

Why I Left The Baptist Church

Grover Stevens

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GROVER STEVENS

(A Biographical Sketch)

Grover Stevens was born in Caddo (Bryan County), Oklahoma on January 5, 1921. He was the fourth in a family of six boys and two girls. When about nine years of age he moved to Phillips, Texas, which is about two miles north of Borger, where his parents still reside.

After passing around among several churches he finally joined the Baptist Church. He became a Sunday School teacher, assistant Director of the Baptist Training Union, and a delegate to Southern Baptist Convention in 1939. On July 25, 1938, he "surrendered to preach" for the Baptists. He preached at Sanford, Texas, and substituted for the regular preacher at Phillips. He led several to join the Baptist Church through his efforts. Through the natural honesty of his nature and the faithful efforts of several gospel preachers he was eventually led to obey the gospel and be added to the church of the Lord.

After coming into the church of Christ he preached regularly for the church in Fritch, Texas, for five years, during which time he was married to Miss Katherine Miller of Kansas City. They now have two children--a girl five, and a boy two years old.

Brother Stevens attended Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee, and preached for the church at Bruceton, Tenn. Upon graduation in the spring of 1948 he began preaching for the church at Charlotte, Tennessee.

In disposition Brother Stevens is earnest, sober-minded and mild-mannered. He has held two public debates (with Church of God, and Baptists) and private discussions with several others.

His special interest is in teaching members of his former religious connection the way more perfectly. He is anxious for their souls and welcomes discussions, debates, or conversations.

Why I Left The Baptist Church

BY GROVER STEVENS

It is a pleasure to me to be in Fort Worth and to have a part in this series of lectures. It is good to see old acquaintances and make new friends here. I appreciate the hospitality of the Vickery Boulevard congregation.

NO ANIMOSITY FOR BAPTISTS

I would like to say in the beginning that I have no animosity whatsoever against Baptists. Personally, I have no reason for leaving the Baptist church, but quite to the contrary, if personal reasons counted, I would never have left the Baptist Church, because personality is in their favor. Especially is this true of the congregation of which I was a member in Phillips, Texas. I believe that the Baptists are, for the most part, splendid people. I believe that most of them are honest

and sincere. I believe that, if there are Baptists here tonight, most of them want the truth, and will consider the things that are said honestly and open-minded. However, some times, out of a sense of loyalty to that which we have become members of, we are prone to cast aside lightly any charges that might be made against us. I sincerely hope that that will not be the way you will do tonight. I beg you to hear what I have to say, study it carefully with an open Bible in hand, then, out of honesty to your own soul and to God Almighty, to embrace all that you find to be in harmony with the Bible. Believe it, not because I said it, but because you found it in the word of God. That is the only thing any of us would have you believe--the Bible, the word of God. In spite of all the accusations made to the contrary, we still preach only the Bible. Such expressions are idle, I suppose, in view of the fact that all "churches" claim the same thing. We know that all of them do not preach "only the Bible" for they are many and the Bible is one. The Bible does not teach contradictory doctrines. The Baptists hold the Bible up and say, "We preach the Bible". That is what we do.

So, what have I gained by telling you that we take the Bible and nothing but the Bible? Nothing, I suppose. I will just have to prove to you that we do actually stand on the Bible and nothing else, and that the Baptists do not. If they did, I never would have left them . I want you to consider the things that are said as honestly as you know how, tonight.

When I came into this world, I found it divided religiously. When I was old enough to notice things, I found a church on every hand. Here was one and there was another, all claiming to preach the Bible, yet wearing different names and teaching different doctrines. This sentiment prevailed, "It doesn't make any difference what church you are a member of, or what you believe, just so long as you are honest and sincere about it." Having grown up in an atmosphere like that, most of us just seem to accept it as the truth--as axiomatic, but it isn't. The Bible doesn't teach that. If so, where? Nevertheless, that is what we heard every day. Another thought akin to this is that everyone ought to go to church; everyone ought to be a member of some church. These things are preached by all denominational preachers. Hence, the general conception in religious circles, and the basis for all resentment toward the church of Christ, because we deny it.

BAPTISTS PREACH SOME TRUTH

I do not believe that everything they say is a falsehood or a He. I believe that they preach a lot of truth. The part that they preach that is true, I am glad to accept, but the things they preach which are not the truth made me leave them. Let me illustrate my point. You will recall that in the Garden of Eden the devil preached truth along with a He. He said, "Thou shalt not surely die." That is false doctrine. He also said, "For God cloth know that in the day that ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." That is the truth. This made the He more deceptive. Did Adam and Eve sin when they believed and obeyed that? Why, certainly they did. It was half a truth and half a He. If you say, "Well, I only stand for the things that are the brush", then I will reply, "Maybe that was what Adam and Eve thought too." "We'll just stand for half of it, and well tell the Lord that we did not believe the other half." But it led them into error and condemnation just the same. Hence, what truth the Baptist Church preaches is perverted by the false. Then, too, they many times preach more against sin, moral sin or immorality, than gospel preachers do. I do not mean to say that we do not preach against immorality, but that they preach on it almost altogether, and we spend some time preaching doctrine and pointing out false doctrines. And we need to do that.

Upon attending the Baptist Church, one hears the Baptist preach against sin, and recognizes the fact that he is a sinner-- that he is lost. Then being convicted of sin, and desiring to be saved and

do what is right, we join the Baptist Church, or some other church. A person convicted of sin is ready to do anything he is commanded. For example, when I first became a member of the church of Christ, I wished that the Lord had left baptism out of the Bible. I said to myself, "Everything that the church of Christ teaches is fine, and I believe that most of the people in the denominations believe exactly what the church teaches, but when they come to baptism, they just seem to resent that. If the Lord had just left baptism out, then everything would be all right." I have learned since that that wasn't the trouble. People do not mind being baptized when they are convicted of sin. People wanting to obey God do not mind being baptized. They do not mind doing anything that God commands them to do. It is a matter of surrendering whole-heartedly one's own will to God's will. When that's done his attitude is simply, "Lord, whatever you want me to do, I'm willing to do it." Many, not realizing this, go on in rebellion against God, believing all the while that they are pleasing to Him. Hence, we join some church because we are convicted of sin, realize that we are lost, and because we believe that it is the right thing to do. That is the reason I joined the Baptist Church.

EARLY EXPERIENCE

I attended Sunday School at the Baptist Church in Caddo, Oklahoma, when I was a little fellow. After we moved to Texas, I didn't go much, if at all. By and by my mother started attending the church of Christ at Banger, Texas,, so I began attending Bible study there. I attended there several months and was impressed with the way they studied the Bible. Then I took pneumonia and was out for about six weeks, so I lost interest and did not go back. After some time, I was encouraged to go to Sunday School at the Baptist Church by some of my friends. I became regular in attendance and made 100 in Sunday School right along. Our class was good to win the Banner. Those of you who know the Baptist grading system know that I had to stay for church to make 100. It wasn't long until I began to realize that I was lost and in sin, and needed to be saved. I wanted to be saved, so one Sunday night when the preacher was making propositions with folks, he invited any who knew that they were lost and "desired the prayers of the church" to hold up their hand. I knew that I was lost, so at this suggestion I raised my hand. It was difficult at first. It took all the strength I had to make that arm move, but after I got it started it wasn't so hard. As I held my hand up my face burned and my heart came up to my throat. When the preacher said, "God bless you, son," my face burned more and I was very self-conscious. Afterwards, several came to me and told me how proud they were of me and encouraged me. Then I felt more confident and was proud of myself. Of course, my Sunday School teacher and a few others encouraged me to join the church. I talked to my mother about it and was persuaded to wait awhile. She felt that I was being persuaded and didn't realize what I was doing. After some time I began to visit the Methodist Sunday School and church occasionally with a friend who was a Methodist. Finally I quit attending at all.

