



WHY I AM A BAPTIST!

February 2014

PERSONAL TESTIMONY. I am not a Baptist because I was raised in a Baptist Church. In fact, I was raised in a liberal Methodist Church and never heard the Gospel. No one ever handed me a tract in all my 25 unsaved years, no Christian ever visited me or spoke to me about Christ. I was saved at age 25 through reading the Bible (the KJV). I had no interest in God and was reading it for another purpose. Though saved, I knew nothing but began to go to Church (no one told me to) right away. After visiting seven or eight, (none of which said anything like what had happened to me), I came to one where the man preached the Gospel. I was thrilled! I was not there very long when I heard him say on many occasions that a saved person could be lost again. I memorized much Scripture, though no one told me to, and I knew that was not possible, John 10:28, etc. Then, I found a small Baptist Church where I began attending and joined.

Some who read this may be upset. The truth is always unsettling to some people, but it needs to be proclaimed just the same. If you can prove that you are right, you should have nothing to be upset about; if you are wrong, you should be willing to change. A great majority in our day, including a good many Fundamentalists have adopted the philosophy that we are to tone the truth down so as not to offend anyone. While there may be times to be silent, our goal is not to appease and get along with everyone. It was not the Savior's goal! What we need is the truth! I am not saying there are no Christians in other churches. There are other churches which have some truth and there are some Baptist churches that err from the truth which I would not want to be associated with. However, it is Baptist churches that adhere most clearly to the Word of God.

I'M A BAPTIST DUE TO THE WORDS OF JESUS. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, **"I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."** Now it is quite clear that Jesus built His Church first in Jerusalem. Then, His disciples went into various places throughout the world, and where people were saved, they were baptized and organized into local churches. The Lord said the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church. If all you have is the denominational churches, which have been built by men, the gates of hell did prevail against His Church for many centuries. Where was the truth for more than a thousand years of Romanism during the dark ages, if not in the small groups of Anabaptists scattered here and there. I also believe Jesus when He said, **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."** ~Matthew 28:19. There is little point in arguing about the method of Baptism! The word means "to immerse." If you read the Book of Acts, you find that wherever people believed the Gospel, they were baptized and they went down into the water to do it! One historian has written: *"During the first three centuries, congregations all over the East subsisted in separate, independent bodies...All this time they were baptized churches...and they give great numbers of histories of the baptism of adults and yet there is not one record of a baptism of a child until the year 370 A.D."* The combined testimony of Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the early Church is that immersion of believing adults is the only form of baptism.

I AM A BAPTIST BECAUSE OF BIBLE TRUTH. We are talking about a line of churches that can be traced back to Christ and the Apostles. A line that is consistent with New Testament teaching. First, Baptist Churches never held the doctrine of salvation by works which most churches hold in one form or another. Baptists insist on (Cont'd p.2)

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A GREAT DECISION

A.W. Tozer wrote the following: "There is a great decision...every Church has to make...Every Pastor has to face it and keep renewing his decision on his knees. Finally, every church member, every Christian has to make this decision...The question is this: Shall we modify the truth in doctrine or practice to gain more adherents? Or, shall we preserve the truth in doctrine and practice and take the consequences?" The sad truth is that many in Fundamental circles are modifying their ministries to please the people and gain more members. But this is a treacherous path! Many say that times are changing and we must change with the times. No, it is the world that needs to change! The Scriptures declare: "**For ever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in Heaven.**" ~*Psalms 119:89*

A GOOD CHURCH MEMBER

Henry Ward Beecher, the great preacher, went to rent a horse and carriage in order to take his wife for a ride. The man tried to sell him a horse. He said, "He is a good saddle horse, a good buggy horse and a good carriage horse. He works well with other horses on either side of the tongue. He is a good all-round horse and a good team worker." Mr. Beecher replied, "My Friend, I cannot buy your horse, but I sure would like to have him as a member of my Church.

YOUTH CORNER

POPE FRANCIS AGAINST CAPITALISM. Pope Francis recently made a statement against Capitalism. The following is a part of that speech: "As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved by rejecting the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation (he's referring to Capitalism) and by attacking the structural causes of inequality (socialism-Marxism), no solution will be found for the world's problems, or for that matter to any problems." -Aol News (12/6/13) What the Pope is claiming is that Capitalism is the cause of all the problems and that basically, Marxism, or socialism, is the only answer. Of course, the Pope is from South America where Liberation Theology is very popular and it is basically Marxist. You don't have to look far to see that Marxism is not the answer to the world's problems; it is the cause of a lot of the world's problems and grief. Where in the world does the average man have it better than in the United States? I have been to several European countries, which are no doubt next to America, and they cannot compare with this land. Marxism says that the state is everything, the individual is nothing!

