

# Duty to Love God

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"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:5)

In this manner the Bible commands the chief of all duties. No reasons are assigned for the requirement. No proof is adduced that God exists, or that he possesses such perfections as entitle him to the supreme love of his creatures. Jehovah steps forth before the subjects of his government, and issues his command. He waits for no formal introduction. He lifts up his voice with majesty. Without promise, and without threat, he proclaims his law, and leaves his subjects to their responsibility.

From the manner of this announcement, we may derive instruction. It is not necessary that we should enter into a formal demonstration that God exists, or a formal investigation of his attributes, before we begin the duty of loving him. We already know enough of him for this; and to postpone the performance of the duty until we have completed our investigations is to commence them with unsanctified hearts, and in rebellion against God. From the dawn of our being we have had demonstrations of God's existence and character, blazing around us like the light of noonday. The heavens and the earth have declared his glory; his ministers and people have proclaimed his name; he is not to us an unknown God, except so far as our minds are wilfully blind to the displays of his glory.

If, therefore, we withhold the affections of our hearts, we can have no excuse in the plea that more evidence is needed. And with hearts so alienated from God at the outset, all our religious inquiries are likely to be unprofitable. What probability is there that further proof will produce its proper impression and effect on our minds, if that which is already in our possession is unheeded or abused? If, from what we already know of God, we admire and love him, we shall desire to know more of him, and shall prosecute the study with profit and delight; but, if we have already shut him out of our hearts, all our intellectual investigations respecting him may be expected to leave us in spiritual blindness.

The duty required corresponds, in character, to the religion, of which it is an essential part. Heathen gods could not claim the supreme love of their worshippers; and heathen minds had no idea of a religion founded on supreme love to their deities. To some extent, they were objects of fear; and much that appertained to their supposed character and history, served for amusement, or to interest the imagination; but the conduct attributed to them was often such as even heathen virtue disapproved. Hence, they could not be objects of supreme love; and no one claimed it for them. The requirement of supreme love demonstrates the religion of the Bible to be from the true God; and when we begin our religious investigations with the admission of this obligation, and the full recognition of it in our hearts, we may be assured that we are proceeding in the right way.

The simplicity of the requirement is admirable. No explanation of the duty is needed. Forms of worship may be numerous and various, and questions may arise as to the forms which will be most acceptable. Many outward duties of morality are often determined with much difficulty. Perplexing questions arise as to the nature of repentance and faith, and the uninformed need instruction respecting them. But no one needs to be told what love is; the humblest mind can understand the requirement, and may feel pleasure in the consciousness of rendering obedience to it; and the learned philosopher stands in the presence of this precept as a little child, and feels its power binding every faculty that he possesses. This simple principle pervades all religion, and binds all intelligences, small and great, to God, the centre of the great system. Between it and the power of gravitation in the natural world, which binds atoms and masses, pebbles and vast planets, a beautiful analogy may be traced.

The comprehensiveness of the precept is not less admirable. From it rises the precept, Love thy neighbor as thyself; and on these two all the law rests. We love our neighbors because they are God's creatures, and the subjects of his government, and because he has commanded us. We love God supremely, because he is the greatest and best of beings; and we love other beings, according to the importance of each in the universal system of being.

One principle pervades both precepts, as one principle of gravitation binds the earth to the sun, and the parts of the earth to each other. This law binds angels to the throne of God, and to each other; and binds men and angels together, as fellow-subjects of the same sovereign. The Decalogue is this law expanded, and adapted to the condition and relations of mankind. Love is not only the fulfilling of the law, but it is also the essence of gospel morality. All Christian obedience springs from it; and, without it, no form of obedience is acceptable to God. He, who loves God supremely, cannot be guilty of that unbelief which makes God a liar, and he cannot reflect on the sins which he has committed against God, without sincere penitence.

We must not overlook the tendency of this precept to produce universal good. Everyone knows how much the order and happiness found in human society, depend on love. If all kind affections were banished from the hearts of men, earth would be converted at once into a pandemonium. What love is left on earth renders it tolerable, and the love which reigns in heaven makes it a place of bliss. Perfect obedience to the great law of love is sufficient to render all creatures happy. It opens, within the breast, a perennial source of enjoyment; and it meets, from without, the smile and blessing of an approving God.

Though the religion of love is clearly taught in the book of God only, yet, when we have learned it there, we can discover its agreement with natural religion. It will be useful to observe how the moral tendencies of our nature accord, on this point, with the teachings of revelation.

The wickedness of man has been a subject of complaint in all ages. The ancient heathen complained of the degeneracy of their times, and talked of a golden age, long passed, in which virtue prevailed. In modern heathen nations, together with the depravity that prevails, some sense of that depravity exists; and everywhere the necessity or desirableness of a more virtuous state of society is admitted.

In Christian lands, the very infidels, who scoff at all religion with one breath, will, with the next, satirize the wickedness of mankind. It is the united judgment of every nation, and every age, that the practice of men falls below their own standard of virtue. It is, therefore, necessary, in order to acquire the best notions of virtue that nature can give us, to turn away from the practice of men to those moral sentiments implanted in the human breast, which condemn this practice, and urge to higher virtue.

It is well known that men judge the actions of others with more severity than their own. Our appetites and passions interfere with the decisions of conscience, when our own conduct is the subject of examination. Hence, the general moral sense of mankind is a better standard of virtue than the individual conscience. In looking to the judgment of others, with a view to determine the morality of our actions, the judgment of those is especially to be regarded who are to be benefited or injured by our deeds. Hence, natural religion approves the rule — Do unto others as you would, in like circumstances, that they should do unto you.

When the vice of others interferes with our happiness, we are then most keenly sensible of its existence and atrocity. However vague our notions of virtue may be, we always conceive of it as tending to promote the happiness of others. Yet it is not every tendency to promote happiness which we conceive to be virtuous. The food that we eat, and the couch on which we lie, tend to promote our happiness; yet we do not ascribe virtue to these inanimate things. Virtue belongs only to rational and moral agents; and the promotion of happiness must be intentional to be accounted virtuous.

There is still another limitation. Men sometimes confer benefits on others, with the expectation of receiving greater benefits in return. Where the motive for the action is merely the benefit expected in return, the common judgment of mankind refuses to characterize the deed as virtuous. To constitute virtue, there must be an intentional promotion of happiness in others; and this intention must be disinterested. Natural religion does not deny that a higher standard of morality may exist; but it holds that disinterested benevolence is virtue, and it determines the morality of actions by the disinterested benevolence which they exhibit.

Some have maintained that self-love is the first principle of virtue, its central affection, which, spreading first to those most nearly related to us, extends gradually to others more remote, and widens at length into universal benevolence. This system of morality is self-contradictory. While it claims to aim at universal happiness, it makes it the duty of each individual to aim, not at this public good, but at his own private benefit. Whenever the interest of another comes in conflict with his own, it is made his duty to aim at the latter, and to promote that of his neighbor only so far as it may conduce to his own. It is true, that the advocates of this system bring in reason as a restraining influence, and suppose that it will so regulate the exercise of self-love as to result in the general good.

According to this system, if we, in aiming at our own happiness, practice fraud and falsehood with a view to promote it, and find ourselves defeated in the attainment of our object, we may charge our failure, not on the virtuous principle by which it is assumed that we have been moved, but on the failure of our reason to restrain and regulate it so as to attain its end. If it be said, that conscience will not permit us to be happy in the practice of fraud and falsehood, and that self-love, aware of this, avoids those practices so inconsistent with our internal peace, it is clearly admitted that conscience is a higher principle of our nature, to the decisions of which our self-love is compelled to yield.

As virtue aims at the general good, it must favour the means necessary for the attainment of this end. Civil government and laws, enacted and executed in wisdom and justice, are highly conducive to the general welfare, and these receive the approbation and support of the virtuous. Were an individual of our race, by a happy exception to the general rule, born with a virtuous bias of the mind, instead of the selfish propensity natural to mankind; and were this virtuous bias fostered and developed in his education, he would be found seeking the good of all. His first benefits conferred, would be on those nearest to him; but his disinterested benevolence would not stop here. As his acquaintance extended into the ramifications of society, his desire and labour for the general good would extend with it, and civil government, wholesome laws, and every institution tending to public benefit, would receive his cordial approbation and support; and every wise and righteous governor, and every subordinate individual, aiming at the public good, would be an object of his favour.

If we suppose the knowledge of this individual to increase, and his virtuous principles to expand, widening the exercise of universal benevolence; and if, at length, the idea of a God, a being of every possible moral excellence, the wise and righteous governor of the universe, should be presented; how would his heart be affected? Here his virtuous principles would find occasion for their highest exercise, and would grow into religious devotion. This glorious being would have the highest place in his admiration and love; and the discovery of his universal dominion would produce ineffable joy. Such are the affections of heart which even natural religion teaches, that the knowledge of God's existence and perfections ought to produce.

