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# THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

VOLUME XXVI ISSUE 3

MARCH 20, 2002

## Enjoying the Benefits Without the Battle

Not all beneficiaries of the victory engage in the battle that achieves the triumph or attains the conquest. Indeed, the actual difference in the numbers who enjoy the spoils and those who endured to obtain the result is always drastically disproportional. Chapter 30 of 1 Samuel provides an intriguing event from the life of David that clearly demonstrates this truth. As you read the passage, take special notice where I have underlined.

1 And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; 2 And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. 3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. 4 Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. 7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. 8 And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all. 9 So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the

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# this and that

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The article in this issue covers a wide range of doctrinal thought. It is not intended to provoke anyone except in the matter of thinking. Multiculturalism is alive and well in Christendom and is thriving within Baptist churches. The eighty years of the inclusiveness of fundamentalism in common battles, the subtle—almost indiscernible—pressure to conform to the “Rodney King theology” of non-denominationalism, and the irresistible force of continuous numerical growth, have combined with a fatal disregard for historical accuracy, as well as a de-emphasis on biblical truth, to produce a generation of Baptists who are unaware of who they are, let alone what they are.

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Previous centuries never observed this phenomenon. Baptists were persecuted nearly everywhere until just before the 1800's. When the Bill of Rights allowed Baptists to exist in this country by removing the heavy hand of established state-religion, Baptists continued to be ridiculed and considered uneducated, backwoods Bible-thumpers. Dismissed by snobbish intellectuals and scorned by “educated” theologians, Baptists were mainly left to survive on the frontier and they did for a century and a half. When World War II recruited workers out of the Southland and into the industrial northern cities, Baptists brought

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# this and that

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their faith with them. Soon strong churches thrived in the cities of the North and the Midwest. Largely they began in storefronts and tents with blue-collar workers as the members.

During the last half of the past century, Baptist preachers became so enamored with numbers, that new members were no longer given instruction or guidance on Baptist doctrine and practice. Para-church organizations that began as practical tools became controlling machines. Differences were minimized and distinctives were forgotten. Soon anyone could usurp the name Baptist and did. The Rev. Jesse Jackson comes to mind as a “Baptist” minister that has no grasp of Baptist doctrine or practice; but he is not alone in that distinction. Others just as ignorant are to be found all across the land. Baptists have traded the offensiveness of doctrinal distinctives for acceptance as one of the denominations.

I imagine that this article will earn me, in some minds, the label of a “BIG B” Baptist. Every time I try to write the word with a small “b,” the spell-checker identifies that “b” as a mistake. My spell-checker is smarter than some “baptists.”

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## BENEFITS WITHOUT BATTLE

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premise and repudiate the second—and do so on the basis of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, Protestants exist because of the first—the need to rediscover, to resuscitate, or to resurrect “the lost church”—and they were the founders of and are the leaders in the second—the recovery, the re-formation of the lost word of God. The great diversity of structure and creed among Protestants is the result of human efforts to reconstruct what the Lord Jesus built. Whenever humanity attempts to set aside the given authority of God and to design what is perceived to be what God *might have given*, such confusion and contradiction is the mandatory result. In contrast, the demonstrable close unity over these centuries and across the various cultures of Baptists who simply view Scripture as the settled, revealed, final authority is testimony that truth was never lost. The parallel in textual confusion is too obvious to require further comment.

There is, at least, one other area in which Protestants owe a debt to Baptists. Because of the emphasis on the local church, Baptists have successfully opposed and withstood the ecumenical movement. Certainly, some using the name Baptist (but clearly lacking the nature) have been leaders in ecumenical evangelism and the one world church movement. Not accidentally, those baptistic brethren with the strongest Protestant inclinations—those attracted to “denominational” structuring—are the first to lean toward ecumenism. While Protestants retained vestiges of the “corrupted church” from whence they came and continually demonstrate a perpetual “homesickness,” Baptists, never having come out of the “corrupted church,” have no yearning to return and possess no desire to unite with corruption. “Baptists by conviction” in their very existence remain a force defending the existence of Protestants and oppose the ever nearing arrival of the final one world church.

