



What It Is and Is Not to Be an Old Landmark Baptist

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"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Romans 16: 17, 18

"Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." 1 Tim. 5: 22

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10-11

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3

Landmark Baptists are continually charged by all who oppose their characteristic principles and policy—Baptists who know better, not excepted—with many and grievous offenses, in order to make us obnoxious to our own brethren, and detested by all others. It seems proper, therefore, at this point, to refute all these, by stating, first, what Old Landmarkism is not, before making a summary of what it is. Then:

1. Old Landmarkism is not the denial of spiritual regeneration to those with whom we associate ministerially or ecclesiastically.

Though we by no means feel warranted in saying that we believe that the members of those societies, which hold and teach that baptism is a sacrament or seal of salvation, or essential to the remission of sins—as all Pedobaptists and Campbellites societies do hold and teach—are Christians, or even presumptively regenerate, since they do not require a credible evidence of regeneration as a condition of membership.

They may believe that baptism, "duly administered," confers the grace of regeneration upon adults and infants as well, but Baptists do not. Therefore, we cannot believe that because they are members that it is therefore probable that they are regenerate, as we are justified in believing with respect to Baptist churches that require a credible profession of regeneration in every instance. It must be true that the vast mass of Pedobaptists, and the overwhelming mass of the membership of Campbellite societies are unregenerate, and we are not justified in applying to them the title of brethren in Christ; for we will thereby misteach them, and brethren, ecclesiastically, we know they are not.

But Landmarkism does not pretend to sit in judgment upon the state of any man's heart, but upon his ecclesiastical relations only. Refusing to affiliate with them, ministerially and ecclesiastically, is not declaring by our act that we believe their ministers and members are unregenerate, but that they are not members of scriptural churches. Refusing to invite their ministers to preach for our churches, and to accept their immersions, is no more denying their Christian character than refusing to invite them to our communion table—Baptists know this, and all Pedobaptists ought to know it.

We mean by our refusal, to emphasize our protest against their organizations as scriptural churches, and consequently against their ministers as authorized to preach and to administer the church ordinances. We do not recognize unbaptized and unordained men, who are Baptists in sentiment, as scriptural ministers, and qualified to administer church ordinances; and why should we be expected to recognize those we regard as disqualified, and who violently oppose our faith and practice? It is manifestly inconsistent of Baptists to do so, and Pedobaptists know and freely admit it. By no act that can possibly be so construed, must we recognize other societies as Christian churches, or other ministers as scriptural ministers.

2. Landmarkism is not the denial of the honesty and conscientiousness of Pedobaptists and Campbellites.

We concede to all the honesty of purpose we claim for ourselves, and we accord to them equal conscientiousness; but we, nevertheless, believe them honestly deceived, and conscientious in the belief of unscriptural and pernicious errors; and that it is our bounden duty to undeceive them by all possible scriptural means; but by no word or deed of ours to confirm them in their error. It is the highest proof of love to endeavor, even at the hazard of losing their friendship, to correct the mistakes and errors of our friends; while to leave them unwarned of a danger of which we are aware, is the part of an enemy.

3. Landmarkism is not a proof of our uncharitableness.

We are charged with manifesting a spirit uncharitable and unchristlike. This charge is without foundation. Christ called himself the "truth". He hated and opposed all error; he failed not upon all occasions to rebuke and denounce it; he recognized only those as his friends who were like him in this respect.

Charity not only rejoices in the truth, but is opposed to that which is not truth, and "hateth every false way." Christ, nor charity, then, requires of us to surrender Christian principle, and to be unfaithful to the teachings and requirements of duty. We cannot hope to please Christ, by recognizing the institutions and traditions of men, as equal to his own churches and commandments. That is not Christian charity, but a false liberality and treason to Christ, to surrender or compromise that which He has committed to us to firmly hold and faithfully teach.

Landmarkism, then, is not opposed to the spirit of true Christian charity, but to an unscriptural and pernicious "liberalism" which is being palmed off upon the world for Christian charity—a spirit which is truly opposed to Christ, and is the "bane and the curse of a pure Christianity," and daily demonstrate itself as the very spirit of persecution itself.

4. Landmarkism is not the denial to others the civil right, or the most perfect liberty to exist as professed churches, or to their ministers to preach their views, as is falsely asserted.

We accord to all denominations and to all "religions" - Jews and Gentiles, Mohammedan and Pagan, the same right to exist; and to their priests and teachers the same civil right to teach and propagate their doctrines, as we claim for ourselves. It is one of the peculiar characteristics of Baptists, which they have maintained in every age; viz., the absolute liberty of conscience and belief, and the freest expression of them. We would fight as soon to vindicate religious liberty in this country, to an idolatrous Chinese or a Jew, as to a Baptist.

We would not, had we the absolute power to do so, forbid Pedobaptists, or Campbellites, or Mormons from preaching, and the fullest enjoyment of their religious rights; but we do most positively deny that they have any scriptural right to exist as churches; we do deny their claims to be called or treated as churches of Christ; we do deny the scripturalness of either their doctrines, or their ordinances, and their authority to ordain ministers of the gospel, precisely as we would the right of Masonic Lodges, or Young Men's Christian Associations, should they assume to do so.

We do deny that their ministers have any more authority to preach the gospel and administer church ordinances; than the officers of Masonic Lodges have, by virtue of their office; but, in saying this, we make no allusion to their personal Christian characters whatever. All the members and officers of a Masonic Lodge might be true Christians, but that would not constitute the Lodge a Christian church, or its officers Christian ministers.

The only force we would bring to bear against Pedobaptists, and Campbellites, and Mormons, to put an end to their existence as churches, or to their ministers to arrest their preaching, is the Sword of Truth, wielded in the dauntless spirit of Paul and the love of Christ. We would convert them from the error of their ways, and bring them all by the force of moral suasion into sweet subjection to the law of Christ. We would exterminate *isms* by converting the *ists*.

We may as well notice here Luke 9:50, "And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" which our would-be undenominational brethren constantly quote as proof positive that we should not oppose in any way, but rather encourage all religious teachers, of even manifest errors, to propagate their false doctrine so long as they claim to be religious teachers and the friends and followers of Christ. The apostles forbade a person to cast out devils in the name of Christ, because he did not follow them.

The Protestant commentators have generally made all possible use of this passage to support their cause as against the pretensions of the Romish church, and Baptists have been influenced to use it against the advocates of apostolic succession, who claim that no one is authorized to preach unless ordained in the succession; and now "liberal Baptists" who would recognize all sects as equally "Christian churches," and all the ministers of those sects as "evangelical ministers" and bid them Godspeed—quote it against Landmarkers.

But the passage yields them no encouragement to disrespect and violate the order which Christ established, and the positive injunctions of Paul. This man, whom John and his fellow apostles saw casting out devils, in the name of Christ, was certainly not an enemy of Christ, and could not have been doing anything contrary to his will or authority, or he could not have cast out devils. He was undoubtedly either one of John's disciples, or one of the seventy who had been authorized by Christ himself to do this very miracle when he sent them forth; and this man may have continued to proclaim the mission of Jesus, and to cast out devils. He was, most unquestionably, a disciple of Christ, though not one of the apostles; and, therefore, had been baptized.

The only irregularity complained of by John was, that he followed not Christ continually, as the apostles were required to do, to qualify them for their work after the ascension of Christ; but it was not required of him, nor of any other disciple of Christ, save the twelve, to follow Christ constantly. That this man was a friend and disciple of Christ, is established by the great faith he had in him as Messiah or the Son of God—greater than the apostles themselves were at times able to exercise. (See Matt. 17:16-22)

Will a Baptist, therefore, in the exercise of impartial candor, claim that this passage warrants him in maintaining that any one, irrespective of baptism or church relations, or faith in the doctrine of Christ, is authorized to go forth and preach his erroneous views in the name of Christ, and to administer church ordinances, and that we must bid him God-speed, and thus indorse his doctrinal errors which are subversive of true Christianity, and his irregularities totally subversive of the church and kingdom of Christ. Let all who desire to believe this know of a certainty that Christ never set up a kingdom and divided it against itself, nor can it be that "the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (I Tim. 3:15) is divided against itself.

The following are indisputable facts:

1. That without scriptural baptism there can be no Christian church, and consequently no scriptural ministers, and no scriptural ordinances.
2. That sprinkling and pouring of water upon persons, adults, and infants, as a sacrament of salvation, is not scriptural baptism, but is a gross perversion of it, as it is to administer it in order to procure the remission of sins.