THAT VERY IMPORTANT WORD – EXCEPT!

Notice how the Scripture puts it. "Except a man be born again," "Except a man be born from above." From amongst a number of other passages which we find the word "except", I would just name three: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." ~*Luke 13:3,5*. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." ~*Matthew 18:3*. "Except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." ~*Matthew 5:20*. They all really mean the same thing. – C. H. Spurgeon. I think that God is very serious in telling us unless you are saved, "born again," you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. No, in spite of what many believe, you are not good enough to enter God's Heaven. You need the forgiveness of sins and a new life. Only God can provide that. "**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.**" ~*John 3:16*.

(BAPTIST, from p.1) salvation by grace through faith alone! They have never baptized babies. No other church has consistently held to all the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. No other church has been more faithful in proclaiming the true Gospel of Christ. Is there any other group that has constantly preached that salvation is through repentance and faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ? Baptists do not believe in sacraments for they find no such teaching in the Scriptures. They hold to (p. 3)

NEWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

the two ordinances, memorials, given by the Lord; Baptism and the Lord's Supper. What other church has been consistently been premillennial, separated, rejecting the idea of a priesthood or clergy.

TESTIMONY OF NON-BAPTISTS. Non-Baptists who are knowledgeable and truthful have over the years acknowledged that Baptists are the only ones who can show this succession of Bible doctrines and the mode of baptism back to Jesus and the apostles. Joseph Belcher, writing in *Religious Denominations in England and America* said, "It will be seen that the Baptists claim the high antiquity of the commencement of the Christian Church. They can trace the succession of those who have believed the same doctrine, administered the same ordinances directly up to the Apostolic Age." Clark Redpath, a Methodist who died in 1900 wrote, "I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist Church as far back as 100 A.D. although without a doubt, there were Baptist churches then as all Christians were then Baptists." Johann Mosheim is no doubt the greatest Lutheran historian; he died in 1775. He stated: "The sacrament of baptism was administered in the first century without public assemblies in places appointed and prepared for that purpose and was performed by an immersion of the whole body in a baptismal fount." Concerning the 2nd century he says, "The persons that were to be baptized after they had repeated the creed, confessed and renounced their sins, especially the devil and his allurements, were immersed under water." Bishop Taylor, the learned Episcopalian, said: "The custom of the ancient churches was not sprinkling, but immersion." Another distinguishing mark of Baptist churches has been the independence of each Church. Miall, in his *Memo of Early Christian Churches* says, "That each Christian Church was in the earliest period of ecclesiastical history individualized and unassociated except by the religious feelings which alike pervaded all, is admitted by most candid historians."

PROTESTANT CHURCHES GO BACK TO THE REFORMATION. First, let me say that the enlightened person knows that the Roman Catholic Church is not the true church. It doesn't go back to Jesus and the apostles for its teachings are in direct contradiction. That it teaches salvation by works cannot be denied, whereas the Bible teaches salvation by faith alone! All Protestant churches go back no further than the reformers. Lutherans began with Luther; Reformed began with Calvin; Presbyterian with Knox, etc. Sir Isaac Newton said, "The Baptists are the only body of Christians that have never symbolized with Rome." Mosheim said, "Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay secret in almost all the countries of Europe, persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles

of modern Dutch Baptists." The *Edinburgh Cyclopedia* (Presbyterian) says, "It must have already occurred to our readers that the Baptists are the same sect of Christians that were formerly described as Anabaptists. Indeed, this seems to be their leading principle from the time of Tertullian to the present time." Tertullian goes back before 200 A.D. Then, all Reformation churches have some vestiges of Roman Catholicism including infant baptism, sacraments, ecclesiastical hierarchy, amillennialism (the church is the kingdom).

I'M A BAPTIST BECAUSE THEIR HISTORY CAN BE TRACED TO THE BIBLE & APOSTOLIC AGE.