Protestants owe an unrecognized debt to Baptists. The saddest part in all of this is that most Baptists have no better concept of the amount of their debt to the Baptist Heritage than do Protestants.

—Pastor Manley

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brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor. 11 And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; 12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. 13 And David said unto him, To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. 14 We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire. 15 And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company. 16 And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

I want to call special attention to what follows.

17 And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. 18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. 19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all. 20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drave before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil.

Once more, I break the passage for an emphasis on what follows.

21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. 22 Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. 23 Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. 24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his

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part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. 25 And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

As I break the passage again, notice immediately, that those who were too faint to fight and who remained at the brook to guard "the stuff"—the equipment, supplies, and provisions that David and his warriors stored while they went to battle—were granted a full share with those who actually placed life in danger in the battle. David did not allow wielding a sword, thrusting a spear, or shooting an arrow to become the perquisite for participation in the spoils of the battle. Remember that Aaron and Hur were as essential to the victory at Rephidim as were any of the warriors serving with Joshua in the valley, even though the only arms Aaron and Hur raised were the arms of Moses (Exodus 17).

However, as you continue to read, you will discover further that the spoils of the battle against the Amalekites were not distributed only to the two classes of warriors—those at the battle and those "defending" the rear approaches and guarding "the stuff." David graciously divides a portion of the spoils to non-combatants—the elders of more than a dozen cities and locations. The spoils of this battle were enjoyed by many more than the four hundred who engaged the enemy and successfully fought the battle.

26 And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; 27 To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir, 28 And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa, 29 And to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites, 30 And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach, 31 And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

The benefits received by these tribal elders are not the only spoils enjoyed by recipients who never actually engage the enemy. The victory achieved at such terrible price during our own Revolutionary War has been used (and abused) by many millions more than the hundreds of brave patriots who purchased this nation on the battlefields—the

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Declaration of Independence would never be in doubt because of the abundance of faithful copies. In the same fashion, those outside the "corrupt church" faithfully and honestly kept the originals. The Lord Jesus had promised that His word would not pass away—His promise is better than any testimony of scholars to the contrary. Some of the blood that was shed over the centuries to keep His word safe was Jewish blood and some was Baptist blood. I do not say this alone—read these quotes taken from "The Trail of Blood":

Cardinal Hosius (Catholic, A.D. 1524), President of the Council of Trent: "Were it not that the baptists [sic] have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past twelve hundred years, they would swarm in greater number than all the Reformers." (Hosius, Letters, Apud Opera, pages 112,113.)

Sir Isaac Newton: "The Baptists are the only body of known Christians that have never symbolized with Rome."

Mosheim (Lutheran): "Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay secreted in almost all the countries of Europe persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of modern Dutch Baptists."

Edinburgh Cyclopaedia (Presbyterian): "It must have already occurred to our readers that the Baptists are the same sect of Christians that were formerly described as Ana-Baptists. Indeed this seems to have been their leading principle from the time of Tertullian to the present time." Tertullian was born just fifty years after the death of the Apostle John.

Protestants owe a debt to those Baptists who guarded the word of God for fourteen centuries so that it was available to lead them from the darkness of corruption as far as they would follow it. Sadly, some did not follow it very far. Whatever light Protestants have, they would seem, therefore, to owe to Baptists.

By the way, if one accepts the premise that the church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ *became* corrupted and *had* to be reformed (*brought together again or purged of corruption*) or restored (*having existed, perished and needing resurrection*) then one might easily be persuaded that the Scriptures have been either lost or corrupted and are in desperate, continuing need of reformation through philological research, restoration with textual criticism, or resurrection by archaeologists from the dry sands of Egypt. I deny the first

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he needed to "amend" eight thousand passages to restore the original that it corrupted. It would appear that Clarius was a "higher critic" of the corrupted texts.

