



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

PUBLISHED AS A MISSION PROJECT OF PILGRIMS HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

Vol. XX, No. 2

February 1, 2004

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THE CHURCH AT THE WELSH TRACT, IN THE COUNTY OF NEWCASTLE UPON DELAWARE

By Wayne Camp

I recall with great joy the first time I heard of this church at the Welsh Tract. I was a new student to church history. Bro. Paul Goodwin, my instructor in church history, related the circumstances of the organization of this church in South Wales and then its journey to the New World. Lately I have had the occasion to learn more of this old congregation and take the following from an account of their constitution as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ from a history of the Philadelphia Association.

"This church was constituted in Pembrokeshire, in South Wales, in the year 1701, at which time the first members of this church were about to come over into Pennsylvania; they then, by the advice and counsel of the churches they came from, in Pembrokeshire and Carmathenshire, entered into a church covenant, and state their number was sixteen persons; and among them was the Rev. Mr. Thomas Griffith, to be their minister. After their arrival in this country, they lived, near two years, near Pennepek and the parts adjacent; keeping together and meeting, as they were a distinct church, and had considerable addition to their number. In the year 1703, they removed and settled at the Welsh Tract aforesaid, and continued successful: and the said Mr. Griffith continued with them until he died, which was on the 25th of August, Anno Domini 1725: during which time, several able gifted ministers were raised, by the blessing of God, in the said church; they were Elisha Thomas and Enoch Morgan, both members when the said church was first constituted; the

said Elisha Thomas was chosen pastor of the church, and after were Jenkin Jones, who removed to Philadelphia, and Owen Thomas. In the year 1730, Elisha Thomas died, and the said church continued under the ministry of the said Mr. Enoch Morgan and Mr. Owen Thomas; during which time, God raised up other two in the said church; viz., Mr. Abel Morgan, who since removed to Middletown, in East Jersey, and Mr. David Davis. On the 25th of March, 1740, died the said Enoch Morgan, and the church continues under the ministry of the said Owen Thomas and David Davis."

William Cathcart gives this account of the origin of this church,

"Welsh Tract Church, Del.—Sixteen Baptists in Wales about to emigrate to America formed themselves into a Baptist church in 1701, with Rev. Thomas Griffith, one of their number, as pastor. They came to Pennepek, now in Philadelphia, Pa., where there was a Welsh Baptist church. Leaving in this place some of their number, and receiving accessions in return, they removed, in 1703, to Iron Hill, in the Welsh Tract, New Castle Co., Del. (at that time a part of Pennsylvania). A small meeting-house was then erected upon the site now occupied by the present edifice, built in 1746."

The following information is taken from the records of the Welsh Tract church under the heading, "Our Beginnings as a Church". It is found in Vol. II of John T. Christian's History of the Baptists, P. 121.

"In the year 1701 some of us (who were members of the church of Jesus Christ in the

THE GRACE PROCLAMATOR AND PROMULGATOR (USPS #000476) is published monthly (subscription free) by the authority of Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church, 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN 38127. Periodical postage paid at Memphis, TN 38101.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **THE GRACE PROCLAMATOR AND PROMULGATOR**, 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN 38127

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countys of Pembroke and Carmathen, South Wales, in Great Britain, professing believers baptism; laying-on-of-hands; elections; and final perseverance in grace) were moved and encouraged in our own minds to come to these parts, viz.: Pennsylvania. and after obtaining leave of the churches it seemed good to the Lord and to us, That we should be formed into a church order, as we were a sufficient number; and as one of us was a minister: that was accomplished and, withal letters commendatory were given us, that if we should meet with any

congregations of Christian people, who held the same faith with us, we might be received by them as brethren in Christ.

"Our number was sixteen; and, after bidding farewell to our brethren in Wales, we sailed from Milford-haven in the month of June, the year above mentioned, in a ship named James and Mary; and landed in Philadelphia the eighth of September following."