The great church historian Philip Schaff, says of the Waldenes (who were Anabaptists): "They were the strictly Biblical sect of the Middle Ages." They appeared long before 1200 A.D. There were many other similar groups, among them the Paulicans and the Albigences. These believers observed the Lord's Supper as a memorial (not a sacrament) and practiced baptism upon believing adults only. They were severely persecuted by the Roman Catholic church, whole villages and areas being destroyed, many years before the Inquisition was instituted. Luther and other Reformers also persecuted the Anabaptists. Then, there were the Cathari, who go back to within a few centuries of New Testament times. Dr. John Newton Brown, editor of the *Religious Encyclopedia*, says, "The Cathari or Puritan churches of the Novatians also had at that very period, about 325 A.D., been flourishing as a very distinct communion for more than seventy years over the empire." The Novatans and the Donatists were of the same tradition and became prominent in the third and fourth centuries. The mainstream of the church was already becoming quite corrupt in its doctrines and practices. Both of these groups rejected heretical baptism and practiced baptism by immersion only on believing adults. At the heart of their beliefs was the purity and separation of the church which in their day was being polluted by its association with the Roman Empire. At the end of the second century, only a hundred years after the last of the apostles, one finds the Montanists. One of the most notable was Tertullian, a lawyer who was saved in his forties. He strongly opposed infant baptism and was a leader in establishing the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. He was also a strong believer in the Premillennial return of Christ. We are not suggesting any of these groups were perfect, but they did stand in the line of orthodoxy that emanated from Christ and His Apostles through His Word. Today many Baptist churches are taking the word *Baptist* out of their names in order to be more acceptable to the world. I might be ashamed of many who call themselves Baptists, but I am not ashamed to be a Baptist. It is the only Church on God's earth that is in the line of the One Jesus built! I stand upon the Rock! (Excerpted from an earlier article)

A WAY THAT SEEMETH RIGHT

Many think if one does the best he can, if he does more good than bad, he'll make it to Heaven. If one is a *good person on the whole* he'll make it. This is the belief of multitudes. There was a farmer to whom that seemed right. He said, "I try to do good, I pay my debts, etc. Sometimes I may swear or get angry but *I am doing pretty well on the whole.*" One day he hired a Christian carpenter, whom he knew, to build a fence around his pasture. "Build the fence securely, perfectly," he instructed. Upon completion of the job the farmer asked, "Is the fence good and strong; totally secure?" The man replied, "I cannot say that it is perfectly secure all around, but it is a good average fence *on the whole*. I may have left a little gap here and there, but I made up for that by strengthening other parts. I would say that *it is a good fence on the whole.*" The farmer cried: "Do you mean to tell me you built a fence with little gaps here and there? That fence must have no weak places or my cattle will get out! That fence must be perfect or it is worthless." The Christian replied, "I used to think so too, but I heard you talk about averaging things out with the Lord, and being *pretty good on the whole*, I thought if it was good enough for your soul it would be good enough for a fence." The Bible says, **"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."** ~*Proverbs 14:12*. It doesn't matter what you think! It may sound reasonable to you, but God requires perfection! That is why He sent His sinless, perfect Son, Jesus Christ to die for your sins. You must put your confidence in Him - not yourself. **"Believe of the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."** ~*Acts 16:31*.

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TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, "If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." ~*Matthew 16:24*. General Gordon was a great man of God. When the English government sought to reward him for his magnificent service in China, he declined all money and titles. Finally, he accepted a gold medal inscribed with his name and his 33 engagements. After his death, the medal could not be found. Upon reading his diary, they found he had sent it to Manchester during a famine saying it should be melted down and be used to buy bread for the poor. His diary for that day read: "The last and only thing that I had in this world that I valued, I have now given over to the Lord Jesus Christ." The love of the Savior, which passeth knowledge, constrained him to give up his one treasured possession for the relief of the destitute. He would not cling to earthly honor, but casting the last vestige of it aside, sought only to be Christ's servant Have you been brought out of the prison house of self indulgence? Have you laid your all on the altar, and become a bondservant of Jesus Christ? Then your song and prayer shall be: "Strengthen heart, and head, and nerve, All thy bidding to fulfill. Savior, let me selfless be, Serving others – Serving thee." There is only two things a Christian can do with his life – he can invest it by truly living for Christ, or he can waste it by doing his own thing! What are you doing with your life? **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."** ~*Galatians 2:20*.