not be divided over such a good deed. Here was a man who had been blind for 38 years yet the fact that Jesus healed him caused division. **John 9:16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.** Should we refrain from preaching on the miracles of Jesus because they were and are divisive?

Anyone who believes the doctrine of Sovereign Grace will go to John chapter 10 for some of the proof texts of that great doctrine. The doctrine of limited atonement is taught there. The doctrine of election is taught in that chapter. The doctrine of effectual call is taught in that chapter. The doctrine of reprobation is taught in that chapter. But these very doctrines caused division. **John 10:19 There was a**

**division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.** Someone will probably say, "Shame on you Jesus, you are being divisive with your teaching."

Now I want to take a look at the brother's letter and note that some of the things the brother wrote are divisive.

First, in his letterhead he has the word **Baptist**. This word signifies the fact that his church is a baptizing church. More Baptist blood has been shed over baptism than possibly any other matter. If you teach that baptism is by immersion only it is divisive. I once declared in a sermon that the only way to baptize was by immersion. I said that anyone who had not been immersed had not been baptized.

No! It was not a Methodist who got upset with me but one of my own church members. She said that her mother had been sprinkled and that I was saying her mother had not been baptized. **Matthew 15:12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?** Anybody who has been around at all knows that the word Baptist is divisive. In fact, some churches are dropping Baptist from their name because it is offensive to some people. To quote the brother, "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife." But Dear Friends, one of the big problems in the world today is that people are not willing to stand for what they believe the Bible to teach. Sadly, some don't want others to stand for what the Bible teaches. I will remain a Baptist and I will teach there is no baptism except by immersion regardless of how much division this truth may cause.

The second word that I want to note in the letterhead is **Church**. Church is a very divisive word. Some, as does this editor, believe that the word refers to a local, visible congregation of scripturally baptized believers joined together in covenant to serve the Lord in the particular vicinity where they meet. But there are others who believe that the word church encompasses all the saved of all the ages. Then there are others who hold that the church is composed of all the saved from New Testament times to the present day and until Jesus comes. Some believe that it is universal and invisible. Roman



Catholics teach that the church is universal and visible. Perhaps we should just quit using the word church in this paper and on our church letterheads because it is a divisive word. "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife."

Another word that appears in this Brother's church letterhead is **Independent**. Some believe that Baptist churches should have no affiliation with any association or with any convention. On the other hand I have heard Baptist preachers who were very critical of those who were strictly independent of associations and conventions. I have heard preachers say, "My church is an ABA church." I have also heard preachers say sarcastically, "He is an independent Baptist." They said this as if there were some kind of stigma attached to a person whose church was not connected with an association or a convention. Beware of calling your church **independent**. "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife."

In this letterhead there is also the word **Missionary**. Baptists have been divided by the word missionary. There are those who are opposed to mission work. There are those who believe in doing mission work. There are those who believe that mission work is to be done through the local church. Others believe that mission work is best done through an association, convention, or some missionary society. Perhaps we should just quit using the word missionary because it is divisive. Avoid designating your church as **missionary**. "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife."

Then we come to the expression **Sovereign Grace**. Apparently the church this Brother pastors believes in the sovereign grace of God in the salvation of sinners. This expression indicates that the church believes in total hereditary depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement or particular redemption, the effectual call of the elect sometimes called irresistible grace, and the preservation and perseverance of the saints.

The doctrine of **total hereditary depravity** is a divisive doctrine. A great number of Baptist people do not believe that man is totally depraved. A great number of Baptists believe that man is capable of his own motivation to come to Christ. One brother with my

fellowshipped for several years told me once that he believed that man is like an egg. An egg has a little pocket in the small end of it that is filled with air. He said, "That little pocket of air is like man's free will. The whole man is depraved except for that little pocket of air or, his free will." This brother was president of the seminary that I attended a few years after I had left school. There were many of that persuasion. There are others who hold that the mind and heart of a man controls his will. But man's heart is wicked by nature. **Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?** The mind of the unregenerate man is defiled. **Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.** Because the heart and mind are depraved the will is depraved. Therefore Jesus said that man will not come to him. **John 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.** In fact Jesus said that man is so depraved he cannot come. **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.** Total hereditary depravity is a divisive doctrine. "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife."

