



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

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IS SELF-CONSTITUTION REALLY A NEW METHOD OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION?

By Wayne Camp

An article was recently published in which self-constitution of churches was referred to in the following manner, *“In this new method of organization, it's claimed that Matthew 18 'clearly' teaches church organization.”* The portion of this statement that I intend to focus on in this article is *“this new method of organization.”*

I intend to show in this message that the self-constitution of churches is not a new method of church organization. In doing so, I will show that

the writer who used this term is either grossly ignorant of church history or he is guilty of *intellectual dishonesty* in trying to convince his readers that the self-constitution of churches is of very recent origin.

The expression *“new method”* needs to be defined. The word *“new”* is widely used and every reader, no doubt, knows what it means. But, let us see what the dictionaries say. The Merriam Webster New Collegiate Dictionary gives the following definitions of the word. ¹*new* (See SELF-CONSTITUTION Cont. P. 2, L. Col.)

SALVATION BY GRACE PERPETUATED THROUGH PRESERVATION PERSEVERANCE

By Wayne Camp

Part I: Preservation

“I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (II Tim. 1:12). “. . . him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (Jn. 6:37).

In this series of articles we have been discussing God's salvation that is wholly of grace. We have learned from the study of Romans 4:16 that grace is the only sure way of salvation. Paul declared: *“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace: to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also*

which is of the faith of Abraham.” Paul includes both Jews and Gentiles in the seed. He tells his readers that the end reason that salvation is by grace is so that it will be *“sure to all the seed.”*

Two great aspects of the salvation that is by grace are the preservation and the perseverance of the saints. Since we cannot effectively and sufficiently deal with both aspects in one article I have chosen to divide it into two parts. In this article a study will be made of the saints' preservation. The Lord willing, we will consider the perseverance of the saints in the next issue of the *GPP*.

(See PRESERVATION Cont. P. 8, Left Col.)

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\ "nū, chiefly Brit "nyü, in place names usu (')nu or n€ or (')ni\ **adjective** [ME, fr. OE *niwe*; akin to OHG *niuwi* new, L *novus*, Gk *neos*] (bef. 12c)

1 : having existed or having been made but a short time : RECENT, MODERN

2 a (1) : having been seen, used, or known for a short time : NOVEL <rice was a *new* crop for the area>

(2) : UNFAMILIAR <visit *new* places>

b : being other than the former or old <a

steady flow of *new* money>

3 : having been in a relationship or condition but a short time <*new* to the job>

4 a : beginning as the resumption or repetition of a previous act or thing <a *new* day> <the *new* edition>

b : made or become fresh <awoke a *new* person>

5 : different from one of the same category that has existed previously <*new* realism>

6 : of dissimilar origin and usu. of superior quality <introducing *new* blood>

Synonyms

NEW, NOVEL, ORIGINAL, FRESH mean having recently come into existence or use. NEW may apply to what is freshly made and unused <*new* brick> or has not been known before <*new* designs> or not experienced before <starts the *new* job>. NOVEL applies to what is not only new but strange or unprecedented <a *novel* approach to the problem>. ORIGINAL applies to what is the first of its kind to exist <a man without one *original* idea>. FRESH applies to what has not lost its qualities of newness such as liveliness, energy, brightness <*fresh* towels> <a *fresh* start>. © 1996 Zane Publishing, Inc. and Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

My *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* gives as the primary definition of "new" "of recent origin, production, purchase, etc.; having but lately come or been brought into being." The definitions given in this large dictionary all agree with this primary definition and with the one above.

My task then in this article is to show that self-constitution is by no means of recent origin. As I said earlier those who advocate that this method of church organization is of recent origin or is newly brought into existence are either ignorant of Baptist church history or they are intellectually dishonest. If the expression is because of intellectual dishonesty those using it want their readers to simply take them at their word and not investigate the matter for themselves. Candor and openness would require that they admit that this method of church organization has been in existence for a very long time, in fact, since the time of Christ.

There is not a single biblical reference to one church voting to start another church. There is not a single biblical record of a mission with members who are actually members of some church that is located at some distance away—*i.e.*, a “mission” in the Philippines whose members are members of a church in Mississippi—a church which they will never attend and whose Mississippi members they will never meet. The so-called “mother church” receives and dismisses members without ever meeting them. In fact, sometimes a pastor goes to a foreign field, baptizes converts who immediately become members of the “mother church” back in the United States. He immediately organizes the momentary mission into a church and the momentary memberships in a US church are immediately transferred back to the new church without the “mother church” taking any action of reception or dismissal of the members. But, let’s consider the practice of Baptists from historical records.