It is a stern and solemn fact-

3. That we, as Baptists, cannot by our words or acts declare that Pedobaptist or Campbellite societies are scriptural churches, or their teachers scriptural ministers, or their ordinances scriptural, without testifying to that we know to be untrue, and without lending all our influence to support and bid "Godspeed" to their false and pernicious teachings, and thus becoming partakers of their wrong-doing--as guilty in the sight of God as they themselves are. (See II John 10:11)

What is the mission of Landmark Baptists?

1. As Baptists, we are to stand for the supreme authority of the New Testament as our only and sufficient rule of faith and practice. The New Testament, and that alone, as opposed to all human tradition in matters, both of faith and practice, we must claim as containing the distinguishing doctrine of our denomination—a doctrine for which we are called earnestly to contend.

2. As Baptists, we are to stand for the ordinances of Christ as he enjoined them upon his followers, the same in number, in mode, in order, and in symbolic meaning, unchanged and unchangeable till he come.

3. As Baptists, we are to stand for a spiritual and regenerated church, and that none shall be received into Christ's church, or be welcomed to its ordinances, without confessing a personal faith in Christ, and giving credible evidence of piety.

The motto on our banner is: **CHRIST BEFORE THE CHURCH, BLOOD BEFORE WATER.**

4. To protest, and to use all our influence against the recognition, on the part of Baptists, of human societies as scriptural churches, by affiliation, ministerial or ecclesiastical, or any alliance or co-operation that is susceptible of being apparently or logically construed by our members, or theirs, or the world, into a recognition of their ecclesiastical or ministerial equality with Baptist churches.

5. To preserve and perpetuate the doctrine of the divine origin and sanctity of the churches of Christ, and the unbroken continuity of Christ's kingdom, "from the days of John the Baptist until now," according to the express words of Christ.

6. To preserve and perpetuate the divine, inalienable, and sole prerogatives of a Christian church to, 1, preach the gospel of the Son of God; 2, To select and ordain her own officers; and 3, To control absolutely her own ordinances.

7. To preserve and perpetuate the scriptural design of baptism, and its validity and recognition only when scripturally administered by a gospel church.

8. To preserve and perpetuate the true design and symbolism of the Lord's Supper, as a local church ordinance, and for but one purpose—the commemoration of the sacrificial death of Christ—and not as a denominational ordinance, nor as an act expressive of our Christian or personal fellowship, and much less of courtesy towards others.

9. To preserve and perpetuate the doctrine of a divinely called and scripturally qualified and ordained ministry, to proclaim the gospel, and to administer the ordinances, not upon their own responsibility, but for, and under the direction of, local churches alone.

10. To preserve and perpetuate that primitive fealty and faithfulness to the truth, that shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God, and to teach men to observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded to be believed and obeyed.

Not the belief and advocacy of one or two of these principles are the marks of the divinely patterned church, but **the cordial reception and advocacy of all of them**, constitutes a full "Old Landmark Baptist."



Baptism is Immersion

John Craps

From *A Concise View of Christian Baptism*, 1827

"Paul says, We are buried with him by baptism into death; that is, the ceremony of wholly immersing us in water, when we were baptized, signified that we die to sin; and that of raising us again from our immersion signified that we would no more return to those disorderly practices in which we lived before our conversion to Christianity."—Saurin.

That baptism is immersion may be determined by the following considerations.

The WORD "baptism" means "immersion." This is admitted by the following writers, although they were not Baptists:

CALVIN says, "The word baptize, signifies to immerse."

BEZA says, "Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word it is certain immersion is signified."

LUTHER says, "I would have those that are to be baptized, to be wholly dipped into the water, as the word imports and the mystery does signify."

Dr. CAMPBELL says, "The word *baptizein*, both in sacred writers and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse."

Scott says, "Immersion is DOUBTLESS baptism." *Life* by J. Scott.

Dr. CHALMERS says, "The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion."

Nothing but the force of truth could have induced these writers to give this testimony in favor of immersion.

2. The words "sprinkle" and "pour" frequently occur in the Scriptures, but there is not one instance in which the original of them is either *bapto* or *baptizo*. The word "dip" or "dip" occurs six times in the New Testament, and in every instance the original word is *bapto* or *embapto*. This plainly shows that, in the opinion of the translators, *bapto*, from which the word "baptize" is derived, means to "dip" or to "immerse."

3. The word "immersion" will in every case supply the place of the word "baptism" so as to make good sense; but the word "sprinkling" will not, neither will the word "pouring." This the reader may easily prove by examining all the passages in which the word "baptism" occurs. Is not this a plain evidence that baptism is immersion and not sprinkling or pouring?

4. The words which in the original language of the Scriptures properly mean "sprinkling" and "pouring" are never used by the sacred writers to describe baptism. If baptism were either sprinkling or pouring, would not the term which properly expresses such act have been sometimes used by the sacred writers to describe the ordinance? If the term which properly means immersion is the only one used in the Scriptures to denote the ordinance, must not the ordinance be immersion? Would the Holy Ghost have invariably used a word which means immersion, if He had intended the ordinance to be administered by sprinkling or pouring?

5. John baptized "in the river of Jordan." Mark 1:5. And Jesus "was baptized of John in Jordan." Mark 1:9. If John immersed our Lord and others, this account of his administering the rite "in the river Jordan" is plain and natural. Is it reasonable to suppose a prudent man would go into a river merely to sprinkle another? Can an instance be produced from history of people racing into a river for the purpose of being sprinkled? Do those who sprinkle in the present day ever go into a river for that purpose?

6. Jesus "went up straightway out of the water." Matt. 3:16. A proof that he was baptized in the water, and an evidence that baptism is immersion.

7. "John was baptizing in Ænon because there was much water there." John 3:23. "Because there was a great quantity of water there."—Doddridge. Is this reason satisfactory if he sprinkled the people? Would that have required much water? Would not a single spring or a small rivulet have been sufficient? If John immersed the people the reason is a good one.

8. Philip and the eunuch "came to a certain water; and they went down both into the water; both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." Acts 8:36-39. They "came to" this water, and then "went down into it," and when "he baptized him" they "came up out of the water." This is exactly what immersion would require, but what would have been unnecessary for sprinkling or pouring. The sacred historian could not have described the immersion of the eunuch in more clear and forcible language.

9. Our Lord calls his sufferings a baptism; "I have a baptism to be baptized with." Luke 12:50. Jesus here refers to those deep waters of divine justice into which he was soon to sink for man's redemption. In reference to which he might truly say, "I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." If baptism is immersion there is an obvious propriety in calling these sufferings a baptism because there is a striking resemblance.

10. The Israelites "were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea" 1 Cor. 10:1, 2. Dr. Whitby says, "Both the cloud and the sea had some resemblance to our being covered with water in baptism; their going into the sea resembled the ancient rite of going into the water, and their coming out of it, their rising up out of the water."

Moses was a type of Christ, as a prophet and a lawgiver. Acts 3:22, 23. As the people on this occasion surrendered themselves to the guidance of Moses, so a believer, in baptism yields himself to the direction of Christ to be conducted in the way of holiness to the heavenly Canaan.

11. Believers were "buried with Christ in baptism." That the apostle here alludes to immersion is generally admitted. Mr. Wesley is constrained to allow that this is an allusion "to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." In Rom. 6:4, and Col. 2:12, the apostle speaks of baptism as an emblem of a burial and of a resurrection; there must therefore be in baptism something that corresponds to these. Neither sprinkling nor pouring in any way resembles either a burial or a resurrection; but an immersion in the water, and a rising out of it strikingly resemble both. This must be obvious to every unprejudiced mind.

12. If, as Mr. Scott says, "immersion is doubtless baptism"—if the term "immersion" will in every case translate the term "baptism," and the words "sprinkling" and "pouring" will not—if the terms properly meaning "sprinkling" and "pouring" are not once used in the Scriptures to denote the ordinance—if baptism was administered "in the river Jordan" and where there was "much water"—if the baptizer and the baptized "went down both into the water"—if baptism resembles the sufferings of Christ—if it resembles the state of the Israelites in the cloud and in the sea—and if it resembles a death, burial, and resurrection—then let the unbiased reader judge whether baptism must not be immersion, and whether it is not an error to consider either sprinkling, or pouring to be baptism. And if he thus judge, must he not conclude that those who have been sprinkled only, have not been baptized, and that to practise sprinkling instead of immersion is to set aside the law of God?