In God's written Word, we learn our duty in a reverse method. We are not left to trace it out by a slow process, beginning with the first exercise of moral principle in the heart, and rising at length to the infinite God; but the existence and character of God are immediately presented, and the first and chief of all duties is at once announced: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." How sublime! How appropriate! The virtuous mind is open to receive such a revelation; and its perfect accordance with the best teachings of natural religion, recommends it to our understandings and our hearts.

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The second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is introduced, not as leading to the first, but as subordinate to it. It takes the place which properly belongs to it in a revelation from the supreme authority.

Love has been divided into benevolence, beneficence, and complacency. This division may at first appear inconsistent with the simplicity which has been ascribed to love. Benevolence is the disposition to do good to an object, and beneficence is the conferring of that good. The latter is not properly love, but the effect or manifestation of it. On the other hand, complacency includes the cause of the love together with the affection itself. Love may be exercised toward an unworthy object, as when God laves those who are dead in trespasses and sins. But it may be exercised toward those whose moral character renders them fit objects. In this case, the love being connected with approbation of the character beloved, is called complacency. When love has an inanimate thing for its object, as when Isaac loved savory meat, the term refers to the deriving of enjoyment; but when the object of love is a sentient being, the term always implies the conferring of enjoyment, even when some pleasure has been received, or some enjoyment in return is expected.

Love to God implies cordial approbation of his moral character. His natural attributes, eternity, immensity, omnipotence, &c., may fill us with admiration; but these are not the proper objects of love. If we worship him in the beauty of holiness, the beauty of his holiness must excite the love of our hearts. As our knowledge of these moral perfections increases, our delight in them must increase; and this delight will stimulate to further study of them; and to a more diligent observation of the various methods in which they are manifested. The display of them, even in the most terrible exhibitions of his justice, will be contemplated with reverent, but approving awe; and their united glory, as seen in the great scheme of redemption by Christ, will be viewed with unmixed and never-ceasing delight.

Love to God includes joy in his happiness. He is not only perfectly holy, but perfectly happy; and it is our duty to rejoice in his happiness. In loving our neighbor, we rejoice in his present happiness, and desire to increase it. We cannot increase the already perfect happiness of God, but we can rejoice in that which he possesses. If we delight in the happiness of God, we shall labor to please him in all things, to do whatever he commands, and to advance all the plans, the accomplishment of which he has so much at heart. Love, therefore, includes obedience to his commands, and resignation and submission to his will.

Love to God will render it a pleasing task to examine the proofs of his existence, and to study those glorious attributes which render him the worthy object of supreme affection. Let us enter on this study, prompted by holy love, and a strong desire that our love may be increased.



# An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty

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Isaac Backus

From the book, *An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty*, 1773

■ nasmuch as there appears to us a real need of such an appeal, we would previously offer a few thoughts concerning the general nature of liberty and government, and then shew wherein it appears to us that our religious rights are encroached upon in this land.

It is supposed by multitudes that in submitting to government we give up some part of our liberty because they imagine that there is something in their nature incompatible with each other. But the word of truth plainly shews, that man first lost his freedom by breaking over the rules of government, and that those who now speak great swelling words about liberty, while they despise government, are themselves servants of corruption.

What a dangerous, error, yea, what a root of all evil then must it be for men to imagine that there is anything in the nature of true government that interferes with true and full liberty! A grand cause of this evil is ignorance of what we are and where we are. For did we view things in their true light, it would appear to be as absurd and dangerous for us to aspire after anything beyond our capacity, or out of the rule of our duty as it would for the frog to swell till he bursts himself in trying to get as big as the ox, or for a beast or fowl to dive into the fishes' element till they drown themselves.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." But they that will take a contrary course "fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. 6:6, 9)

The true liberty of man is to know, obey and enjoy his Creator, and to do all the good unto and enjoy all the happiness with and in his fellow-creatures that he is capable of. In order to which the law of love was written in his heart, which carries in its nature union and benevolence to Being in general, and to each being in particular, according to its nature and excellency, and to its relation and connection to and with the Supreme Being, and ourselves.

Each rational soul, as he is a part of the whole system of rational beings, so it was and is both his duty and his liberty to regard the good of the whole in all his actions. To love ourselves and truly to seek our own welfare is both our liberty and our indispensable duty, but the conceit that man could advance either his honor or happiness by disobedience instead of obedience was first injected by the father of lies, and all such conceits ever since are as false as he is.

Before man imagined that submission to government, and acting strictly by rule was confinement, and that breaking over those bounds would enlarge his knowledge and happiness, how clear were his ideas! (Even so as to give proper names to every creature.) And how great was his honor and pleasure! But no sooner did he transgress than, instead of enjoying the boldness of innocence and the liberties of paradise, he sneaks away to hide himself. And instead of clear and just ideas, he adopted that matter of all absurdities (which his children follow to this day) of thinking to hide from OMNISCENCY and of trying to deceive HIM who knows everything!

Instead of good and happiness, he felt evil, guilt and misery, and in the room of concord was wrangling both against his Creator and his fellow-creature. Even so that, she who was before loved as his own flesh, he now accuses to the great Judge. By which it appears that the notion of man's gaining any dignity or liberty by refusing an entire submission to government was so delusive that instead of its advancing him to be "as gods", it sunk him down into a way of acting like the beasts and like the devil!

The beasts are actuated by their senses and inclinations and the devil pursues his designs by deceit and violence. With malicious reflections upon God and flattering pretenses to man, he drew him down to gratify his eyes and his taste with forbidden fruit. And he had no sooner revolted from the authority of heaven, than the beauty and order of his family was broken; he turns accuser against the wife of his bosom; his first son murders the next, and then lies to his Maker to conceal it; and that lying murderer's posterity were the first who broke over the order of marriage which God had instituted. And things proceeded from bad to worse till all flesh had corrupted his way, and the earth was filled with violence, so that they could no longer be borne with, but by a just vengeance were all swept away, only one family.

Yet all this did not remove the dreadful distemper from man's nature, for the great Ruler of the universe directly after the flood, gave this as one reason why he would not bring such another while the earth remains, namely for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. (Gen. 4:19; 6:13-15; 8:21) So that if he was to drown them as often as they deserved it, one deluge must follow another continually.

Observe well where the distemper lies. Evil imaginations have usurped the place of reason and a well-informed judgment, and hold them in such bondage that, instead of being governed by those noble faculties, they are put to the horrid drudgery of seeking out inventions, for the gratification of fleshly lusts which war against the soul; and to guard against having these worst of all enemies detected and subdued. Enemies which are so far from being God's creatures, that strictly speaking, they have no being at all in themselves, only are the privation of his creatures' well-being.

Therefore, sin with its offspring death will as to those who are saved, be swallowed up in victory. Sin is an enemy both to God and man, which was begotten by Satan, and was conceived and brought forth by man, for lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin-when it is finished bringeth forth death. (Eccl. 7:29; I Pet. 2:11; James 1:14, 15)

Now how often have we been told that he is not a freeman but a slave whose person and goods are not at his own, but at another's disposal? And to have foreigners come and riot at our expense and in the fruit of our labours has often been represented to be worse than death. And should the higher powers appear to deal with temporal oppression according to their defense, it would seem strange indeed, if those who have suffered intolerably by them should employ all their art and power to conceal them, and so to prevent their being brought to justice!

But how is our world filled with such madness concerning spiritual tyrants! How far have pride and infidelity, covetousness and luxury, yea deceit and cruelty, those foreigners which came from hell, carried their influence, and spread their baneful mischiefs in our world! Yet who is willing to own that he has been deceived and enslaved by them? Who is willing honestly to bring them forth to justice!

All acknowledge that these enemies are among us and many complain aloud of the mischiefs that they do. Yet even those who lift their heads so high as to laugh at the atonement of Jesus, and the powerful influences of the Spirit, and slight public and private devotion, are at the same time very unwilling to own that they harbour pride, infidelity, or any other of those dreadful tyrants. And nothing but the divine law referred to above, brought home with convincing light and power, can make them truly sensible of the foul slavery that they are in, and 'tis only the power of the gospel that can set them free from sin, so as to become the servants of righteousness can deliver them from these enemies, so as to serve God in holiness all their days.