279 Years Ago. The first Baptist Church in the America was started by Dr. John Clark, in May, 1727. The covenant into which they entered shows that they were self-constituted. Now, if my calculator is right that was slightly over 279 years ago. Note what they declared. And in the presence of the great God, the elect angels, and one another, having a sense of our unworthiness considered of ourselves, and looking wholly and alone to the Lord Jesus Christ for worthiness and acceptance, we do now solemnly give up ourselves to the Lord in a church state, according to the prime constitution of the gospel church; that He may be our God, and we His people, through the everlasting covenant of His free grace.

Now, Dear Readers, a practice that was common slightly over 279 years ago is not a “new method.” These folks did not look to a so-called “mother church” but looked “wholly and alone to the Lord Jesus Christ.” Moreover, they referred to the method of constitution (self-constitution) that they used to form that first Baptist Church in America as the prime constitution of a gospel church. They declared that we “solemnly give up ourselves to the Lord in

a church state, according to the prime constitution of the gospel church.” They gave up themselves to the Lord in a church state.

302 Years Ago. In the year 1704, the London Association issued the following declaration. “That in case the minor part of any church break off their communion from that church, the church state is to be accounted to remain with the major part. And in case the major part of any church be fundamentally corrupted with heresy and immorality, the minor part may and ought to separate from such a degenerate society; and either join themselves to some regular church or churches, or else, if they are a competent number, constitute a church state by a solemn covenant among themselves.” How did they hold that a church could be constituted? “. . . if they are a competent number, constitute a church state by a solemn covenant among themselves.” These old Baptists of just over 300 years ago were of the conviction that a group of Scripturally baptized believers could “constitute a church state by a solemn covenant among themselves.”

The self-constitution method of church constitution was readily advocated over 300 years ago by the churches of the London Association. Yet, there are those today who dare call it the “new method.”

250 Years Ago. Almost 251 years ago the famous Sandy Creek Baptist Church was constituted in the state of North Carolina. Many Landmark churches in the US trace their history through that church. How was this church constituted? According to a number of historians that I have read the church was self-constituted.

Historian David Benedict wrote, “Not long after arriving at Sandy Creek the group constituted as a church under the same name.” Benedict further states:

As soon as they arrived, they built them a little meetinghouse, and these 16 persons *formed themselves into a church*, and chose Shubael Stearns for their pastor, who had, for his assistants at that time, Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed, neither of whom were ordained.” (David Benedict, *The Baptist Denomination, Vol. II*, P. 38).

Nothing could be clearer to any person who can read the English language on a fourth grade level. These 16 persons ". . . *formed themselves into a church*. Benedict did not even question their action of forming themselves into a church. As a historian, he was no doubt aware that this was the usual Baptist method of church constitution down through history.

Consider another more recent Baptist writer and historian. Eld. John Sparks wrote, And not long after the New Englanders had cobbled themselves a little meetinghouse together, in a small grove of trees near a rock spur at the corner of Husbands's Sandy Creek tract, and *constituted themselves formally into the Sandy Creek Separate Baptist* church on November 22, 1755, none could harbor any more doubts whatsoever that God had ordered and inspired their call to a great and extensive work in the west. (Eld. John Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity: The Life and Legacy of Shubal Stearns*, P. 63).

For those who may be scoffing at the notion that this church was self-constituted I have a question. What did Sparks mean when he said that they "*constituted themselves formally into the Sandy Creek Separate Baptist* church on November 22, 1755." It does not take a person with a college degree to understand the expression "*constituted themselves*." Dear Reader, does that not cry loudly and clearly that this church was self-constituted. But, let us further establish this fact.

Of the constitution of the Sandy Creek Separate Baptist Church William Cathcart wrote, "Mr. Stearns was ordained among the Separates; and after he had been immersed and ordained as a Baptist minister, impressed with what seemed to him the call of God to remove far to the West to perform a great work for his Master, he and a few of his members, in 1754, departed from Connecticut. He stopped on the way before he reached the home selected for him by the providence of God, Sandy Creek, Guilford Co., N. C., when, on Nov. 22, 1755, he and his companions formed a church of sixteen members" (P. 1042).

