

A GENERATION LOST

By: Dalton A. Abshire, Sr.

Deut 6:1-8

Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

Why are we losing so many of our Baptist youth today? The answer to this question can be stated in one word; THEOLOGY. And, of course, the system of theology to which we acquiesce determines our doctrine. And our doctrine greatly influences our conduct as Christians. The system of theology we follow determines things such as: what church we attend, what philosophies our children are taught, what colleges they will attend, who they will marry, etc. Knowing this to be true, we can accurately link the problems of our youth today back to theology.

Now, I would not suppose to argue that the modern day Baptist fundamentalist do not make every effort to teach principles of godliness (as they interpret them) to their youth. I do not know of a group that places more emphasis on standards than they. Still, the majority of young people in our Baptist churches fall away from their church as soon as they reach eighteen years of age; why? Why are they falling away if we indeed are teaching them principles from God's Word? If we are instilling the correct theology into their hearts, why are they falling away into worldliness, or in some cases apostasy?

There would be many reasons that we could cite as to the cause of this; however, I will focus on what I believe to be the main contributor to this problem. Theology is the key. There are two main theological disciplines in Christianity today, Calvinism and Arminianism. Today many of our Baptist churches have become infiltrated with the theological system known as Arminianism. Arminianism is a system of Christian doctrine advocated by Jakobus Arminius and codified later by his disciple Simon Episcopius. There are five main tenets in Arminianism:

- 1) God elects or reprobates on the basis of foreseen faith or unbelief,*
- 2) Christ died for all men and for every man, although only believers are saved,*
- 3) Man is so depraved that divine grace is necessary unto faith or any good deed,*
- 4) This grace may be resisted,*

5) *Whether all who are truly regenerate will certainly persevere in the faith is a point which needs further investigation*

The modern fundamental Baptist version of this system of theology assumes the position that man is the final determiner in his own salvation. Ultimately, it is not the work of Christ at Calvary that saves the soul of man; it is man's willful acceptance of this that empowers Christ's death. This system of theology insists that without the self-initiated cooperation of the individual, Christ's death serves no purpose and accomplishes nothing. This theology postures the Almighty Creator God as one who is helpless, waiting to see if I will receive Him or not; powerless to save me until I am ready to be saved. It places more authority in my own conscience will than in the sovereign Will of God. It makes the Will of God subject to the will of man. This theology, while it gives lip service to the Will of God, implies that man's will, at the very least, equals or even supersedes the will of God in salvation. This is the only conclusion that can be drawn when one's theology states that man has the right (by virtue of his own will) to resist the Will of God. This is not historical Baptist theology; it is, in fact, tenet number four of the Arminian doctrine.

Furthermore, this system of theology supposes that faith is a separate and independent act of man, as stated in the first tenet. This position must be concluded since the Arminian states that God elects on the basis of foreknowledge of the faith we will (in the future) demonstrate. Never mind that scripture states it is God that gives men faith unto salvation (Eph 2:8). What did our Baptist forefathers believe concerning this matter? Consider the commentary notes of John Gill; an English Baptist scholar, and pastor of the *Strict Baptist Church* in Southwark, England, 1719-1770; the same church which became known as the New Park Street Chapel and was pastored by Charles H. Spurgeon, 1854-1892:

through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; salvation is through faith, not as a cause or condition of salvation, or as what adds anything to the blessing itself; but it is the way, or means, or instrument, which God has appointed, for the receiving and enjoying it, that so it might appear to be all of grace; and this faith is not the produce of man's free will and power, but it is the free gift of God; and therefore salvation through it is consistent with salvation by grace; since that itself is of grace, lies entirely in receiving grace and gives all the glory to the grace of God: the sense of this last clause may be, that salvation is not of ourselves; it is not of our desiring nor of our deserving, nor of our performing, but is of the free grace of God:

But one may argue, "That is just one man; what about all the other Baptists?" Well, see for yourself the historic position of Baptists as outlined in the most prominent Baptist Statements of Faith going back 363 years:

THE LONDON CONFESSION OF FAITH, 1644

Article 3

That God hath decreed in himself from everlasting touching all things, effectually to work and dispose them according to the counsel of his own will, to the glory of His name; in which decree appeareth His wisdom, constancy, truth, and faithfulness; Wisdom is that whereby He contrives all things; Constancy is that whereby the decree of God remains always immutable; Truth is that whereby he declares that alone which

he hath decreed, and though His sayings may seem to sound sometimes another thing, yet the sense of them doth always agree with the decree; Faithfulness is that whereby He effects that He hath decreed, as He hath decreed. And touching His creature man, God had in Christ before the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of His will, foreordained some men to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of His grace, leaving the rest in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His justice.

