

# British Reformed Journal



Here I Stand  
I can do no  
other.....



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## Editorial Policy

### (Abstract)

Views expressed by contributors to the British Reformed Journal are not necessarily those of the British Reformed Fellowship but are examined to ensure compliance with the British Board of Publishing and Advertising Practice.

Although we are in agreement with the Confessional statements of Reformed Protestantism, the Doctrinal Statement (see inside back cover) describes the doctrinal editorial policy; it does not define the boundaries of our fellowship.

## CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                                                                                                    |             |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| <b>A Matter of Copyrights</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Page</b> | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>A Word of Appreciation.....Rev. Ron Hanko</b><br><i>PRCNA Missionary Pastor leaves for home in USA</i>                                                                                          | <b>Page</b> | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>The Baptist System UnScriptural and UnReformed</b><br><i>Part 4: Origins &amp; Development of <b>Exclusive</b> Immersionism</i>                                                                 | <b>Page</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>WHO are the Wicked &amp; the Righteous in Scripture?</b><br><i>Paul Fahy discusses Argument and Counter-argument</i>                                                                            | <b>Page</b> | <b>22</b> |
| <b>The Antiquity of Infant &amp; Household Baptisms</b><br><i>An Anthology collected from:<br/>Dr. Wall's "History of Infant Baptism"<br/>Prof. Wilson's "Infant Baptism a Scriptural Service"</i> | <b>Page</b> | <b>35</b> |
| <b>Book Review: PORTRAITS OF FAITHFUL SAINTS</b><br><i>Raymond Kemp looks at Prof. Hanko's anthology</i>                                                                                           | <b>Page</b> | <b>43</b> |
| <b>Correspondence:</b><br><i>Mark Punford slams BRF and BRJ changes</i>                                                                                                                            | <b>Page</b> | <b>47</b> |

**COVER: The Luther Memorial at Worms**

## A matter of COPYRIGHTS

With this Issue No. 32 we come to the end of the old-style British Reformed Journal. The deliberations of the BRF Council and the Biennial General Meeting of the BRF of last July mean a new look and a new style from the new year onwards.

It is appropriate therefore to advertise herewith the situation with regard to the copyright ownership of the articles contained in the old-style British Reformed Journal (hereinafter BRJ) from the first issue of Jan.- March 1993 up to and including this last issue (No.32) for the end of the year 2000. As readers, and contributors, will be aware, the page one of the BRJ has carried a Copyright reservation, (see top of this page) which first appeared on Issue No.11 (July-Aug. 1995). This reservation was in order to preclude "pirate" reprintings of the material contained in the BRJ by anyone who took it into their heads so to do. The aim was to protect the copyrights inherently owned by the writers of contributions to the BRJ, rather than the BRJ itself, or the BRF itself. At no time was there any intent to restrict such copyrights to the British Reformed Fellowship, or the BRJ, thereby denying individual authors their rightful copyrights over their own writings. On occasion we have had to insert a note with some contributions indicating the author's copyright on material already published elsewhere and advertising his permission for us to reprint his article in the BRJ. (See, for example, Paul Fahy's article in this issue). That such notation has not appeared with articles specially written for the BRJ does not in any way obstruct the copyrights of all individual contributors of such articles over the years, including the unsigned articles of the present editor and of his predecessor Mr. Tony Horne, and we herewith declare that our interest in their contributions to the BRJ does not, and shall not, obstruct their individual copyrights to those said contributions, and that they may, without let or hindrance, reprint the same said contributions privately at their own pleasure, in whatever form they deem appropriate. We only ask for acknowledgement that "this first appeared as an article (or articles) in the British Reformed Journal..." giving Issue number and page references.

A number of useful private reprints of BRJ material have already been made, notably Mr. Michael Kimmitt's series on Baptism has been published as a most useful little book, several articles by Rev. Ronald Hanks, by Mr. Allen Baird, by Rev. Alan Spencer, and the present editor, have also been reprinted privately and circulated as useful pamphlets or booklets. And there is a possibility (DV) of further such reprints becoming available in the future.

Copies of BRJ Issue Nos. 1-32 have been lodged with the British Copyright Libraries, and in the British Library, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire.

*H.L.Williams, Editor.*

## A word of APPRECIATION.....

concerning :

**Rev. Ronald Hanko, PRC Missionary**

**I**t is with a note of deep regret and sadness that we have to record here the fact that the Rev. Ronald Hanko and his family will be leaving Northern Ireland some time in the New Year, possibly, we are informed, in January 2001.

He has been stationed in Northern Ireland for some seven to eight years. He was appointed there in 1993 in response to a call made to the Protestant Reformed Churches of America by BRF supporters and others in that Province. At first he served as missionary, and later, from July 1996 onwards, as missionary pastor of the newly-formed Covenant Protestant Reformed Church of Northern Ireland.

His presence in Northern Ireland, and on the old BRF Committee was indeed an enormous and welcome pillar of support for the furtherance of the Reformed Faith in the United Kingdom. Though his ministry was naturally mainly centred on the congregation gathering (and steadily growing) at Ballymena in County Antrim, he reached out to other areas of Ulster, and indeed to the United Kingdom as a whole.

Such ministry meant he pursued an exacting schedule of work output. He not only maintained a steadfast pastoral ministry at Ballymena, but also contributed lively articles to the *British Reformed Journal* throughout his time in the United Kingdom, and regularly wrote religious columns in local Northern Irish newspapers, preached at conferences, conventions, and all manner of small gatherings of saints assembled up and down throughout the United Kingdom. With this he set up and maintained an ever-increasing volume of correspondence with a steadily growing number of people awakened to an interest in the Reformed Faith. In all this he was most ably and faithfully supported by his wife, Nancy. Between them they also found time to raise eight children.

He won a great deal of affection amongst those to whom he ministered, and with broadening experience of practicing Christianity and preaching the Word of Life within the context of the UK life and culture, his tactful and respectful attitude drew numbers to his ministry from a large diversity of religious backgrounds. It was amazing to see how even folk who had been a life-time steeped in Pentecostalism would travel some distance to wait on Rev. Hanko's ministry even on Saturday afternoons and evenings. Several of them came to embrace the Reformed Faith with a

joyous alacrity, even becoming members of the British Reformed Fellowship.

It was commonplace, when ministering on the mainland UK, for Rev. Hanko to travel anything up to a thousand miles in a round trip. Leaving Northern Ireland on a Thursday evening, he would cross by car ferry from Southern Ireland into South Wales early on the Friday morning, minister on a Friday evening, then minister again on Saturday afternoon, again on Saturday evening, then twice on the following Sabbath. Interspersed with such meetings one would find him spending hours of discussion with interested folk. He would return home, crossing to Southern Ireland in the wee small hours of the Monday morning, driving up through the Republic to Ulster, and attending a meeting at Ballymena on the Monday evening. As if this schedule were not onerous enough, on several occasions he added to it by ministering in South Devonshire, and in the Glasgow area of Scotland. Such return circuits would soon involve him in a thousand miles of driving besides preaching.

Such ministry naturally attracted opposition from a variety of quarters. In meeting such opposition Rev. Hanko maintained without compromise a sterling defence of Biblical Truth and the Reformed Faith. In various quarters of the UK at different times this faithfulness brought on him the same sorrowful suffering, not to say even vituperative harassment, that is the common lot of faithful ministers of Jesus Christ who seek primarily to please God, and not man.

Faithful ministry like this takes its toll over the years, and we note with concern that Rev. Hanko's health has deteriorated somewhat in the last year. To add to his troubles his supportive wife, Nancy, underwent surgery early this autumn. We solicit the prayers of all our readers on their behalf that they will soon be restored to full health, and that God's blessing will follow them and their family as they return to the United States.

We give thanks to God for the Rev. Hanko's tireless labours in the cause of the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. He, his wife, and his family will be greatly missed indeed. Speaking as the editor of the BRJ I know that I echo the thoughts of many people in these islands when I say that I feel a great pillar of support for the Reformed Faith and the work of the BRF is leaving our midst.

*H.L. Williams, Editor.*

**Hence he (Jeremiah) calls the warfare which awaits all true pastors, the day of sorrow, for if they please men they cannot be the servants of God.**

*John Calvin....Commentary on Jeremiah 17: 16*

# The Baptist System UnScriptural and UnReformed

## Part Four

### THE ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE MODERN BAPTIST MOVEMENT

In his *"Institutes of the Christian Religion"* John Calvin wrote these salient words:

"....it is evident that the term *baptise* means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive church."<sup>66</sup>

Such a statement is of course, a golden gift for a Baptist polemicist, and is only one of a number of statements made by Reformers that add grist to the Immersionist mills.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, many baptists assert that the Reformation was initially "immersionistic" in principle, and that later political exigencies drove the Reformers off course, leaving the Anabaptists isolated and persecuted by the Establishmentarian "police state" Protestantism of the early Reformers.<sup>68</sup> And whilst modern Baptist

<sup>66</sup> Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Book IV ch. XV end of para. 19.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. the references in **Hughes Oliphant Old**, *The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century*, pages 273 ff. where he cites Luther's *Taufbüchlein*, Leo Jud's editions of the Baptismal rite of Zurich, and Zwingli as early advocates of immersionism.

<sup>68</sup> On the oppressive horrors of this "police state" note should be taken of **Leonard Verduin's** tome of the 1960's *The Reformers and their Stepchildren..* Verduin casts the Reformers in a very bad light and eulogises the Anabaptists as heroes in a somewhat biased manner, in our view. But nevertheless his research on ancient 17th cent. records cannot be dismissed overall.....the Reformers, in particular those of the Lutheran and Zwinglian Reformed stream, practiced cruelty towards dissidents. Verduin does not have so much to say against Calvin as against the other Reformers, though he notes several instances with the words: "one could have wished Calvin had not said that....." With respect to the Genevan Reformation, the recent translation and publication of Vol 1 of the *Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, vol. 1 1542-- 1544 (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 2000) delivers the Consistory minutes for the Genevan Reformed Church for those years, and is somewhat revelatory. The minutes record what amounts to "police state repression" of all dissidents, as the State Government of Geneva was ....

*Continued at foot of next page...../*

writers evince variant attitudes vis a vis the 16th cent. Anabaptists, they all unite in their condemnation of the Reformed and Lutheran attitudes to those sects, and in their appreciation of Anabaptist aims and objectives with respect to both the sacrament of Baptism, and the "gathered church" ideal, as opposed to the Reformers' "establishment territorial church" schemes. <sup>69</sup>

It is difficult to isolate the development of the Baptismal controversy through the Reformation period from the surrounding political considerations that weighed heavily on the early Reformers. The medieval Roman church was not just a church, it was a political empire, the tentacles of which extended into all Western Christendom. In every Western nation, the Roman church was the only religion granted legitimacy. And all citizens were required to belong to that church, and attend upon its requisite cultus and rituals. Failure to do so brought the pressures of inquisition, and the imposition of intolerable sanctions. Hence the churches encompassed not only a minute number of devout believers in their membership, but also extensive multitudes of superstitious and frightened infidels, baptized as babies into the all-embrasive State system.

As the Reformation sprang up, the total Roman stranglehold was broken in many of the German mini-states, in Britain, and the Netherlands, Hungary, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and to a great degree, in France. To consolidate their position, the Reformers worked closely with the Political powers in those states, and the Reformation meant ....precisely that, instead of the Roman church being the established Territorial State Church in those countries, the Protestant Church took its place. Hence instead of all citizens being baptized as babes into Romanism, they were now baptized into Protestantism. <sup>70</sup>

This soon meant, of course, that the vast number of hitherto superstitious quasi-pagans who had previously populated the Roman churches in those areas were forcibly made into Protestants. Pagan behaviour and indiscipline characterised

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*Footnote 68 contin. from bottom of previous page.*

involved with Ecclesiastical discipline. Offenders in spiritual matters were sent off by the Consistory to the civil government for punishment, which often consisted of a term in prison on a diet of bread and water. Where, one asks, can one find justification for such practice anywhere in the pages or the spirit of the New Testament? This all said, one must recognise that Calvin et al fought their battles on difficult ground, we go astray, I believe, when we regard their position and polity as being a permanent mandate for the church, and a justification of their practice per se.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. for instance, the article BAPTISM (Baptist View) given in **Schaff Herzog**.

<sup>70</sup> This is exemplified for example in the notion, entertained strongly by **Knox** and his associates in Scotland, that Scotland as a NATION was chosen of God to be His people. And **Rutherford**, in his **LEX REX** betrays the tendency strongly, in that he tends in his exposition to slide from Israel to Scotland and back to Israel again, blurring the actual distinctions betwixt the two. As such all Scots would have to be considered as God's people, and indiscriminate paedobaptism would be the instrument of initiation. Similar principles ruled the day in England.

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these new Protestant "converts", and in reaction to this serious idiosyncrasy, new sects of fervent believers arose within the Protestant nations who pointed to indiscriminate infant baptism as the fly in the Protestant ointment. These sects wanted new churches to consist only of "professing true believers", or that their churches would be, as they called them, "gathered churches." Baptism, they asserted, should only be administered to those who give credible profession of their faith, and not to the unholy phalanx of offspring from every Tom, Dick, and Harry under the State banner. And for these people, a "credible profession of faith" was necessarily coupled with a holy walk in life. Reacting against the travesty of indiscriminate infant baptism as practised by Establishment churches they quite naturally reacted against infant baptism *per se*,<sup>71</sup> as for them, they saw such baptism as bringing into the church young tribes of unbelievers.<sup>72</sup>

These sects were denominated as "Anabaptists", the title depicting the insistence of such sects that :

- (i) Infant baptism was invalid and unScriptural.
- (ii) In order to receive a valid baptism, those who had already been baptised as infants ought now to be rebaptized as adults. Hence the title "anabaptists" which means, those who have been baptized again.

Whilst the theology of these sects varied across an enormous spectrum that stretched from the sublime to the ridiculous and on to the downright dangerous,<sup>73</sup> it has to be admitted that amongst them were many sincere and godly people deeply concerned that under the Establishmentarian scheme the Protestant reformation was all too often little better than the Romanism it was replacing.<sup>74</sup> The fact is that an emphasis on personal holiness found amongst many Anabaptists was all too often lacking in the State Reformed Churches. The policy of indiscriminate infant baptism virtually ensured this state of affairs, and was a constant downdrag on the work of the Reformers.