Most interestingly, Whitaker devotes over two pages to explaining why 2 Timothy 3:16 must be translated "all Scripture" and could not honestly be translated "every Scripture." He also affirms that "the story of the woman taken in adultery" is in the canon though the corrupt texts remove it. *They had strange (I write with obvious tongue in cheek.) arguments in those days; Solomon recorded correctly: there really is nothing new.* Whitaker was writing only twenty-three years before the translators assigned by King James, having consulted those same "originals" as Whitaker had, produced their marvelous work. Is there any conclusion to be drawn from this fact? I believe there is. Consider this. The "originals" identified by Whitaker and those in 1611 are vastly different from the "originals" allegedly consulted by "revising" textual scholars in 1881, 1901, 1960 (also '62, '63, '68, '71, '73, '75, '77, '95) 1980, or 1984; however, those of 1881, 1901, 1960 (also '62, '63, '68, '71, '73, '75, '77, '95) 1980, or 1984 are quite similar, nearly identical, to those of the translation that Whitaker proves to be corrupted because it is based upon rejected, spurious emendations to the "originals."

Now exactly who was it that had defended and guarded these "originals" in spite of the desire and multiple attempts of the "corrupted church" to destroy them for those 1400 years between the apostles and Whitaker? Certainly not the "corrupt church," it was, however, the faithful believers sequestered in the valleys of the Piedmont and elsewhere. Original Scripture was never lost. The first documents disappeared, but not the originals of Scripture. As an example, I have the original Declaration of Independence. I do not have the paper that John Hancock signed; but I have faithful reproductions. Some are exact photocopies and some are copies with spelling updates. Those in the Colonial handwriting require diligence to read because of the spelling differences and the handwriting itself—but with that diligence, I can read it for myself exactly as did old near-sighted John just before he signed it. Therefore, I can honestly and faithfully declare that I have the original because it has been reproduced, faithfully and honestly, in the years since that day. In fact, should terrorists succeed in destroying the beloved document that Hancock signed, the original

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collective number since 1776 likely would be a million for every Colonial soldier and minuteman. More recently, the millions of allied forces who fought and defeated the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan—and their allies) delivered a world numbering multiplied millions from the horrid evils of Nazism, Fascism, and Imperial dictatorship. Today, once again, America has a few thousand engaged in active armed combat to provide security for the two hundred and fifty millions in this nation and hundreds of millions in other western nations. In this present time with service personnel actively engaged in the present war (Afghanistan, Persian Gulf, Yemen, Philippines, patrols guarding our skies and coasts, etc.), many Americans do not consider the cost borne by the few so that the many may remain free to ignore those courageous, sacrificing few.

In like manner, the spiritual—including the resultant religious, humanitarian, and cultural—benefits of the many battles fought during the long war against the prince of the power of the air and his cohorts are widely enjoyed by Christendom's multitudes who acknowledge no debt to those believers who engaged the enemy, endured the combat, and obtained the victory. Indeed, a strong argument represents that most of those basking in the aftermath of the achievement are devoted to a lifestyle that shall lead to a surrender of those very accomplishments. In particular, Protestants have little appreciation for the spiritual liberties they enjoy, and give little thought to the debt that they owe to Baptists.

### The Unrecognized Indebtedness Protestants Have To Baptists

Anyone professing the name of Baptist stands in a noble lineage when making the claim. Though that name has been taken by some who neither understood nor appreciated that heritage and though that name has been applied by others to identify miscreants, heretics, and discontents until it is as true of Baptists as was written by Paul of Israel, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Romans 9:6). Baptist is still a noble name. Not all of those using the name of Baptist and certainly not all of those branded with the name Baptist have any comprehension of what the name identifies. Whether done in ignorance or with guile, such wilful dishonesty is a pitiful display of superciliousness. Regrettably, most contemporary Baptists seem to lack any interest in knowing the richness of that heritage.