*There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath;
O, what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death!*

*Lord God of truth and grace,
Teach us that death to shun,
Lest we be banished from thy face,
And evermore undone.*

God Is Infinitely Benevolent

J. L. Dagg

From the book, *Manual of Theology: A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, 1859*

Ex. 34:6 *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*

Ps. 103:2-8 *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

Zech. 9:17 *For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty*

Matt. 7:11 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

Luke 2:14 *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

Luke 12:32 *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

Rom. 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

I John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

God's goodness, as exercised towards his creatures, is often expressed in the Scriptures by the term love. Love is distinguished as benevolence, beneficence, or complacence. Benevolence is love in intention or disposition; beneficence is love in action, or conferring its benefits; and complacence is the approbation of good actions or dispositions. Goodness, exercised toward the unworthy, is called grace; toward the suffering, it is called pity, or mercy. The latter term intimates that the suffering, or liability to suffer, arises from the just displeasure of God.

Goodness implies a disposition to produce happiness. We are conscious of pleasure and pain in ourselves, and we know that we can, to some extent, cause pleasure or pain in others. Continued pleasure is happiness; continued pain, misery. God is able to produce happiness or misery, when, and to whatever extent he pleases. Which of these is it the disposition of his infinite nature to produce?

God's goodness may be argued from the manifestations of it in the works of creation. The world is peopled with sentient beings, capable of pleasure; and sources of pleasure are everywhere provided for them. Every sense of every animal is an inlet of pleasure; and for every sense the means of pleasure are provided. What God gives them they gather. His open hand pours enjoyments into their existence at every moment. When we consider the innumerable living creatures that are, at this moment, receiving pleasure from the abundant and varied stores which his creating power has furnished; and when we reflect, that this stream of bounty has flowed incessantly from the creation of the world, we may well consider the fountain from which it has descended as infinite.

It demonstrates the goodness of God that the pleasures which his creatures enjoy do not come incidentally, but are manifestly the result of contrivance. Food would nourish without the pleasure experienced in eating. We might have been so constituted as to be driven to take it by hunger, and to receive it with pain, but little less than that produced by the want of it. But God has superadded pleasure where it was not absolutely necessary, and has made the very support of animal existence a source of perpetual gratification.

It adds greatly to the force of this argument, that indications of malevolent design are not found in the works of God. Pain is, indeed, often experienced, but it never appears to result from an arrangement specially made for receiving it. There is no organ of our body to which we can point, and say, this was specially de-signed to give us pain.

Mere animal enjoyment is not the highest that God bestows. To his intelligent creatures he has opened another source in the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. We need knowledge, as well as food; and we might be driven to seek it by a painful necessity, without deriving any pleasure from it. But here, again, the benevolence of the Creator is manifested. Pleasure is superadded when we acquire necessary knowledge; and, when the progress has reached the limit of our necessities, the pleasure does not cease. The intellectual appetite is never satiated to loathing.

But God has made us susceptible of far higher and nobler pleasure in the exercise of virtue and religion. To this he has adapted our moral nature, rendering us capable both of the exercise and the enjoyment. For the exercise of virtue and religion, the constitution of human society, and the various relations which we sustain in its organization, furnish abundant occasion; and in the moral sense of mankind, and the approbation which virtue extorts, even when the tribute is not spontaneously rendered, a source of enjoyment is opened.

In the proper exercise of our moral powers, we are capable of loving and enjoying God; and, therefore, of experiencing a happiness that infinitely transcends all other enjoyment. This ocean of infinite fulness, this source of eternal and exhaustless happiness, gives the full demonstration of God's infinite goodness. And this enjoyment, also, never cloys; but, with the progress, the delight increases.

The doctrine of God's goodness, notwithstanding the abundance of its proofs, is attended with difficulties. Though sentient beings are not furnished with organs purposely prepared for the receiving of pain, they have organs for inflicting it, which are unquestionably the result of contrivance. The fangs of serpents, and the stings of insects, are instances of this kind; and to these may be added the talons and tusks, or beaks, with which carnivorous animals rend their prey.

How is the existence of such pain-inflicting contrivances to be reconciled with the infinite goodness of God? How can we explain, in harmony with this doctrine, the suffering which animals endure from the violence of each other, from hunger, cold, and disease? Above all, how can we reconcile the innumerable miseries with which human society is filled, in every rank and condition of life? If God is infinitely good, why is human life begun in pain, and closed in pain, and subject to pain throughout its whole course?

These difficulties are of too much magnitude to be overlooked. They perplex the understanding, and disquiet the heart; and, therefore, demand a careful and candid consideration. The following observations are offered, to guard the heart against their influence.

1. Admit the existence of the difficulties in their full force, and what then? Does it follow that God is a malevolent being?

Were he so, the proofs of his malevolence would abound, as those of his goodness now do. We should everywhere find animal senses adapted to be the inlets of misery, and the objects of these senses all adapted to give pain. Does it follow that God is indifferent whether his creatures are happy or miserable? The numerous provisions which are made with a manifest reference to animal enjoyment, forbid this supposition. Does it follow that God is capricious? This conclusion is precluded by the fact, that what suffering there is in the world, runs throughout along with its enjoyments; the happiness and the misery are entwined with each other, and form parts of the same system.

By summing up the whole, we discover that animal life has more enjoyment than suffering, and that its pains are, in most cases, incidental. In our daily experience, blessings are poured upon us incessantly; and when suffering comes, we are often conscious that it arises from our abuse of God's goodness, and is, therefore, no argument against it. In many other cases, we find present suffering conducive to future good; and we have reason to believe that it would always be so, if we endured it with a proper spirit, and made a wise improvement of it. It becomes us, therefore, when sufferings occur, the beneficial tendency of which we cannot discover, to remember that we comprehend but a very small part of God's way. We have found every other attribute of his nature incomprehensible to us, and it ought not to surprise us that his goodness is so.

The sufferings which we experience in ourselves, or see in others, become an occasion for the trial of our faith. To the understanding of a child, the discipline of his father may appear neither wise nor kind. Indulgences which are craved may be denied; and toils and privations, exceedingly unwelcome, may be imposed. In these circumstances, it is the child's duty to confide where it cannot comprehend. So we should exercise faith in the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father, and believe that his ways are full of goodness, even when they are inscrutable. Enough of his goodness is seen elsewhere to satisfy us of its existence when mystery hides it from view.

2. It cannot be proved that an admixture of pain with the large measure of enjoyment which God bestows on his creatures, is inconsistent with his goodness. The insect of a day, and the immortal near the throne of God, derive their enjoyment from the same infinite goodness. If the short-lived insect should pass its few hours in the sunbeams without pain, and should be annihilated without pain, the difficulty which now embarrasses us would not apply to its case. Its existence, filled with enjoyment, would correspond with our notions of the Creator's goodness; and the finiteness, or very small measure of its enjoyment, would not disprove the source to be infinite from which it proceeds.

Now, if a creature of another kind should have enjoyments a hundred fold greater, with an abatement of one measure of pain, its existence, on the whole, is ninety-nine times more desirable than that of the insect. Shall we, then, deny that this existence proceeds from the goodness of the deity? If the pain forms a part of the same system with the pleasure, we must attribute them to the same author; and the animal that has ninety-nine measures of enjoyment remaining, has no more right to complain of the abatement of one by the endurance of pain, than the insect supposed would have to complain of the absence of ninety-nine measures which the more favored creature enjoys. This consideration may satisfy us that the presence of some pain, connected with a far greater amount of enjoyment, is not inconsistent with the doctrine that God is infinitely good.

Furthermore, it is perfectly conceivable that pain itself may, in some cases, enhance our pleasures, as relief from suffering renders subsequent enjoyment more exquisite and, in other ways, which we are unable to comprehend, pain may produce a beneficial result. In this view, the existence of pain cannot be inconsistent with the goodness of God.

3. Much of the suffering in the world is clearly the effect of sin, and is to be considered an infliction of divine justice. The justice of God claims scope for its exercise, as well as his goodness. The goodness of God is infinite, if it confers happiness as widely as is consistent with the other perfections of his nature. It is a favorite theory with some that God aims at the greatest possible amount of happiness in the universe; and that he admits evil, only because the admission of evil produces in the end a greater amount of happiness than its exclusion would have done. According to this theory, justice itself is a modification of benevolence; and the pain suffered by one being, is inflicted from love to the whole. But whether justice be a modification of benevolence, or a distinct attribute, its claims must be regarded; and goodness does not cease to be goodness, because it does not overthrow the government of God, or oppose his other perfections.