Another historian records the organization as follows: "In the year 1701, he [Thomas Griffiths] and fifteen of the members of the church went to America in the same vessel. They formed themselves into a church at Milford, in the county of Pembroke, South Wales, and Thomas Griffiths became their pastor in the month of June, 1701. They embarked on board the ship James and Mary, and on the 8th day of September following, they landed at Philadelphia. The brethren there treated them courteously, and advised them to settle about Pennepeck. Thither they went, and there continued about a year and a half. During that time twenty-one persons joined them, but finding it inconvenient to abide there, they purchased land in the county of Newcastle, and gave it the name of Welsh Tract, where they built a meeting-house, and Thomas Griffiths labored among them as their pastor till he died, on the 25th of July, 1725, aged eighty years."

Note the following facts concerning this church organization:

- 1.The folks composing it were from two different churches in Wales and were about to come to America.
- 2.These two churches advised and counseled them that they should enter into church covenant with one another.
- 3.Sixteen persons entered into covenant and became a church.
- 4.There is no indication that either of these two advising church voted to start the church; they only advised and counseled them to form themselves into a church.
- 5.Cathcart says they "formed themselves into a Baptist church in 1701."
- 6.In their own account of their beginning these brethren indicated they "obtained

leave" from the two churches to form themselves into a church but make no mention of one of these churches voting to organize the church though both apparently gave "leave" for their forming themselves into a church.

Is it Scriptural for two churches to delegate church authority to a new church? Is the mere advising and counseling of folks that they organize themselves into a church the same as voting to start the church and delegating them authority? When two churches are credited with "giving leave" or permission to a group to form themselves into a new church, is that enough to satisfy those who say there must be authority delegated by a mother church for the formation of any church? Can a church have two mothers who are both equally involved in the delegating of authority? Does each church delegate 50% of the necessary authority? Or, does the new church get a double portion of authority?

Since writing the above information about the Welsh Tract Church, I have received the following letter from her current pastor, Eld. James Poole. He has been pastor of the church for 27 years. He wrote,

You may find this little portion of history of interest, especially since it harmonizes with your sentiments below. It regards the Welsh Tract Baptist Church, the oldest of the Old School or Primitive Baptist churches in America.

The following brief quotation is selected from the Bi-Centennial Celebration of the Church, October 19th, 1903.

"In the spring of 1701, sixteen Baptists, in the counties of Pembroke and Carmarthen, South Wales, resolved to go to America. They formed themselves into a church, with Thomas Griffith, one of their number, as Pastor. They embarked at Milford Haven in June, 1701, arriving in Philadelphia September, 8th, the same year."

Notice-they formed themselves into a church.

In another place in the history, Morgan Edwards translated their early records and gave us this:

"In the year 1701, some of us, who were members of the churches of Jesus Christ in the counties of Pembroke and Carmarthen, South Wales, in Great Britain, (professing believers in baptism, laying on of hands, election, and final perseverance in grace), were moved and encouraged in our minds, to come to these parts, namely, Pennsylvania. And after obtaining leave of the churches, it seemed good to the Lord, and to us, that we should be formed into church order, as we were a sufficient number, and as one of us was a minister, that was accomplished, and withal letters commendatory were given us, that if we should meet with any congregations or Christian people, who held the same faith with us, we might be received with them as brethren in Christ."

There again, no mention of the sister churches participating in the formation of their church.

Since there are multitudes of churches that enjoy tracing themselves back to "Mother" Welsh Tract they would do well to pause and reflect. There is no record that I am aware of, and I have been pastor at Welsh Tract over 27 years, that exists showing anything more of the constitution of the church than the above.

Humbly,
Jim Poole

Here is another of those churches which would form the Philadelphia Association through which many trace their history. And, as Bro. Poole points out, many trace their history specifically to the Welsh Tract Church, a church that was formed when a group of baptized believers from two different churches in Wales

"formed themselves into a church, with Thomas Griffith, one of their number, as Pastor."