A little over a year later I made a speech at the Annual Boy Scout Father and Son Banquet. After the Banquet the Methodist preacher came by and asked me if I went to Sunday School or church anywhere. I told him that I didn't, so he urged me to come to the Methodist Church. Later the Baptist preacher approached me and was equally as urgent in his invitation as the Methodist preacher. (They had changed preachers at both places since the incident mentioned before). After some delay I began attending the Baptist Church. It wasn't long until I was under conviction again I remembered the time before, so the Sunday morning I went up during the invitation and asked the preacher to pray for me. I felt just as I had before. I spent the afternoon trying to decide what to do. Late in the afternoon, some time before B. T. U. was to begin, I gathered up a change of clothes and went to the church building to see the preacher. He was in the auditorium talking with one of the men. I asked him if he would baptize me that night. He asked me, "Are you

saved, Grover?" I said, "Well, I don't know; I guess I am." He took me into his office where we talked quite a while. When he heard of my former experience, he told me that I had been saved back then. I accepted that for I remembered how I had felt after they had prayed for me. That night I confessed that "God for Christ's sake has saved me from my sins, and I want to join the Baptist Church." Upon hearing that confession, they voted to receive me, and I was baptized into the Baptist Church that night. It was April 24, 1938.

ZEAL IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

I took a personal interest in the work. I worked diligently. I was instrumental in leading several people to what I honestly thought was Christ, and they joined the Baptist Church. I was given a Sunday School class, made the assistant director of the B. T. U., and was licensed to preach. I preached once a month for a little congregation in Sanford. Texas, about twenty miles out, and filled in for our local preacher when he was away.

I had been preaching and working for some time, and nothing had challenged my attention pertaining to Baptist Doctrine. Then, one day my mother and oldest brother who had been attending the church of Christ, told me how the church of Christ preached the Bible. They urged me to attend a meeting starting in a few days. What I had heard about the church of Christ was told with contempt, so I had learned to feel that way toward them--at least, a little. However, I made up my mind that I would attend the meeting, listen to what was said and accept all that I could. I was determined to "give the devil his due." I wanted to learn what was taught whether I believed it or not.

A. G. Hobbs, Jr., was doing the preaching. Brother Hobbs is a very plain preacher. He is very kind, but he never leaves a doubt as to what he is talking about. I went home and looked up some of the scriptures and found them right there. On many points I would say, "You know, I believe he is right about that," but on others, "Now, he just missed it there. If I could show him a few things in that connection, he'd see differently." I know that many of you will feel that way toward me before this lesson is over. You will think, "I wish I could tell him something." I wish you could, too, because I would like to remove every objection so that you could see your way to obey the truth. I learned that when I offered my objections to his position, that it was even more evident that he was right. That's the reason that the denominational preachers "don't believe in arguing." They do believe in arguing their side of it, but they don't believe in allowing a gospel preacher to examine their side. Suffice it to say that if I cannot sustain every point in this or any other lesson, I will apologize for it and retract it. Isn't that fair? I wish I knew everything that will come into your mind tonight, and I had the time to reply to it. I will do the best that I can out of a consciousness of what turned over in -my mind as I listened to these things being presented. Maybe I can deal with the most of your objections.

MY ATTENTION CHALLENGED

The first thing that challenged my attention as I listened to Brother Hobbs was that there was just one church. I suppose there is nothing in the Bible more plainly taught, yet more disavowed. The Bible says that the church is the body of Christ (Eph 1:22, 23). It says, "There is one body" (Eph. 4:4). The church is the body; there is one body; therefore. there is one church. Along with other proofs, I saw that there was just one church. Which one? So I began to study.

Other things challenged my attention as I studied. I wondered about God calling all preachers to preach. Does God call all preachers, then cause them to preach conflicting doctrines? Does God

call Baptist preachers to preach, and then cause them to preach that immersion is the only kind of baptism, that only ordained Baptist preachers have the authority to baptize, the impossibility of apostasy, the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit, and numerous other things? Then does God call a Methodist preacher to preach that sprinkling is baptism, and that you can fall from grace? Does God call both of them to preach these contradictory doctrines? John 17:20-23 and I Cor. 1:10-13 teach that he does not.

Why belong to a church? I told you that people, when convicted of sin will join one church or another, even though they do not know what it teaches or stands for. It is a church, they tell the story of Christ, and they were convicted of sin there, so they become members of it without questioning, or even knowing anything about its doctrines. When somebody criticizes it, the members do it resent it. Why? Because the criticism was true or not true? NO, we just don't like for people to criticize the church we are members of. Because of a sense of loyalty we resent it. That is human nature. We must overcome feelings like that and be ready to face facts.

Why become a member of a church? Because of parents, friends, relatives? Because of a nice building? Because it is conveniently located? Because they do a lot of good works? Because they teach some truth? Are these reasons we become members? For the most part, yes. The large majority of the people in the denominations join them without knowing what they teach, or stand for, hence they could not have joined because of their doctrine. I would say that 85 per cent or 90 per cent of the people in the Baptist Church do not know what the Baptist Church teaches. Some people say, "I know that they teach such and such a thing, but I don't believe it." Now look, first, you are a member of something that you do not even know what it teaches, and second, you are supporting a doctrine that you do not believe. If I were supporting a doctrine that I didn't believe, you'd call me a hypocrite.

THE SIXTY-FOUR DOLLAR QUESTION

Now here is the sixty-four dollar question. On the preceding basis, I want to know why you do not join all the churches in town? You have heard that question before, but I want you to consider it again. Why not join the Methodist, the Baptist, the Presbyterian and the Adventist? I have friends in all of them. They all teach some truth They all do many good works, they raise the fallen and they do benevolences. There are good people in all. They stand for morality. The reasons we give for belonging to one church could be given as reasons for belonging to all; so, why not join all of them? I'll tell you why. It would make me a hypocrite to be a member of more than one church. If you are a member of the Baptist Church, and you go next Sunday and join the Methodist Church, and then the following Sunday join the Presbyterian, folks will begin to say that you are not sincere, or that you are "not all there." At a place where I was preaching once there was a family that joined every church in town during the big meetings. The town and the churches were considerate--they just overlooked it. Their name is a synonym for being "a little off." Hence, joining all churches will give you a reputation for being a hypocrite or insane.

If it will make you a hypocrite for belonging to the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church at the same time-- then why? Is it because of the good people in it? No. Is it because of the truth or the good they teach? No. Is it because they do a lot of good works? No. What is it then? The conflicting doctrines! The Baptist Church stands for immersion only, impossibility of apostasy and close communion. The Methodist Church stands for open communion, sprinkling for baptism and the possibility of apostasy--just the opposite. We are told that it is all right for one person to stand for Baptist doctrine, and another person to stand for Methodist doctrine. but it is not all right for one to stand for both the Methodist and Baptist Doctrines at the same time. To do

so will bring the charge of hypocrisy or insanity upon you. If it will make me a hypocrite to belong to more than one because of the contradictory doctrines, then answer this question: Is Jesus Christ a member of all churches? Is he? Is Jesus Christ a member of the Baptist Church? If so, is he a member of the Methodist Church, too? Is he a member of both of them tonight--now? Is the Son of God standing for Baptist Doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy now, and at the same time over in the Methodist Church, is he standing for the possibility of apostasy? Is he doing that tonight? And if it will make me a hypocrite to do it, WHAT DOES; IT MAKE THE SON OF GOD? IS HE A HYPOCRITE? Does he endorse an conflicting doctrines? Is Jesus Christ a member of the Baptist Church, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Episcopal, the Adventists, the Mormons, and all of the different churches? Id; he a member of all of them?

There is a good question in the Bible along this line, I Cor. 1:13. "Is Christ divided?" Just three words, "Is Christ divided?" The apostle Paul asked the question in condemning division. What is the answer to it? Will you answer it? Is Christ divided? The answer is in the question. It is a rhetorical question. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" It was after considering things like these that I began to see that something was wrong--that the Baptist Church is not altogether the New Testament Church. Then I would try to justify the Baptist Church by looking to all the good they did, and the splendid people I had learned to love. I couldn't stand the thought of facing my friends and what they would have to say. It never occurred to me to rejoice in the truth and tell others who did not know. I guess I realized that they would not be glad to learn it.