Some persons attribute all the sufferings of brute animals to the sin of man, but the Scriptures do not clearly teach this doctrine; and we have shown that the pain which brutes endure may be otherwise reconciled with the goodness of God. That animals suffer because of man's sin, is clear in the cruelty which they often experience from human hands; but that all their sufferings proceed from this cause is not so clear. Unless the order of things was greatly changed at the fall of man, hawks had their claws and beaks from the day they were created, and used them before man sinned, in taking and devouring other birds for food; and, therefore, pain and death, in brute animals, did not enter the world by the sin of man. Brute animals have, on the whole, a happy existence. Free from anxiety, remorse, and the fear of death, they enjoy, with high relish, the pleasures which their Creator has given them; and it is not the less a gift of his infinite goodness, because it is limited in quantity, or abated by some mixture of pain.

4. It may be, that God's goodness is not mere love of happiness in his view, happiness may not be the only good, or even the chief good. He is himself perfectly happy; yet this perfection of his nature is not presented to us, in his word, as the only ground, or even the chief ground, on which his claim to divine honor and worship rests. The hosts of heaven ascribe holiness to him, and worship him because of it; but not because of his happiness. If we could contemplate him as supremely happy, but deriving his happiness from cruelty, falsehood, and injustice, we should need a different nature from that with which he has endowed us, and a different Bible to direct us from that which he has given, before we could render him sincere and heart-felt adoration.

In the regulation of our conduct, when pleasure and duty conflict with each other, we are required to choose the latter; and this is often made the test of our obedience. On the same principle, if a whole life of duty and a whole life of enjoyment were set before us, that we might choose between them, we should be required to prefer holiness to happiness. It therefore accords with the judgment of God not to regard happiness as the chief good; and the production of the greatest possible amount of happiness could not have been his prime object in the creation of the world. We may conclude that his goodness is not a weak fondness which indulges his creatures, and administers to their enjoyment, regardless of their conduct and moral character. It aims at their happiness, but in subordination to a higher and nobler purpose. According to the order of things which he has established, it is rendered impossible for an unholy being to be happy, and this order accords with the goodness of God, which aims, not at the mere happiness of his universe, but at its well-being, in the best possible sense.

If these views are correct, the miseries which sin has introduced into the world, instead of disproving the goodness of God, proceed from it, and demonstrate it. They are means used by the great Father of all, in the discipline of his great family, to deter from the greatest of all evils. Precisely this use the wisdom from above teaches us to make of his judgments and threatenings; and when these awful means have taught us the evil of sin, and have been blessed to us as means of sanctification, we may perceive in them a manifestation of God's goodness.

5. To infer the infinitude of God's goodness from its effects, we must view them in the aggregate. The perfection of his justice appears in its minute and precise adaptation to each particular case. Every part of his administration must, when brought to the line of rectitude for comparison, be found to agree with it precisely. But as in estimating the length of a line, we do not examine its parts, so the infinitude of God's goodness must be judged from the aggregate of its effects, as we learn the power of God, not from a single grain of sand, but from the whole extent of creation.

To comprehend this vast subject, we need the infinite mind of God himself. In events which now appear to us dark and mysterious, the seeds of future benefits to his creatures may be wrapped up, which will bring forth their fruit hereafter, for the use of admiring and adoring intelligences. The parts of the great system are so wonderfully adjusted to each other, that no finite being dare say that this is useless, or that pernicious or hurtful.

Why God has made precisely such orders of creatures as inhabit the world with us, and why he has appointed to them their various modes of life, with to advantages and inconveniences peculiar to each, we are wholly unable to say; and, if we undertake to say why he has made any creatures at all, we may assign a reason which we think we understand, but of which, in reality, we know but little. If the united intelligence of the universe could lift up its voice to God, as the voice of one creature, and say, "Why hast thou made me thus?" It would be daring impiety. How unbecoming then for man, who is a worm, to arraign the wisdom and goodness of his Maker!

The goodness of God is the attribute of his nature, which, above all others, draws forth the affection of our hearts. We are filled with awe at his eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence; but we can imagine all these attributes connected with moral qualities which would render them repulsive. But the goodness of God, while it is awful and grand, is at the same time powerfully attractive. It is this, when understood in its proper sense, not as the mere love of happiness that renders Jehovah the proper centre of the moral universe. It is this that attracts the hearts of all holy intelligences now in heaven, and that is drawing to that high and holy place whatever on earth is most lovely and excellent; and if the hearts of any repel this centre, and recede further from it, they are "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."



*"All that I am, and all I have, Shall be forever thine;
What'er my duty bids me give, My cheerful hands resign.
Yet if I might make some reserve, And duty did not call,
I love my Lord with zeal so great, That I should give Him all."*

A Much Needed Answer to an Oft Repeated Criticism

Norman H. Wells

From *The Church That Jesus Loved*, 1973 (Chapter 10)

I recently received a letter from a young lady who is preparing to go to the mission field. The letter was very critical of the way the Central Baptist Church does mission work. Enclosed in the letter was a pamphlet published by a Mission Agency that expressed the major points of criticism that are generally leveled at independent Baptists who feel that all missionary activities should be through the local church and not through Mission Boards, Societies, Agencies, Associations, etc.

I believe that there are many people who do not understand the position and work of independent Baptists. I feel an answer is again needed for these oft repeated criticisms.

What Is An Independent Baptist Church?

What is an independent Baptist church? What makes it different than other Baptists? The answer to these questions must be understood before any effort is made to clarify our missionary method.

An independent Baptist church is a Baptist church. Doctrinally they maintain the historical Baptist position. I am speaking now of the great bulk of independent Baptists. There are those who use the word independent when the word interdenominational would fit better. The criticism I am dealing with here, however, is not that of our message but of our method. It needs to be said, in order to clear air that the overwhelming majority of independent Baptist churches would be accepted by the Convention, Associations, Fellowships, Agencies, Societies, etc., without one doctrinal change being demanded. In other words they are accepted as Baptist.

What Makes It Different From Other Baptists?

If independent Baptists are accepted as Baptist, doctrinally, what makes them different from other Baptists?

Before we leave the matter of doctrine and turn to methods it must be said that independent Baptists are different from most other Baptists in that they are doctrinally stronger and lay greater emphasis to the historical Baptist beliefs. They are independent, fundamental, pre-millennial, missionary and evangelistic. They oppose the universal, invisible church theory. They reject open communion and alien immersion. They denounce unionism and inter-denominationalism.

Now, as to methods.

Christ gave the "Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Baptists accept this as their "marching orders" from the great Head of the church, Jesus Christ. They believe they are to carry the gospel story of redemption to all nations. They believe they are to baptize those that believe and organize them into Baptist churches. They believe they are to "teach them to observe all things I have commanded you."

Many different methods are employed to carry out this commission.

1. There are those who believe that this commission was given to all Christians in general, not to a church. Any individual can solicit support, or form an organization to back his work is the belief of this group. This has led to the great number of so-called non-denominational or interdenominational organizations doing mission work. These groups side-track churches. Be it said to the credit of Baptists that very few have ever gotten involved in this kind of activity.

It should also be known that there are many in this group who classify themselves as "independents" meaning they are not attached to any group or church. This kind of missionary should not be confused with independent Baptists.

2. Next, there are those who believe that it is necessary to organize a number of churches together in order to carry out this commission to go into all the world with the gospel. The most elaborate of these is the World Council of Churches. The majority of churches and denominations in the United States belong to this organization. There are those called Baptist who also are members of this organization; however, the great majority of Baptists stay clear of this monster.

Under this heading would come the great denominational organizations. Each denomination of religion has its own organization to which all their churches belong. The individual churches do their mission work through this denominational machinery. Each denomination has its own Mission Board or Agency that carries on the work of missions for the individual churches. The denominational board or organization approves, sends out, supports and controls the missionary. Every organized Baptist Convention, Association, Fellowship, etc., do their mission work in this fashion.

3. There are several Mission Organizations that are independent of any one group or organization of Baptists. These are Baptist Mission Organizations brought into existence for the purpose of giving the local Baptist church a way of getting their missionaries to the field. These groups are not particularly identified with any Convention, Association, Fellowship, etc., but seemingly try to serve all Baptists.

For the moment, let us confine our thoughts to the Baptists in the above groups. While independent Baptists do not agree with the method that is used in these organizations, they thank God for every missionary that has been sent forth with the Gospel story by these groups. Everyone recognizes the fact of the great work that has been done by some of these boards and organizations on the foreign field. I, for one, will readily agree that in the past these organized Baptists have outstripped independent Baptists in this work. The thought that surges through my being and brings deep conviction to my soul is that, somehow, the whole mission effort of Baptists has fallen far short.

Do we have one nation or continent that has been successfully evangelized by any Baptist organization? Isn't China a memory to spur us into examining our efforts?

These United States are literally laden down with thousands of Conventions, Associations, Boards, Societies, Fellowships, etc., of churches and Christians. Every opportunity for these organizations to get the job done has been given under the most favorable conditions. All this, yet these United States are farther away from God than ever in history.