And those who do not thus know the truth, and have not been made free thereby, (Rom. 6:18; Luke 1:74, 75; John 8: 32) yet have never been able in any country to subsist long without some sort of government, neither could any of them ever make out to establish any proper government without calling in the help of the Deity. However absurd their notions have been, yet they have found human fight and power to be so short and weak, and able to do so little toward watching over the conduct, and guarding the rights of individuals that they have been forced to appeal to heaven by oaths, and to invoke assistance from thence to avenge the cause of the injured upon the guilty. Hence it is so far from being necessary for any man to give up any part of his real liberty in order to submit to government that all nations have found it necessary to submit to some government in order to enjoy any liberty and, security at all.

We are not insensible that the general notion of liberty is for each one to act or conduct as he pleases, but that government obliges us to act toward others by law and rule, which in the imagination of many, interferes with such liberty though when we come to the light of truth. What can possibly prevent its being the highest pleasure for every rational person to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, but corruption, and delusion? Which, as was before noted, are foreigners and not originally belonging to men? Therefore the divine argument to prove that those who promise liberty while they despise government are servants of corruption is this. For of whom a MAN is overcome of the same is he brought in bondage. (II Pet. 2: 18, 19)

He is so far from being free to act the man, that he is a bond slave to the worst of tyrants. And not a little of this tyranny is carried on by such an abuse of language, as to call it liberty, for men to yield themselves up, to be so foolish, disobedient and deceived, as to serve diverse lusts and pleasures. (Titus 3:3)

Having offered these few thoughts upon the general nature of government and liberty, it is needful to observe that God has appointed two kinds of government in the world which are distinct in their nature, and ought never to be confounded together. One of which is called civil, the other ecclesiastical government. And though we shall not attempt a full explanation of them, yet some essential points of difference between them are necessary to be mentioned in order truly to open our grievances.

Some essential points of difference between civil and ecclesiastical government:

**1. The forming of the constitution and appointment of the particular orders and offices of civil government is left to human discretion, and our submission thereto is required under the name of their being the ordinances of men for the Lord's sake.** (I Pet. 2:13, 14) Whereas in ecclesiastical affairs we are most solemnly warned not to be subject to ordinances, after the doctrines and commandments of men. (Col. 2: 20, 22)

And it is evident that He who is the only worthy object of worship, has always claimed it as his sole prerogative, to determine by express laws, what his worship shall be, who shall minister in it, and how they that be supported. How express were his appointments concerning these things by Moses? And so wise and good a ruler as Solomon was not entrusted with any legislative power upon either of these articles, but had the exact dimensions of the temple, the pattern and weight of every vessel, with the treasuries of the dedicate things, and the courses of the Priests and Levites, all given to him in writing by the Spirit, through the hand of his father David. (I Chron. 28:11-19)

And so strict were God's faithful servants about these matters, that Daniel who in a high office in the Persian court, behaved so well that his most envious and crafty foes, could find no occasion against him, nor fault in him concerning the kingdom, till they fell upon, the devise of moving the king to make a decree about worship, that should interfere with Daniel's obedience to his God ; yet when that was done, he would not pay so much regard to it as to shut his windows. (Dan. 6:4-11)

And when the Son of God, who is the great Law-giver and King of his church, came and blotted out the handwriting of the typical ordinances, and established a better covenant, or constitution of his church upon better promises, we are assured that he was faithful in all his house and counted worthy of more glory than Moses.

**2. What vacancy has he then left for fallible men to supply by making new laws to regulate and support his worship especially if we consider, that as the putting any men into civil office is men of the people of the world, so officers have truly no more authority than the people give them?** And how came the people of the world by any ecclesiastical power? They arm the magistrate with the sword that he may be a minister of God to them for good, and might execute wrath upon evil doers, and for this cause they pay them tribute; upon which the apostle proceeds to name those divine commandments which are comprehended in love to our neighbour, and which work no ill to him.

Surely the inspired writer had not forgotten the first and great command of love to God, but as this chapter treats the most fully of the nature and end of civil government of any one in the New Testament. Does it not clearly shew that the crimes which fall within the magistrates' jurisdiction to punish are only such as work ill to our neighbour? (Rom. 13: 1-10)

**3. While church government respects our behaviour toward God as well as man, all acts of executive power in the civil state are to be performed in the name of the king or state they belong to.** While all our religious acts are to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, and so are to be performed heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men. And it is but lip service and vain worship if our fear toward him is taught by the precepts of men. (Col. 3:17, 23; Isa. 29:13; Mat. 15:9)

It is often pleaded, that magistrates ought to do their duty in religious as well as civil affairs. That is readily granted, but what is their duty therein?

Surely it is to bow to the name of Jesus and to serve him with holy reverence, and if they do the contrary they may expect to perish from the way. (Phil. 2:10; Psa. 2:10-12) But where is the officer that will dare to come in the name of the Lord to demand and forcibly take a tax which was imposed by the civil state? And can any man in the light of truth maintain his character as a minister of Christ if he is not contented with all that Christ's name and influence will procure for him, but will have recourse to the kings of the earth to force money from the people to support them under the name of an ambassador of the God of heaven?

Does not such conduct look more like the way of those who made merchandize of slaves and souls of men than it does like the servants who were content to be as their Master who said, "He that heareth you heareth me" and "he that despiseth you despiseth me?" (Rev. 18: 9, 13; Luke 10: 3-16)

**4. In all civil governments some are appointed to judge for others, and have power to compel others to submit to their judgment, but our Lord has most plainly forbidden us, either to assume or submit to any such thing in religion.** (Mat. 23:1-9; Luke 22: 25-27) He declares that the cause of his coming into the world was to bear witness unto the truth, and says he, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." This is the nature of his Kingdom, which he says "is not of this world" and gives that as the reason why his servants should not fight or defend him with the sword. (John 38:36, 37)

And it appears to us that the true difference and exact limits between ecclesiastical and civil government is this - that the church is armed with light and truth to pull down the strongholds of iniquity, and to gain souls to Christ and into his church to be governed by his rules therein, and again to exclude such from their communion who will not be so governed. The state is armed with the sword to guard the peace and the civil rights of all persons and societies and to punish those who violate the same.

And where these two kinds of government and the weapons which belong to them are well distinguished, and improved according to the true nature and end of their institution the effects are happy, and they do not at all interfere with each other, but where they have been confounded together, no tongue nor pen can fully describe the mischiefs that have ensued of which the Holy Ghost gave early and plain warnings.

He gave notice to the church that the main of those antichristian confusions and abominations would be drawn by philosophy and deceit from the handwriting of ordinances that Christ has blotted out. And to avoid the same directs the saints to walk in Christ Jesus as they received him rooted and built up in him and stablished in the faith as they have been taught, viewing that they are complete in him which is the HEAD over ALL PRINCIPALITY and POWER. Therefore he charges them not to be beguiled into a voluntary humility by such fleshly minds as do not hold this Head, but would subject them to ordinances after the doctrines and commandments of men. (Col. 2)

Now 'tis well known that this glorious Head made no use of secular force in the first fitting up of the gospel church when it might seem to be peculiarly needful if ever and it is also very evident that ever since men came into the way of using force in such affairs, their main arguments to support it have been drawn from the old Jewish constitution and ordinances. And what work has it made about the head as well as members of the church?

First they moved Constantine, a secular prince, to draw his sword against heretics, but as all earthly states are changeable, the same sword that Constantine drew against heretics, soon turned against the orthodox. However, as the high priest's sentence in the Jewish state, divided matters both for prince and people the same deceitful philosophy that had gone so far, never left plotting till they had set up an ecclesiastical head over kingdoms as well as churches, who with Peter's keys was to open and shut, bind and loose, both in spiritual and temporal affairs.

But after many generations had groaned under this hellish tyranny, a time came when England renounced that head, and let up the king as their head in ecclesiastical as well as civil concerns, and though the free use of the Scriptures which was then introduced by a divine blessing, produced a great reformation, yet still the high places were not taken away, and the lord bishops made such work in them as drove our fathers from thence into America.

The first colony that came to this part of it carried the reformation so far, as not to make use of the civil power to save the people to support religious ministers (for which they have had many a lash from the tongues and pens of those who were fond of that way) but the second colony, who had not taken up the cross so as to separate from the national church before they came away, now determined to pick out all that they thought was of universal and moral equity in Moses' laws, and so to frame a Christian commonwealth here. (*Massachusetts History*, vol. 3, p. 161)

And as the Jews were ordered not to set up any rulers over them who were not their brethren, so this colony resolved to have no rulers, nor voters for rulers, but brethren in their churches. And as the Jews were required to inflict corporal punishments, even unto death upon non-conformers to their worship, this commonwealth did the like to such as refused to conform to their way, and they strove very hard to have the church govern the world, till they lost their charter; since which they have yielded to have the world govern the church, as we shall proceed to shew.