There is also the doctrine of **Unconditional Election**. It is clearly, unequivocally, and abundantly taught in the word of God. But, it is a divisive doctrine. Churches have divided over the doctrine. To adapt what the brother said in his letter, "Many of the Lord's children have felt compelled to leave one of the Lord's Churches and wander homeless because they could not find" a doctrinally pure church that stood for these doctrines of grace. Perhaps we should no longer preach on such Scriptures as Second Thessalonians 2:13. **2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.** What about Ephesians 1:4? **Ephesians**

**1:4 According 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.** I can think of any number of scriptures that we would have to leave alone if we were to avoid this doctrine of **Unconditional Election**. "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife."

What I have said about these two doctrines could be said about the other three that I mentioned above. Don't mention the doctrine of **Limited Atonement**. "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife." Don't mention the doctrine of the **Effectual Call**. "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife." Don't mention the doctrine of the **Preservation And Perseverance Of The Saints**. "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife."

In his letter the brother said, "**In this latest issue, rather than speak that which is for edification you have chosen rather to speak on that which is divisive.**" I wonder, "Does this brother never speak on any doctrine that is divisive?"

The blood of Christ is a divisive doctrine. Some Baptists I know believe that Jesus had divine blood as opposed to human blood. The truth is God is a spirit and spirits do not have blood. But I have been called a heretic because I believed in the complete humanity of Christ as well as his absolute deity. **Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.** Of the **blood of Christ** it could certainly also be said, "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife."

We have already seen that Christ himself is divisive. **John 7:43 So there was a division among the people because of him.** Some are offended because of him. **Matthew 13:57 And they were offended in him.** Don't preach about Jesus Christ, "... (He) is a subject that always divides and causes strife."

The word of God is offensive to some. **Matthew 13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of**

**the word, by and by he is offended.** Because some who make professions of faith are sometimes offended because of the word when tribulation or persecution comes, perhaps we should not preach the word. The problem is we are commanded to preach the word. **2 Timothy 4:1-2 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; (2) Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.** But why are we to preach the word? Why is it so important that we preach the word? **2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.** Because some will not endure sound doctrine is all the more reason to preach the word. They will be offended by it. It may cause divisions and some may go away from a true church because it does not teach a watered-down message such as they desire. When I pastored in Illinois one of our students at seminary was fired from his church because he preached too much Bible. One charge that was made was that in one sermon he used 17 verses of Scripture. Should we avoid the Bible? Should we avoid preaching **God's word**? "It is a subject that always divides and causes strife." But Paul did not tell us to refrain from preaching the strong word of God to those who would not endure sound doctrine. No! He commanded us to preach the word. Another reason for preaching the word is because we cannot be pure from the blood of all men unless we declare all the counsel of God. **Acts 20:26-27 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. (27) For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.**

The brother writes, "**Some have lowered the Biblical standards of separation from the world on entertainment and divorce. These need to be addressed.**" Elsewhere the brother wrote that I should spend my time writing only on those things that edify. I have been trying to figure out how writing on entertainment would be edifying. Besides the matter of **entertainment** for Christians is divisive. "It is a

subject that always divides and causes strife.” Moreover there is much disagreement and division among brethren over divorce. If I were to write on divorce it would probably be divisive. I have also wondered how to write on divorce in a way that it would build up Christians in the most holy faith.

The brother writes, “The only Scriptural designation is ‘the fruit of the vine’. Let us leave it there.” If we are going to simply leave it there then I ask “What kind of vine?” The Scripture does not designate a particular kind of vine. It does not say “the fruit of the grapevine.” If the only implication is that it has to be the fruit of the vine, could it be grapes? Could it be watermelon? Moreover it does not say “the juice of the vine.” Could it be cantaloupe? Cantaloupes grow on vines. When one says, “The only Scriptural designation is ‘the fruit of the vine’,” he may be proving more than he intends to prove. Besides that, his statement, “The only Scriptural designation is ‘the fruit of the vine’,” is divisive. “It is a subject that always divides and causes strife.” I am wondering if the brother can prove that it should be **grape juice** since he opposes wine. How can he prove that it is grape juice if the only Scriptural designation is “the fruit of the vine”?

I also challenge the brother on his statement that preaching on wine or writing on the subject of wine “is a subject that **always** divides and causes strife.” That is a rather sweeping statement. In 1982 a pastor asked me to speak on it in his church. That church had never used anything but grape juice. I taught on it about three Sunday mornings. No one left the church and wandered about homeless. To my knowledge no one got angry. I could name several places that I have been asked to preach on this subject and I can honestly say that it never caused division or strife. The brother's statement is way too broad and too sweeping. He said, “It is a subject that **always** divides and causes strife.”

