

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE REFORMED?

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## **Introduction**

*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*

Colossians 2:8

1 We are warned repeatedly to beware of false religion, false doctrine, and false prophets. Here Paul urges us to beware of those who would spoil us through the deceitful religious philosophies and traditions of men, particularly those who would bring us back under the rudiments of the world, that is to say, those who would make us subservient to carnal ceremonialism, sacramentalism, and legalism.

This warning is given and given repeatedly because we are all naturally prone to idolatry and works religion. Did you ever notice how often in the Old Testament the Lord warned those who worshipped him that they must never, at any time or for any reason, put their hands upon those things which typified our Lord Jesus Christ and his great work of redemption? (Read Exodus 20:25-26, Numbers 5:15, Deuteronomy 27:5, Joshua 8:30-31, 1 Kings 6:7, 1 Chronicles 13:9-10)

**Exodus** 20:25-26 *"And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. (26) Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon."*

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1 The sermons from which this tract sprang were preached to the **Grace Baptist Church of Danville** in Danville, Kentucky - USA, November 2, 1997 by Pastor Don Fortner. The tract is taken directly from the pastor's sermon notes, with as few changes as possible. It was intended for our congregation, and is offered to the public only because of numerous requests that it be put into print. Tapes of the original messages preached in Danville are available.

**Numbers 5:15** *"Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance."*

**Deuteronomy 27:5** *"And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them."*

**Joshua 8:30-31** *"Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, (31) As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings."*

**1 Kings 6:7** *"And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building."*

**1 Chronicles 13:9-10** *"And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. (10) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God."*

These numerous warnings are not given merely to fill up space. The altars and sacrifices by which the holy Lord God allowed men to worship him in the typical, ceremonial dispensation of the law were all typical of our Lord Jesus Christ and God's free grace

salvation in him. For a man to lift up his tool upon any of them, or to mix something of his own with them was, ceremonially, a total denial of the gospel of Christ represented in them. Therefore, when Uzza reached out his hand to steady the ark of God, he presumed to declare that God's Son and God's salvation were in some way, or to some degree, dependent upon him. For that God killed him.

Nothing has changed. Anyone who presumes that God's salvation, that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is in some way, or to some degree dependent upon and determined by the will, work, and worth of man denies the gospel of Christ altogether. For that he shall be forever damned. It is for this reason that I have written this tract. In all that is herein set forth, I trust that our all glorious Christ is honored and his people served.

There is one form of religion that is even more subtle than Arminianism and just as deadly, one form of religion which more subtly promotes the mixture of works with grace than any other. That is what men call Reformed Theology, or the Reformed Faith, or Reformed Doctrine. I am fully aware that those who call themselves Reformed profess to believe the doctrines of grace:

- Salvation By Grace Alone.
- Divine Predestination.
- Total Depravity.
- Unconditional Election.
- Particular Redemption.
- Effectual Grace.
- Perseverance of the Saints.

I also realize that the Reformed faith has become very popular, especially among smug religious people who think of themselves as academically superior intellectuals. I am fully aware that in publishing this message, I will incur the wrath of many. Be that as it may, this message has been on my heart and mind for the past several months. It must be delivered. My concern is for you for

whom I am responsible before God. I am concerned for the welfare of your souls. My concern is for the glory of God and the gospel of his free and sovereign grace in Christ.

Everywhere I go, I hear people talk about the Reformed Faith. Those who do, usually talk more, much more, about the Reformed Faith, the reformers, the Reformation, and the Puritans than they do about the Bible, the grace of God, or Christ. I am weary of it. I want you to understand at the outset that we (The men and women of Grace Baptist Church of Danville) are not Protestants. We are not reformed. We are Baptists. Baptists are not, never have been, and simply cannot be either Protestant or reformed.

When I speak of Reformed Doctrine, the Reformed Faith, or Reformed Theology, I am basically talking about Presbyterianism as set forth in the **Westminster Confession of Faith**. In recent years a denomination has arisen called **Reformed Baptists**. In reality, for the most part, they are not Baptists at all, but just ducking Presbyterians. They hold to reformed theology in all areas except baptism.

As you know, we have no confession of faith but the Word of God, no creed but Holy Scripture. I do not say that with any superficial air of superiority, but simply as a matter of fact. Our only rule of faith and practice is the Word of God. However, as I said, this message has been on my mind a good bit lately. So for the past several weeks I have been carefully studying those confessions of faith most commonly accepted as the doctrinal standards of both Presbyterians and Reformed Baptists: **The Westminster Confession** and **The 1689 Baptist Confession**. You will be shocked to discover the heresies cleverly packaged in them. I am bringing this message to you because these things are not matters of indifference. They are matters vital to the gospel.