## Conclusion to *The Church That Jesus Built*

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Roy Mason

From the book, *The Church That Jesus Built*, 1923 (Chapter 13)

"Church membership is not left to your conscience or to your whims or to your reasonings; it is a matter of loyalty and obedience to Jesus Christ, who bought us and saved us by His own precious blood. Conscience is not a standard of right or wrong for any man, for conscience is a creature of education and needs teaching...For if the church that Jesus built was a Baptist church, then no churches but Baptist churches are churches of Christ, and every man will have to face the Lord Jesus at the judgment and tell Him why he joined some church founded by an uninspired man, instead of the one founded by the Lord Jesus Himself."—H. B. Taylor, in *Why I Am A Baptist*.

"When Baptists enter the scheme of union by a process of compromise and cancellation, they are negotiating for a casket and a lot in the cemetery." J. W., Porter, in *Random Remarks*.

With the facts presented in the foregoing chapters full before us, we are driven to the inevitable conclusion that Baptist churches are the only true churches of Christ—the only churches authorized by Him to carry out the Commission and to administer His ordinances. Many of our day will make almost any concession in order to be thought of as "broad." How many, many times I have heard some individual who aspired to the position of one of great "broadness" remark, "Oh, it doesn't matter which church one belongs to. One church is just as good as another." That all sounds very nice, but can it be true in the light of the facts that we have studied? What right has any man to set up a rival organization to the one founded by the Son of God and to call it "just as good"? What right has anyone to call such a man-originated institution "just as good?"

The church that Jesus founded is very dear to His heart. Its importance is indicated by the fact that to it alone He has committed the task of carrying on His work in the world. That His church is the object of His tender solicitude and care is indicated by the fact that in spite of persecutions, wars, turmoils, the rise and fall of nations, the decay and death of human languages, He has preserved and perpetuated His church. Most certainly it ought to matter to any sincere Christian who wishes to be obedient to his Lord, as to which church he belongs to. He ought to want to belong to a church that can claim Jesus for Founder and Head rather than to a man-founded institution. He ought to want to be identified with the church to which Jesus committed His ordinances, the church He has perpetuated through the centuries and which has New Testament warrant for its doctrines and practices.

In revival meetings, particularly those of the "union" type I have often heard evangelists tell people to "join the church of their choice," no matter which that might happen to be. Some may call me narrow for saying it, but I could not conscientiously tell anyone to do that. As I see it, a mere "choice" perhaps dictated by fancy, caprice, or mere sentiment, is not enough when it comes to settling the church question. The question with each Christian ought to be, which is the true church—the one that Jesus founded? Which is entirely scriptural in its doctrines and practices?" It is a great thing to point a lost person to Christ. It is also a great thing to point a saved person to the path of full obedience. For a new-born soul to make a wrong choice with reference to the church, and to unite with a church whose doctrines and practices are unscriptural, means to start out on a career of life-long disobedience to Christ.

"Union" meetings, in which sentiment is more exalted than truth, and in which Christ's commands are bartered away lightly for popularity's sake, are the cause of many people entering upon a lifetime of disobedience. In such meetings where the full truth is not preached, people usually form their church affiliations upon the basis of which church, relatives or friends belong to, which church the evangelist belongs to, or something else equally trivial. In fact, almost anything may help decide, except the one thing of importance—the teaching of the Word of God.

BAPTISTS CANNOT BE CONSISTENT AND MIX UP IN DENOMINATIONAL HODGEPODGES FOR UNION REVIVALS. For a union meeting to please all concerned, the preacher must keep his mouth shut on certain truths. For a preacher to preach what the Word of God says concerning the security of believers, baptism, the Lord's Supper, church truth, etc., would be to wreck a union meeting. In such a meeting a Baptist cannot properly counsel new converts concerning "the all things" that Jesus commanded without arousing indignation and criticism. Is it right to engage in meetings where a part of the plain teaching of the Word of God is not welcomed? The truth, the whole truth, as taught in the whole Word of God, without addition, or subtraction—that is what Baptists have always stood for. In so far as they engage in union efforts they depart from their time honored principles.

I do not wish to convey the impression that Baptists are to be selfish, churlish, unsociable, unkind, or anything of the sort. They should rejoice when Christ is preached by whatever sect or denomination. They should rejoice at every soul that is saved. Their spirit should never be that of hostility or unkind controversy. But certainly their first loyalty and allegiance should be to Christ and His Word. On His commands there can be neither compromise nor concession. They are to "contend earnestly (not angrily) for the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

Reader, you who have followed me through the pages of this book, if a Christian, are you also a member of a genuine New Testament church? It will pay you to be strict about the matter of your church affiliation. This is not a matter that affects your salvation, but it is one that affects your reward with God. Jesus taught that "He that breaketh one of these least commandments and teacheth men so shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven."

The person that belongs to a church that minimizes and breaks some of the commands of Christ, necessarily lends his influence toward "teaching men so." By so doing, they place themselves in the class of those whom Christ said should be "called the least" in the Kingdom. The question of your church affiliation is something that you will one day have to give an account for when you stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. It will pay you to do what is right about the matter irrespective of what it may cost you, and irrespective of what anyone in the world may think about it.

I have tried to set forth the truth on the church question in this book, plainly and simply. My aim has been to enable you who read to know your duty in the matter of what church you should belong to. As to whether or not you will DO what you know to be the right thing—that is a matter for which you are answerable, not to me, but to your Lord.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin." (James 4:17)



**BOOKS READ OR QUOTED**

Below is given a partial list of books read in whole or in part in preparing the manuscript for this book:

*A History of the Baptists*, by John T. Christian  
*A Short History of the Baptists*, by H. V. Vedder  
*History of the Baptists*, by Benedict  
*History of the Baptists*, by Thos. Armitage  
*Manual of Church History*, by A. H. Newman  
*History of Anti-pedobaptism*, by A. H. Newman  
*A Century of Baptist Achievement*, by A. H. Newman  
*The Baptist Denomination*, by Haynes  
*History of the Christian Church*, by Jones  
*The Story of the Baptists*, by Cook  
*Progress of Baptist Principles*, by Curtis  
*The Baptists in History*, by Geo. C. Lorimer  
*Baptist History Vindicated*, by John T. Christian  
*History of the Christian Church*, by Schaff  
*History of the Christian Church*, by Fisher  
*History of the Apostolic Church*, by Schaff  
*History of the Popes*, by Ranke  
*The Ancient Church*, by Kellen  
*Ancient British and Irish Church*, by Cathcart  
*Church History*, by Kurt  
*Source Book for Ancient Church History*, by Ayer  
*Lectures on Baptist History*, by W. R. Williams  
*Distinctive Principles of Baptists*, by Pendleton  
*Ecclesia—the Church*, by B. H. Carroll  
*Denominationalism Put to Test*, by Tull  
*Baptist Churches Apostolical*, by Newman  
*Seven Baptist Fundamentals*, by Connor  
*The Baptist Faith*, by M. P. Hunt

*Doctrines of Our Faith*, by Wallace  
*Baptist Succession*, by Ray  
*Church Perpetuity*, by Jarrell  
*The Church*, by Harvey  
*Directory for Baptist Churches*, by Hiscox  
*The Ancient Catholic Church*, by Rainey  
*History of England*, by Macaulay  
*Ten Epochs of Church History*, by Walker  
*Baptist History*, by Isaac Backus  
*Guide to Study of Church History*, by McGlothlin  
*Ecclesiastical History*, by Mosheim  
*The Churches of the New Testament*, by McDaniel  
*Fundamentals of the Faith*, by Nowlin  
*World's Debt to the Baptists*, by Porter  
*My Church*, by J. B. Moody  
*The New Testament Church*, by T. T. Martin  
*The Church and the Kingdom*, by Thomas  
*Axioms of Religion*, by Mullins  
*Synthesis of Bible Truth*, by Scofield  
*The Mould of Doctrine*, by Thomas  
*Methodist Episcopal Church Discipline*  
*Baptist Beliefs*, by Mullins  
*Bible Beliefs*, by H. B. Taylor  
*The Baptist Position*, by J. F. Love  
*Baptist Law of Continuity*, by Smith  
*The Church a Composite Life*, by Prestridge  
*Compendium of Baptist History*, by Shackelford



## Jesus Christ Received Religious Worship\_\_\_\_\_

James Abbadie and Dean of Killaloe. Originally written in French. Translated into English by Abraham Booth.  
 From *A Treatise on the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1777, Chapter 5

**T**hat the apostles and disciples of Christ esteemed and treated him as a truly Divine Person, and that he claimed, in a proper sense, an equality with God will further appear by considering that he received, as a tribute due to his dignity, those honours and that adoration, which belong to none but JEHOVAH.