Another interesting thing about this Welsh Tract Church is their reconstitution as a church in the year 1710. Here is an account of that reconstitution as recorded in the records of their 200th anniversary service. In 1710, by reason of a great addition by letters from churches in Wales, and by admission here, they came to another consideration, and thought best to be constituted again. We will read you the full copy of the new church covenant, as we feel sure it will interest you. It is as follows: The solemn covenant of ye church at its constitution, owned and professed by us whose names are underwritten in ye year 1710. We who desire to walk together in ye fear of ye Lord, do, through ye assistance of his holy Spirit, profess our deep and serious humiliation for all our transgressions, and we do also, solemnly in ye presence of God, and of each other, in ye sense of our unworthiness, give up ourselves to ye Lord, in a church state, according to ye Apostolical constitution, that he may be our God, and we may be his people, through ye everlasting covenant of his free grace, in which alone we hope to be accepted by him, through his blessed Son Jesus Christ, who we hope to be our High Priest, to justify and sanctify us, and our Prophet to teach us, and to be subject to him as our Lawgiver, and ye King of saints. And to conform to all his holy laws and ordinances, for our growth, establishment and consolation, that we may be a holy spouse unto him, and serve him in our generation; and wait for his second appearance, as our glorious Bridegroom. Be fully satisfied in ye way of church communion, and ye growth of grace (as we hope) in some good measure on one another's spirits. We do solemnly join ourselves together in holy union and fellowship, humbly submitting of ye discipline of gospel, and all holy duties required of a people in such a spiritual relation. We do promise and engage to walk in all holiness and godliness, humility and brotherly love, as much as in us lieth, to render our

communion delightful to God, comfortable to ourselves, and to the rest of the Lord's people. We do promise to watch over each other's conversations, and not to suffer sin upon one another, so far as God shall discover it to us, or any of us, and to stir up one another to love and to good works, to warn, rebuke and admonish one another with meekness, according to ye rules left to us of Christ in ye behalf. We do promise in a special manner, to pray for one another, and for his glory, and increase of his church, and for ye presence of God in it, and ye pouring forth of his Spirit on it, and his protection over it to his glory. We do promise to bear one another's burdens, to draw to one another, and to have fellowship with one another, in all conditions, both outward and inward, as God in his providence shall cast any of us into. We do promise to bear with one another's weakness, failings and infirmities, with much tenderness, not discovering to any without the church, nor within, unless according to . church rule, and ye order of ye gospel provided in that cause. We do promise to strive together for the truths of the gospel, and purity of God's ways and ordinances, to avoid causes, occasions of divisions, and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We do promise to meet together on Lord's days, and at other times, as the Lord shall give us opportunities, to serve and glorify God in ye way of his worship to edify one another, and to continue in the good of his church. We do promise according to our ability, or as God shall bless us with ye good things of this world, to communicate to ye majesty of ye church. These and all other gospel duties we humbly submit unto promising and purposing to perform' not in our own strength, but conscious of our own weakness, and in ye power and strength of our blessed God, whose we are, and whom we desire to serve, to whom be glory now and forevermore. Amen.

It should be pointed out that in their reconstitution they were not reconstituted by the authority of another church. It was a decision they came to themselves and which they executed themselves just as in their first constitution.

IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE BAPTIZED INTO THE CHURCH?

PART II

By Wayne Camp

In the a previous issue we began a study of the question, In What Sense Are We Baptized Into The Church? By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we saw that baptism into the church is in the same sense as being baptized into Christ and into his death. It is in the same sense as the children of Israel being baptized into Moses.

I also showed that three great Landmark Baptists—J. R. Graves, J. M. Pendleton, and A. C. Dayton—held different views on this matter but still maintained a very close working relationship. In short, they did not make the matter a test of orthodoxy or a test of fellowship. This time we will look at some other brethren and the position they held on this matter.

B. H. CARROLL

Another great and oft-quoted writer concerning the church was B. H. Carroll. B. H. Carroll was a Southern Baptist preacher, pastor and Seminary founder and President. He pastored the First Baptist church of Waco, Texas, for thirty years. He was founder and first president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas.

Eld. Carroll was a strong advocate of the local church-only doctrine. His little book called *Ecclesia* is considered an authority on the nature of the church. He believed the only kind of true church in existence today is local and visible in nature. He held that the church in glory will be composed of all the saved but that such a church is non-existent at the present time except as a concept in the mind of God. According to Carroll the only kind of church Christ has in the world at this time is local and visible in nature with visible ordinances, etc.