However, the rise of such Anabaptist sects was effectually putting banana peel

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<sup>71</sup> It is important to make this distinction. Paedobaptism is a biblical doctrine which stands apart from Establishmentarian principles. Whilst Establishmentarianism effectively demands infant baptism in order to function, infant baptism in and of itself does not require Establishmentarianism in order to justify its existence or to function successfully. A plethora of examples of well-functioning Paedo-baptistic churches that are not "Established Territorial Churches" is evident world-wide.

<sup>72</sup> That this was the major platform in the Anabaptist case against Establishmentarianism is documented by Old, Op. cit. and pages 77 onwards. Cf. also **Bridge and Phypers**, *The Water that Divides*, especially the chapter: "Reformation Tragedy" pages 95ff.

<sup>73</sup> We have already noted above (**BRJ No.29** and pages 6-7 and footnote 14) how it is difficult to theologically categorise the various Anabaptist sects.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. **Bridge and Phypers**, Op.cit., page 94...."adult baptism came to represent salvation by faith, protest against corrupt Christendom, and suffering for the sake of purified religion."

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under the feet of the Reformers.<sup>75</sup> If you tolerated the Anabaptists as a deviation from the State Churches, it also allowed the large Romanist rumps in those States to lodge claim for the same tolerance, under the aegis of which they would work surreptitiously for a re-take-over of the nation. And before you knew where you were, church and nation would be crumbling into anarchy before your very eyes. Indeed, anarchy was the outcome in several places, not least at the tragedy at Munster. And mass reversion to Romanism was another possibility which in fact soon became reality in Austria and Belgium, then later in France, and Poland.

Luther and his followers, together with Zwingli and the Swiss Reformed, responded to the Anabaptist challenge with an Inquisition. A Protestant Inquisition. At all costs the Protestant State had to be preserved politically in order for Protestant churches to be preserved ecclesiastically. Anabaptists were taken, jailed, subjected to horrific, blood-curdling tortures, then burned alive or drowned by the thousands.<sup>76</sup> By Protestants. All in the name of Establishmentarian Territorial Church Religion.<sup>77</sup> All in the Name of Jesus!

Persecuted too by the Romanists, these Anabaptistic groups filtered all across Europe, and across the ocean into North America. Far from being blitzed into total oblivion, they amazingly survived to blossom forth in the 17th and 18th centuries as the modern Baptist, Mennonite, and Moravian sects, the first of which now dominates the prevailing outlook in Protestant Evangelicalism as to the doctrine of baptism, and the principle of the "gathered church". Withersoever their influences have had a salient bearing on the nations in which they live, religious tolerance has been the outcome.

In all these events, the Reformers were of course, in an invidious position. They too, wanted discipline and holy living to characterise the churches, every bit as much as the Anabaptists did. But the total situation embroiled them so much in the politics of the individual nations that there seemed no other option. To avoid anarchy on the one hand, and to avoid a recrudescence of Romanism on the other, the

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<sup>75</sup> The close alliance of Church and State involved in Establishmentarianism meant that any dissidence against the doctrine and practice of the Church was *de facto* a dissidence against the State and the Ruler. Refusal to submit to the ecclesiastical authorities was therefore incipient, if not outright rebellion against the State. This fact probably explains the cruel treatment that all dissidents have suffered over the ages at the hands of State and Ecclesiastical powers.

<sup>76</sup> Speaking of those who wished to practice immersionism, Zwingli, formerly himself convinced of immersionism, could utter these terrible words: "let him who talks about going under the water, GO UNDER..." Cited in **Bridge and Phypers** Op. cit.p.95. This statement accompanied the mass destruction of Anabaptists in Zurich by means of drowning.

<sup>77</sup> In dealing with the Anabaptist leader Felix Manz in Zurich, the Clerk of Courts recorded these words, "They (the Anabaptists) do not allow Infant Baptism. In this way they will put an end to secular authority." Cf. **Bridge and Phypers** *ibid.* page 95. The message is clear, dissidence to the doctrine of the State Church was viewed as Political Insurrection.

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Sword of the State had to be invoked. It seems in retrospect, indeed, that whenever religionists make a heavy investment in State politics, inevitably before long the Bible in their one hand has to be supplemented by a gun in the other. All, of course, in the Name of Jesus.

It has to be said that the Anabaptists in their emphasis on the "gathered church" principle were closer to Scripture than the Magisterial Reformers.<sup>78</sup> And, as if in testimony to this, it is a plain and indisputable fact of history that in all Protestant countries, by the late 16th cent. the Protestant State Churches were seething morasses of indiscipline, unholy living, and political intrigue.<sup>79</sup> Hence the cause of the rise of Puritanism in Britain, the 17th cent. "nadere Reformatie" in Holland,<sup>80</sup> and the rise of "Pietism" in Lutheran Germany<sup>81</sup> and the Nordic lands. This is not to endorse all the theology of such movements, but it is a note that one should understand the circumstances surrounding their development, those circumstances being factors of apostasy in the Reformed, State, Territorial churches. And such apostasy was the result, as the Anabaptists rightly stated, of indiscriminate infant baptism as the principle of those ecclesiastical systems.

However, such considerations should not blind us to the fact that the Anabaptists themselves nurtured a host of idiosyncratic ideas, in particular here we think with respect to the doctrine of Baptism. They had, however, in all this, a theological pre-text as well as a practical, ecclesiastical one. Various reformers, like Calvin, in the

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<sup>78</sup> Claims are made today by various ardent pro-Establishmentarian groups that the Gospels mandate the enforcement of Christianity by the State, on the basis of texts like Matt. 28: 19 "teach all nations, baptizing them (that is the *nations*, or so such interpreters allege) in the Name....etc." Such an interpretation is a forcing of the language of the text to make it yield a logically unnecessary conclusion, and one which is disparate with the rest of the New Testament.

<sup>79</sup> Only someone totally ignorant of the history of Protestantism in the 16th and 17th centuries would question this assertion.

<sup>80</sup> On the Dutch "second Reformation" or "nadere Reformatie", see the excellent account given by Dr. Joel R. Beeke in Vol 1 of *The Christian's Reasonable Service* pages lxxxv onwards, this being part of the introductory articles to the English translation of the Dutchman Wilhemus A Brakel's *Redelijke Godsdienst* first published in Dutch in the year 1700. Note should be taken especially of Beeke's quote on page xciii from P.B. Van der Watt, which states, "The Second Reformation revolted against the *unspiritual* state of the nation, ministers, and congregations....." Need one say any more?

<sup>81</sup> On the rise of Pietism see Mosheim's *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History* Book IV, Century XVII, Sect. II, part II, chapter 1, and section 26 ff. Note should be taken of the later evolution of Pietism in the 18th century in the form of the Moravian movement. On this latter cf. W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge Univ. Press 1992). It has to be said that the Protestant State churches seemed impervious to all attempts to improve their internal spirituality, and the 17th cent. Pietists came on the business end of what Mosheim calls "severe laws". As early as the 17th cent. there was what W.R. Ward has described as "poor Protestant morale", (Op. cit. p. 15) and Ward goes on to reveal how the Moravian heirs of the Pietists were still persecuted by "rigid Lutheranism" in the 18th cent. Parallel to all this is the discrimination and persecution imposed on all non-Anglicans in England, Wales, and Ireland. As late as the 20th cent. such oppression has been noted.

statement at the head of this article, were asserting the idea that "immersion" was the original apostolic mode of baptism. And whilst the vast majority of anabaptists did not practice immersionism in the 16th cent., by the first quarter of the 17th century immersionism was evidently on the front end of their ecclesiastical polity.

It is appropriate here to over-view the development of this immersionist dogma.

We have seen that in the centuries after the Edict of Milan (313 AD), the establishment of Christianity as the State Religion of the Roman Empire consolidated, and furthered, the influx of "Mystery Religion" pagan practices into the Church. Immersionism as a baptismal ritual henceforth became more and more the standard theological principle, if not the standard practice, throughout the Roman communion. This development reached its zenith probably in the early part of the second millennium, and thenceforth it seemed to wane, partly due to the material difficulties attendant upon its administration. Immersing the sick, and the aged, and indeed, immersing anybody in the cold winter climates of Europe was not only inconvenient, but hazardous as well. And if aspersion sufficed for such exigencies, why should it not suffice for anyone at any time? If aspersion is a valid baptism for a cripple, is it not also *de facto* a valid baptism for someone not theologically convinced of immersionism, or for a babe? Hence by the late medieval period we find a general relaxing of the immersionist requirement within the churches of the Roman communion.<sup>82</sup>

Come the Renaissance in the 15th century, and the flood of Greek Orthodox manuscripts into the west, and we find the encyclopaedic 10th cent. AD Byzantine Greek lexicon of Suidas carrying great favour amongst scholars, and later on, the Reformers.<sup>83</sup> Reflecting the Eastern Greek Orthodox theological stable from which it emanated, this lexicon was based on Classical Greek, rather than New Testament or Koine Greek, and listed the verb "baptizo" as meaning "to immerse". Naturally enough, the scholarly Reformed orthodox relayed the lexicon's verdict to their own auditors and readers. This explains the statement of Calvin used at the head of this article. In addition, it was the case that the early Reformers, such as Luther, Jud, and Zwingli, obviously influenced by such lexicographical data, began to advocate a revival of immersionism as an attempt to restore apostolic purity of sacramental practice to the Church.<sup>84</sup> Study of the Ancient Church fathers from the 4th cent. AD onwards impelled their zeal in this respect, as from such sources they picked up the first exegetical association between Romans ch. 6 and the mode of baptism, an exegesis which, as we have seen, though new in the 4th cent. AD, became traditional in the centuries that followed. Accordingly, they saw in baptism an enactment of

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. Hughes Oliphant Old: Op. cit. pages 265 ff.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. in footnote 70 page 273.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid pp. 273 ff.

Christ's own burial and resurrection. Pure immersionist doctrine.

Their attempt to restore immersionism soon waned, and fizzled out. As Hughes Oliphant Old says, if the Reformers were initially misled by the wrong-headed primacy of etymology in the Lexicon of Suidas and others of their day, they were "not the first nor the last to have made this mistake". He goes on....."the Reformers were good biblical philologists, and in time they realized that the biblical use of the word (baptizo) was not the same ...." as that found in the Classical Greek lexicons of their day.<sup>85</sup> Thus, if in their earlier liturgical works, some Reformers had advocated immersionism, they soon came to appreciate from Biblical considerations that the central symbolism in baptism was not the death and resurrection of Christ, but of a washing from sins. As a consequence considerations of mode became secondary, with sprinkling and affusion accepted as being biblical practice as well as immersion. This feature is amply set forth if we go back again to the quotation from Calvin at the head of this article, only here we quote the *whole* paragraph, not just the isolated part of it which the modern Baptist zealously clutches at:

"Whether the person baptised is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water, IS NOT OF THE LEAST CONSEQUENCE: churches should be at liberty to adopt either, according to the diversity of climates, although it is evident that the term baptise means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the early church." (*Emph. mine, Ed.*)

The full quotation is interesting. The last sentence indicates that at this juncture Calvin was still to some degree under the influence of the lexicography of his day, but the overall statement indicates that he has thought matters through somewhat further, and that matters of mode are of secondary importance. Looked at in the full context of Institutes Ch. XV the statement evidently reflects too the fact that Calvin had come to see baptism as a ceremonial purification rite, which outwardly depicted the inward cleansing from sin resultant from the work of the Holy Spirit. We read, for instance, in para. 2 of that same chapter:

"Nay, the only purification which baptism promises is by means of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, who is figured by water from the resemblance to cleansing and washing. "

As to the vexed text of Rom. 6: 3-4, Calvin has this to say about the words "buried with him by baptism unto death",

"By these words, he not only exhorts us to imitation of Christ, as

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* p. 273.

if he had said, that we are admonished by baptism, in like manner as Christ died, to die to our lusts, and as he rose, to rise to righteousness; but he traces the matter much higher, that Christ by baptism has made us partakers of his death, ingrafting us into it. And as the twig derives substance and nourishment from the root to which it is attached, so those who receive baptism with true faith truly feel the efficacy of Christ's death in the mortification of their flesh, and the efficacy of his resurrection in the quickening of the Spirit." (*Inst. IV ch.XV para. 5*).

If anything is evident from this, Calvin failed here to give Romans 6:3-4 the *explicit* immersionistic "spin". The text presented him with a golden opportunity to do so, had he deemed it exegetically right. And given that the quotation from paragraph 19 at the head of this article indicates that he was still partly under the influence of the faulty lexicography of his day, it is strange that he did not take the opportunity to present an outright unambivalent immersionist stance on the text if he had been possessed of any proclivities so to do. Granted that his language here can be used by immersionists, it can also equally comfortably be used by non-immersionists. And what comes through most prominently in Calvin's doctrine of baptism, is the notion of cleansing, washing, mortification of sin, purification, rather than an emphasis on "burial and resurrection" as necessitating immersion as the sole mode of administering the sacrament. This feature is emphasised when one consults Institutes book 4 ch.15 para. 14 where he says:

"....it is himself who washes and purifies us, and effaces the remembrance of our faults; that it is himself who makes us the partakers of his death.....These things, I say, we ought to feel as truly and certainly in our mind as we see our body washed, immersed, and surrounded with water."

Again, one notes the lexicographical effect.....he is still talking immersion, but note that it is CLEANSING that is the primary thought. Thus it is then that by para. 19 Calvin is indifferent as to mode.