That God, and none but He, ought to be worshipped, is a fundamental truth. Whenever, therefore, men have set up themselves as objects of worship, they have pretended to be gods; and when they have relinquished their claim to divinity, they have ceased to require adoration. So that though we had not been expressly told by the inspired writers that Jesus

Christ is GOD; yet we could not have questioned it when we found them assert that he received adoration from his disciples, and that the angels were commanded to worship him.

If Jesus Christ be God, by nature, he has an undoubted right to Divine honours; he cannot but require them. But if not, we cannot, without sacrilege and idolatry, address them to him because they are due to none but JEHOVAH. For though it were possible, on our adversaries hypothesis, to account for the titles he bears, for the authority he claims, and for the works of creation and providence being ascribed to him; yet his conduct, in receiving divine worship, would forever remain indefensible, if he were not the true God.

A man, for instance, who should take the name of king, where a rightful sovereign is acknowledged, would certainly be very guilty. But his crime would be greatly enhanced, if he dared to assume the titles appropriated to signify the grandeur of his sovereign and the extent of his dominions. For example, if, in France, he should call himself, King of France, Navarre, &c., or if in Hungary, King of Bohemia, Hungary &c. But he would be still more guilty if he caused himself to be treated as a king if he demanded the titles of majesty from those who addressed him and required as some kings do, to be served on the knee. In this case, either the allegiance due to the lawful Sovereign must be renounced; or this pretender must be called a usurper, and be punished as guilty of high treason.

Thus the Jews, on the principles of our opponents, had sufficient reason to treat Jesus Christ. The regard which they had to the honour of God, and the obedience they owed to the precepts of his unchangeable law would not fuller them to connive at the conduct of a man, or of any mere creature, who received those honours which are due to none but the God of Israel.

To invalidate this conclusion it must be proved, either, that religious worship is not an honour peculiar to God, or that Christ did not pretend to this worship, or that he did not mean to be worshipped on the same ground, and in the same way, as the true God.—It may, perhaps be said worship is not an honour peculiar to God; for the angel who appeared to the patriarchs, and to Moses in the burning-bush was worshipped though a mere creature.

This is a great mistake. For that angel was a Divine Person and the true God. This appears from hence. Abraham addressed him, as "the Judge of all the earth," and acknowledged that he was "but dust and ashes" before him. That angel revealed himself to Moses, out of the burning bush, as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." From which words Christ himself infers, that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Consequently, he teaches us to conclude, that He who spake to Moses out of the bush, was more than a creature; was the true God. For he who is "the angel of the Lord," in the oracle of Moses, is "the GOD of the living," in the language of Jesus Christ, and both according to our hypothesis.

Again: That honour which is peculiar to God, ought never to be given to any but God. Religious worship is such an honour. Religious worship, therefore, ought never to be given to any but God. That honour which cannot be given to a creature, without, idolatry, is peculiar to God. But religious worship is such an honour, as appears from the idolatry of the Gentiles, which consisted in paying adoration to objects that were not God.

But worship is two-fold; that is, subordinate and supreme. The former is paid to subordinate beings; the latter is due to none but God.—This distinction, were it founded in truth, would be but of little service to the cause, in defense of which it is applied because it is easy to shew, that Christ received supreme worship.

This worship consists, either in thought, in word, or in action. He, therefore, who requires us to think of him, as we do of the true God, would have us worship him as such. But Christ would have us think of him, as we do of the true God. For he attributes to himself the perfections of God, and he claims an equality with him. Consequently, he would have us think of him, as we ought to do of God. He who speaks of himself, or directs others to speak of him as of the true God, would be acknowledged and worshipped as such. But Christ speaks, and would be spoken of by us, as the true God. This appears from his taking the names, and ascribing to himself the works of God. If not, why does he assume such names, why does he declare that he performed such works, as are proper to God, if he would not have us speak of him as God.

What, shall he speak of himself as God? Shall he assert, that he created all things and performed the works of God, and after all be unwilling that we should speak of him as God? Absurd to imagine; impossible to prove. He who requires we should do that for him, which we cannot lawfully do for any but the true God, expects to be worshipped as such. But Christ requires us to do that for him, which we ought not to do for any but God. This appears from hence. We are bound to love God above all things. Consequently, an affection so ardent, and a duty so high, are due to none but God. We ought, however, to love Jesus above all things; to love him more than our lives, which, of all things in the world, are the dearth to us. He requires that we should suffer martyrdom for his sake; and, by so doing, enjoins a duty which we do not, which we cannot owe, to any but God. None of the prophets, nor any of the apostles, ever said, "He that forsaketh not wife and children, and houses and lands, yea, and his own life, for my sake, is not worthy of me."

"But Christ declares that he acts in the name 'of his Father, and that the Father is greater than he' which is sufficient to forbid us addressing him with supreme worship." To this I answer, suppose a minister of state should give orders, under his own seal, for coining money with his image upon it. At the same time arming the names and titles of his lawful sovereign would his conduct be justified by declaring once, or twice, "My sovereign is greater than I, and I act in his name?" Should we not, in such a case, have reason to say, he denies by his actions, what he confesses in words, and contradicts himself?—

The application is easy. For as there is a certain idea of royalty which subject is ought never to apply to any besides their king; as there are names and titles so appropriated to the person of a sovereign that they cannot be given to any other without offence, and as there are particular honours due to a crowned head which cannot on any pretense whatever be paid to others without being guilty of high-treason. Because the signification of words and actions is not fixed by the caprice or authority of any particular person, but by general content and custom, so by a most ancient, sacred, and inviolable use, established by the prophets, established by the eternal Sovereign himself, there are some ideas so appropriated to God, that they cannot possibly belong to any other.

There are some titles peculiar to him that it is high-treason, in a divine sense, to give to any other; and there are certain honours so peculiarly due to him that they cannot be given to another without denying the God that is above, and incurring the complicated guilt of blasphemy and idolatry.

Such an honour is religious worship. For, if there be any dispositions of heart, if any language of the tongue, if any actions in life, by which it is possible for us to express a suitable distinction between God and every mere creature, they must be those of a devotional kind. And as the most sincere, the most fervent, the most sublime adoration we can pay to JEHOVAH, neither expresses, nor implies any more than a dutiful desire and endeavour to treat God AS GOD so the least degree of that worship, when given to a mere creature, is an alienation of the rights of Deity, and a placing that creature on the throne of the Most High.

Subordinate worship is distinguished from that which is supreme. The latter belongs to God only, as the source of being and perfection while the former may be given to Christ, though, a dependent being; he having received, from the Great Sovereign, peculiar honours and authority.—But there is abundant reason to conclude, that this subordinate worship was not known to the Divine Legislator, nor to the prophets; nor to the apostles, nor to angels, nor to Jesus Christ himself of all which in their order.

That the Divine Legislator knew nothing of this kind of worship appears from hence. He forbids all worship, in general, which does not belong to the true God, and that in a moral precept, the obligation is perpetual. This he would not have done, had subordinate worship been lawful; left, by ambiguous expressions, he should have lead mankind into error. Nor would he have forbidden us, without exception, to worship any besides God but only to worship any other with Supreme worship.

If the Divine Lawgiver intended that the promised Messiah, though a mere creature, should be adored when he appeared, why did he, in such general terms, utterly forbid all manner of worship that is not given to the God of Israel? Besides, he evidently designed to discourage and condemn the Gentile idolatry. But that idolatry principally consisted in worshipping

various divinities with subordinate worship, for the ancient Heathens, no less than the Jews, acknowledged but one Supreme Being.

"The law forbids, it will be said, such subordinate worship as terminates on idols - not that which has Christ for its object." But when the law prohibits that kind of worship, it does it in general terms; in such terms as forbid all sorts of subordinate worship without any exception. Our adversaries, perhaps, may say, "There being idols, and these idols becoming the objects of worship, render that worship idolatrous." But they should rather say, "There is an object worshipped: this worship, being given to an object which does not deserve it, renders the object, though innocent in itself, an idol." The God of Israel expressing himself in a general way, and forbidding to worship anything in heaven or on earth, after the manner of the Heathen; it is evident, that so soon as we address subordinate worship to anything in heaven or earth, we make an idol of it. It is worthy to be remarked, that the law does not only say, "Thou shalt have no other gods;" but "thou shalt have no other gods BEFORE ME" which seems principally to forbid subordinate worship.