I remember one day that one of the Baptist Deacons came to me in the store. We went back to the wareroom where we could be alone. He said "Grover, I heard that you are about to join the 'Campbellites'." There was that tone of contempt in his voice. He made it sound like that was the worst thing in the world. I stammered a little and said, "No, I have been attending their meeting, but I am not about to join." He said, "Well, I knew that you had better sense than to be led off by that bunch." I told him that they really knew and preached the Bible. He explained their ease in handling the Bible by telling me that the "Campbellites" only have ten sermons which they memorize and preach everywhere they go. He told me that the church was started by Alexander Campbell, that it was the most narrow-minded and bigoted bunch of people in the world, and they thought everybody was going to hell that didn't belong to their church. When he finished he left such a stigma that I thought, "Well, surely a fellow would be insane who would go with that group."

That helped for a while, as it eased my conscience to disregard what I had learned. It, very likely, was responsible for my not obeying the gospel before the meeting closed. However, the day the meeting closed, Sunday, that afternoon Brother Hobbs came to see me. He took my Bible, sat down beside me, and as I asked questions, he turned in the Bible and had me read the answers. When I didn't ask a question he had plenty of things to show me. We'll notice some of them in just a moment. He offered to talk to me in the presence of the Baptist preacher, or to talk to the Baptist preacher in my presence. He asked me to invite the Baptist preacher to meet with him or Brother Thomas McDonald, the local preacher for the church of Christ in my home town. I didn't want to ask him because I knew that he wouldn't. He took my Church Manual and showed me where Baptist Doctrine contradicts the Bible. I saw the truth very plainly. That night he insisted that I come and hear him. I made every excuse I could but he wouldn't hear them. I told him that I had a part on the B. T. U. program and couldn't get to Borger in time after that. We got out at 8:00 and his services started at 8:00. I thought that would end it, but it didn't. The only reason I could think of for not wanting to go is that I hated to face the Baptists and explain my absence from church which they would surely notice. Brother Hobbs said, "I'll be in front of the Baptist

Church at 8:00 o'clock and take you to town." He preached on church history that night. He explained the origin of denominations and showed how the church of Christ stands for New Testament Christianity free from all denominations. When the invitation was extended I wanted to go. As I thought on what I should do, and what my friends in the Baptist Church would say, my head just whirled. I managed to stay in my seat, however.

The meeting ended and I settled down to a long, hard study of things all by myself. I read the New Testament through and underlined the passages on baptism, the Holy Spirit, the plan of salvation, apostasy, etc. I copied each verse into a notebook on a sheet for each subject. When I had them all I studied them together. The more I studied, the more I realized that the Baptists were wrong, and the more it bothered me. I couldn't keep my mind on my work. I couldn't sleep. Phillips is a big oil field, and there is a big torch that burns day and night. I lay in bed and watched that torch and the lighted sky. The clouds reflected the red from its flames. I would be there, sometimes till daylight, thinking' praying, studying, and wishing that something would happen. I prayed for the Lord to guide me. I asked the Lord to show me his will, the way He would have me go.

I struggled on until time for the Southern Baptist Convention which met that year in Oklahoma City; then, I decided to go to the convention and forget about the church of Christ. Here I was successful in forgetting my troubles and getting better established in the Baptist Church. I went with the local preacher and registered as a delegate. I returned, feeling much better, but not for long. Every time that I read my Bible I noticed those passages which I had marked. I still had my notebook, too. It wasn't long until I found myself spending sleepless nights again. I begged the Lord to show me what he would have me do. I prayed, "Thy will be done." This continued for nearly three months. Then one Sunday afternoon as I was studying and thinking, it suddenly dawned on me that the Bible is God's way of revealing his will to us. I realized that I had been praying, "Thy will be done," and as honestly and earnestly as I knew how, but that subconsciously I had been holding out on the Lord in my desire to remain a Baptist. MY WHOLE STRUGGLE WAS REBELLION TO WHAT GOD WAS TELLING ME TO DO. The Lord was trying to guide me through the light of His word, but it didn't shine in the direction I wanted it to. Most of our struggles between right and wrong is not what is right and what is wrong, but surrendering our desires for what we want, to what we know is right. The Bible is God's way of telling us His will. He is doing everything He can to guide us by the Bible. When we refuse that, we "have not God." (II John 9).

After considerable study and prayer that afternoon, I gathered up my clothes and went to services at the church of Christ. When they offered the invitation, I went forward, confessed my faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized into him the same hour of the night.

The truth is what made me leave the Baptist Church. I now invite your attention to some of those truths. My first point is the most fundamental, and is the ultimate conclusion of every point I shall make.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH IS NOT THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The Baptist Church is not the church you read about in the Bible. Baptist preachers, and all other preachers, take the Bible and read the word "church," but they do not comment on it. They leave the impression that it refers to "their" church. The Baptist preacher will read a passage with the word "church" in it, and apply it to the Baptist Church. The Methodist preacher will read the same passage and apply it to the Methodist Church. The Presbyterian preacher will read the same

passage and apply it to the Presbyterian Church. It cannot refer to all of them. If these passages refer to the Baptist Church, it cannot refer to the Methodist, because they are two different institutions. To which one does it refer then? I am affirming that out of the 112 times that the word "church" is used in the New Testament, not one time does it refer to the Baptist Church, or to any other denomination. It talks about "the church," "the church of God," "the church of the first-born," "the churches of Christ," etc., but most of the time it just says "the church."

Which church? Which one is it? When the Bible uses the word "church" it just refers to one. Now which one is it?

CHURCH THE "CALLED OUT"

First, the word "church" means "called out." "Called out" of what? What does it mean? The Baptists teach that you can be a Christian--you can be saved, and not be a member of any church, including the Baptist. Let us see. The word "ecclesia" translated "church" refers to the "called out" --to that body of people that have been called out of the world, out of sin, into Christ. That is the meaning and significance of the word "church" in the New Testament. It does not mean denomination. It does not have reference to the Baptist Church, not the Methodist, nor any of the rest of them. It simply means "the called out." The point is this: if you can be saved without being a member of any church, then it follows that you can be saved without being "called out" or a member of the "called out." You have to be called out of the world into Christ to be saved. The same thing that calls you out, that redeems you, makes you a member of the church or "called out;" don't you see? The Baptists do not use it that way. They talk about a person being saved and in Christ before he is a member of the church, and without being a member of any church.

I want to illustrate this point by substituting the terms "called out" and "redeemed" for church in a passage of scripture or two. Acts 2:47 says "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The Lord added to the "called out" daily such as should be saved. Now, see this body of people over here that are in sin and in the world, and the Lord added to this other body over here, the "called out," "such as should be saved." All of those who were saved were called out of the world into Christ. The process of saving and calling out are the same. "The Lord added to the saved daily such as should be saved." The Lord added to the redeemed daily such as should be saved.

In Acts 8:1 we read, "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem." Now watch it, "At that time there was a great persecution against the called out which was at Jerusalem," "a great persecution against the redeemed which was at Jerusalem," "against the saved which was at Jerusalem." Do you see that? I do not see how you could miss it.

Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The called out of God which he hath purchased with his own blood," "the saved of God," "the redeemed of God. The church, the redeemed, the saved, the called out. This is the significance of the word "church," and is a far cry from the meaning Baptists give it. Remember they claim that a person can be saved, redeemed, belong to God and not be a member of the Baptist Church. The church is the Kingdom of God, the body of Christ, the family of God. When viewing the church as to its relationship to the world, it is the "called out"--called out of the world--the church. When viewing the church as to its government, it is a kingdom, the Kingdom of God. As to its organization it is the body of Christ. With reference to its relationship to each

other, it is the family of God. Don't you see that the church in the New Testament is not and could not be the Baptist Church?