Article 5

All mankind being thus fallen, and become altogether dead in sins and trespasses, and subject to the eternal wrath of the great God by transgression; yet the elect, which God hath loved with an everlasting love, are redeemed, quickened, and saved, not by themselves, neither by their own works, lest any man should boast himself, but wholly and only by God of His free grace and mercy through Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that as it is written, He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord.

THE MIDLAND CONFESSION OF FAITH, 1655

Article 5

That God elected and chose, in His eternal counsel, some persons to life and salvation, before the foundation of the world, whom accordingly He doth and will effectually call, and whom He doth so call, He will certainly keep by His power, through faith to salvation. (Acts 13:48; Eph 1:2-4); 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2)

Article 6

That election was free in God, of His own pleasure, and not at all for, or with reference to, any foreseen works of faith in the creature, as the motive thereunto. (Eph 1:4; Rom 11:5,6)

Article 8

That all men until they be quickened by Christ are dead in trespasses (Eph 2:1); and therefore have no power of themselves to believe savingly (John 15:5). But faith is the free gift of God, and the mighty work of God in the soul, even like the rising of Christ from the dead (Eph 1:19). Therefore consent not with those who hold that God hath given power to all men to believe to salvation.

THE SECOND LONDON CONFESSION, 1689

Chapter 3

Of God's Decree

God hath decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty, or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established, in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power, and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.

Although God knoweth whatsoever may, or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory some men and angels are predestinated, or fore-ordained to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.

These angels and men thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly, and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain, and definite, that it cannot be either increased, or diminished.

Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love; without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto.

As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto, wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination, is to be handled with special prudence, and care; that men attending the will of God revealed in His word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

The position held by the Second London Confession was reaffirmed by the
PHILADELPHIA CONFSSION OF FAITH
ADOPTED BY THE AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
WHICH MET AT PHILADELPHIA, SEPT 25, 1742

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFSSION, 1833

Article 4

Of the Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who, by the appointment of the Father, freely; took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by His death; being risen from the dead He is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour.

Article 5

Of Justification

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ of His fullness bestows on such as believe in Him, is justification; that justification consists in the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life, on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through His own redemption and righteousness; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most

blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

Article 6

Of the Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth except his own inherent depravity and voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, which refusal will subject him to an aggravated condemnation.

Article 7

Of Grace in Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

Article 8

Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

Article 9

Of God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it is ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves, demands and deserves our utmost diligence.

Article 11

Of the Perseverance of Saints

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from mere professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

This was the position of our Baptist forefathers, and it remains the position of myself and many other Baptists today. Unfortunately, too many of our Baptist brethren have compromised their positions and have adopted the theology of the Arminian. They

label us *Calvinists*; a name I am not ashamed of yet not bound to; and these ignorantly and falsely accuse us of following a theology that kills revival and evangelism. They would represent us as followers of the Frenchman John Calvin instead of the Bible. This is a historical error founded in their own ignorance, of who they are, what they believe, and where it came from. John Calvin no more invented these doctrines or systems of theology than he invented this world that God has created. He (Calvin) found these doctrines in the same place we find them today, in the faithful study of the Bible. In the place where we see them taught by all the prophets, apostles, and the Messiah himself, from Genesis to Revelation. These modern fundamental Baptists accuse us of offering God "dead" service. Yet, it is not we that have changed our theology from that of our Baptist forefathers. They have changed their theology, and now they accuse us of hindering the gospel. They accuse us of perverting salvation. Yet, it was Jesus Himself that stated:

John 6:65

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

There are many other discrepancies in the theology of the modern day fundamental Baptist that could be addressed here, but to keep with the subject of this matter let me turn back to my initial question; why are we losing a generation of our Baptist young people in America today? Why are so many Baptist youth dropping out of these Bible colleges and their home churches; turning to worldliness or apostasy? Why do these colleges implore that we send our youth to them for at least one year, only to have them ridiculed and ostracized because they do not fit the mold of their expectations?