The prophets were ignorant of subordinate worship. They had no instance of it before their eyes, but what they detested as idolatrous. They never heard, they never speak, of any such thing as lawful, or as having any existence among the pure worshippers of Jehovah. Nay, they laugh at, they despise all subordinate gods because they cannot conceive how any man can worship an object that "created not the heavens," and causeth not "the rain to descend upon the earth," which they would not have done had they known that there was, or ever would be, a subordinate god, to whom adoration should be paid. But the prophets, I shall be told, charge the people with idolatry because they addressed supreme worship to gods who created not the heavens and the earth. Quite a mistake, for the Heathens did not pay supreme worship to their subordinate divinities because they did not look upon them as the source of being and the original of all good; Jupiter being the only god, whom they acknowledged under those exalted characters.

Nor were the apostles acquainted with subordinate worship, as appears from the following considerations. They considered all worship, even that which was only external, and could not be esteemed as addressed to a supreme object when given to a creature as doing infinite prejudice to the glory of the Creator.

When Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet, he did- not look upon him as the Supreme Being. Though he worshipped him, it was not, it could not be, as the Original of all good, and the Ruler of all worlds. He knew very well that Peter was but a man; for the angel had told him so, when he commanded him to send for that apostle from Joppa. This worship, therefore, could be no more than subordinate, and even that in a very low degree. The devout Centurion could not possibly think of worshipping a man, called Simon, surnamed Peter, who had lodged at the house of another Simon, a tanner, with the same adoration which he paid to GOD. And yet, as worship, even external worship, was an act determined by custom to express that honour which is due to none but the Great Supreme.

Peter did not so consider the good intention of Cornelius, as to receive it. No, with a holy emotion he said to his admiring and revering friend, "Stand up! I myself also am a man." Hence it follows that it is not lawful to worship any but the true God. For Peter, from a regard to the glory of God, refuses and rejects with abhorrence, that worship which Cornelius was disposed to give him by saying, "I am a man." I am not God. Consequently, subordinate worship is contrary to the glory of God. Hence also it is manifest, that whoever is a mere man by nature, ought neither to require, nor to receive religious worship whether supreme or subordinate.

More fully to prove and illustrate this conclusion, I would ask, what is it that hinders Peter on this occasion from accepting worship? It must be either the respect which he has for God, or that which he has for Jesus Christ. If the former, he must consider what is called subordinate worship, when addressed to a creature as injurious to the glory of God, and if so, not only Peter, but Jesus Christ himself, if he be a mere creature, is bound to refute it. If the latter, he should not have said, as the reason of his rejecting it, "I also am a man," because Christ, of whose honour he is so jealous, is also a man, and, by nature, no more than a man. But the apostle here tells the Centurion what he is, only to let him know what is due to him. He calls himself a man, to inform him, that if any mere man should claim, or accept this kind of worship, he would greatly dishonour God.

And though the character of Peter, as an ambassador of God, deserved extraordinary honours, though it was under this notion that Cornelius considered him, and under this idea that he attempted to worship him, yet he rejected it with detestation, as an impious infringement on the rights- of JEHOVAH, without assigning any reason but this, "I also am a man." It is evident, therefore, and by the conduct of Peter, it is established as a general principle that no man, though a messenger of God, that no mere man, whatever title he may bear ought to be honoured with religious worship.—In a word, if the regard which Peter has for Jesus Christ hinders him from sharing in that worship which belongs to the great Redeemer, the respect which Jesus ought to have for the Supreme Being should prevent him from partaking in the honours of religion with the true God.

Nor did the angels know of any subordinate worship, when John had his prophetic visions in the Isle of Patmos. If they had been acquainted with it, at least, if they had considered it as lawful, that holy intelligence, who conversed with the beloved disciple and shewed him so many wonderful objects, would either not have refused those honours which the apostle was, once and again, desirous of giving to him, or have rejected them on different principles. For none can suppose that the amazed, delighted, and revering apostle mistook the angel for the Great Supreme. He would have worshipped his celestial informant, because he was the angel of God, not because he took the servant for the eternal Sovereign. The angel, however, not knowing of any religious worship which might be addressed to a mere creature, says, "See thou do it not!—Worship GOD." Asserting, in the clearest manner, that all worship must be paid to God and to him only.

Once more: JESUS CHRIST himself was not acquainted with this distinction, nor knew anything of subordinate worship, when he was tempted of the devil. Satan, when he tempted our Lord to worship him, did not pretend to be the true God; consequently, he did not solicit Jesus to worship him as such. For he plainly intimated, that there was one superior to him; one from whom he had received the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. The devil, then, desired to be honoured with subordinate worship. But Christ rejects with abhorrence his blasphemous attempt, and shews the iniquity of it, by adducing that precept out of the law, "Thou shalt worship the LORD THY GOD, and "Him ONLY shalt thou serve." It follows, therefore, that this command forbids us to worship any one besides the God of Israel, either with a supreme, or a subordinate worship, or rather, that this distinction has no foundation in Scripture; but is calculated to disguise blasphemy, and vindicate idolatry.



## C. I. Scofield – “The Rest of the Story” \_\_\_\_\_

Thomas Williamson

From the *Northern Landmark Missionary Baptist Newsletter*, March, 2012

**T**he year was 1877, and the man, who would someday be known as one of the greatest theologians in modern fundamentalism, and editor of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, was up to some skullduggery in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The November 29, 1877 edition of the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* reported that:

"A fellow named Charles Ingerson, who for 2 weeks post [sic] boarded at the Metropolitan Hotel, is under arrest for vagrancy. The fellow pretended to be the owner of a 1,300 acre plantation near Mobile and was paving the way to a union with a fair daughter of the South side, when his career here was suddenly brought to a close by the landlord of the hotel, Mr. Sam D. Maynard, who cared more to save the lady than to call him to account for the amount of the board-bill."

The same paper on December 4, 1877 followed up on this developing story, saying, "Ingerson, arrested on a charge of vagrancy by the landlord of the Metropolitan Hotel, is to be set free. His affianced settled his board-bill and the course of true love will again run smooth."

On December 17, 1877 we read further: "The fellow Ingerson, who talked freely of his large cotton plantation away down South, is again under arrest for vagrancy. He wheedled his affianced into paying his board-bill at the Metropolitan Hotel and has since managed to exhaust her pin-money and the loose change of a number of South Siders."

Luckily for "Ingerson," the local reporters did not find out that he was already married, having a wife and two daughters who were living in Atchison, Kansas.

We hear yet more of "Ingerson" from the October 3, 1878, issue of the paper:

"Cyrus Schofield [sic] alias Chas. Ingerson, who has been hanging around here since the first of July, and who figured conspicuously at the Metropolitan Hotel in Milwaukee a year ago, was arrested here [Horicon, Wisconsin] Tuesday morning on a charge of forgery, dispatches having been received by Deputy Sheriff A.E. Hart from parties in St. Louis to hold Mr. Schofield [sic] until an officer should arrive to take him in charge. Mr. Hart lodged the gentleman in our county jail, where he awaits the arrival of the Chief of Police of St. Louis."

The saga continued as reported on October 7, 1878,: "Mr. Cyrus Schofield [sic], alias Charley Ingerson, was released from the county jail on Friday on a writ of habeas corpus, but Under Sheriff End immediately served another warrant on him and took him back again. An officer is hourly expected from St. Louis to take him to that city on a charge of forgery."

All of this is significant, because many years later, Scofield, who had become famous as a Congregationalist preacher and editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, made the claim that he had maintained a successful law practice in St. Louis during the very same period of time that he was experiencing all these problems with the law in Wisconsin.

Scofield's conversion is variously dated to the year 1879 or 1880. He testified that he was saved through the witness of one of his law clients, Thomas McPheeters.

The chronology of his life immediately prior to his conversion indicates that he returned from Milwaukee to St. Louis around the end of 1877, and then left St. Louis in the late summer of 1878 to avoid a forgery charge. He was returned to St. Louis on October 8, 1878, and spent much of the following year in jail, until his case was finally dismissed in November, 1879.

### **Member of the Bar, Or Behind Bars?**

How could Scofield have maintained a large law practice in St. Louis in this period immediately prior to his conversion, if he spent most of that time either in Wisconsin or in jail?

Scofield's biographer Charles Trumbull states that McPheeters witnessed to Scofield and won him to the Lord in Scofield's law office. Efforts have been made to locate that office without success.

Joseph Canfield, in his book, *The Incredible Scofield and His Book*, pages 55-57, 66, reports that:

"Admission to the Bar of St. Louis and the State of Missouri, not obtained before he left for Kansas in 1869, was out of the question. Scofield's behavior between 1877 and 1879 made it impossible. It was never granted. 'The Bench and Bar of St. Louis County,' an official publication of the legal profession, was checked. It shows that at no time in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was C.L. Scofield a member of the St. Louis Bar...."