"CHURCH" NEVER REFERS TO BAPTIST CHURCH

If the word "church" never refers to the Baptist Church, then the Baptist Church is eliminated from the Bible. You know, of course, that the expressions "Baptist Church," "Baptist Churches," "Baptists," or "a Baptist" are not to be found in the Bible. We have now shown that the word "church" never refers to the Baptist Church. In as much as the Baptists admit that you can be a member of the New Testament Church, the kingdom of God, before and without being a member of the Baptist Church, then it follows that the Baptist Church and the New Testament church are two different institutions, entered at two different times, by two different processes. That is exactly it. This is according to the Baptists, themselves. Therefore the Baptist Church cannot be the New Testament Church.

Do I have to be a member of the Baptist Church to be saved? The Baptists say "no." If they should say "yes," then all the Methodists, Presbyterians, etc., would be going to hell because they are not Baptists. They say that they would not be that "narrow-minded." On page 17 of this little book, Church Manual for Baptist Churches by J. M. Pendleton, and published by the Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tennessee, we read, "persons wishing to unite with a church give an account of the dealings of God with their souls, and state the 'reason of the hope that is in them'; whereupon, if, in the judgment of the church they 'have passed from death unto life', they are by vote of the church recognized as candidates for baptism, with the understanding that when they are baptized they are entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership." This simply says that a person desiring to join the Baptist Church must tell that he is saved. The Baptist Church then votes to determine whether the church thinks he is saved or not. They, deciding that he is, receive him into the church after baptism. Hence, he must confess that he is saved, that he is a member of the kingdom of God already, and then, he joins the Baptist Church. This being true, then it follows that a person can be a member of the kingdom of God, or body of Christ, or New Testament Church, before, and without belonging to the Baptist Church.

TWO DIFFERENT PROCESSES OF SALVATION

You had to confess that you were saved before you could join the Baptist Church. When I asked the Baptist preacher if he would baptize me, he asked, "Are you saved, Grover? We want saved people in our church." Then, at services that night I confessed that "God, for Christ's sake, has saved me from my sins" and I went to join the Baptist Church. I was visiting a Baptist Church one time and saw them do it this way: The preacher asked, "Do you believe that you were lost and that you are now saved for Christ's sake?" The reply was "yes." "Do you desire to join the Baptist Church?" "Yes," again. "You have heard the statement, what is your pleasure?" Then they took the vote. Once more I say that this proves, according to Baptists, that a person can be a member of the kingdom of God (saved) before and without being a member of the Baptist Church. Hence, to be a Christian, to be saved, and a member of the kingdom of God, or the church you read about in the Bible is one thing, and to be a Baptist is another. Friends, the conclusion is inevitable. **THE BAPTIST CHURCH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ARE TWO DIFFERENT PROCESSES.** This argument alone should show every honest person why you can't afford to be a Baptist.

THE "VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE" CHURCHES

Baptists teach that the church is used in two senses a visible sense and an invisible sense. They claim that when you are saved, God adds you to His church, the New Testament Church, which is the invisible church. If you are regenerated, you are saved; God knows it, and you know it, but nobody else should pass judgment on you--that is, nobody except the Baptists; they vote it, you know. That makes you a member of the kingdom of God or the New Testament Church, which is the invisible church--to them. Then, you can go to the Baptist Church, relate your experience (tell them you are saved), let them vote on it to decide if you really are, then by baptism you become a member of the Baptist Church which is a visible church. They claim that all denominations are visible churches. They look upon the church of Christ as being just another "visible church" or denomination. That is the reason they think we are so narrow, that is, because they look at us as a church v'. .' their denominational, NARROW .., and erroneous conception of what the church is. They will say, "I think there are saved people in the church of Christ. I think their doctrine is wrong, but I think there are saved people in "their" church. Again, "I disagree with the Methodists, but I think there are saved people in the Methodist Church." This is because they think of a person being saved in the "invisible church" and then joining a "visible" one. This would be all right if the Bible taught it, but it doesn't.

Friends, the New Testament Church was a visible church. The Jerusalem church was a visible church. It met for worship every Lord's day, yet was no denomination. The church at Corinth met upon the first day of the week, sang, prayed, had preaching, took the Lord's Supper, and contributed of their means, yet it was no denomination. Paul called it, "the church of God" and "the body of Christ." (1 Cor. 1:2; I Cor. 12:27).

WHAT MAKES A DENOMINATION?

I want to use an old illustration: Suppose that three denominations, the Baptists, Methodists and the Presbyterians have a union meeting. In the course of the meeting 400 people are saved. Understand that I disagree with them on the way that they think they are saved, but we are waiving that point just now, in order to make another. These 400 persons, being saved, are members of the New Testament church, the Kingdom of God. When the meeting closes, they are told to "join the church of your choice." Suppose that 100 go into the Baptist Church another hundred go into the Methodist, and a third hundred join the Presbyterians. What made the first 100 Baptists? Now look, they were saved to begin with, already Christians, members of the Lord's church, then they joined the Baptist Church which made them Baptists. What was it that made them Baptists?! It was the doctrines peculiar to the Baptist Church. The doctrines that differentiate and distinguish the Baptist Church from the Methodist and all others. These doctrines are given in this Church Manual. If a Baptist Church didn't measure up to this doctrine, then it would not be a Baptist Church, but some other kind. Hence, Christians plus the peculiarities of the Baptist Church make Baptists. Christians (saved) plus the Methodist Discipline, the doctrines peculiar to the Methodist Church, make them Methodists. It is always Christian first, plus the creed containing the doctrine peculiar to the particular denomination that makes them members of the second church, the denomination. Two Churches? Why not? You are members of the Lord's church when you are saved--church number one; then you join some denomination--church number two. Hence, to be a Baptist is something in addition to being a Christian, and belonging to something in addition to the New Testament church Where does the Bible teach us to join some denomination, the second church? The Bible teaches, "The Lord added 10 the church daily such as should be saved."

HOW NOT TO BE A SECTARIAN

But, what about the other 100? Suppose they couldn't make up their mind which church to join. As they study about it, it suddenly dawns on them, "we are saved aren't we? Our sins have been forgiven, haven't they? We are members of the New Testament church, are we not?" 'O, yes. "We are members of the Kingdom of God, aren't we?" Yes. "Well, suppose that we select a place, meet there upon the first day of the week according to the New Testament and worship God, and never join a denomination." Can they do that? If not, why not? Would that make them a denomination? If so, which one? They didn't join any denomination. They said, "We just want to be Christians, and Christians only."

This is exactly what the church of Christ pleads for. We ask people to be just a member of the New Testament church, and not of any denomination. I preach that a person must belong to the New Testament church to be saved. So do the denominations. I preach that a person does not have to belong to any denomination to be saved. Every one of them teach the same. When I teach the same thing that they do, they do not like it. Of course, they teach that you do not have to belong to any denomination to be saved, but that you ought to belong to one; and I teach that you do not have to belong to any denomination to be saved and that **YOU OUGHT NOT BELONG TO ANY** because the Lord did not build them. Yes, we are pleading with people to be a member only of the Lord's church, the New Testament church, the kingdom of God, and **NOT** to be members of any denomination. Be a Christian, and a Christian only.

DIVIDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Before I leave this point, I want to examine their claims from another angle. Baptists claim to be building up the kingdom of God when they, through their preaching, lead people to be saved. (I do not agree that they are saved, because, Baptists teach the wrong plan of salvation. We will notice that in a moment, but we are speaking in Baptist teens in order to make the point.) They claim that their greatest concern is simply to get folks "saved," then invited them to join the Baptist Church or some other denomination, for they are **DIVIDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD**. When they lead you to be saved, that makes you a member of the kingdom of God. Then, when they encourage or allow you to join a denomination, that divides the kingdom of God into various denominations, drags you off, and fences you in. The very name denomination means divided. Denomination and denominator came from the same root word which means divide. Division is condemned. (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:14). Division is carnal, and to be carnal I am sinful. Hence for a Christian to be a member of the Baptist Church, or any other denomination, is to divide the kingdom of God, and therefore a sin. Let me plead with you, friends, to leave the Baptist Church as I have done, and be a member only of the Lord's Family, the New Testament Church.