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Baptists have a traceable record extending into antiquity that, upon examination, reveals such an amazing consistency of doctrine and practice that it would appear nearly inexplicable. Baptists are not people of creeds or confessions. There is no document that defines the doctrine or the practice to which one must subscribe to become a Baptist (such as the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians, the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglicans, the Book of Discipline of the United Methodists, etc.). A Baptist is a Baptist through personal choice. A soul is saved by personal trust in the atonement provided through the Lord Jesus Christ. That individual from the moment of belief is born into the family of God and has Heaven for his/her eternal home. For that child of God to become a Baptist requires that the person be baptized, upon a credible profession of faith, into the membership of a Baptist church. To be a Baptist requires a personal choice, followed by personal action.

No one has ever been compelled to be a Baptist—except perhaps by the subtle, internal pressure of wanting to marry a particular gal or guy. Baptists do not practice, and will not tolerate, “conversion by the sword.” In broad sweeping strokes—whether motivated by conviction or whether maneuvered by convenience and managed by conformity, a Baptist is always a Baptist by personal choice. Some who use the name Baptist do so because it has a family connection; they simply follow a path of least resistance and conform to the wife’s, mama’s, or dad’s expectations. Some who are called Baptists, as one national self-appointed Baptist spokesman has written is his personal situation, are Baptists because “that is the church where I was saved” and some are Baptists because they mistakenly believe that “I’ve always been a Baptist.” Those who think and act in that fashion are Baptists by convenience, nonetheless each exercised a choice in doing so. These are Baptists—Baptists in name only.

Even today in multicultural, unprincipled, ecumenical America, some individuals choose to become Baptists because of conviction. It is admittedly a much smaller number than the total identified as Baptists; however, it remains a noble company to join. Many of these did not start life with a Baptist “connection.” A careful, prayerful study of the Scripture motivates them to seek identity with the doctrine and practice of the churches described in the New Testament. Such an honest search inevitably leads the sincere seeker to a Baptist church. I am of the latter species. I am a Baptist by conviction, not convenience.

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mitted to writing, that his [sic] scriptures should be commended to men, and that in a language known not only to the learned, but to the vulgar (common) also. ... the reasons on account of which God willed the scriptures to be read are perpetual. Therefore he [sic] wills them to be read to the people perpetually throughout all ages.” (Page 235)

“But they cannot be useful to the people in an unknown tongue: therefore they should be translated into a language known to the people.” (Page 238)

“For it behooves a translator of scripture not merely to take care that he do not corrupt the meaning, but also, as far as it is at all possible, not to depart a hand’s breadth from the words; since many things may lie under cover in the words of the Holy Spirit, which are not immediately perceived, and yet contain important instruction.” (Page 165)

“... a translator of scripture hath no right, first to change the words, and then to plead this excuse, that the sense hath been rendered by him. For we are not to consider the sense which he renders, but what the words require.” (Page 181)

Whitaker has no hesitation in declaring that he has access to the very originals of “the prophets, apostles and evangelists” that have been preserved for the benefit of the people of God.

“That scripture which was authentic for the old [sic] Testament before Christ, and for both the old [sic] and new [sic] six hundred years after Christ, should now also be deemed authentic by us. ... We must ask them, Whether the church hath changed its authentic scripture, or hath not rather preserved, and commended to all succeeding generations, that which was truth authentic from the very first? If it lost that which was published by the prophets and apostles, who can defend that negligence, who can excuse so enormous a sacrilege? (Page 155)

He commends the works of Beza and Robert Stephens as faithful and writes of Erasmus:

“Erasmus, therefore, when he desired a review of the new [sic] Testament, preferred translating it anew according to the Greek verity to spending his pains in correcting this old Latin edition.” (Page 207)

He then continues on the same page to identify, Isidore Clarius of Brescia, who, in his edition of “this old Latin edition” complained that

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"unerring" men.