"When C.L. Scofield gave information to the publishers of 'Who's Who in America' he mentioned being admitted to the bar in Kansas, but made no mention of the bar in Missouri.... the admission of Cyrus Scofield to the bar in Missouri at any time was highly improbable, and more pertinent, is not confirmed by some recognized reference sources....

"We established that there is no record, in recognized sources, of a Scofield law office in 1879 when the conversion supposedly took place. Deputies could not locate Scofield's office in 1877 or 1878. It must have passed out of existence almost before the ink was dry on the pages of the 1877 edition of the City Directory."

James Lutzweiler of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, in his unpublished paper on the Scofield conversion stories, states, "Whatever the case, the St. Louis City Directory for 1879 lists neither a residence nor a business address for Scofield or for any of the variations of the spelling of his name. Of course it can't be ruled out that a prominent businessman like Tom McPheeters had for a lawyer a recent convict without a business address. But it does seem improbable."

To add to the confusion, there are other stories of how Scofield was converted. A story that appeared in the Atchison, *Kansas Patriot*, and the Topeka, *Kansas Daily Capitol*, in 1881 stated that Scofield, having spent 6 months in jail in St. Louis, was converted while in jail, and then after his release began a courtship with a Christian woman, alleging that he was now divorced from his wife in Kansas (which was not true - they were still married).

### **Does Character Matter in the Ministry?**

By now, some of my patient readers may be thinking, "What difference does it make how or where Scofield was saved, as long as he got saved?" and, "It is unfair to bring up offenses committed by Scofield before he was saved."

Scofield had a lengthy record of financial deceptions and dishonest practices before his conversion. All that was changed after he was saved and he became an honest man, right?

Well, not exactly.

As of 1899, Scofield still owed a lot of people in Atchison, Kansas, a lot of money which he had not yet paid back. This was noted in an article in the *Kansas City Journal* on December 28, 1899. Scofield had attracted the notice of the paper by officiating at the funeral of the famous evangelist D.L. Moody.

D. Jean Rushing of East Tennessee State University, in her unpublished paper on the life of Scofield, notes,

"*The Kansas City Journal* published a story under the headline 'A Preacher with a Past,' which recounted Scofield's checkered history in the states of Kansas and Missouri. Indicating Atchison residents still sought restitution from Scofield after he became a clergyman, the paper reported, 'when approached by his Kansas creditors, Parson Scofield declared that he is poor and unable to pay.' Perhaps what Rev. Scofield owed in Atchison, Kansas, far exceeded his income sources but the cost of 7 months abroad might have made some headway in paying the debts."

Rushing notes that Scofield in February, 1899, applied for a passport for foreign travel, and then he and his second wife and son spent 7 months traveling abroad.

There is something seriously dishonest about a man who owes money that he will not repay, but then spends 7 months in presumably expensive foreign travel. Scofield was a dishonest man, a shyster and a deadbeat who refused to pay money that he admitted that he owed. Most fundamental Baptist churches today would expel such a scoundrel from the membership. They certainly would not make such a man into an infallible source of Christian doctrine, and yet that is exactly what modern dispensationalists have made out of Scofield.

What about Scofield's marriage? When he got saved, surely he returned to the wife and children he had abandoned in Kansas, and took up his proper role as husband and provider, like a Christian man should. Right? Wrong!

David Lutzweiler, in his Scofield biography, *In Praise of Folly*, notes that:

"Leontine [Scofield] had drawn up that first pleading for divorce. The papers were filed on December 9, [1881] charging that her husband had 'absented himself from his said wife and children, and had not been with them but abandoned them with the intention of not returning to them again.' The petition stated further that he 'has been guilty of gross neglect of duty, and has failed to support this plaintiff or her said children, or to contribute thereto, and has made no provision for them for food, clothing or a home, or in any manner performed his duty in the support of said family although he was able to do so.'" (page 98)

Lutzweiler in his book reproduces the original copy of the court decree for Scofield's divorce dated December 8, 1883, which states:

"Now comes the plaintiff by her attorneys Tomlinson and Griffin and the defendant enters for appearance and files answer and makes no further appearance.

"And thereupon this cause came on for hearing upon the pleadings and testimony and was argued by counsel upon consideration whereof the Court does find that the defendant has been guilty of wilful abandonment of the plaintiff for more than one year prior to the commencement of this action.

"It is therefore adjudged and decreed that the custody nurture education and care of the said minor children Abigail [sic] and Helen [sic] be and the same is hereby given to the said plaintiff and the said defendant is hereby forever enjoined from interfering with or disturbing the said plaintiff in the custody care nurture and education of the said above name children until further order of this Court."

Scofield's minions have made all sorts of excuses for his divorce. They say it was not his fault because his wife initiated the divorce, and that there was no way the newly saved Scofield could be expected to get along with a fanatically Roman Catholic spouse.

However, it is not clear that Scofield ever made any attempt to reconcile with his wife. Also, as we have seen, Scofield prior to his conversion had grown tired of his wife and had taken a romantic interest in at least one other woman. His disaffection for his wife began while he was unconverted, and thus was not a matter of Christian scruples about being unequally yoked to an unsaved spouse.

The August 27, 1881, the *Topeka Daily Capital* reported:

"Cyrus I. Schofield [sic] formerly of Kansas, late lawyer, politician and shyster generally, has come to the surface again, and promises once more to gather around himself that halo of notoriety that has made him so prominent in the past. The last personal knowledge that Kansas have had of this peer among scalawags, was when about 4 years ago, after a series of forgeries and confidence games he left the state and a destitute family and took refuge in Canada.

"For a time he kept undercover, nothing being heard of him until within the past two years when he turned up in St. Louis, where he had a wealthy widowed sister living who has generally come to the front and squared up Cyrus' little follies by paying good round sums of money. Within the past year, however, Cyrus committed a series of St. Louis forgeries that could not be settled so easily, and the erratic young gentleman was compelled to linger in the St. Louis jail for a period of 6 months....

"In the latter part of his confinement, Schofield, under the administration of certain influences, became converted, or professedly so. After this change of heart his wealthy sister came forward and paid his way out by settling the forgeries, and the next we hear of him he is ordained as a minister of the Congregational Church, and under the chaperonage of Rev. Goodell, one of the celebrated divines of St. Louis, he causes a most decided sensation.

"In the meantime the courtship between himself and the pretty young representative of the Flower Mission continued, Schofield representing first that his wife had obtained a decree of divorce. When the falsity of this story was ascertained by inquiries of our district clerk, he started on another that a divorce would be obtained, that he loved his children better than his life, but that the incompatibility of his wife's temper and her religious zeal in the Catholic Church was such that he could not possibly live with her.

"A representative of *The Patriot* met Mrs. Schofield today, and that little lady denies, as absurd, such stories. There was never any domestic clouds in their homes. They always lived harmoniously and pleasant. As to her religion, she was no more zealous than any other church member. She attended service on the Sabbath, and tried to live as becomes a Christian woman and mother. It was the first time she had ever heard the objection raised by him.

"As to supporting herself and the children, he has done nothing, said the little woman. Once in a great while, say every few months, he sends the children about \$5, never more. 'I am employed with A.L. deGignac & Co., and work for their support and mine. As soon as Mr. Schofield (sic) settles something on the children to aid me in supporting them and giving them an education, I will gladly give him the matrimonial liberty he desires. I care not who he marries, or when, but I do want him to aid me in giving our little daughters the support and education they should have."

I suppose it is possible that the first Mrs. Scofield misrepresented herself to the reporter, and that she really was an insufferable shrew after all. But do we want to give all of our church members today implicit permission to be divorced and remarried, any time that the going gets rough in their marriage? That is what we are doing, when we defend Scofield's divorce and remarriage.

### **Torn Between Two Lovers**

Rushing reports on how Scofield's divorce was finalized, right around the time that he was being ordained by the Congregational Churches of North Texas:

"Leontine Cerre Scofield filed for divorce just days before the council held the ordainment ceremony and this time the court granted the divorce on December 8, 1883. The final decree barred Scofield from contributing to the upbringing of Abigail, 16, and Helen, 14. Freed now from 'being unequally yoked,' Scofield took notice of Hettie Hall Van Wartz, another northerner who relocated to Dallas, Texas, from Michigan. Hettie and her sister Mattie joined First Congregational Church just one day after the court filed Scofield's divorce decree on December 9, 1883. While the ink dried on the decree, Dallas County, Texas, issued a marriage certificate to Cyrus Scofield and Hettie H. Van Wartz and they married the following day on March 11, 1884."