Independent Baptists are not to escape responsibility for these conditions. They have no great successes to wave as a standard.

4. The final group, of course, that we want to mention are independent Baptists. These are Baptist churches that believe that the great commission was given to the local church. They accept the fact that since the only organization established and sanctioned in the New Testament was the local church that it must be the organization that God intended to carry out His work. They do not believe that any organization except the church is necessary to carry out the plan of God in giving the Gospel to the world.

How Does An Independent Baptist Church Do Missionary Work?

How is it possible for an independent Baptist church to do missionary work without the help of Conventions, Associations, Fellowships, Boards, Agencies, Societies, or what have you?

The answer is simple. They follow the Bible way — God's way. God's way worked in New Testament times — it works now!

The Lord only established one institution for the propagation of His Word. That institution is the local church. There is no other organization mentioned or sanctioned in the entire New Testament. The church is God's way — anything else is of man. Anything else has to have originated with man and the laws governing it have to be manmade — there is no Bible covering anything but a church.

Independent Baptists accept this as meaning that the Lord intended for local churches to carry out the Great Commission. They believe that this is clearly demonstrated in the New Testament.

The World's Greatest Missionary Effort

The greatest missionary effort ever accomplished was in New Testament times. The Gospel was spread farther, quicker and more successfully than any time since. One definite fact stands out — the only organization used in this, the greatest of all missionary efforts, was the local church. God's method worked. It worked then and it will work now.

How did the early churches accomplish this great feat? What method did they use? We are thankful that the New Testament gives us the method they used. It makes it possible for us to pattern our work after this God-given example.

1. The New Testament teaches that the missionary is to be called and directed by the Holy Spirit. In the record of the sending forth of Saul and Barnabas as missionaries from the church at Antioch as given in the 13th chapter of Acts we find these words in the second verse.

"And they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

The fourth verse says: "So they being sent forth by the Holy Spirit..."

2. The Holy Spirit directs the church to send forth the called missionary. In verse 2, quoted above, the language is very clear. The Holy Ghost directed the church to "Separate me Barnabas and Saul."

3. The missionary is to be sent out under the authority of the local church. The passage under consideration (Acts 13:1-4) makes it very plain that the local church sent out the missionary.

These men were sent out by the local church at Antioch and reported back to this church.

"And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." — Acts 14:27.

4. The churches of the New Testament cooperated together in missions without any organizations but the churches.

"I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.

"And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied..." — II Cor. 11:8-9

Here we see that other churches cooperated with the church at Antioch in financially supporting Paul the missionary.

The church at Philippi is also said to have had a part in the supporting of Paul.

"Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent one and again to my necessity." — Phil. 4:15-16

The pattern is clear. The Holy Spirit called the missionary and directed the local church to send him forth. The missionary was sent forth on the authority and control of the local church. Other churches cooperated in the effort. All this without any other organizations other than the local churches. This method resulted in the world's greatest missionary effort.

Will It Work Now?

The question arises as to whether this method will work now. Times have changed; must our methods change? No. God gave one message and He gave one method for this age.

It is working now! There is a great surge among Baptists to return to God's way of doing things. All over this country there are hundreds of Baptist churches who are doing their missionary work in the manner set down in the New Testament. It is our prayer that this number will continue to increase.

The number of independent Baptist churches is growing by leaps and bounds. Missionaries are being sent out. Bible Schools are growing and new ones are being started. There are many fine Baptist publications and more are coming. Fine fellowship exists between these churches and pastors. Revival is on every hand and souls are being saved.

All over this country voice after voice is being heard calling God's people back to God's way. God's people are listening. They have grown utterly weary of all the extra-scriptural organizations.

Will it work? I have the report of one of the missionaries recently sent out by independent Baptists. His report, sent to me by the local church that sent him out, reveals that 37 Baptist churches in 10 different states are contributing to his support. This is just one example. Just recently independent Baptists have sent missionaries to Belgian Congo, Africa, Mexico, Japan, and Alaska. This has been accomplished in the past few weeks. They join the fine number already on the foreign field that have been sent out by independent Baptists.

Does It Make A Difference?

Does it make a difference how we send out missionaries? Independent Baptists think it does, for several reasons.

1. We believe that doing things God's way will glorify God and doing things man's way glorifies man. It has ever been true that man is never satisfied with God's way. Just as they have always added to God's way of salvation in order to glorify man so they have always added to God's method in order to glorify man.
2. We believe that there is a serious lack in today's missions. If we are going to have a genuine revival it will be as we return to God's way. We believe we can see another world-shaking effort in our age as there was in New Testament times if we let God have His way. This is what our hearts yearn to see.
3. We believe that greater response can be expected from the individual Christian when the work is through his church than any other way. This will increase the giving and enlarge the work.
4. We believe more young people will respond to the call of God when the work is on the local level of the church. This will increase the number of missionaries.
5. To sum it up, we believe God's way is best in all way



Herod and John

J. Jackson Goadby
From *Timely Words*, 1869

"For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." (Mark 6:20)

"For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother." (Matt. 14:3-11)

Two men are here brought face to face. It will be well for us to look at them, since we shall discover that there is much in both which it concerns us carefully to note. Behind the old fact there is a present truth. For this, among other purposes, perhaps as the chief purpose, many of the incidents of the Old and New Testament are recorded. It is very possible to lose sight of this moral teaching as we read the narratives which fascinate alike simple youth and reverent age.

Perhaps this forgetfulness of the purpose for which these facts are preserved, is one reason why the reading of the Bible is less fertile of results than it should be, less distinctly moral and religious. We gaze upon others, when the glass of the Word reflects ourselves. We are quick to condemn the worldliness, the selfishness, the corruption, or whatever it may be, which appear in the lives and character of the men portrayed in the Sacred Page; but we are not infrequently slow to acknowledge, or even to see, that out of our own mouth we are condemned. No time is thought too much, if it be spent in looking at the messenger; but in gazing at the messenger we forget the message. The larger and higher advantage of Bible reading can only come through constant, humble, and penitent self-application. Let us use that whilst looking at Herod and John.

Here are two men whose positions present the very sharpest points of contrast. Herod Antipas was the son of a king; originally designed by his father as his successor, but in the last change of his will, made Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa. With less exactness he is also described as king. Herod was brought up in a palace, with all that palaces supply. His father's home might not be very happy, but it was noted for its luxuries. Herod now occupies a palace-fortress, standing on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. He possesses power, such as belongs to an irresponsible Eastern despot. There is no sceptre to which he bows, except that of mighty Rome, whose shadow was now flung over all the earth. There is apparently very much to envy in Herod Antipas, as he stands face to face with John the Baptist. He has not only power, but wealth, and all that wealth can buy. He has material comforts without stint; a name of some terror; palaces of some pretensions. Poor Jews, weary and footsore, might pass by the fortress-palace of Machærus and envy the owner. Outwardly, there did seem much to covet in Herod's position.

Look now at John. There is little about his position that men commonly desire. His father was a humble priest. John had been brought up by his parents in strict obedience to the angel's injunction. He was a holy Nazarite from the womb. Waxing strong in spirit, and becoming growingly conscious of that high and honourable office to which he was called, John still further prepared himself for it, by self-discipline, and by constant communion with God. Year after year had that stern probation been unrelaxed. He had lived rather like an old Hebrew prophet, preparing himself for the deliverance of a "burden of the Lord," than like the worldly sons of the priests in his own dissolute age. The desert had been his home; and the rough fare which the desert furnished had been his daily food. He now stands before Herod with a dress unlike the purple and fine linen which men wear who dwell "in kings' houses;" a rough tunic of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle. Physically, he may be the stronger of the two, since he has breathed the freer air of the desert, and has lived in simpler and

hardier fashion than the man who has been cooped up in palaces or towns. He is a Prophet, not a king; a Prophet in chains. There is no freedom now. His days of liberty are ended. He is Herod's prisoner. He seems to have been his captive for some months past; and still likely to remain his captive. Machærus might have luxurious rooms for Herod. It had only a dungeon for John. Even locusts and wild honey might be dainty fare to the fare doled out to John in Herod's prison. Looking, then, at the outward conditions of the two men, perhaps numbers would rather be the Tetrarch than the Teacher, Herod than John.