"The scriptures, therefore, are necessary to us, because God foresaw that we should need, for preserving the integrity of true religion, to have the scriptures in our hands; so that to think otherwise is to accuse God of thoughtlessness or error." (Page 516)

"If God had permitted the scripture to perish in the Hebrew and Greek originals, in which it was first published by men divinely inspired, he [sic] would not have provided sufficiently for his [sic] church and for our faith. From the prophetic and apostolic scripture the church takes its origin, and the faith derives its sources. But whence can it be ascertained that these are in all respects prophetic and apostolic scriptures, if the very writings of the prophets and apostles are not those which we consult? What reason can be alleged, why the authentic word of God should perish in those languages in which it was first published, and become authentic in a new tongue, into which it was translated by a man who was no prophet?" (Page 148)

"Now in this sense no translation ever was, or could be, authentic. For translations of scripture are always to be brought back to the originals of scripture, received if they agree with those originals, and corrected if they do not. That scripture only, which the prophets, apostles, and evangelists wrote by inspiration of God, is in every way credible on its own account and authentic. ... The authentic originals of the scripture of the old [sic] Testament are extant in Hebrew, of the new [sic] in Greek." (Page 138)

... we make no edition authentic, save the Hebrew in the old [sic], and the Greek in the new [sic] Testament. We approve translations, if they agree with these standards: we reject them if they do not." (Page 140)

Whitaker finds the purpose that God had in preserving the originals to be for the protection of the saints. Simply stated, without the originals, no translation could be accurately measured. If the originals are not extant (existing presently), no certainty would be possible. In a remarkable passage, Whitaker shows that translating the Scripture was essential, since otherwise the speaker would be using an unknown tongue.

"But God hath commanded all to read the scriptures: therefore, all are bound to read the scriptures. ... for God hath chosen that his [sic] will should be written, that his [sic] word should be com-

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While I do not have a driving ambition to glorify the name, I am not ashamed of the name Baptist. I am a Baptist by choice—a choice that is motivated, even mandated, by conviction. Let other preachers remove the name Baptist from the church sign—I frankly wish some more would; I could respect that honesty—I will polish the name on our church sign.

As a Baptist, I am grateful for Protestants. My paternal grandparents were Protestants. As a child, the first pastor with whom I ever enjoyed a connection was Protestant A. E. Houseman, the pastor at Grand Avenue Methodist. I attended a non-denominational Bible college and received training from several Protestant as well as Baptist professors—all of whom I believed to be godly men and some of whom took exceptional interest in me and made great sacrifice to help me in my labor toward a degree. Through the years, many Protestant preachers have befriended me—not the least in stature was Dr. Arnold Prater, then pastor of the largest Methodist congregation west of the Mississippi River and for many years afterward an honored author and Methodist evangelist. I have known and enjoyed friendship with several Assembly of God, Presbyterian, and Bible Church pastors. While in college, I supplied the pulpit on an interim basis for two Mennonite churches in North Carolina. In my early ministry, I preached meetings for the Salvation Army, Assembly of God ministries, non-denominational ministries, and other Protestant groups. A Cumberland Presbyterian church many years ago invited me to be the pastor, because the congregation listened to a weekly (Baptist) radio broadcast I conducted. I could not accept the request, but I was honored to receive it. So, I have first-person experience among Protestants. I have treasured their friendship and valued their counsel.

The authors of many, if not most, of the books in my library are Protestants. Looking across the shelves, I note that these men (that is those among the trusted works) were (or are) Presbyterian, Lutheran, Assembly, IFCA, Wesleyan, Puritan and Anglican, "non-denominational," Christian Missionary and Alliance, and others of both the Covenant and the Reformed traditions. While I have serious disagreements with these authors on areas of doctrine and though, if some actually believed what they confessed to believe in their creeds (e.g. baptismal regeneration), I must question their salvation, I find them to have been students of the word of God, devoted to the deity of Jesus of Nazareth, affirming the Trinity, and, at least, giving lip

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service to salvation by grace. The biblical resource world and this preacher would be greatly impoverished without their works.