Bro. Carroll is often quoted on the church. I found that he has an interesting position on I

Cor. 12:13 and what it means, or rather, meant, to be baptized into the body. He believed the baptism of I Cor. 12:13 was the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the body was the local church. He believed that Holy Spirit Baptism only happened one time, the day of Pentecost, and that its effects were temporary and were done away when the Bible was complete. According to Carroll, only those living during the New Testament period ever had the effects of the baptism that is mentioned in I Cor. 12:13 and nobody needs that today. This baptism in the Spirit was "into" or "with reference to" the church. Moreover, he held that the baptism of I Cor. 12:13 was never administered to an individual; it was only for the church and only happened one time. That was at Pentecost.

I should also point out that Carroll held that this one-time baptism in the Spirit was "with reference to" the church.

Bro. Carroll wrote,

Suppose we take the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians. If you want to get muddled you should read what the commentators say on the subject. What is it? It reads in the King James Version this way: "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." It reads in the new version, "In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." Notice the difference in the two renderings. The King James Version makes the Holy Spirit the administrator, "By one Spirit." The Holy Spirit never administers baptism. He is the element, not the administrator. The Greek preposition is *en*—"in one Spirit." The King James Version says, "We are baptized," as if it were a present transaction, something going on now. The true version reads, "We were," putting it in the past tense.

Here then is a baptism unquestionably not water baptism. It is expressly said, "We are baptized in the Spirit," the Spirit baptism, and the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of the First Letter to the Corinthians are devoted to the discussion of nothing else under heaven but the baptism in the Spirit—nothing else. You ought to read those three chapters over

when you think about the baptism in the Spirit. They discuss exclusively baptism in the Spirit, and it is in that place that Paul said that they should cease and that certain other things should abide; that the graces would stay; that faith, hope and love would continue, but this thing stop. This is for a sign, he said.

Now, what is meant by "into one body"? Notice that the baptism is in the Spirit. We have a Greek preposition, εἰς, "into," or "unto," the body. What does it mean that we were all baptized in the Spirit (not water) unto (with reference to) one body? That is, no man ever did receive a baptism in the Spirit to affect him as an individual only.

No man ever did receive a baptism in the Spirit except as a constituent part of the church.

Christ baptized the church, and when He baptized the church all were baptized, were baptized in the Spirit into that body. It was one baptism once for all. In other words, one might never claim that the baptism in the Spirit prompted him to set up a new order of things. He might not say, "I am guided by the baptism in the Spirit to go off at a tangent, to set up a different establishment, to defy church authority, to go off as a free lance." No, sir.

They all were baptized in the Spirit into one body, and none might dare claim Spirit guidance for separatist work. Much less do you do it now. Don't you say, when you are despising dignitaries, and speaking evil of them, and bringing about schism and disrupting and dividing the people of God, don't say the Spirit prompts you, that the baptism in the Spirit makes you do this. If you had the Spirit baptism it would be into, it would be for the church; it would be with reference to the church and not contrary to it and against it. That is what that passage means.¹

Again Carroll wrote,

Here I venture to interpret a Scripture that seems to have run theorists mad. Of all the wild, divergent, and contradictory interpretations known to me, the wildest, most divergent and

most contradictory have been given of this simple Scripture. I refer to I Cor. 12:13: "For in one Spirit are we all baptized into [or unto] one body." Some say this refers to water-baptism and means "With one design were we baptized into the church." Others say it refers to regeneration; that regeneration is the Spirit-baptism and the only real baptism. Bear with me therefore while I expound this passage:

1. From the beginning of the twelfth chapter of I Corinthians to the end of the fourteenth chapter, the Apostle is discussing miraculous spiritual gifts.
2. This miraculous endowment he calls "baptism in the Spirit," and this is the only baptism he mentions in the whole context.
3. This baptism of miraculous power these Corinthians were so using as to depreciate regeneration, and for self-glorification, and to the positive damage of the church.
4. This evil he corrects in part in the thirteenth chapter by showing the inferiority of these temporary gifts to the enduring graces of regeneration, that they were temporary—were for a sign, that is, to accredit the church and would then cease: "Whether there, be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge [supernatural], it shall vanish away."
5. And here in this very text he assured them that this very "baptism in the Spirit" was "into the one body," the church—not out of it, not against it, not to its detriment, but for it; not to its confusion, but to its order; not to its shame, but to its glory; not unto its destruction, but unto its upbuilding. The whole context shows, as other Scriptures abundantly confirm, that the baptism in the Spirit was a baptism in miraculous power, for a temporary purpose, but that baptism, while it lasted, was to give credentials unto the church. Hence

the baptism in the Spirit was a baptism unto, or into, the church.