Scofield's divorce and remarriage have been justified by his followers (and by Scofield himself) on the basis of the necessity to separate from unbelievers. However, Paul specifically taught in 1 Corinthians 7:12-14 that new converts are to remain with their unbelieving spouses and not to abandon them.

In the information that Scofield submitted for publication in the 1912 edition of "Who's Who," he omitted any reference to his first wife and his children. At that time, knowledge of his divorce and remarriage would have been very damaging to his

reputation, although nowadays such conduct is no longer considered such a big deal, perhaps in part because of Scofield's bad example.

The 1912 "Who's Who" entry contains other errors that could have been based only on information supplied by Scofield. It states that Scofield served in the Tennessee Infantry from May 1861 "to close of Civil War." The Civil War ended in April, 1865. It is a matter of record that Scofield was honorably discharged from the Confederate Army on September 26, 1862, long before the end of the war.

Scofield moved to St Louis, Missouri, after his discharge and was living there at the time of General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Virginia, in April, 1865. However, he told his biographer Trumbull that he was "12 miles from Appomattox" at the time of the surrender, and said he claimed his share of Union Army food supplies that were transferred by General Grant to Lee's troops.

In his "Who's Who" entry, he gave the date of his second marriage as July 14, 1884, which is 4 months after the correct date of March 11. Canfield states, "The tendency of American husbands to forget anniversary dates is legendary, but we submit that the conflict in this case is not due to mere forgetfulness. It was reported by Trumbull and others that Cyrus and Nettie were married after a friendship of about 6 months. Now backdating 6 months from March, 1884, takes us back to September, 1883. Cyrus was then still legally bound to Leontine and not morally free to court Hettie or anyone else."

Scofield prudently omitted any mention of his alleged, and totally undocumented, D.D. degree or doctorate in his "Who's Who" entry. There is no record of any educational institution granting Scofield such a degree, but that did not stop him from claiming to have such a degree on the front page of his *Scofield Reference Bible*. Actually, we have no record of Scofield receiving any formal theological education.

Not only did Scofield expunge from the public record any mention of his first wife and children, but it is a matter of record that he never provided them any substantial financial support, even after he started receiving generous royalties from sales of the Scofield Reference Bible.

Nowadays there are serious legal penalties, as well as social ostracism and disgrace, for fathers who fail to pay child support, but for Scofield it was okay to withhold such support.

On May 4, 1921, Scofield wrote to his daughter Abigail, in response to a request for money, and advised her to pray to a Roman Catholic saint for the money.

### **Not a Role Model for Fundamentalists**

The purpose of this article is not to propose that Scofield was not a genuine Christian believer. As far as we know, he was. Nor is it to deny that Scofield produced some valuable writings and presented some useful Christian truths in his spoken and written ministry.

The purpose of delving into Scofield's personal history is to point out that a man with his failings and problems ought not to be considered an infallible source of doctrine and practice for fundamentalist churches today. Unfortunately, there has been a tendency over the past 100 years for many fundamentalists to regard Scofield, because of his editorship of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, as an authoritative and almost infallible source of Christian doctrine.

There is an unwritten, unspoken understanding among many fundamentalists, in which many of the false or questionable teachings of the Scofield notes are accepted without question, on the basis that Scofield was such a great Bible scholar and a godly, saintly man. As we have seen, Scofield was not exceptionally great as a scholar nor as a practitioner of holiness.

If Scofield were alive today, most Baptist churches would not allow him to have a position of leadership and responsibility, based on the kind of problems he exhibited in his personal life. How is it, then, that we as fundamentalists and Baptists allow him to have the dominant position that he has had in determining the theological beliefs of our movement?

We need to rethink and reexamine the whole question of the authority of Scofield over our movement. And we need to give ourselves and our followers the liberty to dissent from the teachings of the Scofield notes, especially when such teachings are in clear conflict with the Word of God.

#### FOR FURTHER READING

1. *The Incredible Scofield and His Book*, by Joseph Canfield, 1988, Ross House Books, Vallecito, California.
2. *In Praise of Folly: The Enigmatic Life and Theology of C.I. Scofield*, by David Lutzweiler, Nicene Council, P.O. Box 411, Draper, Virginia 24324.
3. *The Many Conversions of Fundamentalist Saint, Cyrus Ingerson Scofield: 'Peer Among Scalawags' and the Golden Goose of Oxford University Press - and Texan*, unpublished paper by James Lutzweiler, Archivist, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 114 N. Wingate, Wake Forest, North Carolina 27587.
4. *From Confederate Deserter to Decorated Veteran Bible Scholar: Exploring the Enigmatic Life of C.I. Scofield, 1861-1921*, unpublished paper by D. Jean Rushing in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History, East Tennessee State University, December, 2011. Readers desiring a copy of this paper by email may request it from James Lutzweiler at [ilutzweilesebts.edu](mailto:ilutzweilesebts.edu).



## On Reading The Scriptures ---

Jabez Burns  
From *The Pulpit Cyclopaedia*, 1851

"How readest thou?"—Luke 10:26

**H**appy is that people who possess in their own tongue the oracles of eternal truth. This has been our eminent privilege for ages past, but to avail ourselves of the advantages this privilege holds out, we must possess the ability of reading.

In past times, education, even of an inferior order, was limited to the few. Now, through the diffusion of knowledge and progress of truth, the first elements of instruction are open to the many, but we may have the book, and the ability to read it, and yet the manner may be so defective and ill-adapted, that little benefit may be derived. Let us then contemplate the proper method of reading the Holy Scriptures, and enforce that method by several considerations.

#### I. NOTICE THE PROPER METHOD OF READING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

We should read the Scriptures:

1. **With profound veneration for their divine Author.** This is the book of God; the only book he has written, full of his own mind and will, sent in infinite condescension to our ignorance, weakness, and misery.

A book that pleasures in the divine character, and works, and glory. How, then, ought it to be treated? Lightly, flippantly, merely as a human composition? Surely not! The Jews in this may be held up as truly worthy of our imitation. We say nothing as to slowness of manner, or posture of body, but at all events, there should be true reverence and veneration of mind.

**2. With a deep consciousness of our own unworthiness.** A self-righteous person cannot be instructed, delighted, or benefited by the perusal of God's word. The whole volume treats of human depravity and worthlessness. It is designed to empty the mind of self, in all its variety of modifications. In this spirit only shall we value its humiliating truths, and gratefully receive its tidings of mercy and grace. We should read the Scriptures.

**3. With exemplary diligence and constancy.** Much truth lies on the surface of the sacred page, but infinitely more in the deep mine of its profound resources. It cannot be accurately understood without mental labor—without study and reflection—without holy meditation. In this work especially, the diligent only can be enriched. With this diligence there should be united untiring constancy. The psalmist meditated therein, day and night. This must be our closet book, the family daily portion. It is profitable to have periods and seasons for the exercise of this delightful duty.

**4. With an earnest desire to learn by what we read.** Many read the word merely to be amused; others as a matter of course or of mere duty; some, again, read to establish more deeply their own theological opinions, or consult the Bible as a work of reference. The Christian reader should peruse its pages to know and learn what God has spoken—what the Spirit has revealed—what are the truths therein taught. Thus we cannot fail to grow and improve by our reading. Thus God's word is honored, and our own profit inevitably secured.

**5. With a holy purpose to exemplify our reading in our life and conversation.** Narratives of Scripture will furnish both models for imitation, and beacons for warning. The doctrines of revelation will be believed—the precepts obeyed—the promises embraced—the privileges realized. Thus the word of God would be incorporated with our souls, as food is with our bodies, living, speaking, and acting in us, and by us. By this mode of reading the mind will be enlightened, the heart changed, and the life regulated.

**6. With fervent prayer for the Spirit to sanctify the Word to our profit.** The Spirit must be sought to inspire with love to the Word—to give us clearness and quickness of moral perception—to enable us to treasure it up in our hearts—to fill us with the spirit of humble faith in its blessed truths.

## II. LET US URGE THIS METHOD OF READING BY SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

**1. By the evils arising from a careless reading of the Scriptures.** These are numerous; God is dishonored—the mind is uninstructed, or more probably initiated in error. Thus one of God's especial blessings is abused and perverted, and our guilt greatly enhanced and aggravated.

**2. By the blessings we shall derive from such a perusal.** Increasing knowledge and understanding; a clear and harmonious apprehension of the divine mind; a certain and confidential acquaintance with the truth as it is in Jesus; an abiding sense of the divine approbation; a holy growth in the work of heart sanctification- John 17:17; an avoidance of the snares and fascinations of the present evil world; a holy meekness for the inheritance of eternal life.

Thus only can we render a satisfactory account for the possession of the Scriptures at the last day. Of this book we are stewards, and as such, everyone must give an account to God.