Be sure you understand the importance of never mixing grace and works, at any point. Any teaching that mixes, to any

degree or at any point, the grace of God and the works of man in the affair of salvation totally denies salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (Rom. 11:6).

**Romans 11:6** *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."*

**NOTE:** Before I proceed further, let me clarify one thing. I know that there are some Presbyterians and some Reformed Baptists who may not fit the mold presented in these confessions. If so, I am not talking about them. I am talking about those who believe the heresies I am about to discuss.

I want to show you five subtle heresies of reformed doctrine. I will not build a straw man, just to knock him down. I leave that deceitful practice to others. I will give you their own words from their own confessions, in the context and order in which they are given. As I said before, Reformed Baptists are really just ducking Presbyterians. They would really like to be Presbyterians. They just cannot find a way to justify infant baptism. In fact, the 1689 confession of faith adopted by the Reformed Baptists of our day is almost identical with the Westminster Confession (1646), except on the subject of Baptism.

Generally, I prefer to deal with things from a positive position. Rather than pointing out what is wrong with this doctrine or that, I prefer simply to declare the truth of the gospel. But, as our Lord warned of the Nicolaitanes, and Paul warned against Judaizers, it is sometimes necessary to identify heresy and heretics with specific clarity, so that you will know exactly what I am talking about. Here are the five heresies of reformed doctrine about which you must be warned. When you lay this tract down, I want you to know precisely why we refuse to practice these things, believe them, or participate in any way with those who do.

1. The Heresy of Necessary Consequence
2. The Heresy of Conditional Grace
3. The Heresy of Self-Righteous Assurance
4. The Heresy of Legalism
5. The Heresy of Sacramentalism

### **The Heresy of Necessary Consequence**

Perhaps you are scratching your heads, saying, “What on earth is the heresy of necessary consequence?” It is the doctrine which says that the Bible alone is our only rule of faith and practice, that is to say, that which is written in the Bible and that which is logically and rationally deduced from the Bible. This is the first great error of Protestant theology. The Reformers retained this little bit of Romanism which led to the retention of much more.

In the 1689 Baptist Confession we read, **“The sum total of God’s revelation concerning all things essential to His own glory, and to the salvation and faith and life of men, is either explicitly set down or implicitly contained in the Holy Scripture.”** In other words, God’s Word must be supplemented by our reason and logic to determine our faith and practice!

The Westminster Confession is even more specific. **“The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture.”**

It is this doctrine of necessary consequence which allows churches and preachers to devise their own creeds and confessions and causes them to hold their creeds and confessions above the Scriptures, making void the Word of God by their traditions!

This doctrine of Necessary Consequence is not something considered insignificant to reformed theologians. It is vigorously defended by them in every age. Without it, the whole system would collapse. Those who reject it are ridiculed as being irrational and



ranked with ignorant heretics<sup>2</sup>. There is nothing new about that; but such scandalization must not deter us.

The Word of God states the matter with dogmatic clarity. **Our only rule of faith and practice is the Word of God.** We must add nothing to it. We must take nothing from it (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18-19).

**Deuteronomy 4:2** *"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."*

**Deuteronomy 12:32** *"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

**Revelation 22:18-19** *"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (19) And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

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<sup>2</sup> See **Are Baptists Rational** by Michael L. Czapkay in *The Trinity Review* #95, January 1993, John Robbins, Editor.

We have absolutely no right to invent doctrines or ordinances of worship. We must believe and practice exactly what is written in the Word of God, not what was written and what we deduce should have been written!

If I cannot show you where a thing is stated in Holy Scripture, I have no right to believe it, preach it, or compel you to believe it. We have no right to believe, or insist that others believe, any doctrine which is not expressly taught in Holy Scripture.

If I cannot show you in the Word of God a precept or an example of an ordinance, administered and practiced in a specific way, I have no right to practice it that way, nor do you. We have no right to baptize whom we please, in any way we please, or in any way that is most convenient. We are commanded in Scripture to baptize believers only, and to do so only by immersion, which is both what the word *baptize* means and the only way the ordinance was ever practiced in the New Testament.