6. Believing as I do, that in Apostolic times the church was thoroughly and sufficiently accredited, to my mind there is now no need for this baptism in the Spirit, and as the Scriptures were completed, inspiration ceased with John. So Daniel foretold: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" (Dan. 9:24).

What then does remain of the new endowment received on the Day of Pentecost? The Spirit did not occupy the house of Jesus merely to accredit it by miracles but to fill it with ability to do the work assigned it, to enable it to carry out all its mission. This is our everlasting heritage.

Do understand me here. When I say the Spirit fills the church today, I do not refer:

1. To that mere concept of the mind—all the elect as they are or shall be in heaven. I refer to no invisible church.
2. Nor do I refer to any provincial, national, or world-wide organization of professed believers.
3. I do refer to an independent, local, visible organization of baptized believers. There was one such organization at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. That was the church. There was afterwards one such in Corinth, to which Paul wrote, and he called that one a temple of the Holy Ghost. There was one such at Ephesus, and he wrote to that one and called it a temple of the Holy Ghost. And wherever elsewhere one was organized, it became a temple of the Holy Ghost. They were all visible and had visible ordinances. All of them were working bodies here on earth. To such a one, and only to such, could our Savior's precept

apply: "Tell it to the church." These were the organizations that received, educated, disciplined, and, if need be, excluded members. These preached the gospel. Each was the house of God, the church of the living God, and pillar and ground of the truth.

The Holy Ghost does not inhabit a denomination. He inhabits a church. The Holy Ghost does not inhabit a nation. He inhabits a church—a local church.

This was the new thing at Pentecost. Christ built the first one. It was designed not only to perpetuate itself but to multiply itself.²

In another place, Carroll said almost the same thing. He wrote,

In other words, it is partly a discussion of the baptism in the Holy spirit, and I take for the text 1 Corinthians 12:13, following the revised version: "for in one Spirit [that is the element of the baptism, showing it was not a water baptism] were we all baptized into one body. I prefer to say "unto"; it makes better sense. Almost entirely throughout the New Testament the preposition *εις*, with the verb *βαπτίζω*, is read "unto," not altogether, but in almost all cases. Let us read the text again: "for in one Spirit were we all [past tense, referring to Paul's baptism in the Spirit and the Corinthians' baptism in the Spirit] baptized unto one body," that is, baptism in the Spirit did not refer to any man individually, though the baptism in his case was individual and in power. The baptism had reference to the church, the one body. That is the text.³

While Carroll did not believe the Baptism of 1 Cor. 12:13 was water baptism, he did, in yet another place, say that he understood why some say water baptism is the door to the church. He wrote,

Our baptism is a profession or declaration, public and visible, of our faith in Jesus, as the Sent of the Father and the Anointed of the Spirit, to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. Hence, the prescribed formula: "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mat. 28:19). As has been

shown, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all present, and their respective offices suggestively indicated at the baptism in Jordan (Mat. 3:16, 17). From all which it is conclusive that baptism must be the personal, individual, and voluntary act of one who has heard and believed the gospel, otherwise there is nothing to profess or declare. And as we should speedily and candidly profess what we honestly and heartily believe, we are not surprised to find baptism so closely associated in time with the faith which it professes. In apostolic days there was nothing like the modern interval between them. Baptism was at the threshold of religious life. It preceded every other obligation enjoined on the converted. The candle being lighted it was put on the candlestick. We can thus understand why some called it the "initiatory" ordinance, and others "the door" into the church, so interpreting I Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all, baptized into one body; whether we be Jews or Gentiles; whether we be bond or free."⁴