WHO IS IT THAT IS NARROW?

Just here, I want to call attention to this charge of being narrow. Usually about all the enemies of the church of Christ can say against us is "they are narrow minded." Narrow means limited, or circumscribed. We just noticed how the Baptists make Christians (?), members of the kingdom of God, then teach and encourage them to separate themselves from others in the kingdom of God by joining the Baptist Church, thus limiting and circumscribing themselves from all others whom they claim are members of the kingdom of God, too. Who is it that is narrow?!

Have you ever wondered just why we are called "narrow minded"? It is NOT because we point out and condemn error, because all preacher do that. The Baptists condemn the Methodists for sprinkling and infant membership, and the Methodists do not get mad and call them narrow-minded. Then too, the Methodists condemn the Baptist doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy, or once saved always saved, and the Baptists do not get mad and accuse the Methodists of being narrow-minded and bigoted. Yet, when I condemn the Methodists for sprinkling, and the Baptists for "once saved always saved," no more than they do themselves, they both get together and charge me of being narrow-minded. Why? I think I know why. When the Baptist preacher finishes condemning sprinkling, he tells them that it doesn't make any difference what you believe anyhow, and the Methodist preacher does likewise. But, when I get through pointing out that the Bible does not teach sprinkling for baptism, infant membership in the church, "once saved always saved", etc., and instead of telling the audience that it doesn't make any difference anyhow, I plead with them to accept and obey the truth, the word of God and turn from these false doctrines. This is why I am branded "narrow-minded", and it amounts to this: A denominational preacher will preach for an hour and "wind up" by saying that it doesn't matter whether you believe what he has been preaching or not. This makes him BROAD-MINDED. But after I have preached for an hour, I "wind up" by pleading with you to accept it because it is the truth. This makes me NARROW-MINDED. Isn't that the reason others are considered broad-minded and we are considered narrow-minded? I wonder what Jesus thinks, do you? Let's see, Mark 16:15-16 says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED". This is a never failing test for gospel preaching. When a preacher says that you do not have to believe what he preaches to be saved, he is not preaching the gospel, for Jesus said, "Go preach the gospel he that believeth not shall be damned."

THE BAPTIST CHURCH IS UNSCRIPTURAL IN NAME

We have already said that the expression 'Baptist Church', is not found in the Bible. John the Baptist, it is reasoned, baptized Christ and others, and since he was sent from God, that made Christ and all others Baptists. Well, that made Baptists before they ever had a Baptist Church. Did you ever hear of a Baptist that was not a member of the Baptist Church? Yet, they admit themselves that the Baptist Church was not established until the ordaining of the twelve. John was not called Baptist in the same sense that people are called Baptist today. The expression "Baptist" is found only 15 times in the Bible. Every time it is "John the Baptist." Mark 6:14 says, "John the Baptizer." The Greek is "John, he who baptizes " or "the man who baptizes." There is the passage that tells why John was called "the Baptist"--because he baptized people. This distinguished him from all other Johns. Do you know that in the book of John you cannot find the word "Baptist"? The Apostle John never called John the Baptist, "the Baptist." It is only found 15 times in the Bible, and every time "John THE Baptist." The followers of Jesus Christ were never called Baptists. The followers of John were never called Baptists. Is it not peculiar that if John's baptizing folks made Baptists out of them that not one was ever referred to as a Baptist then, or thereafter? Not one time is anyone ever called Baptist in the Bible except John.

Human names are condemned. (1 Cor. 1:12). "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Again in Acts 4:12:"Neither is there salvation in any other: For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Look at it, "There is none other name." Is it all right to use other names? Listen again, "There is none other name." Among human names (those not found in the Bible) I can think of none greater than that of Paul. Yet, if I were to present a check for my soul's salvation in the

name of Paul at the judgment bar of God, he would have to say, "Not in the name of Paul, not in the name of Apollos, not in the name of Cephas, nor in the name of John the Baptist, for salvation is in none other name than Jesus Christ." This is the only "name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." This name exalts Christ. This is the name that we in the church of Christ are pleading for. Other names, or additional names are sinful. Wear the name of Christ and none other. (Phil. 2:9-11).

THE BAPTIST CHURCH IS UNSCRIPTURAL IN WORSHIP

They call Sunday the Sabbath day. Ex. 20:10 says, "Six days labor, but the seventh is the Sabbath." That would make Saturday the Sabbath day. In Acts 20:7 we learn that the disciples came together to break bread upon the first day of the week. Baptists teach that people ought to keep THE Ten commandments. one of which commands the keeping of the seventh day, Sabbath. Yet, they will meet on Sunday, the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10), and teach that Sunday is the Sabbath day. This confuses the people. It confused me while I was a Baptist. The truth of the matter is, Sunday is not the Sabbath, nor is it the Christian Sabbath, but the Lord's Day. The old Law, the Sabbath included, has been "fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18), "done away" (Ex. 34:27-33; II Cor. 3:6-14; Rom. 7:1-7), "nailed to the cross" (Col. 2:14-16).

Baptists use mechanical instruments of music in their worship. I think a good bit has been said about that in other lessons, so just suffice it to say that the New Testament Church did not use mechanical instruments of music. David used them, but neither Jesus nor his disciples ever did. That is as good an argument as is needed. They had it to use, but did not use it. That is reason enough for not using it.

Baptists set aside the Lord's Supper and say that it makes it too common to take it every Lord's Day. The same passage that says for us to come together, says also for us to partake of the Lord's Supper. (Acts 20:7). They come together every first day of the week, they take a collection every first day of the week, and they have preaching... but to take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week makes it too common. Why is it not too common to give every first day of the week? Why is it not too common to come together every first day of the week? Why is it not too common to have preaching every first day of the week? They read in I Cor. 11:25, where Christ is quoted as having said, "this do, as oft as ye drink it, ;in remembrance of me," and conclude that they are left at liberty to take it when they are pleased to do so. The Bible plainly states, "upon the first day of the week . . ." (Acts 20:7) . Every week has a first day. When God told the children of Israel "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," they understood that they were to keep every Sabbath holy. Just so with us in regard to the Lord's Supper. The Lord said `Do this in memory of me," so we meet every first day of the week to remember the Christ in that humble and simple way, by keeping the Lord's Supper.

They have unscriptural means of raising money. In the first place they teach tithing. The Jews gave a tithe but we are taught to "lay by in store as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:2), and as we "purposeth in our heart" (II Cor. 9:7), which will "prove the sincerity of our love" (II Cor. 8:8). Baptists will build an elaborate building, then go around begging the business men in town to pay for it. They want the bank to discount the notes. Various schemes and practices similar to these have given churches in general a "black eye." One can hardly get a bank to loan a church any money at all, because if they foreclose on a note it causes ill will toward the bank, and if they don't, they must suffer the loss. They just do not want to fool with it. Begging and hijacking business men and professional men to pay church debts is certainly not following the scriptures. Then too, they will use carnivals, suppers and other means of amusement to raise the money to

support their churches. Let "every one of you lay by him in store" to support the cause of Christ and the work of the church.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH IS WRONG IN THEIR PLAN OF SALVATION

They teach that a person is saved by prayer. I could tell several incidents in which people were saved by prayer according to the Baptists. One Sunday night three boys, who were alien sinners, a preacher, and myself, all engaged in prayer until the boys arose and confessed that they were saved.

An alien sinner is not saved by prayer. John 9:31 says, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth." It is God's will that we "obey the gospel" (II Thess. 1:8). The gospel commands us to be baptized into Christ "for the remission of sins." (Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38). We have not done God's will until we have been baptized into Christ. Hear Isaiah, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." (Isa. 59:2). We are to pray for the lost, that's true (Rom. 10:1), but the gospel, not prayer, "is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16).