Now notice how the well-known William Cathcart describes the constitution of the Sandy Creek church. Of Shubal Stearns Cathcart wrote "he and his companions formed a church of sixteen members." Do we need to read that again? "He and his companions formed a church of sixteen members." Stearns and his companions formed a church of sixteen members. No so-called "mother church" was involved. No mission was set up with members of some other church somewhere else that would later be constituted by a vote of the mother church. No! A thousand times, No! This group formed a church composed of sixteen saved, baptized Christians. Notice that not one of these three historians gave any indication that this was a "new method" of church constitution 250 years ago. It was not new then and it is not new now.

305 Years Ago. William Cathcart gives this account of the origin of the Welsh Tract 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."

Notice the clarity of the statement of Cathcart as he tells us of the method used in the organization of the oldest Baptist Church in the US. "Sixteen Baptists in Wales about to emigrate to America formed themselves into a Baptist church in 1701." Notice that they "formed themselves into a Baptist Church." They were not constituted by a so-called "mother church" in Wales. They were not formed when the pastor of that "mother church" declared them to be a church. The pastor did not stand up and declare to what had been a mission, "The umbilical cord has been cut and you are now a Baptist Church." No "daughter church" was suddenly

transformed into a sister church by the declaration of that pastor. No! Absolutely not! This group "formed themselves into a Baptist church in 1701." And, Dear Reader, that was not something of recent origin. It happened over 300 years ago in Wales. Again we also notice that there was nothing to indicate that this was a "new method" of church organization at that date.

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 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 and thereby constitute a church.
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."

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.

One of the most interesting pieces of information that I have seen concerning the constitution and re-constitution of this Welsh Tract Baptist Church came from the minutes of the church itself. I would remind the reader that this church has existed continuously since its self-constitution in the year 1701. It continues to exist today.

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?

Shortly after writing the above information about the Welsh Tract Church, I received the following letter from her pastor, Eld. James Poole. He had been pastor of the church for 27 years at that time. 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 of 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.

366 Years Ago. As we come to the end of this article, we reach back to 366 years ago when the Broadmead Baptist Church of Bristol, England was constituted. Here is the account of their constitution. "Soe that in the year of our ever blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus (1640) one thousand six hundred and forty, those five persons, namely Goodman Atkins of Stapleton, Goodman Cole a Butcher of Lawford's Gate, Richard Moone a Farrier in Wine Street, and Mr Bacon a young Minister, with Mrs. Hazzard, at Mrs Hazzard's house, at the upper end of Broad Street in Bristol, they Mett together, and came to a holy Resolution to Separate from the Worship of the World and times they lived in, and that they would goe noe more to it, and with godly purpose of heart Joyned themselves together in

the Lord.”

Notice that neither a mother church nor her pastor were involved in the constitution of this church 366 years ago. These five people “Joyned themselves together in the Lord.” That clearly shows that 366 years ago churches were being organized by baptized believers joining themselves together in the Lord in gospel order as a church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The documented information that I have given in this article can be enlarged into several articles. And, God willing, next issue I will publish a collection of documented church organizations in which the churches were self-constituted.

Do not be misled! The practice of self-constitution has many more examples that can be sited than the concept that a church can only be organized by another church. But, for the moment, these should suffice to show that self-constituted churches are no novelty; this is not the new method as falsely alleged by some imaginative and ingenious brethren.

(PRESERVATION Cont. From Page 1)

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS

Before entering this study it seems well to make a few prefatory observations on the subject. When it is declared that all the saved are preserved it is not meant to be construed that I believe that all church members are saved. In fact, it is quite evident from Scripture and experience that many professing Christians are just as lost as the worst reprobate. They are like those described by John when he wrote: **“They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (I Jn. 2:19)**. Many come, make a profession of faith, and then fall by the way side. They did not lose their salvation for they were never saved. Their departure manifests their lost condition.