But if the position of the two men presents sharply marked differences, their several characters show contrasts still more striking. Herod Antipas was unscrupulous, tyrannical, weak. His cruelty was marked by cunning, and followed by remorse. He was a true type of the Oriental despot—fickle, sensual, superstitious. He had not earned much honour in his government. "Many evil things" were done by him during his reign, but he was chiefly notorious for his open defiance of moral and social law. He was married to the daughter of Aretas, the king of Arabia Patræa. Whilst on a visit to Rome, and living in his half-brother Philip's house, he became ensnared by the charms of Herodias, Philip's wife and niece. Plans were mutually formed between them. Herod Antipas was to divorce his wife, and then return to fetch Herodias. The intrigue came to the knowledge of the daughter of Aretas, who, under a ruse, desired to be sent to Machærus, from whence she escaped to her father's court. Herod and his step-niece, and half-sister, were now living in shameless adultery and incest. Herodias had the stronger nature of the two; and her ambitious spirit afterwards spurred Herod to seek that which cost him his life. The true wife had fled from Machærus, and the paramour occupied her place.

Herod, like too many other kings, ancient and modern, showed his people "ill example." When rulers are sensual, courtiers catch the contagion, and help to spread it far and wide. Evil in the palace is evil at the nation's fountain head. All the streams become tainted. No part of the government escapes pollution. Some of the worst calamities that have ever afflicted nations have been born of the immoralities of the palace. The history of other times, nay, the history of some nations in our own days, furnish lamentable evidence of this general truth. That people is already on the high road to national disaster and ruin whose sovereign despises the decencies and moralities of social life. Here, then, was Herod, doing his best to bring on the worst evils that can scourge a nation. He was a capricious tyrant, a weak and shameless sensualist. He had adopted nothing more than the surface polish of Roman civilization. He had copied the vices by which that civilization was now beginning to be tarnished.

How different from all this was the Prophet! There might be sternness about his morality; perhaps, to many, something that was a little forbidding. It did not, it could not, win universal acceptance. It was ascetic, and therefore not assimilative. "All men mused in their hearts of John whether he were the Christ, or not;" (Luke 3:15) but all men were not disposed, and were not intended, to live his life. If, however, John's morality were severe, it was also true and thorough. He was not one to accept half measures; and yet he was no mere enthusiast. He saw everywhere around him among his countrymen the most fearful corruption. Religion was a sham, morality a pretense, honour a thing unknown. It was the darkest day of their national history. Like many others of pure and lofty mind in such surroundings, his soul recoiled from it; and the recoil produced uprightness, severe and stern.

In John's case there was no playing with conscience; no weak hesitation about right and wrong; no readiness to yield through the adverse pressure of outward circumstances. He was a pure stainless soul, in the midst of depravity. Even the very haunts of men seemed to be filled with taint, and John shunned them with all the loathing of an Arab of the desert. No man could accuse the Prophet of injustice or impurity. So free from taint was he that corrupt men leaped to the conclusion that he had a devil. They pronounce the same verdicts still, and so repeat the example of John's contemporaries. When great principles fire the soul, then men who lack this fire have the same ready way of excusing themselves by despising or pitying the reformer. "He is mad. Nothing else will explain his fervor. Why then heed him?" But it is worth considering, that only by such men have great revolutions in morals and in kingdoms been effected.

John did not lose his purity in the presence of Herod. In this he was unlike too many others. Their morality is strong enough so long as it is untried, so long as they are among their equals. Once let them be brought into any kind of relation with others of higher station and corrupt life, and forthwith they grow ashamed of their purity. The rank dazzles and destroys. But with sadly too many it only needs the presence of evil companions to scatter their little dust of self-righteousness to the four winds. They leave the neighbourhoods where they are known. They come to live in the desert of great cities. They are daily thrown into company with others who have already become corrupt; and not themselves forsooth, daring to be "singular," or unable to face the mockery of all tenderness of conscience as a childish folly, to be put away when you leave

home, they follow the multitude to do evil. Many young men, brought up in homes as pure as John's, thus bring dishonour on their hitherto spotless names, and whelm the heart of their godly parents in unspeakable sorrow. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us...Cast in thy lot among us...My son, walk not thou in the way of them; refrain thy foot from their path; for their feet run to do evil." (Prov. 1:10-16)

There was, further, a wide difference in the mutual estimate of Herod and John. "Herod feared John." (Mark 6:20) There was very much in the Forerunner to make Herod fear him. The very difference of character produced fear. However explained, bad men always fear those who are indisputably good. There is a conscious disparity of thought and life which any, even the least, contact at once makes apparent. Deep down in every bad man's heart this fear of good men exists. Nor does it always remain concealed. It will crop out in many ways. Sometimes it takes the form of subtle detraction; sometimes of temptation; sometimes of open hostility. "The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth." (Ps. 37:12) So David had found it to be, and many others have had bitter evidence of the same fact since his day. There is persecution, petty or fierce, according to the measure of the power possessed. All this springs out of the mutinies in evil men's hearts, which may be stirred by the presence, or even by the recollection, of the righteous. There is enough knowledge of better things still left to make such men uncomfortable sinners. Herod knew the difference between his own character and the character of John; and that knowledge made him fear the Prophet.

Herod's fear of John sprang from John's bold denunciation of his particular sin. The man whom his Master described as "more than a Prophet," (Matt. 11:9) was not one of those men who carefully pick their words, and are more solicitous to please their hearers than to discharge the duties of their sacred office. If John could reprove, he could also rebuke. The solitary Voice that had rung through the desert, and awakened its echoes with the cry, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matt. 3:2) was not hushed into a whisper when speaking of the sin even of a ruler. It was notorious what a shameless life Herod and Herodias were then living.

John's judgment concerning that life soon came to be equally notorious. "It is not lawful for thee to have her." (Matt. 14:4) This denunciation was a sore point with Herod. He was like some other men when they hear the truth. They can smile complacently, so long as the denunciations of sin are general, but as soon as you touch upon their particular sin, they wince like the patient whose wound the surgeon is probing. You are no longer "acceptable." You have grown "personal." You have become "offensive;" or perhaps, with the milder sort of sinners, you are deemed "inconsiderate." "This kind of teaching is not to be endured; nor the man who gives it. Vague platitudes, if you like; general pouring out of the vials upon the ancient Scribes and Pharisees; but let us have no modern instances. We will hear your facts, but we do not want to hear your applications." So it has come to pass that foul vice lurks under smug appearances; and that teacher is too often most esteemed who deals as much as possible with evil doers of the past, and as little as possible with the evil doers of the present.

Herod's fear of John was cowardly. It was not the mere lashing out of indignant rebuke because of John's condemnation of his shameless life that led Herod to look with alarm upon John's teaching. The Tetrarch began to tremble at the possible consequences of John's teaching among the people. Though the multitude were not disposed to imitate John, "all [the people] hold John as a prophet." (Matt. 21:26) Herod was too fond of his position to care that another should fill his place. Like other men of his type of character, he was willing enough to make tools of the people, to use them for his own ends. But how would it be, if the people should rise up in offended majesty, and refuse to be tools any longer?

How, if John should so sting the people with a sense of righteous wrath that they should lay violent hands upon Herod, and hurl him from his throne? More improbable things than this have happened in the history of nations. Moral revolutions always precede social changes. Herod's alarm at the possible effects of John's teaching might not, therefore, be so far wrong after all. It was the working of this craven fear which had something to do with Herod's laying hands on John, and casting him into prison. No doubt Herodias "screwed his courage up to the sticking place," like another Lady Macbeth; but political jealousy and suspicion goaded him on to do this cowardly deed. It was fear of the people alone that had already restrained him from putting John to death.

There is another and altogether different fear shown by Herod. He listened to John after he had made him a prisoner; and even "did many things" (Mark 6:20) according to John's suggestion. What those "many things" were to which the sacred Evangelist refers, we have no means of ascertaining. Herod was willing enough,—if we may venture a surmise founded on

the absence of any reformation of life,—to do anything, except give up the sin which John emphatically denounced. This is a form of relieving conscience of its burden which has never lacked imitators.

A species of compounding for sins to which we are inclined, by an open show of denouncing and shunning those which, for us at least, do not possess any attractions. Men can be wrathful against misers, because they are careless about money, or warm in their condemnation of insobriety, because they are never likely to err on that side, or indignant at dishonesty, since they are put out of the reach of temptation, or horror-stricken at social infidelities, because "the very ice of chastity" is in them. But while "doing many things," and denouncing others, the one thing they are not willing to do is this—give up their particular sin. Herod would "do many things" when he heard John. What he would NOT do was this—give up Herodias.