It is obvious that this was not the position of Bro. Carroll, but he readily understood why some did hold that position. In other words, if he had held that the baptism of I Cor. 12:13 was water baptism, he very possibly would have made water baptism the door to the church. I would point out that he interpreted εἰς in the same sense in this verse as in Matthew 28:19. "Baptizing them into [εἰς] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This would be in the same sense as we are said to be "baptized into [εἰς] **Christ**" and "baptized into his death." Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into [εἰς] **Christ have put on Christ. Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into [εἰς] Jesus Christ were baptized into [εἰς] his death?**

Jarrel Huffman

Bro. Jarrel Huffman was a very dear friend to this editor. I knew him for most of our years of pastoring. He served as the full-time Dean of

the Illinois Missionary Baptist Institute and Seminary for several years while I was President of the school and pastor of Beverly Manor Baptist Church. He has preached meetings and in conferences where I pastored and I have preached in his church. He was a scholar and a Christian gentleman. I printed his book on the church. In a yet unpublished work written by Bro. Jarrel Huffman on the church, he wrote,

"Special attention needs to be given to a very important verse in this discussion—I Corinthians 12:13. The verse says, 'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into ONE BODY, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.' Let us make the following deductions:

1. The ONE BODY spoken of in this verse is the assembly at Corinth (I Cor. 1:2; 12:27).
2. The subject matter here is SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Paul is proving that the ONE SPIRIT gave the various spiritual gifts to the members of the ONE BODY (the assembly at Corinth).
3. The subject matter here IS NOT HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM. Many erroneously teach that Paul here means that all believers are spiritually baptized into the universal, mystical "church." Paul had nothing like this in mind.
4. The baptism under consideration here is WATER BAPTISM. John the Baptist baptized in water; he baptized Jesus in the Jordan; Paul himself was baptized by Ananias (Acts 9:14). Scriptural baptism is water baptism. No one can be a member of one of the Lord's assemblies without water baptism."⁵

J. P. BOYCE

In his short work on the church, J. P. Boyce mentions briefly the subject at hand and says, "The church, as the body of Christ, is an external, visible organization, and the

condition or medium of admission must, in the nature of things, be in part external also. The leading design of baptism was to serve as a part of this condition. 'We are all baptized into one body' - I Cor. 12:13."⁶

I would disagree with Boyce slightly on his statement that the "leading design of baptism was to serve as a part of this condition." The leading design of baptism, as others whom I will quote affirm, was to show forth the death and resurrection of Christ. Paul, as well as other Baptist writers, repeatedly set forth the design of baptism to be to show forth the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Romans 6:3-5 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

ELD. D. N. JACKSON

D. N. Jackson, once a leader in the ABA and then in the NABA wrote, "Baptism is one way of making a confession of faith in Christ. Scriptural baptism is performed by the authority of the triune God (Matthew 28:19-20). No one without baptism is qualified for membership in a church, but baptism does not wholly qualify him. It is the ceremonial qualification he is required to meet. It is the first act of Christian obedience after one's profession, although one may have the opportunity to witness for Christ as Saviour before he is baptized."⁷

Again Bro. Jackson said, "The rite of water baptism, as a mode, is a condition of membership. It is a primary condition, as membership cannot be Scripturally obtained without it. It is a condition and not the door

into a church. The "door" is the voice of the church by which members may be received and by which they may be dismissed. Any act that is made the door of admission must of necessity be made the door of dismissal. Baptism, therefore, cannot meet that requirement, as it would be impossible to "unbaptize" a person! In New Testament cases baptism always preceded one's initial church membership (Acts 2:41; 10:47). Baptism is a primary condition of church membership only as it presupposes the subject's regeneration and profession of faith in Christ."⁸

Bro. Jackson makes a very interesting point. He argues that if baptism is the door into the church, would it not also be the door out. He says that the "door" is the voice of the church by which members are to be received and by which they are dismissed.

Churches receive and dismiss members by some form of action, usually. It may be a negative vote wherein the moderator simply asks if any object to the reception. When one comes from another church by letter or statement, it is the action of the church or the voice of the church that receives him into the fellowship.

Members are dismissed by church action. If it be by withdrawing of fellowship it is church action that does this (See Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 5:1-11). If one is dismissed by letter, that is done by church action. Of course, if one dies, the church takes no action for they have no say in the death of a member. In every other case, the way in or the way out of the church is by the voice of the church, the action of the body.