The same emphasis on washing emerges in the works of the other Reformers. In fact, whereas the initial work of Luther (*Taufbüchlein*) and Leo Jud (*Baptismal Rite of Zurich*) specified immersion, from 1525 on in Zwingli's own editions of the Zurich baptismal liturgy, such specifications had disappeared, there being no rubric on the mode of baptism included. A further shift was indicated by the advent of Bullinger's first service book at Zurich, which actually went so far as to specify pouring, or affusion.<sup>86</sup>

Against this theological background the early Anabaptists developed, and it would have been understandable if initially their doctrine of baptism reflected the

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* p. 277.

view current amongst the Reformers as to mode. In general, however, this did not, amazingly, happen. Something else riveted their attention. Their primary aim was to shun paedobaptism, in order to facilitate pure, gathered churches. Accordingly, a clarion call went out advocating the radical reformation of the Reformed doctrine of baptism. And in all this, the mode of baptism seemed to take a back seat, the vast majority of anabaptists acquiescing in the practice of affusion.<sup>87</sup>

By 1523 there was a group of ardent anabaptists at Zurich working with Zwingli, and his refusal to take up their call for a radical reformation meant that in their eyes he had compromised with the world.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, on January 21st of that year the first anabaptist re-baptism had been performed, and the City Council took steps to disband the "conventicles" of "separatists" who were by then taking to themselves the name "Brethren in Christ".<sup>89</sup>

By 1525, at Waldshut, Balthasar Hübmaier, disappointed at the lack of progress under Zwingli's ministry, began preaching against paedobaptism, and advocated infant dedication instead. At the easter-time of that year, 300 were rebaptised in the public fountain, with Hübmaier using a bucket to pour water over them.<sup>90</sup> The revolution had begun.....a revolution which was to evince evolution in the case of Hübmaier. He might have started off with a bucket, but he graduated to a bath. This was indeed, a salient distinction for those times, as documentary evidence bears out the fact that affusion was the general mode of baptism amongst the Anabaptist sects.<sup>91</sup> But Hübmaier's development was a precursor of what was about to come about one hundred years on from then. That intervening 100 years was an era when multitudes of anabaptists spilt their blood in testimony of their faith, yet it was an era through which they not only survived, but went, ultimately, from strength to strength.

The long era of persecutions leads us to September 12th 1633, in England. On this date, says Dr. W. A. Mackay, we have the earliest record of the inauguration of an *exclusively* immersionist congregation, when one John Spilcsberry set up the first known modern Baptist church.

Baptist churches indeed, there had been aplenty in the 100 years previously, but this is the first *known* EXCLUSIVE IMMERSIONIST baptist church.<sup>92</sup> It is likely

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<sup>87</sup> Only Hübmaier appears to have kicked the trend here eventually. Cf. **Bridge and Phypers** Op. Cit. page 104.

<sup>88</sup> By this time the City Council of Zurich was "leaning on" Zwingli, and warning him not to take his teachings to the extent that the Church-State alliance would be broken. Cf. **Bridge and Phypers**, page 105.

<sup>89</sup> **Hughes Oliphant Old**, Op cit. pp. 92-93.

<sup>90</sup> **Ibid.** page 93.

<sup>91</sup> **Bridge and Phypers**, Op. cit. p.104.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. **Dr. W. A. Mackay**, *Immersion and Immersionists* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1880) page 50.

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that others predated this one, but it is at this time that the modern baptist movement emerges to our eye on the pages of history. By 1644, seven of their London congregations issued a Confession of Faith, a revised edition of which in 1646 consisted of 51 articles, in which these modern baptists distanced themselves from any Anabaptist connections. The articles indicate a Calvinistic orthodoxy similar to Reformed churches, save that they teach exclusive immersionism as their Baptismal theology, and independency of Church government as ecclesiastical polity. By 1656, sixteen Baptist churches in Somerset issued a 46 article Confession, and the culmination of all this is found in the 1677 Confession, reprinted in 1689 with the approval and recommendation of the ministers of above 100 congregations. But prior to these Calvinistic Confessional statements, the General or Arminian baptists first published a Confession in Holland in 1611, under the direction of Smyth and Helwys, but whilst this Confession in 26 articles confines baptism to adults, nothing is said about immersion. It looks therefore, as if *exclusive* immersion first emerged into the world somewhere between the work of Smyth and Helwys, and the rise of John Spilesberry's congregation, that is, between the year 1611 and the year 1633.<sup>93</sup>

Thus we may deduce that modern *exclusive* immersionism is a dogma less than 400 years old, and that prior to 1611-1633 it was unheard of anywhere in the whole history of the Christian church.<sup>94</sup>

### THE LATER HISTORY OF EXCLUSIVE IMMERSIONISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS.

Baptists, of the Calvinistic and Arminian types, struggled against the enormous odds of Establishmentarianism in Europe and Britain throughout the period of the 17th and 18th centuries. It was probably in England in the late 18th cent. that they began to expand and blossom, a feature which was to be transferred to the emerging United States of America. Several factors are intrinsic to this phenomenon of expansion. **First** of all, the hide-bound apostasy of Establishment Reformed Churches left a spiritual vacuum, which began to be occupied by the Pietists and Moravians in Europe, and the Non-conformists in Britain. Amongst such dissenting groups the Baptists were nimble and quick off the mark to evangelise. So alert were they in the emergent American colonies that they literally "stole" thousands of Scotch-Irish immigrants of Presbyterian origins. Baptist ministers went out to the frontiers, where, it seemed, either Presbyterian ministers feared to tread, or the Presbyterian churches were too hide-bound to send out ministers to do the treading.

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<sup>93</sup> On all the foregoing data concerning the Baptist creeds, Cf. **Schaff: The Creeds of Christendom** Vol. 1 and pages 852 ff.

<sup>94</sup> As to Hübmaier in the 1500's, it seems evident that he did not practice immersion to the extent that he totally refused fellowship to those baptised by affusion.

A large number of modern America's Baptists in their "bible belt" are in fact of Scotch-Irish Presbyterian origin.<sup>95</sup>

Similar phenomena could be noted in such places as 18th and 19th century Wales, and indeed England itself. But another, new factor was emerging on the scene now, one that was destined to put the poison in to the very heart of Protestant belief.....the factor of **subjectivism**, allied to the influx of mysticism running rampant in the Churches in the aftermath of the Evangelical Revivals. Subjectivism played into the Immersionist's hands on the matter of baptism, for as a modern American theologian has observed:

"What distinguished (the Anabaptists) as Anabaptists and distinguishes them today as Baptists was and is that in their view of baptism and the Lord's Supper they regarded these sacraments not so much as signs and seals of God's covenant toward us, but rather as actions of ours testifying to our faith. The Church for them was not coextensive with God's Covenant, but rather a society of experiential believers. This distinguishing emphasis on the individual and his experience is subjectivistic."<sup>96</sup>

In short, the new "spirit of the age" favoured the Immersionist ethos. Subjectivism began to ruin Reformed theology, and the very rise of Modernist Critical theology in the late 18th and early 19th centuries is a salient example of how subjectivism emerged to eclipse practically every major Protestant denomination. Schliermacher, the "father" of modernist theology, was born and bred in the Pietist evangelical circles of the German Reformed Churches, and founding his thought on the subjectivist "feeling of total dependence" he centred his theology on inward mystic experience, moving away from the veracity of Scripture, and even introducing and allowing critical and skeptical attitudes to it. As Peter de Yong well said, this subjectivism was the ideal booster to baptist doctrine, seeing that it fitted well with the already subjectivistic theology of personal testimony to one's own mystic "burial and resurrection" embodied in Baptist sacramental theology. Subjectivism has run rampant in Protestantism now for some 200 years, and is clearly in the ascendancy in the modern evangelical movements, with their "experience-centred" proclivities. "Feelings of love," "leadings of the spirit", and "sweet breathings"<sup>97</sup> characterise their worship, and the Bible and its doctrines get set

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<sup>95</sup> A BBC television series "The Scotch-Irish in America" on Ulster Television documented this phenomenon about 10 years ago, and published a handsome book to accompany the series.

<sup>96</sup> So: **Peter Y. DeYong**, article *The Reformed Faith and the Danger of Subjectivism* in the old "**Torch and Trumpet**", journal of the "Reformed Fellowship Inc." for April 1966. This journal is now known under the name: "**The Outlook**".

<sup>97</sup> "Sweet breathings...." indeed! But that is the language of the subjectivists themselves. See **D.W. Bebbington**: *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730's to the 1980's* (London: Unwin Hyman 1989) page 171.

aside, becoming little more than some sort of subjectivistic "talisman" to propagate spiritual "kicks".

It also has to be said that "Subjectivism", swamping the theological world of the 19th cent., generated in that century a mass of schismatic sects and cults that have inhabited Christendom ever since. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, various Charismatic and Revivalistic sects, Christadelphians, numerous "Brethren" and Baptist factions, and ALL OF THESE MOVEMENTS practice baptism by Immersion, salient testimony to the effect of the Subjectivist theological method coming right through to control their theology of the sacraments.

Another factor that has given the Immersionist cause a major boost was the rise of so-called "**Biblical Theology**" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With this movement lexicography and word studies began to take the place of Systematic and Dogmatic Theology. The problem was that the lexicography was dominated by the philosophic principle known to scholars today as "Etymologism".<sup>98</sup> This was in fact a continuation of the idiosyncrasies of Suidas' 10th cent. Greek lexicon. In such works, the history (etymology) of a word would be traced back in history to its earliest known origins, and its meaning at that original point would be established as the word's *true* meaning. Thenceforth, the usage of that word would be always related to that original meaning. The upshot of this was that the verbs "bapto" and "baptizo" were heralded as meaning "to immerse" and only to "immerse". The fallacy in the whole method was of course spotted by such reformed scholars as James W. Dale in his multi-volume encyclopaedic work on those same verbs.<sup>99</sup> Dale, like the reformers, was a precursor of the modern schools of Linguistics, and like them he insisted that such features as Metonymy and culture-transference were equally of importance as Etymology. Indeed, to ignore these latter two factors is to import nonsense into the whole science of Lexicography. Thus the vast phalanx of lexicographical work from 1800 up to the 1950's is to some critical extent, spoiled, if not in some specific examples, entirely vitiated, by this

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<sup>98</sup> For a thorough exposure of "Etymologism" and its effects on Biblical exegesis and lexicography cf. especially : **James Barr**: *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford University Press 1961). Barr became Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford, and one does not have to take on board his trenchant anti-fundamentalism to be able to appreciate his contribution to philology and lexicography in this work, which was the first and salient stand made against etymologism. Since that time the science of linguistics has made further advances into Lexicography, such advances actually ramifying the philological work of the Reformers, who as we have seen above in the case of Calvin, did not allow the lexicography of his day to over-rule entirely his acute philological sense. Some 60 pages of Barr's work cited herewith are given over to a critical analysis of the methodology underlying no less than Kittel's multi-volume *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Nuen Testament*, this having the enormous status of being virtually standard reference in the world of Lexicography.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. *BAPTIZO* a four-volume study on the usages of the Greek verbs used in baptism. Originally published in the mid-19th cent., now reprinted in the USA, by a publishing combine including Presbyterian and Reformed.

lack of appreciation of the full dimensions of linguistic exigencies.<sup>100</sup>

But it all helped the Baptists. "Look! " they would say, "Look at the Greek lexicons and concordances. Look at the word studies. They all say that we are right.....!" Today, we know different.

One further factor also boosted the baptist cause. **Technology.** It is noticeable how the modern Baptist movement has increased enormously during the last 200 years since the Industrial Revolution. To effectuate baptism by immersion, one needs water deep enough to facilitate the action. Of course, six to eight inches will be enough to immerse most people, if you lie them down and roll them into it. But this hardly expresses the "going down into" and "rising up from" that the Baptist wants to portray. A dignified, and indeed, safe, performance of immersion requires about 3 feet depth of water. In such a depth the minister can lower the candidate backwards quickly, such that the candidate's back hits the water hard enough for the natural resistance of the liquid to "bounce" the person back up before they go down too far, and risk drowning. A practised minister can produce a most dignified performance of this rite, provided he can have enough depth of water. In the old days, they used to baptize in rivers, not an easy accomplishment for immersers, because they had to wade out far enough to get the required depth. There currents could be dangerous.<sup>101</sup> And of course, you may live in a mountainous area where there are only little streams. Again, any time outside of June to September, that river water is usually going to be mighty cold. *Nil desperandum!* The Industrial Revolution gives us modern plumbing, and we can have a baptistery deep enough in churches which we can fill easily from a tap, and drain easily via the sewers, and in the meantime we can even heat the baptismal waters with a radiator or some such device.<sup>102</sup> How much more convenient it is now to baptise by immersion than it used to be in the old days of John Spilesberry, or Balthasar Hübmaier ! Doubtless, this increased convenience has facilitated a faster spread of Immersionism than hitherto acceptable or possible in the centuries prior to modern plumbing. This is the more so appreciated if we consider the climatic conditions of vast tracts of North

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<sup>100</sup> For some modern and able lexicographical work on the Greek New Testament, which embodies the principles set out by the modern linguistic schools, note the two-volume: *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains* compiled by Louw and Nida and published 1988 (1st edit.) by the United Bible Societies.

<sup>101</sup> We have at least one example of baptismal candidates being drowned in a river. The London "Times" for Sat. August 22nd 1992 reported how a pastor and two baptismal candidates were drowned when they were washed away during a baptism in the Vaal river between Vanderbijlpark and Sasolburg, south of the city of Johannesburg in South Africa.

<sup>102</sup> The "mod cons" are not always reliable. In an issue for May 1979 the "*Baptist Times*" reported the death of a 16 year old boy whilst he was being immersed in a baptistery at the Church of God Assembly at Galson, Ayrshire, Scotland. It seems the electric heater for warming the baptismal water malfunctioned, and electrocuted the boy. The minister was only saved by virtue of the fact that he was wearing rubber waders.

America, Northern Europe, and Russia. River baptisms in such climates can be hazardous even in summertime, and in winter the rivers freeze from the perma-frost bottoms and banks upwards and inwards. Strong men soon die in water of such low temperatures, and immersionist baptisms in such conditions put people at grave risk.

The same can be said too, of tropical climes, where the rivers do not freeze, but are hosts to such creatures as crocodiles, pirana fish, anacondas, leeches, and micro-organisms extremely hostile to human health.<sup>103</sup> Modern plumbing in Africa is a god-send for immersionists, though it must be said that great care must be taken even so, as drains etc, in tropical countries tend to host numerous undesirable, and dangerous creatures.<sup>104</sup>

In short, immersionism is at least a difficult, and often a hazardous ritual to implement unless you have the benefits of modern plumbing. How such a ritual was to have been adopted by the churches of 2000 years ago without the benefit of "modern plumbing" would be a study all by itself.