As to the gladness with which Herod heard John, is not the explanation of this rather to be found in John's character than in Herod's morality? What was Herod? A willing tool of a crafty and sensual woman? A man surrounded by feeble copies of himself, obsequious courtiers, willing dupes? The things that were most conspicuously absent from Herod's court were reality and zeal. Sensualism wraps the soul in softness, and saps its very life. What was John? A man all reality and fervor; a soul set on fire of God Himself. It was something in Herod's court to see a man in earnest, even though that man was a prisoner. John's zeal created, for these jaded voluptuaries, "a new sensation." He spoke "in the spirit and power of Elijah;" (Luke 1:17) and that was altogether fresh to such an audience as John gathered about him in the palace of Machærus.

The gladness, therefore, was not moral, but sensational. It was the joy of a man who finds some new pleasure where all others have begun to pall; and, to him, it is of little consequence whether he find it in a dancer or a Teacher. He who could gladly hear John speak, very soon as gladly looked on while Salome danced; perhaps but too faithful a portrait of men less known than Herod Antipas, and not quite so far removed from the present century.

But if "Herod feared John," John did not fear Herod. There is nothing weak, fickle, and yielding about this last of the Hebrew prophets, and the man who was pronounced by the Son of God Himself to be greater than all. The Forerunner was to Herod and his infamous paramour what Elijah had been to Ahab and Jezebel, although not for the same reason. His boldness was shown in spite of the dangers into which it brought him. But why did not John fear Herod? **BECAUSE HE FEARED GOD.**

At the worst, Herod could put John to death; but after that, he had no more that he could do. His power was strictly confined to the present world. He could not touch a hair of his head in the future. Over that future the God whom John feared was alone the Ruler. He reigned supreme in the world invisible. Hence, then, the heroism of John; and hence, also, that power which chases out all moral cowardice from the heart. Possessed of this, men will bravely dare to swim against any popular current, to proclaim any unpalatable truth, and run all present risks. From this springs, also, that less conspicuous, but not less noble purpose, which checks the first rising up of evil desire in the heart, even though the opportunity favour, and the chances of detection be apparently small and remote. This is the fear of which the world and the Church are now in such sore need. If men feared God more, they would fear men less.

There is a wide difference, lastly, between John's treatment of Herod, and Herod's treatment of John. The very outspokenness of John to the Tetrarch was kindness, not petulant complaining. "Open rebuke is better than secret love," (Prov. 27:5) says the wise man. "Let the righteous smite me," says David, "it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (Ps. 141:5) John's rebuke was prompted by a desire to remove a public scandal, and secure Herod's reformation. There was no end to be gained by the Prophet, except the gain which comes from delivering one's heart of the burden of the Lord, of snatching a soul from death, and so hiding a multitude of sins. But this was not a gain such as could be assayed in any other court than that of Heaven. John knew the great evil of Herod's example, and the imminent danger of that evil to Herod's soul. The continued indulgence in one sin is the sure preparation for the commission of others. When the defences of the soul are broken, "the enemy will come in like a flood."

Nor was John's denunciation of Herod the cry of a demagogue who was envious of Herod's higher social position. The Prophet who could live and thrive on the hard fare of the desert, was as little likely to covet the delicacies which groaned on the Tetrarch's table, as Daniel and his companions were to lust after the king's wine and meat. His meat and drink, like his Master's, was "to do the will of Him that sent [him], and to finish His work." (John 4:34) He had the clear insight of a holy character, and would far rather be the humble Prophet than the haughty king. John would not have changed his camel's

hair and leathern belt for all the stores of Herod's purple and fine linen if he could. He was jealous for the Lord of Hosts, not envious of the Tetrarch of Galilee.

How different was Herod's treatment of John! To put a preacher you gladly hear in chains, and to keep him in them, is, to say the very least, a wretched way of showing your respect for his instructions. It is using the Prophet as kings once used jesters—to make sport when their own dull minds were wearied by court inanities. Yet even this does not complete the proofs of the difference of Herod's treatment of John. He would rather behead the Teacher he professed to love, than break his oath, or permit himself to be thought imprudent in promising, or inconstant in performing. He was "exceeding sorry," (Mark 6:23) when the artful daughter of an artful mother asked for the head of John the Baptist in a charger.

But whence Herod's sorrow? If it had sprung out of genuine reverence for John, he would have refused the request. Was not his sorrow traceable in part to the Roman superstition into which Herod had fallen? To take away life on a birthday was a bad omen, and Herod trembled to face it. Was there not also another source of the sorrow outside the walls of Machærus? John had many adherents among the people. How would they take the murder of their Prophet? Might not danger spring from that source too? Here, as it appears to us, are the true causes of Herod's sorrow at Salome's request.

He might plead his oath, and the possible effect of his breaking it, upon "the high captains and chief estates of Galilee," who were now at his table; just as men will put forward one reason rather than another for their conduct, when they are ashamed of the true motive. A man who had broken marriage oaths was not likely to be over careful in any oaths that he might chance to utter, especially if they leaped out of the lips in momentary excitement. He who did not scruple to trample under oaths deliberately and solemnly taken was the last person in the world to have any very tender conscience about oaths hastily uttered, except his apparent regard for them suited his purpose. It needed no casuist to show Herod that, from a silly promise made over his cups, any law would at once absolve him. Herod did not want absolving. He wanted to hide the secret motives for his conduct, and he took the one that came readiest, although his previous and present life were a standing protest against its mockery.

The order went forth. The tools of tyranny are always sharp and within reach. Herodias took care that there should be no impediment to the gratification of her fiendish desire to gloat over the head of the man who had dared to speak unwelcome truth. Still bemused with wine, Herod slept that night a drunken sleep, scared, it may be, with dreams of his evil doings to the "just man and holy," burdened with the crimes of incest and murder, but that night the pure and stainless soul of John fled upward to the sweet paradise of God.

Could any picture be more fearful than that which Herod supplies of the downward tendency of sin? He begins with adultery and incest; he proceeds to personal violence; he ends in murder. He might have shrank back appalled from the first sin, if he could have seen the end from the beginning. He would have found less readiness in his heart to commit the crime of murder, if he had not already made it easy by his former evil life.

If, then, there be one lesson more than another that speaks trumpet-tongued from this guilty life of Herod, it is surely this: to beware of listening to the first solicitations to evil. They are the first, but if regarded, they will not be the last. The appetite of sin grows on what it feeds, until earlier sins seem tame, and others, more daring and more abominable, will alone satisfy the corrupt and evil heart. Men may think the grave warnings of the servant of God misplaced, or unnecessary, but the blasted lives of hundreds of young men too sadly testify that there is still need to cry aloud against the seductions of vice. Look not upon the bedizened siren, in whatever form she may tempt you, or however tricked out with meretricious garb and grace. Look at the end. Think of that, and start back, ashamed and penitent, from her fatal embrace and her poisonous breath.

There is also another lesson as plainly upon the face of this ancient story. Beware of letting mere delight in hearing the truth proclaimed suffice. There may be much about that truth to win your attention and stir your heart. Like Herod, you may hear the preacher gladly. The subjects on which his mission demands that he should touch, are the highest that can engage human thought,—God, Christ, the soul, life, death, eternity; are pregnant with issues, both now, and hereafter—that you cannot fail to listen, if only the preacher be faithful to his Lord. And should there be any want of interest in the preaching, it is never owing to the preacher's theme. It is owing to his defective treatment, or to your unwilling ear and unprepared heart.

But, if fired with the love of Christ, and travailing in birth for souls, who will not confess the preacher's power? You, surely, who owe to his earnest words your first stimulus to a higher and nobler life, will not deny their potency; and you, who hear them, even though they may be spoken with a stammering tongue, and not with the scathing power of the Voice which once cried in the wilderness, have not you also, in moments of pointed appeal, risen up to a present better thought and purpose? In the delineation of a holier life, have not you felt a thrill of passing delight? But take heed how you allow this to stand in the place of something else. Be a hearer of the Word; but be something more. Be a doer. Then shall you be blessed in your deed.



Chitoura

From The Baptist Magazine, 1858

Chitoura is a heathen village, lying about twelve miles to the south of Agra [in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India]. It contains about a thousand inhabitants. It is divided into three or four sections, or thokes, each thoke being a separate enclosure, and occupied by individuals of one caste. The majority of the people are weavers. The village and its lands are the property of a zemindar [an Indian aristocrat] owning some three or four other villages. He is a gosain, or religious teacher, and of a sect which does not allow him to marry. The chief disciple succeeds to his possessions on his death. His religious duties consist of little more than the repeating in the ears of his followers of a mantra, while he receives almost divine honour at their hands.

It was in the year 1844 that some of the villagers gave a very friendly reception to Mr. Williams, then the missionary at Agra, and his native assistants. Before the close of the year, three had been baptized, and three others had expressed their desire to renounce their ancestral faith. In these labours Mr. Williams was assisted chiefly by Gunput, who subsequently became for a short time resident at the village. Nainsukh, of Moughyr, then on a visit to Agra for his health, also rendered valuable aid.