I should also record that I am neither a Calvinist nor an Armenian. I reject both as human attempts to explain the mind of God; a task that I believe is beyond human ability—"Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" I fully believe in the supreme, absolute sovereignty of God and I accept completely the individual, personal responsibility of every human soul. Theologians are prone to see these realities either as two perpetual parallels or as two incompatible opposites. I make no effort to reconcile what the Bible teaches, for the simple reason that, whatever the Bible teaches, it is true as it is written and requires acceptance, not reconciliation.

In similar fashion, I am a follower neither of Covenant Theology nor of Dispensation Theology. Both are, in my view, seriously flawed attempts to conform the works of God into neat, efficient, logical (by human standards) equations. It is obvious that God established covenants with His creation, individuals, and the nation of Israel and it is equally obvious that He has worked through differing methods at various times. However, the great God of Heaven is neither bound nor confined to any human system of rationalistic boundaries. Biblical doctrine and true believers survived for centuries before either Kasper Olevianus, 1536-1587, (and his covenantal system) or Pierre Poiret, 1647-1719 (and his dispensational system) arrived on the scene. These two scholars are credited with being the first to publish materials espousing these two systems. Their original proposals have been "developed" more extensively by others following their steps; but the basics were first written by them. Both systems are scholarly attempts to catalog the providence and the works of God into humanistic philosophies—to make God conform to human logic and reasoning. Simply put, taken in the strict forms as advocated by purists of both schools of thought, these systems produce a mold that is superimposed upon Scripture. The danger is that eventually the system becomes the rule rather than Scripture in that Scripture is forcibly squeezed into that pre-conceived mold. It is made to fit. Both the Covenant theologian and the Dispensation theologian have much to offer that is profitable and, in my view, both have much error to be avoided. Scripture itself, not some system, is to be the starting, the controlling, and the ending premise in the believer's study.

When Scripture is the sole basis for the beliefs and practice, a Bap-

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"formed again" or "changed back") continuation of the church established by the Lord Jesus Christ. The protesting reformers missed a crucial central truth of Scripture. There is no biblical mandate to do what they claimed to have done. Corruption is not to be reformed. Indeed, corruption cannot be reformed. Corruption is to be left—"Come out of her, my people." Separation from error and separation unto truth is the biblical mandate.

One of the most serious corruptions of the "corrupt church" that the Reformers vainly sought to reform was that of the text of Scriptures held by that "corrupted church." William Whitaker (1547-1595) in a masterful work (The Disputations on Holy Scripture, 1588) explores the difference between the corrupted text "stream" of the Vulgate and the "pure fountain" [his terms] of the Hebrew and Greek "originals." Originals that he maintained were "extant" and in his possession. No, he did not claim to have the scroll on which Moses wrote the Law nor the parchments of Paul. He did declare without reservation that he had the "originals."

"Now we, not doubtfully or only with some probable shew, but most certainly, know that this Greek edition of the new [sic] Testament is no other than the inspired and archetypal scripture of the new [sic] Testament, commended by the apostles and evangelists of the christian [sic] church." (Page 142)

Whitaker devotes over 700 pages to a repudiation of the Vulgate and the spurious Greek texts on which it was based. He shows their corruption and declares that the doctrine of the "corrupted church" requires this precise "translation, *since without these erroneous alterations and deletions, the doctrine would have no basis whatsoever.* The false doctrine of the "corrupt church" necessitates a false textual basis for the fraudulent, corrupt translation. This is a very interesting observation. Whitaker, a Protestant, devastates the premise that the Vulgate and those Greek texts producing the variant readings of the Vulgate (shown to be Alexandrian in origin--Pages 203-207) and the corrupted Septuagint (Pages 192,120-122, etc.) are superior to the "originals" of Hebrew and Greek. He shows that these texts are filled with error. All of this published in 1588!