It should also be pointed out that many who preach are unsaved. The fact that one preaches in the name of Jesus, works miracles in the

name of Jesus, casts out devils in the name of Jesus, and does many wonderful works in the name of Jesus does not mean that he is a born-again child of God. Jesus revealed that many such preachers would be cast into hell. **“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:22-23)**. These miracle-working ministers of Satan are on the airwaves and the TV channels peddling their perverted gospel and collecting millions. Others are out in small churches supporting the same doctrine that generates the momentum of the modern charismatic movement. Jesus will say: **“I NEVER KNEW YOU.”** These were not known to him in time or eternity. They are none of his but are **“certain men . . . who were before of old ordained to this condemnation” (Jude. 4)**.

False prophets parading as apostles of Christ are abundant. John wrote: **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I Jn. 4:1)**. Again he wrote: **“For many deceivers are entered into the world” (I Jn. 4:1)**. Again he wrote: **“For many deceivers are entered into the world” (II Jn. 7)**. Peter wrote: **“But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you . . . and many shall follow their pernicious ways” (II Pet. 2:1-2)**. He further says that these false teachers are **“as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed”** and that they are like **“The dog”** which **“is turned to its own vomit again; and the sow that was washed”** which has returned **“to her wallowing in the mire” (II Pet. 2:12, 22)**.

This proliferation of false teachers will continue until the return of Jesus Christ. Paul declared that these evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, **“deceiving and being deceived” (II Tim. 3:13)**. **“Such are false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed as an angel of light. Therefore it is no great**

thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness (II Cor. 11:13-15). They come **“with all power, and signs and lying wonders and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish” (II Thes. 2:9-10).** They and their followers, while claiming to be saved, have **“not received the love of the truth”** and God **“shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (II Thes. 2:10-12).** It is clear from these verses that the majority of professing Christians do not know the meaning of nor have they ever experienced the God-wrought salvation that is wholly of grace. **ALL CHURCH MEMBERS ARE NOT SAVED!**

Let me point out also that when we teach the preservation of the saved we are not saying that children of God do not sin. Any who claim sinless perfection in the flesh are liars who deceive themselves and the truth is not in them (I Jn. 1:8). **“There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccl. 7:20).**

Are the saved preserved? Is this preservation sure and certain? Is there even the most remote possibility that a blood-bought, born-again believer could so sin as to be cast off forever? Can Christ really save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him? Why is the preservation of the seed certain?

PRESERVATION IS SURE BECAUSE OF THE IRREVOCABLE NATURE OF THE GIFTS AND THE CALLING OF GOD

Paul declares that **“the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. 11:29).** The word translated repentance in this verse means **“irrevocable.”** The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.

The Gifts of God Are Irrevocable

Most, if not all, of those things that pertain to our salvation are declared to be gifts of God. The gifts of God are irrevocable and without repentance. They are immutable and unalterable. God does not revoke them; nor does he re-call or withdraw them. They are not extended because of nor do they stand upon the works and will of man but upon the eternal, unchangeable and sovereign will and purpose of

God.

Salvation is one of the gifts of God and is irrevocable. **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Eph. 2:8).** Where I grew up we called anyone who gave you something and then took it back an **“Indian giver.”** I do not know if this was a characteristic of Indians or not. I do know from the Scriptures that it is not a characteristic of God. God's gift of salvation is irrevocable.

Eternal life is a gift of God. **“The gift of God is eternal life” (Rom. 6:23).** **“I give unto them, (My sheep) eternal life” (Jn. 10:27).** There are two things here that assure the preservation of the sheep. First, the life that Christ gives is eternal, never ending life. Secondly, it is a gift of God and is therefore irrevocable.

Living water is given to those who come to Christ. **“But who drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn. 4:14).** The one receiving this water of life that Jesus gives will never thirst again. He has everlasting life and this is another irrevocable gift of God that assures the preservation of those who drink at this fountain.

Saving faith is irrevocable because it is a gift of God. **“Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ . . . to believe on him” (Phil. 1:29).** God never recalls this gift of saving faith; therefore the saved are kept by the power of God.

Everything that pertains to life and godliness, according to the Apostle Peter, is a gift of God and is therefore irrevocable. **“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (II Pet. 1:3).** There is nothing that pertains to our salvation that is not a gift of God. Since all are gifts of God they are irrevocable; they will not be re-called; they are without repentance! The saved are preserved through those irrevocable gifts of God.

The Calling of God Is Irrevocable

The calling of God is a holy calling that is extended as required by the covenant of Grace that was entered into by the three persons in the Holy Trinity before the foundation of the world.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (II Tim. 1:9).