It is now necessary to look at the effects of Exclusivist Immersionism as they impinge on the modern ecclesiastical scene.

If baptism may be validly performed using a mode other than full immersion, then immediately the foundation for the modern Baptist's ecclesiastical justification is broken. The whole point of having "Baptist", i.e., "immersionist" churches as separate from non-immersionist churches is in order to establish "proper" churches, as per the alleged New Testament principles. By baptist standards, a non-immersionist church is not a true church, seeing that its "members" have not been correctly initiated into the fellowship of Christ, and are living in some kind of serious disobedience to the heavenly commands. Any position less than this destroys the fundamental *raison d'être* for having immersionistic churches. For the baptist to adopt

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<sup>103</sup> We refer again to the Anglican Evangelical missionary, Rev. Canon M.H. Garner, M.A. Whilst a missionary in the West Nile district of Uganda, it fell to him to baptise some 600 people. His convictions on baptism were immersionist, and he set to immersing all his catechumens. As a result, he contracted the disease Bilharzia, or Schistosomiasis, directly from contact with the river water. This today, though a serious disease, is not necessarily fatal, as it responds to modern medicines. However, in any age pre-antibiotic (which means up to the 1940's) contraction of bilharzia was a death sentence. For the information on Rev. Canon Garner, cf. *The Churchman's Magazine* for May-June 1983 and the first page "Portrait Gallery." He required hospitalization in Kampala and London having contracted the disease, after which it was "considered unwise for him to return to Africa."

<sup>104</sup> I once witnessed a movie film taken by a Pentecostal missionary of the *Congo Evangelistic Mission* in the Katanga district of the old Belgian Congo (nowadays Zaire). It showed immersionistic practice in the jungle. They actually had to dig a hole in the ground and fill it by carrying pots of water from a well or somewhere. This worked alright for one baptismal session, but some months later, an attempt to use the stagnant pool for another baptismal session was held up while first the snakes were all dealt with. Then, as the ritual proceeded, they discovered that there were leeches in the water.....and etc.

a more embracing view of non-immersed Christians would be for him to say *de facto* that "immersionism" doesn't really matter. This would have a knock-on effect, as *de facto* it would imply that "baptist" churches as such shouldn't exist, but that they, like other churches, should tolerate aspersion/affusion with immersionism.

In order therefore, to protect their own position, Baptists are *logically impelled* into EXCLUSIVISTIC immersionism. Many modern Baptists do not go this far, in fact, probably a large number, if not the majority of Baptist Union churches in the British Isles have liberalised their position on this under Ecumenicalist pressures. But the force of the logic means that such liberalisation will ultimately mean the destruction of their churches as a separate and distinctive witness to the very sacramental issue for which such churches were originally inceptioned.

The immersionist logic therefore impels one to EXCLUSIVISM. Those Baptists who dig their heels in and refuse to budge on this issue cannot avoid falling into the exclusivist abyss. To practice this one is forced to argue that non-immersed professors of faith are not as yet, fully obedient to the Lord, and are not as yet, Christians in good standing. This means their exclusion from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is effectively excommunication. No escape exists from the inexorability of the logic here, once accept a non-immersed believer to the Lord's Supper, you are declaring that person as being in good standing of membership in the Body of Christ, and thereby, eligible, and acceptable, as a member of your baptist church, if they should so apply for it.

On this factor, some modern baptists find themselves on the horns of a dilemma. One faction will practice strict exclusivism, of such a kind that would have excluded such non-immersionist stalwarts of the faith as Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones from holy communion and membership in their churches. Others, a little more catholic in their proclivities would accept a Lloyd-Jones to the Lord's Supper, but not church membership. This latter group involve themselves then in the gross inconsistency of saying that this brother is of good enough standing to partake of the Holy Communion, and thereby is good enough in standing to partake of membership in the Universal Body of Christ, BUT, he is not good enough to be accepted into membership of THEIR congregation until he submits to immersion. *De facto*, this means that membership of THEIR congregation requires a higher level of righteousness than membership of the Universal Body of Christ. The New Testament has a name for this kind of nonsense. Pharisaism.

Indeed, it is the "Strict" kind of Baptist church that is the type that honestly follows Baptist logic to its full implications. However, this impels them into the following practical difficulties:

(i) they may not invite into their pulpit a visiting minister who is not an exclu-

sive immersionist, for if they do, they accept such a non-immersionist in the role of a teaching elder, and it would be utterly incongruous to deny such a one holy communion afterwards, and then church membership. Hosts of immersionistic churches break these principles left, right and centre, when they invite into their midst Scots Presbyterian ministers, or such as Martyn Lloyd-Jones, to minister from their pulpits, yet at the same time, deny to non-immersionist believers membership in their own congregations. The New Testament has a name for this kind of practice, too. Hypocrisy.

(ii) Strict Baptists who regularly consult the commentaries and Theological works of non-immersionists are effectively allowing such allegedly "disobedient-to-Christ" practitioners to have the role of a teaching elder in their lives and in their ministry.

It amazes one to see how, on the study shelves of Baptist ministers, one will find rank upon rank of Presbyterian and Reformed works. This always seems very peculiar, that those who are allegedly disobedient to Christ on an issue great enough to justify separate denominations are nevertheless regularly consulted as to the interpretation of Scripture. I noted too, that if the Presbyterian and Reformed works were removed from such libraries, there would be at most only about one third, or more likely, less than a quarter, of the books left.

It ever seems peculiar that such allegedly "disobedient-to-Christ" theologians were so necessary in an immersionist's library. And this anomaly is one that extended to the library of no less than one Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Now there was a logically inconsistent Baptist, if ever there was one. But his godly catholicism prevented him from going the whole hog of the baptist logic in his practice, whatever else he might have said from the pulpit or in his written works. Thus we find that he even preached the inaugural sermons at the opening of Dr. John Kennedy's new Presbyterian Church at Dingwall in Scotland,<sup>105</sup> an action in and of itself a total denial of the Baptist position. For in so doing, Spurgeon was *de facto* announcing to the world that he believed and accepted Kennedy's paedobaptistic and non-immersionist church to be a true church. He eulogised Kennedy too, and was a long-time friend of the man.<sup>106</sup> One can see however, how Spurgeon's catholicism here would have nevertheless involved him in hypocrisy back home at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. For there, non-immersed believers would be denied

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<sup>105</sup> On the 17th May 1870. In addition to this, Spurgeon had in 1866 addressed the General Assemblies of both the Free Kirk and the United Presbyterian Church. Cf. *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* page 455-456 & 790. *De facto* this was in principle unavoidably a tacit recognition and admission by this Baptist leader that such Paedobaptist churches were true churches in good standing.

<sup>106</sup> After Kennedy's death in 1884, Spurgeon wrote eulogistically of him to the widow, using these very words concerning Kennedy: "I venerated him (Kennedy) AS EVERY INCH A MAN OF GOD.....he was TRUE AS STEEL AND FIRM AS A ROCK....." (Emph. mine Ed.) The full text of the letter can be read in *Auld's* biography of Kennedy, where it appears photo-facsimile in Spurgeon's own handwriting. Yet Kennedy was a Paedo-baptist, inelligible for membership at Spurgeon's Tabernacle !

membership. Even the great Dr. Kennedy would have suffered exclusion from there!

In short, it is astounding how many allegedly (in baptist terms) "disobedient-to-Christ" Christians proved to be such stalwart Saints of God. I mean.....Augustine, Gotteschalk, Bradwardine, Luther, Knox, Calvin, Turretin, Witsius, Brainerd, .....one could go on and on and on.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this four-part study we have traced the rise of Immersionism from some time in the late 2nd Cent. AD. At first a pagan rite performed in an octagonal pool as an initiation into the "Mysteries" of ancient Roman religions, the immersionistic method of baptism infiltrated the ranks of Christian professors. By the 4th cent. AD, after the post-Constantinian Establishment of Christianity as the State Territorial Religion, the influx of pagan mysteries into the churches was consolidated, and given additional impetus. Popery, the Mass, and Mariolatry invaded the institutional body ecclesiastic, pagan feasts were "christianised" and imposed on the Church calendar, and the initiation rite of baptism became officially paganised in the Immersionistic form brought in from the Mystery cults. In that 4th cent. we find the first exegetical connection made between water baptism and Rom. 6:4/Col.2:12, and the "dying-rising" motif became the paramount focus of Christian baptism, rather than a ceremonial and symbolic "washing" or "cleansing" from sin. In accordance with the Mystery cults, the "immersionism" of "dying-rising" was thenceforth only undertaken at the pagan spring festival, which had been imported into the Church and denominated "Eostre", or "Easter".

Whilst Immersionism thenceforward was the regnant theology in the Roman church, EXCLUSIVE immersion was never countenanced at that time, since an accommodating provision was made for the sick and the aged, and those in cold climes, to receive baptism by aspersion or sprinkling.

Throughout the Dark Ages (post 530 AD approx.) baptismal fonts deep enough to immerse gradually became more widespread, despite artistic and architectural iconography which, "frozen" from Classical times, depicted baptism as traditionally being affusion or sprinkling. In this period the pagan Octagonal form of the Mystery cult baptisteries became a popular design, and is evinced still today in the thousands of octagonal fonts still in British parish churches, which, though not designed for immersion, nevertheless still reflect the old pagan 8-sided design.

By late medieval times, the Roman church had given up on trying to superimpose Immersionism as standard practice. Inconvenience, climate, and public health matters played a big part in the retention of aspersion.

At the Reformation, the Reformers first trying to re-establish pure churches, aimed at instituting immersionism. Philological studies of the Bible language and vocabularies, plus inconvenience, climate, and health matters, meant that they took aspersion as the normative mode, with its key focus on symbolic cleansing from sin.

The Anabaptists arose prominently in the 16th cent., and took an anti-paedo-baptistic stance, but did not, (except in one instance) practice Immersionism. Instead, their mode of practice was affusion.

By the early 17th cent. EXCLUSIVE IMMERSIONISM emerged into history for the first time.

Exclusive Immersionism suddenly exploded into a world-dominating position amongst Evangelical churches as from the early 19th cent. Aiding this explosion was:

- (i) The deadness and apostasy of the Reformed State Territorial Churches.
- (ii) The rise of Subjectivism in Theology and Philosophy favouring the Immersionist interpretation of the Sacraments.
- (iii) The fallacy of "Etymologism" in Lexicographical Studies.
- (iv) The rise and development of the Industrial Revolution, modern plumbing techniques securing for the first time a convenient and relatively safe provision for performing the Immersionist rite.

Hence we conclude that modern Exclusivist Immersionist Sacramental theology is:

- (a) A Johnny-come-lately on the Ecclesiastical scene.
- (b) Has no exegetical connection to Scripture prior to the 4th cent. AD.
- (c) Is unnecessarily divisive of Christians and their churches.

All this is not to condemn Baptists as non-Christians. A Presbyterian can accept that an Immersed person has had a valid form of Baptism. (The problem is that the Baptist won't allow the same privilege to the Presbyterian.) Also, it must be acknowledged that many godly Calvinistic Baptists have done sterling service to the furtherance of God's Kingdom and His glory. They are to be commended for their diligent evangelism, their emphasis on "gathered churches", and their efforts to uphold the principle of discipline in the body ecclesiastic.

Presbyterian and Paedo-baptistic churches need to learn these desirable features, but without ditching their proper Reformed and Scriptural doctrines of the Covenant and the Sacraments. Paedo-baptism does not need Establishment Territorialism in order to function, and indeed only functions correctly and Scripturally under a "gathered church" principle, which latter also facilitates godly Scriptural discipline.

*Concluded.*

# WHO are the Wicked & the Righteous in Scripture?

A Study by  
PAUL FAHY

## Part Two: Counter-arguments discussed

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**1. God's judicial wrath** is upon the elect prior to their conversion, but God's decree of elective purpose is preserving them in love. This means that God loves and hates the elect, therefore, God can hate and love the reprobate. This means that God's love and God's condemnation are equally upon both the righteous and the wicked. The only righteous man is the effectually called believer.

**F**irstly, clearly unregenerate elect are under God's judicial wrath (Eph 2:3), but I dispute that the judicial wrath of God towards unregenerate elect is synonymous with God's hatred towards the reprobate. God looks at things in their finality; he is aware of the fulness, the maturity of a thing and judges it accordingly. This means that he must look upon the elect completely differently to the reprobate. Scripture supports this contention. God could love a sinful David or Jacob and yet hate an Esau who was possibly less sinful (there is no account of Esau killing a man to steal his wife).

**Secondly**, God never says that he hates the elect at any stage of their lives.

**Thirdly**, the elect are predestined to be sons from eternity (Eph 1:4-5), it is not conceivable that God could be said to hate his own children, even if they are in sin. The parable of the prodigal son also supports this.

*Point One:* God does not ever hate the elect. It is wrong to compare the elect and the

reprobate in this way.

Next, even an effectually called believer can be viewed as being sinful if he does not put off his old nature and commits sin (1 Jn 3:4). Only those *in Christ* are righteous, because only Christ is righteous. Only those putting off the old and putting on the new nature are righteous at any time (1 Jn 3:6,9). Is a Christian who sins hated by God? Is it not rather that a sinning Christian is chastised by a loving Father? Even the discipline is an expression of love.

If we are declared to be God's sons from eternity: *'he chose us in him before the foundation of the world ... he predestined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ.'* (Eph 1:4-5), then surely this is also a better way of looking at the unregenerate elect also, that is as a chosen, adopted son, but as yet actually outside the family; loved by God as Father, but under the sentence of God, as Judge, for a time. The idea of God loving and hating the same person, at the same time, is an offence to his simplicity.

Even if this were not the case, we know that God loves the elect because his word says so. We also know that God hates the wicked, but nowhere does the Bible say that God also loves the wicked. There is, therefore no ground for this assumption at all.