Is baptism the only door to the church? Read what another wrote on the subject.

John R. Gilpin

In a message on baptism Eld. John Gilpin relates an event in which a woman baptized by a Campbellite church sought membership in the church he pastored. She sought to come on the basis of her baptism. Among other things, Bro.

Gilpin said,

I told her that it would be necessary to rebaptize her, as Baptist baptism was the only door into a Baptist Church.⁹ Note that he said that baptism was the "only door" into a Baptist church. Gilpin held baptism was not only the door, it was the only door into a Baptist Church.

I will quote only one more late Baptist Brother at this time.

THOMAS MONTANYE

Many Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptists trace their history through the Philadelphia Association. In the 1808 minutes of that Association Thomas Montanye says,

If baptism were an initiating ordinance into the Church, those who were baptized by John, and those who believed and were baptized in Samaria, were made members of the Church."¹⁰ Bro. Montanye makes a great point. For the purpose of making us all think, let me ask some questions:

1. If baptism, as some insist, always puts one into the body of Christ, a local church, what of those folks who were baptized by John the Baptist?
2. Into what body were they baptized?
3. Was John's baptism invalid because it did not put those baptized into a church?
4. Or, did it put them in a church?
5. Was John's baptism from heaven or of men?
6. Was John's baptism scriptural baptism?
7. Was John the Baptist ever baptized? When and by whom?
8. If someone who had been baptized by John the Baptist applied to your church for membership, would you accept him on that baptism even though no church existed into which he could be baptized?
9. Did John the Baptist baptize folks with the prospect of there being a church organized or did his baptism put them in some church many miles away?
10. Is the pattern followed in gathering the materials and organizing the first church on earth a good pattern or is it faulty?
11. If baptism is literally "the door" to the local

church, is it the only door?

12. What of Scripturally baptized folks whose church goes out of existence and they desire membership in another church?
13. If baptism is "the" door to the local church, how may these enter?
14. Where in Scripture is baptism ever called or likened to a literal door?

Baptism is likened to a burial and resurrection. It is likened to planting. Romans 6:3-5 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

I raise these questions to illustrate what I have said before. Our Baptist brethren of the past have not always agreed on baptism being the literal door to the church or otherwise. Yet, they, like J. R. Graves and A. C. Dayton, were able to be in very close fellowship. As I pointed out last month, Graves wrote an introduction to Dayton's book on baptism even though Dayton took a position different to that of Graves on this question.

There is also another reason for asking the questions above. I have before me the following statement which was written in a rebuke of any who might advocate freelance baptism.

"The fact that every New Testament baptism about which the facts are known was administered by: (1) a man, (2) a baptized man, (3) an ordained man, (4) a man in good standing with a previously existing Church . . ." A little later the same author writes, "Baptism cannot exist without Church connection!"¹¹

We have some detail about the baptisms administered by John the Baptist, especially the baptism of Jesus. I have always heard that John was never baptized, yet the writer says that "every New Testament baptism about which

the facts are known was administered by . . . a baptized man." The writer further alleges that "every New Testament baptism about which the facts are known was administered by . . . a man in good standing with a previously existing Church. With what "previously existing Church" was John the Baptist in good standing? It has always been contended by Baptists with whom I have had fellowship that John the Baptist was never a member of any church. Rather, he prepared the material for the first church. These assertions concerning "every New Testament baptism about which the facts are known" contradict all that I have been taught and all that I have read about John the Baptist. If "every New Testament baptism about which the facts are known" was administered by a baptized man who was in good standing with a previously existing church John the Baptist must have been baptized and there must have been a church already in existence when he came on the scene.

Consider another statement made by the cited writer. "Baptism cannot exist without Church connection!" This suggests there must have been a church into which John the Baptist was baptizing or his baptism did not literally exist.

If, as is claimed, "Baptism cannot exist without Church connection!" there is no such thing as unscriptural baptism and no such thing as "freelance" baptisms which the writer decried. I have always understood and taught that "freelance baptisms" were baptisms administered since John the Baptist's ministry which were administered by some self-ordained, self-sent, churchless person. I call them "bootlegged" baptisms. But, how can one decry and condemn such baptisms if indeed they cannot exist without a church connection?