This irrevocable call is a heavenly calling. The saved are ***“partakers of the heavenly calling” (Heb. 3:1)***. It always results in the justification of those who are called thusly. ***“Whom he called, them he also justified” (Rom. 8:30)***. Because this call is irrevocable and always results in the justification and glorification of those called Paul asks: ***“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Rom. 8:33)***. A call that always results in justification and glorification certainly must be an irrevocable call and all called with this call are most definitely preserved.

PRESERVATION IS CERTAIN BECAUSE OF ITS SOURCE

Were the preservation of the saints dependent upon anything less than pure grace we would all surely perish. Our security and preservation is not dependent upon us nor our faithfulness or works. ***“The Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil” (II Thes. 3:3)***. We have the God who is always faithful guarding and assuring our spiritual well-being. He ***“is able to keep you from falling,”*** child of God, ***“and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24)***.

Every child of God can have the assurance expressed by Paul when he wrote: ***“I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (II Tim. 1:12)***. When the called are granted the gifts of repentance and faith, they are enabled to commit their soul’s security into the hands of Jesus Christ who is well able to keep it against the day of judgment.

Christ has never asked the Father for anything which fell outside the realm of God’s will. He prayed for the safekeeping of all those given to him by the Father. ***“Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but***

that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (Jn. 17:11, 15). Christ had the assurance that the Father always hears his prayers (Jn. 11:42) and we can be assured that we who are saved will be kept and preserved in answer to this prayer of Jesus.

God is not willing that any of the elect perish; therefore they are preserved. It is God’s will that none of his elect be lost. Christ declared: ***“This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (Jn. 6:39)***. Christ always does the Father’s will so he will raise up all those given to him by the Father.

The two epistles written by the Apostle Peter were written to the ***“elect”*** (I Pet. 1:2 II Pet. 3:1). Those toward whom God is longsuffering and ***“not willing that any (of them) should perish”*** are the elect. God has given all the “elect,” the “sheep” to Christ and Christ will save and preserve everyone of them because God is unwilling for them to perish (II Pet. 3:9).

God will complete what he has started in the saved. This gives us confidence and assurance that all children of God will be eternally preserved. ***“Being confident of this very thing,”*** wrote Paul, ***“that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6)***. Every child of God can be sure that that work of grace that originated with God will be continued, completed, and consummated by him who keeps us in this world.

God does not forsake his saints. ***“For the Lord . . . forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever” (Psa. 37:28)***. Their preservation is most certain because they ***“are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ” (Jude 1)***. He upholds us with and in his hand (Psa. 37:24, 25; Jn. 10:28-30).

The saved are not preserved by their own power. If our preservation were dependent on us we would faint in a moment of weakness and plunge into the lake of fire forever. He who has chosen us, however, ***“according to HIS ABUNDANT POWER hath begotten us again unto a lively hope”*** and we have an ***“inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in***

heaven” and **“are kept by the power of God”** who assures that we will fill the reservation through his grace of preservation (I Pet. 1:2-5).

God and Christ hold their sheep in their mighty hands (Jn. 10:27-29); and every born-again believer has been sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13). With the three Almighty Persons of the Eternal God-head securing the salvation of the saints, how could any be so deluded and deceived that they would believe that even one of them could be lost? Praise God! All the saved are preserved forever!

PRESERVATION IS ASSURED BY MANY NEGATIVE DECLARATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Space will not permit us to submit every negative declaration that assures preservation. Only a small portion of those found in the Bible can be noted here.

Christ's sheep will **“never perish”** (Jn. 10:28). The believer **“shall not come into condemnation”** (Jn. 5:24). **“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,”** declared Paul (Rom. 8:1). The one who drinks of the water that Christ gives **“shall never thirst”** (Jn. 4:14). Jesus said, **“He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst”** (Jn. 6:35).

The believer **“shall never die”** spiritually (Jn. 11:26). Nothing can separate the elect from the love of God (Row. 8:35-39). **“None”** of those given to Christ will ever be lost (Jn. 17:12). There is no way that these Scriptures could be true and the doctrine of preservation be false. If the saints are not preserved these verses are lies.

PRESERVATION IS ASSURED BY POSITIVE DECLARATIONS FROM THE WORD OF GOD

While there are many, many positive declarations those set forth and assure the preservation of the saints of God we must limit our discussion to only a few.