While demonstrating that both the original work of the Seventy and that of Jerome were effectively corrupted by deliberate hands and are forever, irretrievably lost, he declares that God intentionally preserved the ("never errs," "without error," etc.) "originals" written by

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the true message of salvation was lost because "the church" had "become corrupt." The names themselves—Reformation, Reformers, Protestants—all bear testimony to the truth of this assertion. "The church," in their views, needed reforming and those who determined to reform "the church" protested the corruptions. Baptists, however, believing in the perpetuity of the church that the Lord Jesus Christ founded, insist that never was there a time in history when the true light of the Gospel was extinguished. The promise of the Chief Shepherd is more trustworthy than any apparent evidence of history. The Lord Jesus said that He (not Peter or the apostles, not even the Holy Ghost) would build His church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. He later instructed His disciples to go into all the world to preach the Gospel and promised that He would be with His disciples until the end of the world. It is, therefore, not possible that His church ever became corrupted and in need of either the reformation sparked by Martin Luther and other reformers or that phony restoration induced by Alexander Campbell. While Dr. Luther was crawling up those famous stairs in Rome, struggling with justification by faith, or when he was nailing up his ninety-five suggestions for discussion, which is what the famed "Ninety-five Thesis" actually were, the faithful followers of Christ were no farther away from him than the valleys of the Italian Piedmont (read Foxes' Book of Martyrs). True believers were found in every area of Europe—many in hiding under threat of death, but they were there nonetheless. Luther helped begin a Reformation, but he neither tried to "re-start" nor did he actually re-establish biblical Christianity; his efforts were directed at reform. Campbell was also surrounded by faithful witnesses in Kentucky and Tennessee—the same faithful Baptist witnesses he cunningly joined, only to be disciplined from their ranks for his apostasy. The Reformers and Restorers began with a false assumption, even as do today's voices—the "Returners"—calling for a "return to" or "recovery of" New Testament Christianity. To all such movements, I declare that, while corrupt teachings abounded and even now abounds, New Testament Christianity was not completely corrupted, was never lost, and is now neither corrupted nor lost. New Testament Christianity lives and biblical faith survives.

I am grateful for every soul drawn to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through these five centuries of Protestant efforts. They simply fall fifteen centuries short of being a "re-formed" (whether they mean

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tist is the natural product. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. said to the ministerial class that I attended that if one were to give a new convert a Bible and send him into the woods for six months alone with his Bible, he would come out of those woods a Baptist. Set aside the creeds, ignore the councils, avoid the commentaries, accept only the Bible as the basis for belief and the result is that one will indeed "come out a Baptist."

Baptists are a peculiar people. Baptists are distinctive; no other group of people is quite like Baptists. They are special and humorous concurrently. Baptists are unique and unusual, but they are also common and regular. While no two Baptists are exactly matching, any two Baptists are extraordinarily similar—more like paternal twins than identical twins. Unconnected, unrelated, unfamiliar Baptists from opposite sides of the world and living in different cultures will have more in common spiritually with each other than any two non-Baptist neighbors anywhere in America. When this church was mailing hundreds of Bibles and doctrinal materials into Russia, we received a most interesting response from a Russian pastor. He wrote on behalf of his church to let us know that the church body rejoiced to discover a sister church in America that believed the same doctrine as did they. He remarked that not all who say they are Baptists in Russia are in fact Baptists. My wise Russian brother had taken our materials, compared them with his Bible as a good Berean should, and found them to be an expression of what he had come to believe independently of outside influences. Numerous testimonies reflect the same experience. As one man, who due to circumstances of life was saved in an isolated situation, said to me, "I knew what I believed. I just did not know what to call myself. I have now discovered that I am a Baptist." Thus, he requested baptism of the church and became a Baptist by conviction.

"What's in a name?" muses Shakespeare through the character of Juliet, and answers, "that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." (Romeo and Juliet, Act 2, scene 3, lines 47,48) Someone poorly paraphrased the Bard with "A rose is a rose is a rose. By any other name, that rose would smell the same." This is certainly a truism; however, one must understand that the reverse premise is just as true. One may name a rose as she/he wills; the attributes of the rose change not with the name. Labeling a rose "a chrysanthemum" will not give the attributes of that flower to the rose—exactly as altering the name will never cause a chrysanthemum to smell as does a rose. The smell of the rose is part of the nature and the charac-

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ter of a rose and these qualities have given it the name. These qualities are not transferable; they come not with the name, but from within. Naming a pig "Rose" will not change the nature or character (or smell) of the pig. Calling a skunk "Flowers" is Disney doctrine; it is certainly not biblical doctrine. Merely using the name Baptist does not make one a Baptist. A Baptist is defined and determined by belief and practice not by name. Tragically, in our day, so few who are called Baptists are familiar with the biblical distinctives that identify Baptists. It is among those historically traceable distinctives that we find the measure of the indebtedness that fellow believers called Protestants owe to the Baptists of past and present generations.