### **2. The righteous man in the OT is only a reference to actual uprightness, not the elect.**

**W**e must remember that this (O.T.) dispensation is prior to the cross. The idealised man as the recipient of covenant promise (e.g. Psalm 1) is always a reference to God's perfect man, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The apprehension of God's promises by New Covenant saints, is based upon being found *in Christ*. The cross has changed our basic constitution so that we actually share in Christ's inheritance as a result of union with him. No one receives God's promises by effort, natural faith or fleshly efforts to be righteous. But what about the Old Covenant saint?

The practical apprehension of the benefits of salvation prior to the cross is different to that afterwards. Without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it was impossible for OT saints to live a New Covenant lifestyle by faith or receive New Covenant blessings. They were locked into the law which was to lead towards Christ (Gal 3:23ff). Until the revelation of Christ and the gift of faith, the law restrained sin and unified the covenant people. The righteous man was thus the man who had faith in the Old Covenant worship system, the man who repented of sin by offering a suit-

able sacrifice and identifying with it in its death. The man who celebrated the feasts ordained by God and worshipped with God's people. The man who looked up to God's appointed leaders prophets, priests and kings to teach and direct him. All these things were done in faith and obedience to God's statutes.

Although OT saints did not have our revelation of union with Christ, they equally looked to God's provision for their failings. They relied upon material, objective symbols which have antitypical value to us, but to them was the means of life. They knew they failed (read Ps 51). They knew they were not righteous. They knew they needed God's provision of a substitute life, but were not told how the Messiah would enable that to take place. OT saints did not rely upon their own righteousness, they relied upon the offerings and worship system which God had provided. These offerings included restoration for sins done in ignorance.

The point is that the Old Testament promises to the righteous man did not then, and do not now, rely upon human strength and ability for enjoyment. No one is righteous, no not one! (Rm 3:10 **and** Ps 14:1-3, 53 :1-3.)

Before his conversion Paul saw himself as ritually clean and righteous (Phil 3:6), looking with open eyes years later, he saw himself as the chief of sinners (1 Tim 1:15). It is the beneficial application of the life of Jesus which enables us to appropriate the promises of God. For us now this is by faith, having received God's revelation of Christ in his word; for OT saints this was trusting in the performance of duties ordained by God's word, which Christ would perfectly fulfil.

### **3. An heretical split in the doctrine of the person of Christ.**

**T**he argument is that: if God does not love everyone, Christ as God does not love everyone, but only loves only the elect; but as a righteous man under the law, Christ must love even his enemies. This results in a heretical dichotomy in Christ's person.

If this can be maintained, it is a serious obstacle to the thesis proposed. Firstly, we have to evaluate if there are differences between Jesus' existence as a man and as God. Obviously there are many, since he laid his glory aside in order to perform the work of atonement as a man. Did Jesus, as a man, do things which God could not do? Again, there are clearly many things. Jesus bore the curse, Jesus took sin upon himself on the cross, Jesus was under the law. There were areas where Jesus was restricted as a man (e.g. expressing his glory), and there were areas where he did things God does not do (e.g. being subject to the curse, subject to physical confine-

ment). Similarly, God knew the time of the parousia, Jesus (at least as a man) does not.

So, our first point is that it is not unusual for there to be differences in function between the Father and the Son.

Secondly, God *has* shown love to his enemies, as we have already explained. The whole world rebelled in Adam. Everyone became an enemy of God. God dealt with this by revealing love to a portion of that rebellious society - the elect. (These choices all took place in God's eternal decrees before the events actually occurred. God did not react to surprises in time, but determined the course of actions in eternity according to his plan.) Man is to love his enemy to manifest supernatural compassion. This reveals godly people, it just is not natural to love those who hate you. In this we follow God, who not only loved those who were against him, but provided for their full and free salvation.

So our second point is that there is no real distinction in disposition, God had loved his enemies, Jesus as man could love his enemies.

The real difficulty, is: *did Jesus love the actual reprobates*, living at the time of his human existence, whom God must have actually hated? We have to say that this is getting very metaphysical at this point and splitting theological hairs. If the key argument relies upon this, then the case is slender indeed. The point is that Jesus allowed the restriction of the fulness of his divinity. It was still his, but it was restricted. He, through whom the world was made, was subject to the need for food and sleep for instance. Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh, he came to be a man like us. As such he lived the life of a righteous man, in the order of a man, a man with no knowledge of who the elect and reprobate are. He acted righteously to all. His knowledge, ministry, and power were given him as required by the Holy Spirit. This included times when he did see who were reprobate (see Jn 8:44-47; Mk 12:38-40; Matt 23:13-15 27ff). His expression then was not love, but righteous anger. This is a clear fact. If opponents state (as some have) that Jesus could not hate reprobates but must love them as a man under the law, they have no explanation for those passages in the Gospels where he clearly did not love certain men whom he said were hell bound.

It is impossible for us to go further into the mystical details in harmonising the differences between Jesus' human and divine natures. There is much here impossible to grasp. We must be satisfied with the facts on hand, and those are clear.

A final point is that due to our lack of knowledge as to the identity of the elect, we must love all in order to love our brethren. Saul was a vicious enemy of the

church, and yet was elect. We cannot dismiss and reject anyone.

#### **4. Election from eternity**

**I**t is suggested that holding the view defended in this paper requires one to believe in an unorthodox view of election, that is the idea that election and adoption are from eternity, rather than resulting from faith in time.

This is not the case. Justification clearly arises from faith (Rm 5); this cannot be controverted. What is in view is that God's loving, elective purpose is towards his people, and only his people from eternity (Eph 1:4-5). We were chosen in love and predestined to *blameless adoption* in Christ from eternity; this also is very clear (Compare the illuminating passage in Num 23:21). A person actually becomes pardoned when the Holy Spirit applies the Gospel to him and he is converted. Before that he is under the judicial wrath of God in legal terms towards God as a Judge. However, the elect person is seen from eternity as a son in Christ by God as Father. This enables God to love him, not hate him. The blood of Christ answers for his sin to enable relationship, not only before conversion, but also afterwards when a Christian sins (1 Jn 1). This is why Jesus could speak of those given to him by the Father in loving terms, while they were yet still sinners (Jn 17). The blood of Christ, though not yet actually applied in time, was answering in heaven for sin. Jesus was the lamb slain from eternity.

One cannot deny this eternal and elective aspect to justification. If God predestines those who will be saved, then he predestines their justification. God sees his elect from eternity as justified, just as he sees them glorified as a bride for his son. God views the end from the beginning; we experience different aspects of God's plan in time, piece by piece as the Holy Spirit applies to us: regeneration, repentance, faith, assurance, sanctification, peace etc. The confusion is between the way we view things - from the past forwards - and the way God reveals that he views things - in their fulness or maturity.

#### **5. The promises of God are conditional.**

**T**he argument is: God's promises are extended to *all men* to be embraced as part of the Gospel message. They are genuinely offered to everyone as part of a loving benevolence to all.

But can this be true? How can God offer promises of life to wicked men he knows will never respond because they are destined to condemnation? If the benevolence

(love) of God is only towards the elect, the promises of God are covenantal and tied to salvation. These cannot be for the reprobate. Certainly, the proclamation of God's promises should be universal. All who respond to the Gospel can be directed to the promise of life, but that is not the same as claiming that the promises are equally intended for those who will never respond.

**6. Scripture says that God is long-suffering to all, and this does not simply mean delayed judgment, since God is not said to be long-suffering to Satan even though his condemnation is delayed. This word is identified with grace and mercy, therefore, God is merciful to the wicked.**

Scriptures adduced in support of this include the following:

**Ex 34:6**

*The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger (long-suffering),<sup>7</sup> and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.*

However, we need to continue reading in verse 7:

*keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty. RSV*

This passage is about the renewal of the covenant with Moses and starts a pattern, repeatedly noticed, where long-suffering is contrasted with poured out wrath upon the wicked. Here God declares his love and saving purposes for his people. It is to these people that God is gracious, merciful and slow to anger, not to outsiders of this covenant who will be condemned for their iniquity. There is no grace or love of God to the wicked here.

### **7 “Long-suffering” and words associated in Exodus 34:6**

Analysis of words used from Strong's abridged BDB with Strong's reference numbers:

**Long-suffering (slow to anger) 750** Hebrew אַרְאֵק 'arek {aw-rake'} • from 748; *Theological Word-book of the Old Testament* (Botterweck und Ringgren hereinafter **TWOT**.) 162b; adj • AV - slow 9, long-suffering + 639 4, longwinged + 83 1, patient 1; 15 • 1) long (pinions) 2) patient, slow to anger.

#### **Merciful**

**7349** Hebrew רַחֻמִּים rachūwm {rakh-oom'} • from 7355; **TWOT** - 2146c; adj • AV - merciful 8, compassion 5; 13 • 1) compassionate 1a) always of God with one possible exception.

#### **Gracious**

**2587** Hebrew חַנּוּן channwn {khan-noon'} • from 2603; **TWOT**- 694d; adj • AV - gracious 13; 13 • 1) gracious

#### **Goodness (and mercy v7)**

**2617** Hebrew חֶסֶד chesed {kheh'-sed} • from 2616; **TWOT** - 698a,699a; n m • AV - mercy 149, kindness 40, lovingkindness 30, goodness 12, kindly 5, merciful 4, favour 3, good 1, goodliness 1, pity 1, reproach 1, wicked thing 1; 248 • 1) goodness, kindness, faithfulness 2) a reproach, shame.

*6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,*

*7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. KJV*

Long-suffering is here connected with words which are dedicated to the covenant people of God e.g. mercy, steadfast love, graciousness (Cf. Footnote 7 page 27 herein) and are not applicable to the reprobate. The verse cannot refer to the reprobate; but can the idea of *long-suffering* ever apply to them?

### **Is long-suffering benevolence?**

It is when associated with mercy; in itself it simply means slowness to anger, patience. The scriptures and word studies examined (Ps 103:8, 145:8. Ex 34:6, see also appendices) show that in the Old Testament, benevolent long-suffering is reserved for the Lord's people only. God says that he is angry with the wicked (Ps 5:5, 58:10), that they go astray from the womb (Ps 58:3), God's wrath is already hanging over them, they are condemned already (Jn 3:18,36). God's blessing is only upon the elect, only they are covered with favour, which includes being long-suffering with their failures (Ps 5:12).

All the remaining OT references of the word, in this form, apply the long-suffering of God towards the elect only or are characteristics of a godly man (one ref. is literally to a long wing). *Long* (as in long-suffering / Strong's 750) appears 15 times: Exod. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; Ps. 103:8; Ps. 145:8; Prov. 14:29; Prov. 15:18; Prov. 16:32; Eccl. 7:8; Jer. 15:15; Ezek. 17:3; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2; Nah. 1:2-3. The last reference is most interesting as it contrasts God's long-suffering with his wrath towards the wicked.

*God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. Nahum 1: 2-3*

One way to explain this text is to apply the long-suffering of God to the elect and the wrath of God for the reprobate. Some writers see God's long-suffering here as referring to the wicked. Num 14:18 is similar:

*The LORD is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty. (RSV)*

In emphasising God's patience with sinners, the Biblical writers stress that this does not mean that sin is ultimately unpunished. On the contrary these passages show extreme prejudice towards sin.

The long-suffering of God towards his people is closely connected to a tolerance of God towards the wicked. In order to show mercy to the elect, God defers judgment on all. **The Old Testament passages often reveal this proximity of patience and judgment.**

**To sum up the Old Testament texts,** there is no clear reference to this word being applied to the reprobate or the wicked. Possibly one or two passages could be interpreted as showing God's patience with sinners in a general way, but there is no connection of long-suffering in the sense of graciousness with the reprobate.

There simply is no evidence to make a case of grace for the wicked.

In the New Testament, long-suffering is a characteristic of the redeemed e.g.: 2 Tim 3:10, Gal 5:22; or is specifically referring to the grace of God towards the elect:

*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

1 Tim 1:16

*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

2 Pt 3:9

*Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*

1 Pt 3:20

In one place, Peter directly relates the word to salvation:

*And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.*

2 Pt 3:15

So far, every Old and New Testament reference to *long-suffering* has, without significant doubt, been applied to the Lord's people, the elect, only.

However, Rm 2:4 and 9:22 seem to be applied differently to this meaning.

This requires careful examination.

**Rm 2:4**

*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness* Greek: χρηστοτης (*chrestotetos*) *and forbearance* Greek: ανοχης (*anoches* = *tolerance*) *and long-suffering* Greek: μακροθυμια (*makrothumia*); *not knowing that the goodness* Greek: χρηστον (*chreston*) *of God leadeth thee to repentance?*<sup>8</sup>

Paul is writing to explain the Gospel to converts at Rome whom he had never met. He knew that they needed instruction, and that they were a mixed company, some Greeks, a few Jews and mostly Gentile Romans. The beginning of his presentation is to expound the seriousness of sin and its root in all men. He changes from the third person (e.g. 1:26) to the second person in chapter two to bring his point home. Here he speaks hypothetically to his audience which would have been mainly elect people, but Paul could not be sure that there were not professing, superficial believers attending.

So he uses general terms to apply to both. God's kindness is meant to lead to repentance. Someone with a hard impenitent heart will store up wrath to judgment (v5, 8,9). Others, who respond to God's kindness, repent and show the fruits of repentance in good works, and have eternal life (v7, 10).

Verse 5 is thus a warning to this mixed assembly. The passage cannot be said to only apply to the reprobate as verse 7 and 10 are clearly about the elect. Long-suffering here, therefore, also refers to the elect and not the reprobate.

In any case, it is not said that the wicked experience God's long-suffering, rather they despise it. If one tries to make this verse speak of a graciousness of God towards the wicked, then we have a gigantic failure on the part of God, for this goodness is despised. God extends goodness, and long-suffering in grace to reprobates and they spurn him. In other words this makes men stronger than God. To make this passage speak of grace to reprobates, one has to be an Arminian.

<sup>8</sup> "Long-suffering" as used in the NT.