By Jesus Christ's **“one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified”** (Heb. 10:12). They are **“sanctified once for all”** (Heb. 10:10). Christ, by the sacrifice and offering of his own blood has **“obtained eternal redemption for us”** (Heb. 9:12).

The child of God **“has everlasting life”** (Jn. 3:36). He is **“hid with Christ in God”** (Col. 3:1-3). In the mind and purpose of God, everyone whom he has chosen is already glorified though experientially we may yet anticipate glorification (Rom. 8:29-30).

“All things work together for good” for the called. They are **“predestinated to be conformed to the image”** of God's Son (Rom. 8:29-30). Surely, none will be so grandiloquent as to say that those who are already glorified in the mind and purpose of God could be lost! Such nonsensical error can only have its source in the heart of Satanically inspired and controlled persons.

PRESERVATION IS CERTAIN BECAUSE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE SAVED BY GRACE

Our salvation from beginning to full glorification is by grace, not works. Therefore, nothing one does or can do can affect his preservation in the relationship he has with God (Eph. 2:8-10). Salvation in its entirety is based on the blessed mercy of God. It is **“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us”** (Titus 3:5). God's eternal purpose of election stands on grace, not works (Rom. 9:11-13; 11:6).

CONCLUSION

God's salvation is sure and certain to all the seed. Our entire hope is assured by Divine grace—saving and preserving grace. That which God has commenced he will assuredly consummate. He is able to keep you from falling and surely present every saint **“faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy”** (Jude 24).

Bouquets and Brickbats

TEXAS: I have been getting the Proclamator and Promulgator for years now and would like to send financial support toward the ministry work overseas. I am a member of a Southern Baptist Church but whole heartedly believe in the doctrines of grace. The Proclamator has encouraged me through these years of listening

and battling a conflicting hodge podge of doctrines from the pulpits and mouths of Baptists. Majority of Southern Baptist upon hearing sovereign grace doctrine believe these doctrines kill evangelizing. My wife and I have been evangelizing in the local jail now for over 20 years every Sunday evening as well as other opportunities. These doctrines have not killed our desire to evangelize but to encourage us to see our Lord move in the hearts of those He is calling to Himself. Talking to a young youth pastor the other day I heard the very same thing that others have said. "95% of people who believe like you do will not tell others about Jesus because if they are to be saved they will be saved whether we do anything or not", so they do nothing. I replied, then if that is true what has happened to the vast majority of people who believe like you do, that Jesus died for everyone. This is their confession but not their profession, which might as well be that of a hyper-Calvinist. If they really believed this they would spend every waking moment keeping

people from going to hell so that no one could say in hell, "why didn't they tell me?"

Back to the main subject I started this email about. Can you advise me on where to send financial support for a ministry that teaches truths that honor our Lord and sets his people free?

NEWS FROM SURINAME

Bro. Lee,

Thank you very much for your thoughts and concerns and to me what matters more than anything for the Lord's work here are your prayers.

The Lord's church is doing well. I really rejoice to be enable of the Lord to preach sovereign grace to these brethren. These doctrines are received with joy and shows what a great God we serve. What is a great blessing is that the TV and radio are making the Arminian Baptists are asking questions but to my surprise they are not questions as to stimulate hatred for these doctrines, there more inquisitive questions. This is good news.

Yes, yes I would love to have Bro. Camp here in Suriname anytime, this would be an encouragement to the work here. This is a great idea !!

We are praying and asking our Lord to provide for us our own building and land, we are very much focus on this and we are making it an object of prayer. We have not located any land as of yet but trust the Lord that He will lead and direct and find us the suitable place with all what is required. Thank God that we have a place of worship and thus far there is no problem but a blessing at bro Kemchan's and sis Jullie's house. In the Lord's good time when he will provide all this I will be more than happy to have the bro who is a contractor to come help us here in Nickerie, Suriname.

Bro. Lee, I have received May's month paper and it is very clear and true how Bro Camp points out the error and lies in the Berea Baptist Banner on the topic of was Antioch self constituted. This shows the other side of matters. It was easy to believe what was written in the Banner but when the light was shed on the other hand it becomes very clear and evident what the truth is. Thank you for this paper and thank you for Pink's book you've sent me. I enjoy studying it.

Please greet sister Janice and in our prayer meeting we are praying for you and the Lord's work there.

By God's grace,
Romel

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