Paul says in II Cor. 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Some people try to persuade God to save the sinner, but Paul persuaded the sinner to obey God. God is willing to save all who will obey. (II Peter 3:9; Titus 2:11; I Tim. 2:4; Heb. 5:9). "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have OBEYED from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being THEN made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Romans 6:17-18).

Baptists think that the "new birth" is a mysterious, mystical, operation performed by the Holy Spirit which produces some indescribable sensation to the flesh. They do not know how it happened, but they do know that a change has been made and their heart tells them that the change is of such a nature as to have come from God. Their pet passage is John 3:8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In the first place this would be carnal--a sensation to the flesh. A spiritual birth is of the spirit, not of the flesh. In the second place, the passage doesn't teach any such idea. It says, "so is everyone" not "so is the new birth," but "so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." MacKnight translates this passage, "The Spirit breathes where he pleases, and you hear the report of him, but know not whence he comes, or whither he goes; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." We must hear the "report or Voice" of the Spirit--the inspired word of God. I John 5:1 says, "whosoever believeth is born of God." I John 4:7 says, "every one that loveth is born of God." I John 2:29 says, "everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him." We must take all that the Bible says. John 3:5 is plain enough, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." But if you have trouble with it and the others just mentioned, then the thing to do is to find some examples of how people were "born again" in the Bible. Nobody would question the fact that the people of Acts 2 were born again. After hearing Peter's sermon, they were pricked in their hearts (hence, believed, v. 37). Upon asking what to do, they were told to "repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Verse 38). Then in verse 41. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Again, (Gal. 3:26-27), "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have

been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Notice that they were "children of God," therefore had been "born" into the family of God, but they were children of God by faith--by faith where--by faith in Christ. But, they were baptized into Christ, and thus "put on Christ." Hence, they were "born again" (made children of God) by faith and baptism.

Baptists teach that sinners are saved by faith only. They say, "All you have to do is believe, and He will save you." Article 5 of their Declaration of Faith, page 48, says that justification is "solely through faith." James says just the opposite, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24). Their doctrine of faith only breaks down on the chief rulers of John 12:42-43. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Were the chief rulers saved? If you say "yes," then you disagree with the Apostle John for he says, "every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." (1 John 4:3). If you say they did not believe, then you disagree with the Apostle John again, for he says they "believed on Him." Sometimes Baptists try to dodge the force of this argument by saying they believed on, not in Him. The Greek is "eis," the strongest expression in this respect in the Greek language.

Many times they refer to Paul's statement to the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved," and argue that in as much as Paul did not mention baptism that it is not a part of the plan of salvation. According to this logic, we could eliminate repentance, love and confession, because they are not mentioned either. And did you notice that Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus." Besides that, where do these go? "For by GRACE are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). "For we are saved by HOPE" (Rom. 8:24). "Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the GOSPEL which I preached unto you, by which also ye are saved" (1 Cor. 15:12). "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted WORD, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). "The like figure whereunto even BAPTISM cloth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21). So, we see that we are not saved by faith only (James 2:24), but by grace, hope, the gospel, the word, and baptism also. But these are all made possible by Jesus (Matt. 1:21). Paul told the Philippian Jailor "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved"--but do not stop here, let us read on--verse 32 reads' "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house, and he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straight-way." Since faith is the first step taken toward salvation, Paul told the jailor to "believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved," but when they "spake unto him the word of the Lord," he was baptized the same hour of the night, since the word of the Lord says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Therefore, we are not saved by faith only, but by "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).

Baptists make the wrong confession. They say "confess your sins," but Christ says in Matt. 10:32, "Whosoever therefore shall confess ME before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." The confession is not made in baptism. Consider, (Rom. 10:9), "That if thou shalt confess with thy MOUTH the LORD JESUS and shalt believe in shine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The eunuch did not confess his sins, but did confess "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Who ever heard a Baptist preacher ask anyone to confess "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" Sometimes Baptists confess "that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned my sins." This is the confession that I made and I have heard a number of others make the same confession. This confession contradicts eve?" verse the Bible that speaks of baptism and salvation. The Bible says we are made free AFTER we have obeyed the gospel (Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18).

BAPTISTS DO NOT ADMINISTER BIBLE BAPTISM

John's baptism is out of date. In Acts 19:1-5 we find where Paul rebaptized twelve men who had received John's baptism. Aquila and Priscilla took a preacher who knew "only the baptism of John" and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." (Acts 18:24-26).

Baptists baptize people whom they claim already have received the remission of sins. "There is an actual, a real remission of sins when we believe in Christ--there is a declarative, formal, symbolic remission in baptism." (Baptist Church Manual, p. 13).

The Bible plainly states that baptism is FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, (Acts 2:38), or to wash away sins (Acts 22:16).

Baptists do not baptize a person into Christ, but rather, into the Baptist Church. They say any such person is in Christ before baptism. Hear Paul, "For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27) .

Baptist baptism must be on a confession that one is already saved. Bible baptism puts a person into Christ where salvation is. (1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:3; II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; II Tim. 2:10).

Inasmuch as Christian baptism is "for the remission of sins," or to "wash away sins," and to get "into Christ," or "put on Christ," and Baptists do not administer Christian baptism, as has just been pointed out, then it follows that those who obeyed the Baptist plan of Salvation have missed the Lord's plan of Salvation, and they are therefore not members of the New Testament Church, the Body of Christ, have not had their sins remitted, and are not saved.

Many will say, "Oh but I know I'm saved." "Well, how do you know it?" "Oh, I just know it. I feel like I am." "What makes you feel like you are saved?" "Because I'm saved," they will say. Saved because they feel good, and feel good because they are saved. Such people prefer their feelings to anything the Bible says. I am not opposed to a person's feeling good about being a Christian, but I am opposed to a person claiming to be a Christian just because he feels good. Feelings are based on faith. Hence the Catholic feels like the Priest forgave his sins--he feels forgiven, but he isn't; but he feels forgiven because he BELIEVES that the Priest can forgive his sins. I felt just as saved as you do, when I was in the Baptist Church. I had just as much feelings as any of them, and can tell just as good an "experience," but I finally learned that feelings were the result of what I believed. If you believe that something is going to go wrong, you will feel nervous as long as you believe that. When the children are out late, if you believe that they are all right, you will feel good; but if you believe that something is wrong, you will worry, fret, and maybe cry. I feel saved because I believe that I am saved. You ask, "Why do you believe that you are saved?" Because I John 2:3 says, "hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." I know that I am saved, and I feel like I'm saved because the Lord said that if I would obey his commands, then I would be saved. I have done that, therefore I know that I have the promise of God. Baptists would have this verse read, "hereby we do know that we know him, if we feel like it." If you will study the scriptures with an open mind rather than through your feelings, you will then begin to feel different. You will feel that you should turn from the human organization, the Baptist Church and obey the gospel of Christ because the Bible teaches you to do that. Don't follow your feelings. FOLLOW THE BIBLE. FOLLOW CHRIST.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH IS UNSCRIPTURAL IN ORGANIZATION

The Baptist Church has a minister whom they call "Pastor," and deacons, but no elders. The truth of the matter is this. pastors, bishops, presbyters, and elders are all the same and take the oversight of the flock. The deacons are servants of the church. The preacher is a minister or evangelist, not "the pastor" of a congregation.