E. Y. Mullins (*The Axioms of Religion*) identifies the central characteristic of Baptists as "the competency of the soul" or "soul liberty," also known as "the priesthood of the believer." Soul liberty is the responsibility and the right of every soul to answer to God for him/herself. No one—no person, no church—stands between God and me (or you) except the One Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. This Baptist doctrinal position coupled with another Baptist distinctive—the separation of church and state is credited by many historians as having had a strong influence on the religious liberty that is ours in this land today. (This unique doctrinal precept is not a part of the Protestant heritage—consider the historical and contemporary records of the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Anglican denominations in the countries and states where they had or have dominance.) J. M. Carroll (*The Trail of Blood*) wrote:

"Congress declared the first amendment to the Constitution to be in force December 15, 1791, which granted religious liberty to all citizens. Baptists are credited with being the leaders in bringing this blessing to the nation. ...We venture to give one early Congressional incident. The question of whether the United States should have an established church or several established churches, or religious liberty, was being discussed. Several different bills had been offered, one recommending the Church of England as the established church; and another the Congregationalist Church, and yet another the Presbyterian. The Baptists, many of them, though probably none of them members of Congress, were earnestly contending for absolute religious liberty. James Madison (afterwards President) seemingly was their main supporter. Patrick Henry arose and offered a substitute bill for them all, 'That four churches (or denominations) instead of one be established': the Church of England, or Episcopal, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, and the Baptist. Finally, when each of the oth-

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ers saw that it could not be made the sole established church, they each agreed to accept Henry's compromise. (This compromise bill stated that each person taxed would have the right to say to which denomination of these four his money should go). The Baptists continued to fight against it all, [maintaining] that any combination of Church and State was against their fundamental principles, that they could not accept it even if voted. Henry pleaded with them, said he was trying to help them, that they could not live without it, but they still protested. The vote was taken; it carried nearly unanimously. But the measure had to be voted on three times. The Baptists, led by Madison and possibly others continued to fight. The second vote came. It also carried almost unanimously, swept by Henry's masterful eloquence. But the third vote had yet to be taken. Now God seemingly intervened. Henry was made Governor of Virginia and left Congress. When the third vote came, deprived of Henry's irresistible eloquence, the vote was lost. Thus the Baptists came near being an established denomination over their own most solemn protest."

Americans have religious liberty, rather than the toleration granted under state-churches, because of Baptist preachers who fought for the principle of separation of church and state. J. M. Holliday (*The Baptist Heritage*) compiled a lengthy section entitled "Baptists and Religious Liberty in United States" [sic]. This portion contains an excellent compilation of quotations regarding the connection of Baptists with the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Within this rich vein lies this citation from "Imprisoned Preachers and Religious Liberty in Virginia" by Lewis Peyton Little:

"But justice compels the admission that [Thomas] Jefferson's part in this accomplishment was not as great as that of James Madison, nor were the contributions of either or both as important as that of the humble people called Baptists"

Baptists suffered for freedom of religion—Obadiah Holmes, John Waller, James Childs, Lewis Craig, John Clarke, James Ireland, and many others served prison time, paid fines, and/or were publicly whipped under the authority of established state churches in this very nation before the Bill of Rights was adopted. The very religious principle that American atheists, humanists, secularists, and apostate Christians used to remove the name of God from public activities was gained through Baptist blood.

The underlying principle of the Reformation and, consequently, all the denominations that spring from the European Reformers is that

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