In the NT the equivalent Greek word used for the Old Testament  (see footnote 7 on page 27) is

Strong's 3115 μακροθυμία (*makrothumia*; pronounce it as mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah) • from the same as 3116; TDNT - 4:374,550; n f • AV - long-suffering 12, patience 2; 14 • 1) patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance 2) patience, forbearance, long-suffering, slowness in avenging wrongs • For Synonyms see entry 5861. [Thayer]

μακροθυμία noun dat fem sing, from μακροθυμία, ας, ἡ as a state of emotional quietness in the face of unfavorable circumstances *patience, long-suffering*; (1) as patience under trial *endurance, steadfastness* (HE 6.12); (2) as constraint exercised toward others *forbearance, patience* (2C 6.6); (3) as God's constraint of his wrath *long-suffering, forbearance* (RO 2.4). [Friberg's Lexicon].

The word used in the LXX is very similar : μακρόθυμος adj nom sing masc.

Rm 9:22

*What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured<sup>9</sup> with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:*

*23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

We cannot avoid the connection of the word *long-suffering* to ‘vessels of wrath fitted to destruction’. However, the emphasis is upon God *enduring* the vessels of wrath not his patience. ‘Long-suffering’ here is incidental, and explanatory, to God’s enduring. One could make the case that the sense is rather: in being patiently merciful towards the elect, waiting for the full number to be complete, God endures the wicked. In order to be long-suffering to the elect, God must also tolerate the wicked for a season because the elect live in the same world as the wicked.

The overriding use of the term is in connection with the elect, as we have seen. This is logical. If God is going to show mercy, love and grace to rebellious sinners (unregenerate elect), then he must be long-suffering and slow to anger regarding their sin until they are completely righteous. What is significant is that this term is a simple description of God’s patience. It carries no thought of grace or loving disposition on its own. Its connection to the words mercy etc. show that it is a characteristic of God’s attitude towards the elect, but on its own it has no other content than ‘slow to anger’.

In this sense, God, who has decreed to delay pouring out his wrath upon the wicked until the day of judgment, maintains an attitude of long-suffering towards reprobates throughout history. This is just a simple fact. It does not mean that God is also gracious towards them, rather, the penalty of judgment hangs over sinners, who are condemned already, throughout their lives.

Consequently, although one can interpret all the occurrences of the word *long-suffering* as applicable only to the elect, it seems prudent to suggest that, at least in a couple of passages it has a restricted meaning to the wicked. We can, therefore, state the following:

- God is long-suffering, slow to anger, especially towards the elect. This is the overwhelming use of the term in scripture.
- God is also patient towards sinners in that judgment is deferred. One or possibly two texts support this.
- There is no sense of grace being extended to the reprobate in the use of this word.

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<sup>9</sup> **Endure** = (5342) ἠνεγκεν verb ind. aor. act. 3rd per sing, from φέρω ( phero) • a primary verb TDNT - 9:56,1252; v • essentially: to carry some burden, to bear, to bear up i.e. uphold, endure, to bear patiently or spare one (abstain from punishing or destroying). This word only appears 5 times in the Greek NT, four of them translated as ‘brought’ (e.g. Acts 4:37).

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## Conclusion

The overwhelming and inescapable conclusion of our study is that the term *wicked*, in the Old Testament covenant promises, refers to the reprobate and the term *righteous* refers to the elect in Christ. I will close with two final considerations from Scripture.

**Prov 16:4**

*The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. (RSV)*

*The Lord has made all for himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom. (NKJV)*

If the Lord made the wicked for the purpose of condemnation, then it would be totally contradictory for him to show love to them and give them hope. If the lord made the wicked for damnation, he is not going to promise them life. This is why there is no clear reference to a love or grace of God to the reprobate. God's promises are based upon election. God's blessing is for the elect in Christ alone.

*8 When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel (or 'sons of God').*

*9 For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Deut 32:8-9*

When God planned the division of the nations and the separation of mankind, his foundation for so doing was in direct connection with the elect. The Lord's dealings with men are on the basis of his love for his own people, his inheritance, his offspring. The Lord does not deal with reprobate men in grace, he deals providentially with all on the basis of his plan for his own children.

This song of Moses is important and referred to in Revelation. The same concept is seen in Paul's words about Jesus:

*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

*Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

*Eph 1:22-23*

Jesus is head over all things, including reprobate men, in order to complete God's purposes concerning the church, the elect. God's compassionate provision to all is part of his plan to bring all the elect to repentance and maturity. To the sons of God

this is grace, to the wicked it is undeserved compassion. God does not deal with the reprobate in the same way He deals with His own family.

**APPENDIX**  
**Two Types Of Men**  
**A Sample Seen Throughout Scripture**

Scripture repeatedly draws a comparison between two sorts of men, variously delineated as: ELECT / REPROBATE, NEW NATURE / OLD NATURE, LOVED / HATED, GOOD / EVIL, RIGHTEOUS / WICKED.

*This is a fact which cannot be ignored. God's dealings are quite different with each group.*

**Ps 5**

The righteous are those that love God - v11-12

The wicked (NB quoted by Paul in Rm 3) v4-9.

**Ps 11:5-7**

The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked, and his soul hates him that loves violence. On the wicked he will rain coals of fire ... For the Lord is righteous, he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.

**Ps 50:7,16**

Hear O my people .....etc.

But to the wicked God says .....etc.

**Ps 58:3-11**

The wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent ...He (God) shall take them away ... in his living and burning wrath. The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance.

**Ps 106:5**

I may see the prosperity of thy chosen ones .....that I may glory with thy heritage.

**Prov 3:33**

The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesses the habitation of the just.

**Prov 11:24**

One man gives freely yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.

**Eccles 2:26**

For to the man who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he gives the work of gathering and heaping, only to give to the one who pleases God.

**Eccles 3:17**

God will judge the righteous and the wicked.

**Rm 9:13**

Jacob I have loved, but Esau I hated

**Rm 9:15**

I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

**Rm 9:21-23**

Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use ... vessels of wrath made for destruction ... vessels of mercy ... prepared beforehand for glory.

**2 Cor 2:15-16**

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a savour of death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.

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*We are extremely grateful to Mr. Fahy for allowing us to print the foregoing tract. If readers wish to furnish themselves with copies of the same they should apply to Mr. Fahy at the address above, where he also carries a range of similar most helpful materials in booklet form. Editor.*

**See also:** “*Does God Love Everyone*” by Paul Fahy, printed by permission in the British Reformed Journal Issues Nos. 15 and 16 and available as a booklet from the author at the above address.

**The Antiquity  
of  
INFANT BAPTISM  
and  
HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS.  
BEING AN ANTHOLOGY OF EXTRACTS FROM:  
WALL'S "HISTORY OF INFANT BAPTISM"  
AND:  
PROF. WILSON OF BELFAST:  
"INFANT BAPTISM:  
A SCRIPTURAL SERVICE"**

"We also who by Him have had access to God, have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision, which Enoch, and those like him observed. **And we have received it by baptism**, by the mercy of God, because we were sinners: and it is enjoined to all persons to receive it by the same way."

(Justin Martyr: writing in approx. 135-140 AD. *Dialogue with Trypho* p. 59 Edit. Stephens 1551) (Cf. *Wall Op.cit.* Vol. 1 ch. 2: sect. 2).

**I**t is plain that this most ancient Father does not here speak of baptism being to Christians in the stead of circumcision: and the analogy between these two is one of the arguments used by the paedobaptists to prove that one (baptism) ought to be given to infants, as well as the other (circumcision) was. It is to the same sense, as is that saying of St Paul, where he calls baptism, with the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, which attends it, *the circumcision of Christ* (or as it would be more intelligibly rendered, *the Christian circumcision*), in these words: "In whom also ye are circumcised with circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him by baptism." For by those words, *the circumcision of Christ*, must be understood either that action by which Christ Himself in His infancy was circumcised: and it is no sense to say, that the Colossians were circumcised with that: or else, that circumcision which Christ has appointed, *the Christian circumcision*: and with that He says they were circumcised, being buried with Him by baptism. Only He, as well as Justin, refers both to the inward and outward part of baptism; whereof the inward part is done without hands: and accordingly the ancients were wont to call baptism,

“the circumcision done without hands” (Greek: περιτομήν ἀχειροποίητον) as will appear by some following quotations. So that it seems hard for the antipaedobaptists to maintain, as some of them do, that the Scripture and ancient Christians do not make any resemblance between these two sacraments.

The paraphrase given of this text of St Paul in the *Quest. ad Orthodox.*, ascribed to Justin Martyr, q.102, is this. The question there is, "Why, if circumcision were a good thing, do we not use it as well as the Jews did?" The answer is, "We are circumcised by baptism with Christ's circumcision," &c. And he brings this text for his proof.

*Justin Martyr /Apol. i. (vulgo 2da) prope ab initio.*

"Several persons among us of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who **were disciplined** [or made disciples] to Christ in their childhood, do continue uncorrupted " [or virgins]. (*Wall: Vol.1 ch.2 sect. 6*).

St Justin's word, "*were disciplined*", or, "*made disciples*", (Greek: ἐμαθητεύθησαν) is the very same word that had been used by St Matthew in expressing our Saviour's command, (Greek: μαθητεύσατε ) "*disciple [or, make disciples] all the nations*". And it was done to these persons, Justin says, in their childhood. So that whereas the antipaedobaptists do say, that when our Saviour bids the Apostles disciple the nations, baptising them, he cannot mean infants; because He must be understood to bid them baptise only such among the nations as could be made disciples: and infants, they say cannot be made disciples. They may perceive that in the sense in which Justin understood the word, they may be made disciples. And Justin wrote but ninety years after St Matthew, who wrote about fifteen years after Christ's ascension. And they that were seventy years old at this time must have been made disciples to Christ in their childhood (as he says they were) about thirty-six years after the ascension: that is, in the midst of the Apostles' times, and within twenty years after St Matthew's writing.

*Irenaeus : AGAINST HERESIES I. ii. c. xxxix. Speaking of Christ.*

*Lived approx. 115-190 or possibly 202 AD. A native of Asia Minor, he knew men who had known St. John. See also Dodwell's notes herein.....*

"Therefore as He was a Master, He had also the age of a Master. Not disdaining nor going in a way above human nature; nor breaking in His own person by the likeness that it has to Him. For He came to save all persons by Himself: all, I mean, who by Him are regenerated [or baptised] unto God; infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons. Therefore He went through the several ages: for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants: to little ones He was made a little one, sanctifying those of that

age; and also giving them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness; to youths He was a youth, &c." (*Wall: Vol. 1 ch.3, sect.2*).

This testimony, which reckons infants among those that are regenerated, is plain and full; provided the reader be one that is satisfied that the word *regeneration* does, in the usual phrase of those times, signify **Baptism**: and this cannot be doubted by any that are at all acquainted with the books of those ages. As for those that are not, I have already had occasion to refer them to the use of the Jews before and in Christ's time, and to some places of Scripture: and it may be worth the while to turn back to the passage of Justin Martyr last quoted (He lived but thirty or forty years before Irenaeus), and to observe how he uses the word. The reader will also see in almost all the passages that I shall have occasion to produce, the same use of the word constantly observed: that to say *regenerated* is with them as much as to say *baptised*.

At present, take these three evidences of it.

(1) Irenaeus himself uses it so in all other places of his book that I have ever observed: as for instance, l. iii. c. xix. where he is producing testimonies of Scripture concerning the Holy Spirit, he has this, " Et iterum, potestatem *regenerationis* in Deum demandans discipulis, dicebat eis," &c., (which when translated gives:) "And again, when He gave His disciples the commission of **regenerating** unto God, He said unto them, " Go and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Where the *commission of regenerating* plainly means the *commission of baptising*.

(2) There are several sayings both of the Latin and Greek Fathers, which do plainly show, that they not only used that word (*regenerate*) for baptism, but also that they so appropriated it to baptism, as to exclude any other conversion or repentance that is not accompanied with baptism, from being signified by it.

(3) When Irenaeus does here speak of *infants regenerated*, it is plain enough of itself, that they are not capable of regeneration in any other sense of the word, than as it signifies baptism: I mean the outward act of baptism accompanied with that grace or mercy of God whereby He admits them into covenant, though without any sense of theirs.

I shall in the places that I must cite henceforward, where we meet with the words *regeneratus*, *renatus*, &c., translate it *regenerated*, without any further explication; but the reader will find that he must understand by it *baptised*, or else that he will make no sense at all of the place.

Since this is the first express mention that we have met with of infants baptised, it is worth the while to look back, and consider how near this man was to the

Apostles' time. - Mr Dodwell, who has with the greatest care and skill computed his age, makes him to be born in the Apostolic Age, viz., the year after Christ's birth 97, four years before St John died; and that he was chosen Bishop of Lyons A.D. 167, which is after the Apostles sixty-seven. His proofs are too long to repeat here. So much is plain, that he wrote the book I here quote within eighty years after the Apostles, and that he was then a very old man. For he wrote the two first of his five books against heresies first, and published them; in which these words are: and he published his third book in the time of Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome, for he mentions him as then bishop.

In an age so nigh the Apostles, and in a place where one of them so lately lived, the Christians could not be ignorant what had been done in their time in a matter so public and notorious as is the baptising or not baptising of infants.

From the opposite end of the Mediterranean area, Alexandria in Egypt, the practice of Paedobaptism is attested by :

*Origen: 185-254 AD. Homilia 8 in Levit. c. xii*

"Hear David speaking: I was, says he, conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother bring me forth: showing that every soul that is born in the flesh is polluted with the filth of sin and iniquity: and that therefore that was said which we mentioned before; that none is clean from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day."

" Besides all this, let it be considered, what is the reason that whereas the baptism of the Church is given for forgiveness of sins, infants also are by the usage of the Church baptised: when if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them."

(Wall: Vol.1 ch.5 sect.1)

Again: *Origen: Homil. in Lucam 14*

"Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes frequent inquiries among the brethren. Infants are baptised for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins ? Or when have they sinned ? Or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to that sense that we mentioned even now: none is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth ? And it is for that reason because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptised."

(Wall: Vol.1 ch.5 sect.2).

And again: *Origen: Comment. Epist. ad Romanos lib. v.*

"For this also it was, that the Church had from the Apostles a tradition [or order] to give baptism even to infants. For they, to whom the divine mysteries were committed, knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit: by reason of which the body itself is also called the body of sin." (Wall: Vol.1 ch.5, sect. 3).