When one starts reading into Scripture things that are not really there, there is no end to the extremes it may take him. These statements cited clearly prove that.

CONCLUSION

Liberty of conscience has always been a "landmark" among true Baptists. In things such as I am discussing in these articles, fellowship was apparently not disturbed by these differences. It should not be now. If I insist that you must agree with my interpretation on such matters or we cannot fellowship, my position has the stench of popish claims of infallibility all over it. I beg to be excused.

¹The Holy Spirit, B. H. Carroll, Pp. 44, 45.

²Ibid., Pp. 58-60

³Commentary on the English Bible, B. H. Carroll, P.

⁴"*Baptism in Water*", *The Baptist Examiner*, Vol. 26, No. 24, July 2, 1977, P. 6.

⁵ Unpublished Work on the Church, Jarrel E. Huffman

⁶THE LOCAL, VISIBLE EKKLESIA, DR. J. P. BOYCE CHARLESTON: SMITH & WHILDEN, 229 King STREET, 1857, SCANNED COPY WITHOUT ORIGINAL PAGE NUMBERS.

⁷Baptist Doctrines and History, D. N. Jackson, Baptist Publications Committee, Little Rock, AR, P. 34

⁸ Ibid., P. 35

⁹"*The Bible and Water Baptism*", *The Baptist Examiner*, Vol. 43, No. 46, December 6, 1965, P. 5.

¹⁰Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, Vol. II, Thomas Montanye, Minutes of 1808, pp. 6-10.)

¹¹Berea Baptist Banner, January 5, 1999, P. 15).

Bouquets and Brickbats

WWW: How dare you! i used to believe that the promise keepers were this radical right-wing organization dedicated to bigotry and religious fanaticism. but then i saw your article on the internet entitled 'promise keepers: satan's latest tool of deception' and i realized that there are people in this world who are even more judgemental and narrow-minded than the promise keepers. the things you said in your

article about mother teresa were just appalling. the way i understand it, christianity is supposed to be about loving your neighbour, not condemning and antagonizing your neighbour. the vast majority of people in this world would disagree with you, not because we glorify the devil, but because we are morally sound enough not to believe in such trash. hatred and self-righteousness are contrary to the teachings of all the world's great religions, including christianity. people like you give christianity a bad name, just like those terrorist groups in the middle east give islam a bad name. i beleive

that when jesus said "not everybody who comes to me saying 'lord, lord' will make it into the kingdom of heaven", he was referring to people like you.

[Editor's note: I wonder what this writer would have said to Jesus when Jesus referred to the Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites who would not escape the damnation of hell.]

MICHIGAN: I just wanted you to know that I appreciate and agree with your articles on the church. I really enjoyed the one on baptism into the body in the last issue.

MICHIGAN: We continue to enjoy the paper and agree with what you write. _____ went to Washington, D. C., to the PKs rally and was the best dad you could ask for for about three months. Now he has disappeared again.

MISSISSIPPI: I enjoyed the articles in the last issue of The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator. I am really appreciative of the articles on church organization. The article on the church of Lower Dublin was very informative. Thanks again.

FLORIDA: Upon reading the Oct. issue of your paper, one thought rings out in my mind, "satan is loving this whole mess!" You have a great opportunity, and I believe even the ability to be such a positive influence, in the live of God's people. However, you choose to take up much of your paper fighting an issue that doesn't exist! The Brethren that you "think" you are "debating," do not believe that one organized Church is "over" another organized Church. They simply believe that it takes one to "start" one. I also believe that there is no real need for me to point this out to you, because a person with your depth of knowledge must surly, already know this fact. If it is true, that you truly do know this, not only are your efforts a waist of time, they are scripturally wrong, and the paper is nothing more than waste of good trees.

One thing is for sure, our All-knowing GOD, does know the truth, and HE will be the Judge of all motives, as well as all actions.

PLANNING TO MOVE? If at all possible, please notify us three weeks in advance of your change of address so that we may keep your paper coming. It costs us 70 cents to get your new address from the Postal Service and that may take long enough that two papers are returned at a cost of \$1.40 before we get the correction. This will mean you miss one or two papers. Your help in saving us this expense will be appreciated.

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