Although there are a number of other things that I could address in this letter I want to close with one other thing the brother wrote. He said, “But whether or not a Church uses fermented or unfermented juice at the Lord's Table **is not important.**” [Emphasis mine, RWC].

Regardless of where one stands on the proper liquid element to be used in the Lord's Supper it alarms me when a brother says it's not important. Everything about the Lord's Supper is important. Everything in God's word is important. If it is not important how could my writing on it “cause strife and controversy” as the brother accused? It is apparently more important to him than he will admit or he would not be angry that I wrote on it.

I must say in closing, “I fellowship with a number of brethren who use grape juice and the Lord's Supper.” I've had some of these brethren preach meetings where I pastored. I have preached meetings in their churches. I've had them preach in conferences where I pastored. I often preach in conferences where these brethren pastor. But while we differ we did not divide nor strive over the subject. It does not **always** cause division and strife. I have published articles in this paper several times on the subject and to my knowledge this is the first time I have been accused of causing division and strife. So I reject the brother's claim categorically that the subject is one of which it can be said, “It is a subject that **always** divides and causes strife.”

## FEAR OF CONTROVERSY

*By Robert Kaldane*  
(Written in 1874 A. D.)

Many religious persons have a dread of controversy and wish truth to be stated without any reference to those who hold the opposite errors. Controversy and a bad spirit are, in their estimation, synonymous terms. And strenuously to oppose what is wrong is considered as contrary to Christian meekness. Those who hold this opinion seem to overlook what every page of the New Testament lays before us. In all the history of our Lord Jesus Christ, we never find Him out of controversy. From the moment He entered on the discharge of His office in the synagogue of Nazareth till He expired on the cross, it was an uninterrupted scene of controversy. Nor did He, with all the heavenly meekness which in Him shone so brightly, treat truth and error without reference to those who held them or study to avoid giving its proper appellation to those corruptions in doctrine or

practice that endangered the interests of immortal souls. His censures were not confined to doctrine but included the abettors of false principles themselves.

And as to the Apostles, their epistles are generally controversial. Most of them were directly written for the express purpose of vindicating truth and opposing error--and the authors of heresies do not escape with an abstract condemnation of their false doctrine. Paul again and again most indignantly denounces the conduct of the opposers of the Gospel and, by name, points out those against whom he cautions his brethren. When Hymenaeus and Alexander erred concerning the faith and when he delivered them unto Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme, he did not compliment them as amiable and learned persons. Even that Apostle who treats most of love and who possessed so much of that spirit which was so eminently manifested in his Divine Master, does not avoid controversy--nor in controversy does he study to avoid severity of censure on the opposers of the truth. In the examples of opposing error (left on record for our imitation) we perceive nothing of that frigid spirit of indifference which smiles on the corrupters of the Word of God and shuns to call heresy by its proper name.

With what holy indignation do the Apostles denounce the subtle machinations of the enemies of the gospel! In vain shall we look among those faithful servants of the Lord for anything to justify that trembling reserve which fears to say decidedly that truth is truth--and error is error.

In what style, indeed, should perversions of the truth of God be censured? Ought they to be treated as mere matters of opinion on which we may innocently and safely differ? Or ought they to be met in a tone of solemn, strong and decided approbation? Paul warned Christians against men who arose from among themselves, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them--and instead of complimenting false teachers in his day, denounced an angel from heaven on the supposition of his preaching another gospel. And if an Apostle was withstood to the face, because he was to be blamed, are the writings of those who subvert the Gospel to pass without rebuke?

When the canker of the principles of neology [the use of new meanings for established words], derived from the Continent and from America, is perverting the faith of many and seducing them into the paths of error--which a spirit of lukewarmness and indifference to truth is advancing under the mask of charity and liberality, there is a loud call on all Christians to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel," to present a firm and united phalanx of opposition to error under every name--from whatever quarter it may approach. Should believers become unfaithful to their trust and be seduced to abandon their protest against false doctrines, they may gain the approbation of the world--but what will this avail when compared with the favor of God? But if (with prayer to God, in the use of the appointed means) they contend earnestly for the truth, then they may expect the gracious fulfillment of the blessed promise, ***"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."***

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