When we teach our young men and women that they possess the power, by virtue of their own free will, to choose for or against God, it offers them a skewed picture of God. It presents God as one sitting in heaven, with bated breath, hoping and waiting for their decision. What a gross misrepresentation of the Almighty God. My God is a holy, righteous, and just God. Everything He does is according to His purpose, for His pleasure and unto His glory. His Holy Spirit effectually works in the life of the believer, transforming him or her into the likeness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (2Cor 5:17). All who are of the elect of God hear, answer, and follow Christ (John 10:27). The doctrine of the modern day fundamentalist makes God powerless in salvation and the Holy Spirit impotent in His ministry of sanctification. It implies that Christ's death alone is not the complete payment for my sin; as I must first accept (by my own free will) this offer before His blood can actually be applied to my personal sin. It also implies that Christ blindly sacrificed Himself without any knowledge or assurance that any would believe. Further, the theology of the modern fundamentalist implies that I can continue to live a life of sin and rebellion against God; however, because I "prayed a prayer and was sincere" I am assured of salvation. Some of their most prominent leaders make statements such as, "God has done all he can do for you, and it is now up to you." There is something very wrong with that theology. In fact, it is not theology at all; it is rank heresy. God has not done all he "can" for you; He, in fact, has done all He intended to do for His elect. He has secured salvation for those that He has chosen, and has left the others to their sin and the consequences thereof (The London Confession of Faith, 1644, Article 3: ". . . *And touching His creature man, God had in Christ before the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of His will, foreordained some men to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of*

His grace, leaving the rest in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His justice.").

In the modern fundamental churches, our youth are being taught Arminian theology, not Baptist theology, and far too many are under the misguided assumption that they are born again, when in reality they are not. They believe that they are saved, not because God has elected them unto salvation; rather they believe they are saved because they walked down the aisle at church, or came forward at some camp, or because without divine intervention they made a *choice* to accept Jesus as their Saviour. All the while, they continue to live a life that demonstrates no evidence of the new birth. They continue in sin and desire to clean up their own life but fail, because they have a God that does not interfere with their "free will" to choose. They have not been taught (because of the wrong theology) that the work of sanctification is that of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they fail to grow in holiness because they have been indoctrinated into a theology that rejects the sovereignty of God and the perseverance of the saints through the work of the Holy Spirit. They attend Sunday school where the true doctrine of perseverance (Matt 10:22) is denied, and a perversion of this doctrine is offered. And this, their leaders teach and believe, because their own fruit falls away by the thousands, and to teach the perseverance of the believer would expose the failure in their own theology. Therefore they teach that repentance of sin is not necessary for salvation (i.e., Curtis Hutson, *The Sword of the Lord*). This is a failed theology; one that produces fruit that does not remain. I am holding a letter from a supposed missionary in which he boasts of 12,217 souls saved; yet only 2,104 attended services, of which 1,751 were already members of the church. Where were the other 11,864 converted souls? Jesus asked this same question:

Luke 17:12-18

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.

This man was changed by salvation. He did not just keep on going as the other nine did. He experienced an undeniable change. He turned around and began to seek Christ. Now it is interesting to note that Jesus healed the other nine lepers but did not pronounce them as saved. Many share experiences with those that are saved, but it does not change them at all. There is always a change when a man is saved! There is none that seek after God, until they are born-again by the irresistible and effectual calling of a Holy, Sovereign God. A man who does not change was not called by God nor convicted by the Holy Spirit. Rather, it was a man that was convinced by another man. Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, stated, "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, . . . all things are become new.*" (2 Cor 5:17).

Now, I am aware that the response of the fundamentalist to this will be, "What number did you have?" or, "Where is your fruit?" My response would be, "All that the Lord hath

given us is with us." The mistake of the fundamentalist is to falsely accuse us of failing to be a witness for Christ. I practice compassionate soulwinning. I witness to those that God brings into my life. I pray for and witness; both by word of mouth and by my life; to all those that I know and meet. And God saves whom He will save. After all, it is the Lord that adds to the church (Acts 2:47), not me. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts the heart of man unto repentance, not my incessant pleading. When God gives us fruit it remains:

John 15:16

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Don't be deceived by numbers. Rock stars have millions of fans. The largest congregations in this world are cults. Jesus never sought for quantity; he sought for quality. The modern day fundamentalist fights for his theology, which exalts man and puts importance on the man and his will. I, today, fight for a theology that exalts God and places complete sovereignty in Him and in His irresistible Will. Which will you fight for?