And from North Africa, the testimony of St. Cyprian and the Council of Carthage, AD 253.

*Cyprian: born approx. 200 AD, martyred 257 AD. Was baptized as an adult in approx. 245. His testimony in favour of Infant Baptism is therefore all the more significant, especially as it is part herewith of an Ecclesiastical Letter from the Council of Carthage: (Cf. Wall: Vol.1 ch.6, sect. 1).*

"This therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the assembly; that it is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God who is merciful and kind and affectionate to all. Which rule, as it holds for all; so we think it more especially to be observed in reference to infants and persons newly born: to whom our help and the divine mercy is rather to be granted, because by their weeping and wailing at their first entrance into the world, they do intimate nothing so much as that they implore compassion."

Referring to St. Cyprian, **St. Augustine** says:(Cf. Wall: Vol.1 ch. 6 sect.2).

In his *Ep. 28 ad Hieronymous*, he, speaking of some that taught that the body only, and not the soul, must suffer for original sin, says among other things this: "Blessed Cyprian, not making any new decree, but expressing the firm faith of the Church, in refuting those that thought a child must not be baptised before the eighth day, said (not that no flesh, but) that no soul must be lost."

### HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS

*Extracted from pages 517 - 523 in*

*"Infant Baptism: A Scriptural Service" by Prof. Wilson of Belfast (1848).*

**BAPTISM OF HOUSEHOLDS.** Acts xvi. 15, "She was baptized, *and her household.*" Acts. xvi. vv. 31, 33, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house.*" - "He was baptized, he and *all his* straightway." 1 Cor. i. 16, "I baptized also *the household* of Stephanus." Many a strong hand has been put forth to break the connection between household baptism, and infant baptism;-but that connection still remains in its strength, to bid defiance to fresh efforts, and guard the privileges of the helpless through coming generations. Let us briefly estimate the force of this important branch of the argument.

1. We do not build mainly on the fact of the households mentioned, but on the *common practice*, which is thereby clearly indicated. No one will assert that the New Testament contains a record of all the baptisms administered in the apostolic age. Its writers did not profess to make out a census of them. In instances unnumbered, individuals and families doubtless submitted to the ordinance, though no entry on the sacred page attests their dedication to a Saviour whom they loved. That this is true of households, the manner of the Scripture narrative evinces to the satisfaction of every candid mind. When the Philippian Jailer and *all his* were baptized, the writer

does not present it as an uncommon occurrence. When the ordinance was administered to Lydia and *her household*, we find no note of admiration. Nor is the baptism of *the household* of Stephanas referred to as a world's wonder. Baptists have attempted and failed to prove that in these families there were no infants. But had they even succeeded to their heart's wish, the broad and solid foundation of the argument would still have remained unshaken. They cannot, they will not, deny that the instances narrated form no more than a specimen of the households baptized before the close of apostolic labour.

To imagine then that in a very considerable number of families there were no infants is to trample upon the strongest probabilities, and to set experience and history at defiance. Dr. Carson admits "that there might have been infants" in the house of the jailer; and none, we presume, will affirm that there were no infants in any of the households baptized by the apostles and their fellow labourers. Whether such infants were admitted to baptism, or not, is matter for farther inquiry; but that they formed part of some of the baptized families is the dictate of experience and the necessary admission of candour.

2. The exclusion of infants from *household* baptisms is opposed to the current practice and language of the ancient economy. Dr. Carson can produce instances of the use of the term household, in which we must understand some members to be excepted. But he has not touched the analogy on which our present observation is founded. Through the entire history of the Old Testament church, *the accession of a HOUSEHOLD to the Lord's people necessarily included THE INFANTS of that household*. Infants were not excepted, when the initiatory rite of Judaism was administered to a household. Infants in common with their fathers were circumcised, and by the same observance incorporated with the great congregation. **Thus was established a current and well defined application of the term household.** Let a household be spoken of as connecting themselves with the church of God, and all who understood the language, would instantly learn that the step thus taken applied to the infant of eight days as imperatively as to him who had attained manhood's prime. Now the *baptism* of a household is an analogous case. It embraces the formation of the first link of connection with God's heritage, by means of the initiatory rite of Christianity, and the analogy pleads strongly against the exclusion of infants. Nay it is plain from the sense of the term, combined with prior usage, that they must be included, unless the author of our religion has interfered by way of prohibition. The baptism of households necessarily involves the baptism of infants, and secures their admission to the Christian church; and their claim cannot be righteously barred, except by the direct authority of the King of Zion.

3. We maintain that Christ's authority, put forth in the commission, does not exclude infants from the baptized households. According to Dr. Carson, the com-

mission exercises a limiting and controlling power over the households. The commission he regards as a "sure commentary on the households of Lydia, Stephanas, and the jailer." From this appeal to the modifying force of the commission, we may infer that the households, if permitted the exercise of their own native freedom, would inevitably declare in favour of the claim of infants to Christian baptism. **Leave the term households in possession of the application with which usage had invested it, and in vain will you attempt to exclude infants from its accredited extension.** Dr. Carson, as an enlightened exegete, felt this; and hence a continual reference to the commission for help against the households, pervades this part of his discussion. Indeed the only strong point which he has made, in combating the argument derived from household baptism, rests on the alleged fact that the commission *requires the baptized households to clear themselves of infants*. The commission, in his view, makes the exception, the commission authoritatively excludes infants, the commission cannot tolerate a little one as part of a baptized household. To this whole procedure we object as opposed to sound interpretation. The *practice* is uniformly regarded as a commentary on the *law*. Dr. Carson, reversing this order, makes the law a commentary on the practice. He finds the baptism of households by the apostles, and these households, he admits, may have contained infants; but the infants, he alleges, could not have been baptized, because the commission restricts the ordinance to believers. What is this, but to destroy the record of apostolic baptisms, as an independent testimony? Why summon this witness at all, if he must be compelled to sustain *Dr. Carson's view* of the commission?—For it manifestly comes to this—The author asserts that the commission restricted the baptism of households to believers,—by which we are simply to understand, that *he so interprets* the commission as to exclude infants from all interest in its provisions.

Taking higher ground, however, we maintain that Dr. Carson's restriction is not in the commission. We have carefully examined that document, in the light of facts and testimonies on several of which he has not touched, and our deliberate finding is that "there is room for infants in the commission." If our judgment is sustained by the evidence, we have taken off the *high pressure* by which Dr. Carson sought to force the *escape* of infants from the baptized households. Our view of the commission secures for the *households* perfect liberty to bear their plain testimony without fear or favour; and in that spontaneous and unprejudiced testimony we discover triumphant support to the cause of infant baptism.

4. Household baptism, compared with apostolic baptisms in general, sustains the claims of infants. The Baptist cannot prove that there were no infants among the three thousand baptized in one day at Jerusalem. The Paedobaptist will admit that they were probably all adults, chiefly because the audience appears to have been composed entirely of adults, most of whom moreover were not citizens. Preceded by the preaching and the professed acceptance of the Gospel, baptism is adminis-

tered to adults in attendance on the public ministry of the apostles. The same Gospel enters the bosoms of families, and as the cheering result, whole households, comprehending infants and adults, are baptized. No exception is stated in regard to infants, and Dr. Carson has failed to force an exception by the power of the commission. The adults composing the public audience were baptized; the infants and adults of the household were baptized. Is not this state of the case in perfect keeping with the doctrine of infant baptism? The people who assemble on public occasions are adults, and on a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, they are baptized; and when the Gospel enters the domestic scene, instantly we are supplied with proof that Christianity does not yield to Patriarchism or Judaism in tender regard for the little ones. *Households* are baptized. The Gospel church, like its divine founder,—the mediator of the new covenant on which it is established,—affectionately receives infants into its arms and blesses them. It has room for the *infant* Isaiahs, and Jeremiah's, and John the baptists, and Timothys, whom the Baptist excludes from the congregation of the Lord, leaving them for years in the same ecclesiastical position with the masses of the heathen world.

Consider the meaning which an assembly of Jews would attach to the words: *"The promise is unto you, and to your children...."* ACTS 2:39. On a point of vital moment, these words identify the Gospel with the Abrahamic covenant. They echo the great federal promise, *"I will be a God unto thee, AND TO THY SEED."* How would Jews understand, how **MUST** they have understood --such language? In all ages their children had been associated with themselves in covenant relation to God: and now when Christ's apostles *"endowed with power from on high"* publish the salvation of the Gospel covenant, one of its first gracious utterances maintains the connection between parents and children. If this language were intended to exclude infants, it appears deceptive, and in the circumstances, must have conveyed an erroneous impression. **WHEREAS**, if the apostle designed to include infants, he could not easily have selected better terms for that purpose. *"The Promise is unto you and to your children"* the Jew could not understand it to the exclusion of infants, without the entire reversal of habits of thought and association, which had grown up with the covenanted people from the days of Abraham.

*Prof. Wilson on Infant Baptism page 505.*

# Portraits of Faithful Saints

A Review and Appreciation  
of the book by Prof. Herman Hanko

by  
Mr. Raymond Kemp.

*"Portraits of Famous Saints"* ISBN 0-916206-60-2  
Reformed Free Publishing Association.

When originally asked to review this book for the *British Reformed Journal*, this request met with an immediate decline. Your reviewer had a general knowledge of the book's interesting content; known, liked, and appreciated, the author, because as a student of literature, he has long admired the prose which profuses from the Hanko pen. Why refuse the review? Whilst the reasons for the original articles in *The Standard Bearer* were clear, initially it was neither immediately or abundantly obvious what the actual purpose was in the publication of eclectic anthology. But there was something else. We were aware that in existence were a number of Revd Herman Hocksema's (unpublished) *Sermons on Romans*, and we considered this venture more worthy. However, this arbitrary and unwarrantable creation of a hierarchy with the canons of Reformed literature was soon jettisoned. The reason lay in the excellent content and underlying message of *Portraits*.

It is a volume which sets forth the plight of God's people in the face of suffering. From the very first Portrait of Polycarp in the early church to George Ophoff in the 1950's, Prof. Hanko's saints suffered under the whip of persecution and the melting sun of marginalisation and opposition. Thus, in a sense, bare history recedes to reveal human hardship, human trial, and, ultimately, human impotence in the face of a Holy, Sovereign, and Graciously loving God.

The book's fifty-two chapters are organised into a septuplicate division of church history, each section introduced by a time chart detailing the names, dates, and church events of the period.

**Part One, *The Ancient Period*** (100-750 A.D.), deals with such men as Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Anthony, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Augustine, Patrick, Columba, and Boniface. Therefore, the concentration is widespread, covering God's dealings with His people in North Africa, Europe and Asia. As an Irishman, your reviewer warmly recommends the chapter on Patrick, whilst we were not aware that, mythically, Patrick banished frogs (which we can refute as well as snakes), we gladly welcome the debunking of the myth that Patrick worked under Papal authority, hence our disappointment that some of the accompanying pictures (including Patrick) have a Romanist tinge. They may have been better omitted altogether. Initially, the inclusion of the hermit Anthony, Ascetic among Ascetics, was surpris-

ing because of his self-imposed exile and self-inflicted, physical punishment in an attempt to conquer the flesh and the world. But as Prof.Hanko argues, some men in God's church belong to the roster of the heroes of faith only because their witness, though in some respects wrong, is important (p.22). We agree. Anthony played an important part in the Arian controversy, declaring it no better than heathenism. We agree with Anthony. This was a period of rampant heresy and corruption. Even the great Tertullian ended his last days in the Montanist sect, but, as Prof.Hanko correctly notes, Tertullian was a Theologian of the Trinity. This, of course, was a time when Arians corrupted the text of Scripture, which has serious ramifications for us today. The two main Greek manuscripts (א and B, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) underpinning most modern Bible translations (such as the NIV) undermine the deity of Christ. For example, I Tim. 3:16, "**God** was manifest in the flesh" has been changed in the Westcott-Hort text to, "**He** who was manifest in the flesh" (RV). The implication is: He was one, albeit the highest, aspect of godliness, a pivotal argument in unitarian philosophy. Interestingly, the Watchtower Society (JW's) have used for their own Greek text the printing plates of the W-H text! If Prof. Hanko ever decides to publish a book of heretics, we may perhaps learn something of the root cause of textual corruption.

**Part Two** unfolds the *Medieval Period* (750-1517) including Alcuin, Gotteschalk, Anslem, Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Wycliffe and Hus, and a treatment on The Waldensian movement. We may wonder why Catherine of Siena, a Mystic, is included, and although Francis of Assisi, founder of the famous order, did much to challenge church abuses, nevertheless his order was later a major counter-reformation force. We are treated to an excellent review of the reforming pivots of the period, Wycliffe and Hus, and the author rightly gives these great figures a place in the period's roll of honour. However, this section brought home to this reviewer the fact that God has providentially preserved the faith. Long before Calvin and Beza there was Gotteschalk (806-868), also an ardent defender of the doctrines of grace, and Martyr for Predestination. How many of us knew this? Thanks to *Portraits* we now do.

**Parts Three and Four** cover *The Reformation Period* on the Continent and Britain (1517-1600). The Continent receives excellent coverage, and it is especially refreshing in these days of ecumenism and apologetic Protestantism that Zwingli, Luther and Calvin are rightly praised and not forgotten, and that other notables are also included. We have Bucer, the Protestant facilitator; Peter Martyr; Bullinger; Beza; Ursinus and Olevianus (authors of the Heidelberg Catechism); de Bres (author of the Belgic Confession); William the Silent, Peter Datheen; the Two Fredricks. The portraits of the lesser known reformers are what makes this book a worthwhile companion to Wylie's *History of Protestantism* and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. All these tomes have one thing in common, they reveal the horror and antichristianity of the Church of Rome. For the Protestants, "The Inquisition ordered that their tongues be screwed with metal screws to their jaw bones and the whole cauterised

with a hot iron so that the swelling would make it impossible for them to speak.” (p.226).

The British section contains such figures as Tyndale, Knox, Latimer (but not Ridley), Cranmer, and Andrew Melville, (Father of Presbyterianism). These are the prominent figures of the British Reformation, though, of course, many could be added to the list.