During the year 1845, a small chapel was opened, the number of converts was increased to sixteen, and the friends in Agra began to contemplate the necessity of founding a Christian village as a shelter and home for the converts, then much tried by the opposition and persecution of their countrymen.

In January, 1846, a church was formed, consisting of forty-two persons, and Gunput became their pastor. Fifteen others were baptized during the year, so that at the time of the settlement of Mr. Smith at the station as the missionary, in 1847, on the invitation of the Agra Auxiliary, the church numbered fifty-seven persons. The state of things appeared most hopeful. A very considerable interest in the gospel had been awakened in the numerous villages which lie so thickly spread among the cotton and cornfields of this locality. To Mr. Smith was committed the Christian culture of this promising region. In this arrangement there was no intention to interfere with the native church; Mr. Smith's time was to be devoted to evangelic labours in the surrounding hamlets.

Owing to some difference with the Auxiliary, Gunput, however, soon abandoned his post, and the duties of the pastorate then devolved upon Mr. Smith. He found great laxity of discipline existing, and that the members still retained many heathen practices among them, wearing their necklaces, intermarrying with the heathen, and even attending their pagan festivals. In a short time it was discovered that caste continued to be observed; that the Panchayat, or council of the caste, still exercised its power over the people, many not daring in opposition to its decisions even to attend the house of God.

The attempt to remedy this evil led to the breaking up of the church. Some bathed in the Jumna, others paid fines, and eventually nearly all were again settled in caste. And now the prospects of the spread of the gospel were very discouraging. The zemindara would not allow a Christian to remain in the village. The wells and shops were closed to Christians; they

were driven from the markets. The threat of exclusion from caste, freely used by the Punchayats, seemed to shut the door to the entrance of the truth. It presented an apparently insurmountable barrier to the diffusion of divine truth.

The formation of a Christian village was resolved upon. Two hundred bigahs of somewhat sterile land were rented of the zemindar, within half a mile of the village of Chitoura, which were relet to the native Christians, and for some years at an annual loss. However, its value gradually increased, and before the mutiny, it had for some time been entirely in the hands of the native Christians, by whom the entire original rent was paid. Thus one difficulty was overcome, and a refuge found for the persecuted followers of Christ.

The church was reorganised on the 5th of June, 1847. The truth slowly spread: and every year witnessed additions to the little flock. At the close of the year 1849, there were twenty-three members in the church, and the village contained ninety inhabitants, all of whom had separated themselves from the caste customs of their countrymen, and were daily receiving Christian instruction. "Three years ago," said the missionary, speaking of himself and Thakur Das, his native helper, and of the success which had already dawned upon their labours:

"Three years ago we sat in the old building, in the heathen village, nearly alone, almost despairing of success, the prospect appeared so dark and discouraging. The place where I now write was then a barren plain; now it contains two bungalows, a comfortable building used for a chapel and school, and three rows of Christian houses, containing altogether a population of ninety souls. Some have been, we hope, brought out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ; others are inquiring the way to Zion. Schools have been commenced for boys and girls, and are well attended, and prospering; and the gospel leaven is at work through the whole district."

Some ninety villages were embraced within the circuit of the itinerant labours of the missionary.

The girls' school partly consisted of some orphans who were received at Claitout on the breaking up of the Orphan Refuge at Patna.

In the following year severe trials befell the station. First, Walayat Ali was arrested while preaching at Shumshabad, on an action commenced by his brother, a bigoted Mohammedan. The claim was for money and property, said to have been left by his father, who had been dead twenty-three years before. The Mohammedan judge, through religious hatred, decided against Walayat Ali, but the decision was reversed on appeal to the English judge.

Next, the son of Thakur Das was inhumanly murdered on his way to the Christian village. Seven of the native Christians were seized by the police, and two were at length charged with the crime. Witnesses were suborned, money and grain distributed, and promises of reward lavishly made, should their efforts be crowned with success. The adversaries threatened to dig out the Christians root and branch. The two prisoners suffered severely; they were handcuffed, and their feet made fast in the stocks. On one occasion they were beaten by the head of the police to force them to a confession of the crime. Bail was at length taken for their appearance at the trial when the magistrate at once dismissed the case. The evidence was so contradictory as to satisfy him of the innocence of the accused.

Yet the Word of God grew. Eight persons during this year of trial put on Christ by baptism. At the markets and the fairs the preaching of the cross was listened to by increasing numbers. The stormy clouds of tribulation passed away, and a period of peaceful and successful labour followed. The refuge afforded by the Christian village was resorted to by several converts; schools were established in other villages, and many were found to be halting between two opinions, doubting whether Krishna or Christ should have their obedience and love. The Shumahabad school had, however, to meet the opposition of the pundits of the neighbouring temple; twice they succeeded in nearly emptying the school, but it shortly recovered its numbers, and contained usually from forty to fifty boys under regular instruction.

At the commencement of the year 1856, Mr. Smith was constrained by failing health to return for a time to England. Immediately preceding his departure, John Bernard, a native catechist, and for some years a tried servant of Christ and preacher of the word in Muttra, was chosen as pastor by the people, and regularly set apart to the ministry of the Word

among them. The church then contained fifty communicants, and the total number of residents in the Christian village was 104. From this time to the breaking out of the mutiny, missionary labour went on.

The neighbouring villages were visited by Bernard and Thakur Das, and several persons were added to the church by baptism. In some cases discipline had to be exercised, and generally the prospects of the native pastorate were good. Suddenly the storm of rebellion swept over the land. The Christians were scattered in every direction. Some found a refuge in the Fort of Agra, others in the villages among their friends. But their faith has stood the sharp test of persecution and suffering, and measures are now in progress to reorganise the church and station which the return of Mr. Smith will complete.

When the church was disorganised by the caste question there appeared no possibility of a Christian living independently in his own village. He was not permitted to buy or sell; every avenue of employment was closed against him. Hence arose the necessity for the formation of a Christian settlement. Some have advocated the establishment of native Christian villages, distinct from the heathen. Such separation it is supposed would lead to an earlier laying aside of heathen practices, and afford to the missionary frequent opportunities of instruction and oversight.

But in the North-West Provinces the real necessity lay in the nature of the tenure of the land, and the exclusion from all family connection by the loss of caste which followed the confession of Christ. As a general result the good effects of this isolation have been few. Probably it has hindered the diffusion of divine truth rather than fostered it, while some evils have arisen in the body of the Christian community which have neutralised the good that has been done. It was not possible to confine the inhabitants of the village entirely to true Christians. Hence the occasional presence of improper persons has thrown discredit on the profession of the rest; while the heathen have not seen much of that piety which adorned the daily walk of the great body of the converts.

Until, however, a better feeling prevailed in the surrounding villages no other course was practicable, and this small Christian settlement of Nistarpur, "the town of salvation," grew up by the side of the heathen village of Chitoura. The people were there protected from persecution, and from the grasp of the zemindar. But employment must be found for them. Most of the converts were weavers, and weaving is but a poorly remunerated employment in India. Four shillings a month is the average of earnings with the native loom. This led in 1851 to the introduction into the village of two Scotch looms, kindly obtained by Mr. Urquhart, and Mr. Smith now busied himself in instructing the native Christians how to work them. By degrees improvements were introduced into the native loom, for it was found almost impossible to get the people to understand or fully use the English loom.

Still diligence and industry overcame all obstacles, and a large weaving shop or factory was built by local donations, assisted by the Lieutenant-Governor of the province. The success was on the whole very satisfactory. So much progress had been made, that just before the mutiny the people were able to work the looms on their own account, markets had been found for their manufactures, and there was the prospect of the missionaries being released from all further trouble with the secular interests of the people. Many of the towns have been destroyed by the rebels, but the weaving shop remains nearly uninjured. On the reorganization of the station, it is doubtful whether many of the people will return to their former occupation or even to the village itself. For the most part they have found other employment in Agra under a government which before the mutiny generally ignored their existence. It is, therefore, probable that few will be found to return to their old employment. Should any do so, the experiment will not have been without beneficial results.

During the few years of its continuance, this station has enjoyed many tokens of the Divine favour, and missionary labour is being resumed under very favouring prospects. Already our native brother Thakur Du has revisited all the scenes of past exertion, and has met with a cordial welcome. The old opposition to Christianity has to a large extent disappeared. The houses and markets of the people are open to our native brethren. The leaven of the gospel has manifestly penetrated into many places, and hopefully may the servant of Christ resume his evangelic toil.