But not only is it a theology that produces fruit that does not remain; it is also a theology that produces corrupt fruit. These modern day fundamentalists hide the sins of their most prominent leaders, hoping that the truth of their wicked hearts will not be exposed. It is a theology that produces leaders that crave the praise of men, as they stand in pulpits and revel in the accolades, praise, and adoration of thousands; a praise that is due to the God that created and saved them (if He in truth did). Again, the response of the fundamentalist here will be, "You are only jealous, because no one wants to hear what you have to say." Well, my response to that is, "No one wanted to hear what Christ had to say either." In fact, they hated what He had to say so much that they crucified Him. They hated what Stephen had to say so much that they stoned him to death. They hated what Paul had to say so much that they cut off his head to shut him up. And the modern fundamentalists hate the Doctrines of Grace so much that they would do anything to shut us up too.

These allege that our doctrine makes a comeback every 40 years or so. A statement such as this exposes the lack of knowledge these possess concerning Baptist history. This is just a vain stab at continuing to confuse and control an already uninformed mass of people. The truth of the matter is that our doctrine does not need to make a comeback, because it has never been defeated nor has it ever gone away to begin with. It has been with us since John stood in the Jordan River baptizing believers. It has been with us since Jesus stated in John 17:8-10, *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.* It has been with us since Paul stated in Ephesians 1:4-6, *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* It has been with us since John

stated in John 1:11-13, *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* So I am sorry Mr. Fundamentalist, my theology does not pop up every 40 years or so; it has always been with us and will continue forever. And I will teach it to my children and my children's children; and there is nothing you or any other Arminian can do to stop it or keep it from accomplishing the Will of God in my life.

So, why are we losing a generation of our youth? I say, because we have forsaken the theology of our Baptist forefathers and have corrupted ourselves with the doctrine of the Arminian. Let us return unto the tenets of our Baptist forefathers. Let us once again teach and preach the doctrines of Grace and the Sovereignty of God in salvation through the election of the saints. And in so doing, we will teach our youth about a God that is able to do all that He planned and purposed to do in their life. We will rear a generation of young people that walk in truth and have a real faith that will not compromise with false doctrine. We will see true revival in our churches and we will reap the harvest of the Lord. We will go forth and witness with the assurance that God will add to the church according to His Will and His good pleasure.

What say ye? Will you follow these that have corrupted themselves and have compromised the theology of our forefathers? Will you be named among those that deny God's sovereign right in election? Will you join those that would call God unjust in election? Or will you walk in the paths of those that have stood for truth and scriptural accuracy in their theology? Men such as: Charles Spurgeon, Albert Barnes, John Gill, Matthew Henry, Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, David Brown, Alexander MacLaren, Augustus Strong, A.A. Hodge, R.L. Dabney, Charles Hodge, James Pettigru Boyce, John L. Dagg, and Thomas Watson, to name just a few. These men collectively represent the most profound and theologically sound commentators available for this or any generation. I do not need nor desire the neo-philosophies of the modern day fundamentalist; be he Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Evangelical, or any other. I have the Word of God and His principles, as taught to me and affirmed by His own Holy Spirit, and in which my Baptist heritage is rooted and built up.

I leave you with the proclamation of our Baptist forefathers as stated in the Midland Confession of 1655:

That all men until they be quickened by Christ are dead in trespasses (Eph 2:1); and therefore have no power of themselves to believe savingly (John 15:5). But faith is the free gift of God, and the mighty work of God in the soul, even like the rising of Christ from the dead (Eph 1:19). Therefore consent not with those who hold that God hath given power to all men to believe to salvation.

I am a Baptist, and unlike many today, I truly know what that means. Do not label me a fundamentalist; rather label me a *Historical Baptist*. Follow the modern fundamental Neo-Baptist if you will; but I will follow the admonition of my Baptist forefathers, and consent not with these.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Praise God for our Saviour, Jesus Christ.