**Parts Five and Six** cover the *British and Dutch Post-Reformation Era* (1600-1920). Biographies of the covenanter, Alexander Henderson, Rutherford, the martyrdom of the two Margarets (MacLoughlin and Wilson), and Bunyan, is arguably a weak representation of Britain's post-reform movement. We could well have had a chapter on one of the greatest theological influences on the Westminster Assembly (1643), James Usher, Archbishop of Armagh, whose Irish Articles are almost quoted verbatim in the Confession of Faith. Whilst many consider the British delegation at the Synod of Dordt (1618) to have been weak, yet a mention of Joseph Hall (1574-1656), Bishop of Exeter, author of *Roma Irreconibilis* or *No Peace with Rome* and proud wearer of the Dordt Medal (which appears in all his portraits) would have been beneficial. Surprisingly absent is one who just makes the period. William Perkins (1558-1602) is immensely important in establishing a link between Beza and the Westminster Confession of Faith, although not as R.T. Kendall *et al* believe in introducing hyper-calvinism to confessional Presbyterianism. A convinced paedo-baptist, this reviewer would nevertheless have made place for Dr. John Gill (1697-1771), Bible commentator, scholar, and ardent defender of the doctrines of grace. If our criticism is that this section needs strengthening by additional material to supplement already excellent and eye-opening portraits, then **Part Six** dealing with the *Dutch post-Reformation* is worth the price of the entire book. What do we really know about Gomarus, Ames (the English Puritan), Maccovius, Voetius, Cocceius, William III, Prince of Orange, Hendrik DeCock or Abraham Kuyper? The generally favourable account of William III is confusing in its assertion that in Ireland, James II had successfully defended Londonderry and Enniskillen. He did not. Enniskillen was defended by the heroic Western Protestant Army which swept North-eastwards gathering protestants from Irish counties, Sligo, Rosscommon and Leitrim. James's army did not even successfully besiege Enniskillen, whilst the Protestant inhabitants of Londonderry withstood James's blockade and siege of the city for 105 days. Their staple diet at the end was the sewer rat. The account of the Englishman, William Ames, sub-headed as *A Puritan in the Netherlands*, is excellent. Not only did Ames study under that doughty Calvinist, William Perkins, at Cambridge, but later would serve as assistant to Bogerman, President of the Synod of Dordt, and Professor of Divinity in Friesland. His *Marrow of Theology* (1620) was at one stage quoted more prolifically than either Calvin or Luther. Whilst your reviewer found interesting the biography of De Cock, leader of the Afscheiding (1834), or Secession in the Dutch church, most people will be more interested in

Abraham Kuyper, leader of the later secession, *The Doleantie*, or *Aggrieved Ones* (1886). As far as we know only two biographies of Kuyper exist in English, one of those only recently published; therefore, this treatment of the not uncontroversial Preacher, Reformer, Politician, Educator and Theologian, is significant. In his university days Kuyper was influenced by modernism, but as Prof. Hanko notes, "God governed events. Kuyper's surrender to modernism was not complete" (p.360). Here is revealed the thrust of Hanko's book: God's providential dealings with His people, his church. In many respects Kuyper is a pivotal figure in the body reformed. He more than any other popularised the theory of common grace. An interesting but incredulous assertion is Kuyper's belief in the antithesis, the separation of the church from the world (p.372), yet Kuyper would resign his ministerial charge, enter politics, and his anti-revolutionary party, under his premier-ship, would unite with Roman Catholics in the governance of Holland (1901-05). What happened to antithesis? Prof. Hanko sees the culprit as the doctrine of common grace which paved the way for co-operation between believers and unbelievers in many areas of life (p.372). Suffice to note, the nemesis of common grace.

**Part Seven** deals with *20th Century Reformers in America* (1920-1965), and includes one Presbyterian and two from the Protestant Reformed Churches in America: J. Gresham Machen, Herman Hoeksema and George Ophoff. There is a good balance here, those from a PRC background will doubtlessly find some profit in reading about Presbyterianism through Machen's biography, and those of a Presbyterian persuasion (or non-Americans) will learn much about Dutch Reformed theology and the doctrinal instigation of the Protestant Reformed Churches through the portraits of Hoeksema and Ophoff. In all the profiles, one lesson pervades, that is, God's Providential care of His church. The sufferings and trials faced by all three men for the sake of orthodoxy was borne in the knowledge that God was working all things for the good of His people (Rom.8:28). When old school Presbyterianism united with new school Presbyterianism, and gave the accepting nod to Finneyism, it was God's plan. Westminster Theological Seminary and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was that plan. Modernism is, as Prof. Hanko notes, born of Arminianism. Modernism, very closely, is born from a teaching of common grace, or the belief that man is not depraved. Dr Ralph Janssen denied the inspiration of Scripture, and used common grace to introduce higher critical methods to Calvin Seminary, against which Hoeksema fought with fervour. Though we have read the full biography of Hoeksema, *Therefore, Have I Spoken*, nevertheless Prof. Hanko's account made points which were absent in the fuller account. For example, Hoeksema's theological pedigree was twofold. For he was an heir to the piety of *De Afscheiding* and to the doctrines of sovereign and particular grace in the Kuyper followers (p.397). He was steeped in church reformation, an apposite pedigree for perhaps the greatest American theologian of the Twentieth Century, as is demonstrated by his groundbreaking reformed contribution to a unilateral understanding of the covenant. It was refreshing, too, to see Hoeksema's co-professor at the

Seminary, George Ophoff, given considerable recognition. He has been almost forgotten. His writings should be collected and published, and my reading of this account has made your reviewer more determined in this belief. Ophoff, and not Hoeksema, recognised that the PR Churches of the 1950's were lapsing into the error of a conditional covenant as espoused by Dr Klaas Schilder. Prof. Hanko's insights are worth their weight in gold, because through all the sufferings and human weaknesses God in His sovereignty used these men for the glorification of His church. Thus, this book is an excellent accompaniment to Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and Wylie's *History of Protestantism*.

Stylistically, Mr Jeff Steenholdt shows no inconsiderable skill in designing a professional and modern image to embellish Hanko's work, which is greatly aided by an excellent index. However, the typographical layout of the book with its unjustified right margin brought us back to the bad old days of manually typed, untidy scripts. This does not look good. (The Publishers have adopted this procedure with Engelsma's, *Marriage: The Mystery of Christ and the Church*, 1998, but not with Hanko's, *Ready to Give an Answer*, 1997). Perhaps presumptuously, we issue a warning. Hoeksema's *Reformed Dogmatics* and *Sermons on Romans* are shortly to be republished and published respectively, and the format used recently shall be wholly inappropriate for such important and academic works. The serious acceptance of a theological position may be dependent on presentation. We suggest an appearance not far removed from the RFPA's best presented tomes, *The Voice of Our Fathers* and *When I Survey*.

## Correspondence

**From: Mr. Mark Punford,  
BRF member.**

Apartment 5, 1 and 2 High Street, via Fish  
Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY 1 1SP  
12/11/00

Dear Editor,

I was not a little horrified to learn of the curiousest and curiousest changes overtaking both the Fellowship and the Journal. Someone somewhere has obviously managed to think of six impossible things before breakfast!! Surely the changes in the organisational structure result from motives not in keeping with the spirit and original intention behind the inauguration of the BRF? Moreover, they would appear to be illegal changes that take no account of proxy votes for involuntary absentees. How come a resolution of amendment has been passed by a committee member? And how come such an amendment involves a tightening of the grounds for access to membership contrary to the original

proposed loosening of which members were apprised prior to the conference I was sad to have had (unavoidably) to miss?

Whatever one's views on membership requirement, the tightening was not preceded by an official memo to members not in attendance. Worst of all, the tightening requires the logical impossibility of contemporaneous subscription to the statements NOT common to the *Three Forms of Unity* and *Westminster Standards* which latter incidentally, are compromised with respect to the decrees and the Amyraldian influences.

To crown it all, the British Reformed Journal, an excellent semi-technical journal, popular with many thoughtful Christians across the globe, is now to be illegally replaced by a virtual penny dreadful replete with youth and fun for all the family pages, yet stealing the highly inappropriate name for such trivia from the beloved journal it has conveniently ousted. One does not need to be a prophet to predict that you will lose

many subscribers to gain only those who like their theology "*Living Bible*" or "*Daily Tabloid*" Style. Just who are all these people who want a dumbed down rag-mag? Surely not the original founders of the Fellowship? What if the majority who do not want these changes only did not vote due to the non existence of proxy voting, so that a minority got their way? This is surely an illegal alteration contrary to the spirit of the Fellowship. It can only be a politically motivated expediency manoeuvre as no one in any of the major theological factions would want a dumbed-down magazine, however much it might promote their particular hobby horse. There is no other comparable academic journal in philistine Britain coming from an orthodox High Calvinistic perspective and to destroy it for the sake of a reformed ho ho ! version of "*Buzz*" is, in my view, criminal. Forever we hear grumbles in modern Christendom to the effect that the King James Version or this book or that journal is too difficult, but as the Marxist historian Christopher Hill pointed out, the common man had no problem in Bunyan's Day due to the quality of the material on which they were raised.

Around the bonfire plain folk met for in depth bible studies and sophisticated debate. One should educate UP not DOWN. Far more educated then were they than now. Imagine someone complaining, to the editor of "*Mind*" or some other learned journal that it was too difficult or that it ought to contain youth pages and quizzes etc !!!

In the light of these considerations, if these insane decisions cannot be lawfully reversed via an extraordinary meeting being convened then I urge the formation of the British Reformed Journal and Fellowship (continuing). I, and many others, have benefitted enormously from the Fellowship and Journal without which I would still be believing in common grace knowing nothing of the historical origins or debates surrounding this heresy largely imbibed by default under a cloak of apparent orthodoxy. Think also of the work yet to be done in helping the myriad devotees of moderate, paradoxical, double reference atonement theorising, four -point and other calvinists-so-called, to come to the full orb'd truth and to leave behind their common grace and hyper-Spurgeonism and their blue-pencilled Pinkism, Fullerism, and I don't know what else . No profound journal spells no profound witness or contending for the

faith once delivered to the saints. I shall laugh at the new magazine and then toss it aside in disgust . How about you unwilling editor?

### Editor's Response:

First, this editor was always "unwilling", and originally only took up the position in 1994 because no-one else would touch it.

Regarding the "tightening" of the Doctrinal Basis, a rider clause now footnotes Clause 2 of the Basis, in an attempt to obviate the problems Mr. Punford and others have found. Clause 2 itself, was devised by a non-BRF member in private correspondence to Allen Baird, then picked up and utilized last-minute by Committee member John Clarke as an amendment to the Committee's recommendations, a move which involved him in effectively dissenting from the Committee's recommendations, which as a Committee member he could not legally do. I myself had previously resigned from the Committee in order to propose amendments or outright oppose the new proposed Constitution, and to avoid being forcibly bound to the majority position on the Committee. It was Mr. Clarke who emphasised to me that this was the rule on May 19th, as a result of which I resigned.

As to the absence of right to proxy voting, I do not know whether such is legal or not. But it meant that out of about 60 BRF members, only about 20 were able to get to the Biannual General Meeting, and the new Constitution won the day 14-6. Now, up to four members, who to my knowledge did not want the changes, were unable to be present due to unavoidable exigencies. If granted a proxy vote the result would have been 14-10, and the proposed changes would have failed to carry with the necessary 2 thirds majority. Hence the new set-up is in position by a whisker of a default.

The new BRJ has to reflect the changes, hence its totally new style and orientation, as it will now aim at a more popular market, and has to compete with a plethora of similar-content magazines in that realm, whereas hitherto the old BRJ has been sole occupant of a "niche" market. Several dismayed and disappointed folk have already resigned membership or cancelled subscriptions and donations to the BRF and BRJ. The new Council and its sub-committees face a big challenge in the months to come.

# British Reformed Fellowship

Founded in 1990 by a group of Reformed Christians concerned for the defence of the Historic Reformed Faith in the British Isles

## SECRETARY:

## Secretarial Office

To which all subscriptions should be sent for membership in the British Reformed Fellowship and for the British Reformed Journal, and any other correspondence not concerned with matters for printing in the Journal.

## Doctrinal Basis of the British Reformed Fellowship

1) The Divine inspired, infallible, and inerrant Holy Scriptures

2) "I delight in the fact that the doctrinal foundation of the British Reformed Fellowship is the testimony of historic, Reformed Orthodoxy, especially as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Confession of Faith. I myself stand squarely and without equivocation\* within that same glorious tradition of the Reformed churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and make their confession my confession. As such I also therefore repudiate and renounce as unbiblical the distinctive tenets of the historical manifestations of:

Romanism, Erastianism, Arianism, Socinianism, Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, Arminianism, Amyraldianism, Universalism, Anabaptism, Immersionism, Antipaedobaptism, Perfectionism, Pentecostalism, Charismaticism, Antinomianism, Higher Criticism, Evolutionism, and Barthianism.

Against These serious departures from God's holy and infallible Word, I will endeavour, by the grace of God and according to my gifts and calling, to promote the doctrines of historic Reformed Orthodoxy in word and deed, and to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and all to the glory of Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour."

*\* The BRF council do not interpret this to mean a formal subscription to every clause in the confessions.*

## British Reformed Fellowship General Council

Mr. Jonathan McAuley (*Chairman*);

Mr. Paul Hayden, (*Treasurer*);

Mr. John Clarke (*Conference Secretary*);

Mr. Hugh Williams (*Journal editor*).

## **British Reformed Fellowship**

### **Aims and Objectives**

- 1. To promote knowledge of the Reformed Faith as is defined in the Doctrinal Basis through the publication of a quarterly journal (British Reformed Journal) and by organising a biannual national family conference and other conferences and lectures as opportunities arise, through media, Internet and any lawful means.**
- 2. To facilitate the networking of Reformed Christians scattered throughout the British Isles and to enable opportunities for supporting and communicating with one another.**
- 3. To promote Reformed causes such as Christian Education, Christian Benevolence, Biblical Ecumenism and fellowship throughout the British Isles.**
- 4. To provide a source of advice, information and support to Reformed Christians who are living and working in isolation. To provide practical answers to difficult questions arising among Reformed Christians isolated from fellowship.**