Baptist preachers call themselves and have themselves called, "Reverend." (There are a few exceptions to this, but very few). This word is used one time in the entire Bible and then in connection with the name of God. (Psalm 111:9). When you see the man you believe on a par with God, call him "reverend." This also violates the principle laid down by our Savior in Matthew 23:5-12.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH IS UNSCRIPTURAL IN DOCTRINE

They are wrong first in having a man-made doctrine at an. "This Declaration of Faith was framed many years ago by J. Newton Brown, D. D." (Baptist Church Manual, foot note, p. 43). Christ says in Matt. 15:9, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The Baptist doctrine contradicts the Bible in reason. Ask a Baptist preacher, "What is the Baptist Doctrine?" It is "what a church believes the Bible to teach." (Baptist Church Manual, p. 41). I have pointed out that it is the distinctive features of the Baptist Church that make it Baptist instead of some other kind of Church Now ask, "Must I believe the Bible to be saved?" Answer, "Yes." "Must I believe Baptist Doctrine to be saved?" Answer, "No." Then, if I must believe the Bible to be saved, and must not believe Baptist Doctrine to be saved, then it follows that Baptist Doctrine is not Bible Doctrine. Jesus told the apostles to go preach the gospel and said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." When any preacher preaches things that you do not have to believe to be saved, you may rest assured that he is not preaching "the gospel," because you do have to believe "the gospel" to be saved. If a person can be saved without belonging to the Baptist Church and without believing Baptist Doctrine (that which is peculiar to Baptists), then why does the Baptist Church exist, and by whose authority? Baptists say they exist to save people, but how can this be, when a person can be saved and never hear of the Baptist Church? Friends, think about that seriously.

Baptist Doctrine contradicts the Bible in fact. "We believe that the salvation of sinners is WHOLLY of grace." (Baptist Church Manual, Article IV of the Declaration of Faith, p. 47). We are saved by HOPE, (Rom. 8:24), and Peter said BAPTISM saves us, (1 Peter 3:21). If this is true, then we are not saved WHOLLY or ENTIRELY by grace, but by hope and baptism also. Then this article of faith is false.

In Article V on page 48, the Declaration of Faith declares that "justification, the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life . . . are SOLELY THROUGH FAITH." In the first place, this article of faith contradicts Article IV. How can salvation be WHOLLY of grace and at the same time SOLELY through faith? We have pointed out that we are saved by grace, faith, hope, the gospel, the word, repentance, confession, baptism, etc., but the expression "solely through faith" excludes everything except faith. The Bible certainly does not teach this. James 2:24 again, "not by faith only," therefore, this article contradicts Article IV and also the Word of God.

Their doctrine of apostasy is false. "We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end." (Article XI, p. 54). This is the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" and if a person "falls from grace," then they claim that he was not saved to start with. Consider II Peter 2:4, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Are these "real believers" more steadfast than angels?

Is it possible that Paul could be a cast-away? Paul thinks so, hear him, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:27). Was Paul a "real believer?" Paul said, "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

Again, "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." (Gal. 5:4). We are saved by grace. (Eph. 2:8) . Therefore, people can fall from that which saved them.

Many Baptists do not believe this doctrine, but as long as they are Baptists they stand for it just the same.

BAPTISTS SUPPORT A DEMOCRACY, NOT A KINGDOM

The essentials of a kingdom are: a king, law, and subjects over which he rules. The king makes the laws, enforces the laws, and passes judgment on violators of the law. Officers are filled by appointment of the Thing. Since Christ has all authority in heaven and in earth and has been crowned "King of kings," He makes the laws; He will judge all violators of His laws in the day of judgment.

A democracy is that form of government that the subjects by vote make the laws and elect their officers. I challenge you to compare the Baptist Church with these two forms of government.

"The government of a church (the Baptist Church) is with its members. The churches must say . . . whether music shall be led by choirs, with the aid of instruments or not, etc., etc." (Baptist Church Manual, p. 39). This very plainly shows that the Baptist Church is democratic in its nature, but Christ established a kingdom.

In John 4:24 we learn that we must worship God "in spirit and in truth." In John 17:17 Jesus said, "thy word is truth." In Rom. 10:17 we read that "faith comes by hearing the word of God." Our worship, then, to be "in truth" must be as the truth directs. In Leviticus 10:1-2 we have an example of two boys, Nadab and Abihu, worshiping God, but because they did so in a "strange" way "which he commanded them not," the Lord took their lives. Again in I Chron. 15:13-15, David says, in reference to the method of bearing the ark of the covenant, ". . . God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." Jer. 10:23 tells us "that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and in Isa. 55:8-9, the Lord says, "my ways are not your ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways." God will not tolerate PRESUMPTION. We, simply mortal men, cannot worship God any way WE see fit, but must "seek Him after the due order." Remember, Jesus said. "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments (that is, following the precepts) of men." (Matt. 15:9) . Which are you following, God or men?

Baptists take Christ's place in adding to the church. The scriptures say "the LORD added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47). But Baptists VOTE to receive people into the

church. There is not one place in the Bible that teaches us to vote to receive people into the church, nor to put them out, either.

Baptists talk about "Opening the doors of the church." No man, whether he be the Pope of Rome, or a Baptist preacher, can "open the doors" of the Lord's Church. Those doors were opened by the Apostle Peter in the long ago, and they stand ajar to this good time, and shall ever be open until the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall announce that time is no more. This is just more evidence that the Baptist Church is a human, man-made church. For if the, can "open and close the doors" then it is of men and not of God. They cannot open, nor close the doors of the New Testament Church.

Baptists take the authority to change the great commission. Christ said in Mark 16:15, 16, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Baptists teach, "he that believeth and is NOT baptized is saved already because of his faith." Thus, they promise the sinner salvation SHORT of the conditions upon which God promises it. Therefore, Baptists are standing on the promises and assurance of Baptist preachers and NOT ON THE PROMISES OF GOD. Which do you prefer to believe, Baptists, or Christ?

Indeed, this is the real issue--who is king? Who is head? Who has all authority? In whom do you believe? Let me illustrate. Many times the church of Christ is accused of "believing in water." No, we do not believe in baptism as such, but in Jesus Christ. We practice baptism for the remission of sins, because Christ, in whom we believe, and who is our King and God, commanded it. To refuse His command, or the purpose for which He gave it is nothing short of rejecting Jesus Christ--"we will not that he should reign over us"-- at least in this respect. To simply follow Christ when you like it, is not to follow Him at all. You are your own King in such a case. That sets yourself above Jesus Christ, above His word. You sit in judgment over His Word, accept what you like and reject the rest if it is different from your feelings. Friends, such is not Christianity, but religious anarchy You do not have a right to "believe as you please," to choose the way you like to serve Him, but simply to humbly submit to Him who is Kind and Love, and is the creator of heaven and earth, and before whom we must all stand in a little while.

Let me plead with you to renounce all denominational affiliations and humbly submit to Christ as Lord of lords, and King of kings. While we sing, just step out from your seat and come forward, confess your faith in Jesus as Lord, as you humbly repent of every sin, and be baptized for the remission of sin.

Addenda

As a reaction to Brother Stevens' visit to Fort Worth, and the lecture and tract which he distributed on the theme, "Why I Left The Baptist Church," a Baptist preacher of the community wrote the following letter to Brother Stevens. His. reply also follows:

Fort Worth, Texas

November 12, 1948

Mr. Grover Stevens

Charlotte, Tennessee

Dear sir:

I just finished your booklet on "Why I Left The Baptist Church," and after reading it and seeing what you believe, I would say the church left you.

In the first place all Christians ought to believe the word of God and be able to give it out without fear or favor. (II Tim. 2:15).

You stated that Paul baptized 12 of John's disciples. But Paul said in I Cor. 1:14 that he baptized none but Crispus and Gaius, verse 16, also the household of Stephanas. You say that baptism is part of the gospel Verse 17 Paul plainly states he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

Eph 2:8. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works (baptism) lest any man should boast. Why didn't you give all the scripture? In I Peter 3:21 you failed again. Why didn't you give all of the verse? "Not putting away the filth of the flesh by the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." And not by baptism.

You said believers could fall from Grace and gave Gal. 5:4 as your scripture. All Bible students know that Paul was teaching them if they were justified by the Law, Christ is become of none effect. Just like you teach you are saved by baptism, and if you are, Christ is none effect, you are fallen from grace, as some of the Galatians were.

I know that he "that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Just like "He that buys a ticket and gets on a train and sits down shall go to his destination," and I know also "He that buys a ticket (if he sits down or not) will arrive." No, you didn't leave the Baptist Church. (The church left you.)

When Christ said in John 10:28--what did He mean when He said, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish"? Read I Peter 3:9. Verse 5 tells us that we are kept by the power of God. We don't and can't keep ourselves. You said in your booklet that Judas fell by transgression. John 17:12 tells us that he was the son of perdition that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Jesus said he was a devil from tie beginning. Remember II Tim. 2:15.

You said God did not hear sinners' prayer when they pray. Luke 18:13 says God does hear sinners. Verse 14, "He went down justified." (And he was not baptized).

Mr. Stevens, answer this question: If a man can so sin as to be eternally lost after he is saved, is that man a lost believer or a lost unbeliever, and if he is lost, do you [baptize him again, and if you don't baptize him again you don't believe what you preach.

Dear Brother, take the whole Bible plus nothing and minus nothing and stand on it, and you would be a good Baptist.

Yours in His Name,

BAPTIST PREACHER.

P. S. When I have time I will inform you on many more scriptures. Read Leviticus 17:11. It is the blood and not the water that makes atonement for the soul.

Charlotte, Tennessee

November 15, 1948

Baptist Preacher

Fort Worth, Texas

Dear

Your letter of November 12th reached me today, which I am glad to receive and to have the opportunity of discussing the points of my tract with which you disagree. I admire your conviction which prompted you to write, and shall be very happy to discuss our differences. Judging from the introduction to your letter, you are an honest man and want to be governed by the Bible rather than sentiment. I would like for you to bear this in mind, that I do not have any hard feelings toward the Baptist Church nor Baptist people. I believe they are doctrinally wrong, and because I love them, I hope to teach them the truth. In order to make my reply as short as possible, my replies will have to be brief, but I assure you the kindest feelings prompted them. Now to your objections:

Paul did not say that he baptized none but Crispus and Gaius, etc., but "I baptized none of you (Corinthians), but Crispus and Gaius, etc." (1 Cor. 1:14). However, even if Paul did not do the baptizing with his own hands, the fact still remains that 12 who had received "John's baptism" were rebaptized (Acts 19:1-7).

If baptism is no part of the gospel, then making Baptists is no part of the gospel for one must be baptized to be a Baptist. Inasmuch as Paul pronounced a curse on all who preach "any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you" (Gal. 1:8), and since making

Baptists is no part of the gospel, then it follows that all who make Baptists are accursed. If not, why not?

Your reasoning on I Cor. 1:17 is faulty. You say: "Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel, but Christ did not send Paul to baptize, therefore, baptism is no part of the gospel. This is erroneous. Here is the syllogism given and the correct conclusion drawn: Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel, but Christ did not send Paul to baptize, therefore "to baptize" (a verb, hence the act of baptizing) is no part of "to preach" (the act of preaching). They are two different acts. Paul preached baptism (Acts 18:8; I Cor. 12:13; Acts 16:14, 15; 30-34; Acts 19:1-5; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26, 27; Col. 2:12). This is the gospel that Paul preached, which he certified was "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12), and pronounced a curse on all who preach "any other gospel" (Gal. 1:8, 9).

You next quote Eph. 2:8, 9, and say "not of works (baptism) ". In John 6:29 we read "this is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Hence, according to your own argument salvation is not of faith because it is "not of works" and faith is a work, therefore it is not of faith. Then too, there is more room to "boast" of faith than of baptism. Furthermore, baptism belongs to God's righteousness and not to man's (Rom. 10:1-3). Baptism is "the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9) .

I am surprised at your statement on I Peter 3:21. You say, " . . .by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And not by baptism." Peter says, " . . . baptism doth also NOW save us," but you say "not by baptism"--the same as saying "baptism doth also NOT save us." You seem to think that the rest of the passage changes the meaning of the part that I quote. No, my friend, the passage still says, " . . . baptism doth also now save us." Do you believe that, Mr.....? Or do you believe "baptism doth also NOT save us?" Which do you believe? And from what does baptism save us, Mr.....?

Can a person fall from something he doesn't have, Mr.? We are saved by grace, yet the Galatians had "fallen from grace," therefore it follows that a person can fall from that which saved him (Eph. 2:8; Gal. 5:4) .

You next try to eliminate baptism from Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," by giving a parallel (?) sentence. "He that buys a ticket and gets on a train and sits down shall go to his destination." Thus you make "buying a ticket" stand for faith, and "sitting down" stand for baptism. What about "getting on the train," Mr.? We make "buying a ticket" stand for faith, and "getting on the train" stand for baptism, and "destination" stand for salvation your own illustration will refute your position. However, I think that you meant to make "getting on the train" stand for faith, and "sitting down" stand for baptism, and "destination" stand for salvation. You then reason that a person does not have to "sit down (be baptized) to reach his "destination" (salvation). No, according to Baptist doctrine he wouldn't have time to "sit down" for the minute he "got on the train" (believed) he arrived at his destination (salvation). Not only that, but since one can travel other ways than by "getting on a train," it would follow that one does not have to "believe" (get on the train) to be saved. But enough of that. You say, "I know also, He that buys a ticket (if he sits down or not) still arrives." That is as much as saying, "I know also, He that believeth (if he is baptized or not) is still saved." Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," but you say, "He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved." That is why I left the Baptist Church,

Next, you want to know about John 10:28. In the first place the Lord is talking about sheep who follow him. What about those who quit following, Mr.....? We have eternal life in the sense that we have Jesus Christ (1 John 1:2; 5:12). But having Christ depends on our "abiding in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9). "They shall never perish" was said of sheep following the Lord. That a "brother" can "perish" is evident from I Cor. 8:11.

You want me to read I Peter 1:3-9 with emphasis on verse 5, which reads, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." First, notice that we are kept "through faith." I Tim. 5:12 says that some have "damnation because they cast off their first faith." You say, "We don't and can't keep ourselves." Jude says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (verse 21). Now back to I Peter 1:5. Notice next that the salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time. But according to Baptist doctrine it has already been revealed. Then I Peter 1:9, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." But according to Baptists one receives the salvation of his soul in the beginning of his faith.

It was Peter who said that "Judas by transgression fell," Mr.....(Acts 1:25). Judas himself said, "I have sinned." (Matt. 27:4) . Was Judas a free moral agent, Mr.....? If so, he betrayed the Lord by choice, and if not, then God is responsible for the act.

The Publican in Luke 18:13, Mr....., was a Jew and therefore a child of God under the law. Nobody but the Jews were allowed in the temple.

It is possible for a believer to quit believing (1 Tim. 5:12; 4:1). Will there be unbelievers in heaven, Mr? The Bible tells us of believers who are lost (John 12:42, 43). Hence the answer to your question is, it is possible for a man to be a lost believer (John 12:42, 43), and it is also possible for a believer who was saved to quit believing (1 Tim. 5:12).

No, I do not baptize "him" again, and I believe and practice what I preach, too. I preach that baptism is for the remission of alien sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

How could I take the whole Bible plus nothing and minus nothing and be something that is not even mentioned in the Bible? Nobody can follow the Bible and nothing else and be a Baptist, nor a member of the Baptist Church, for it is nowhere found in the Bible. That is the reason I left the Baptist Church.

I believe in the blood of Christ, Mr. How do we contact the blood of Christ? Rom. 6:3 says that we are baptized into His death. Christ's blood was shed in his death (John 19:34). Hence, we contact the blood of Christ and get the benefit of it when we are "baptized into his death."

Mr....., it is my sincere prayer that you will open your eyes to the truth and leave the Baptist Church which is nowhere to be found in the Bible, and turn to the Lord and His Church. We must both stand before our Maker and give an account, therefore, with a view to the judgment before God, let us be honest with our own souls for their salvation's sake. I shall be very happy to hear from you as often as you can write.

In Christian Love,

GROVER STEVENS