### **The Heresy Of Conditional Grace**

I know people will respond to that by saying that I have simply popped my cork. How could anyone dare suggest that those men and churches, known everywhere for preaching unconditional election, limited atonement, and irresistible grace, are guilty of teaching conditional grace? I will show you, again in their own words.

**First, in the matter of justification, they teach that sinners are justified by the merit of Christ's blood through the instrument of faith.** They tell us that we were justified, not when Christ died for us and satisfied the justice of God, but when we appropriated the work of Christ to ourselves by the instrument of faith.

The Westminster Confession states that **“Faith, receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification.”** Thus, they teach that the Scriptures require faith in Christ as a condition of, or qualification for justification. Archibald Alexander (1772-1851) wrote that faith is a condition of justification in the sense that it is “a duty which God requires to be performed by us prior to our justification.”

Alexander goes on to say, “When an elect sinner is united to Christ and believes, his faith is imputed for righteousness; that is, the righteousness of Christ which is the object of faith, is made over to him and his sins are, **IN THAT MOMENT**, pardoned, and his person accepted as righteous in the sight of God, or in other words, he is justified.” His doctrine is that Christ, by his obedience and death laid a solid foundation for the justification of the elect, but did not actually accomplish it. It is not accomplished until the chosen sinner believes. That is a good, accurate summary of reformed theology. But that is not the doctrine of Holy Scripture!

When the Word of God declares that we are justified by faith, it does not make faith a condition or instrument of justification, but the mere recipient. Faith in Christ is the result, not the condition, of justification. Our justification was accomplished and finished when the Son of God paid our debt and satisfied the justice of God for us at Calvary (Rom. 3:24; 4:25; 5:8-11; Heb. 10:10-14).

**Romans 3:24** *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*

**Romans 4:25** *"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."*

**Romans 5:8-11** *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."*

**Hebrews 10:10-14** *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (11) And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: (12) But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (13) From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. (14) For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

When God the Holy Spirit regenerates the sinner, giving him faith in Christ, as that sinner looks to Christ alone as his Savior and Redeemer, the blessed Spirit sprinkles the blood of Christ upon the conscience and speaks like a bailiff reading the verdict in court - "*JUSTIFIED!*"

Thus every believing sinner receives justification by faith in Christ, "*Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified, by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" **Faith does not justify us. Christ did that. But faith does fetch from the crucified Christ the blessed peace of being justified by his blood.** Christ has justified us by his great sin-atonement sacrifice; and all who believe on Christ as Lord and Savior receive the many benefits of his finished work. One of those many benefits which we receive by faith is justification.

**Faith does not cause God to justify us.** The obedience of Christ has done that. But faith, resting upon Christ alone as Savior, obtains peace with God, even the peace of perfect, complete justification.

Faith does not merit justification with God; but faith receives justification. Faith is not the basis upon which men are justified; but faith is the instrument by which justification is received.

Faith is essential; but it is not meritorious. Faith receives Christ; but it does not merit Christ. Faith receives the forgiveness of sin; but it does not merit forgiveness. Faith receives grace; but it does not merit grace. Faith receives justification; but it does not merit justification.

We were justified in the court of heaven by the decree of God the Father and by the death of God the Son. Then, in the experience of grace, we are justified in the court of conscience by the declaration of God the Holy Spirit.

When the Scriptures speak of us being justified by faith, or by the faith of Christ, and of faith being imputed to us for righteousness, the meaning is not that our act of faith is imputed to us for righteousness, but that Christ, the Object of our faith, and his obedience to God as our Representative is imputed to us for righteousness. **That which God imputes to us for righteousness must itself be perfectly righteous.** Our faith can never meet that qualification; but Christ does. **It is not our faith which is imputed to us for righteousness but Christ's obedience which is the object of our faith** (Rom. 5:19).

According to Paul's language in Romans 4:25-5:1, Christ was delivered over to the sword of justice because of our offenses which were imputed to him. Once he had satisfied justice for our sins by the sacrifice of himself, he was raised from the dead because of our justification accomplished. His resurrection was God's public declaration that his one sacrifice for sin forever satisfied justice for his people and forever put away our sins. Now, every chosen sinner, being justified by his blood, obtains peace with God by faith in Christ, even the peace of perfect, everlasting justification. We are not justified by the act of faith. We are justified by Christ. We obtain the peace of justification by faith in Christ.

**Reformed doctrine also makes sanctification a conditional, progressive attainment of personal holiness.**

I have no quarrel with anyone teaching that believers grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. You know that. If you and I are born of God, we grow in faith, hope, love, commitment to him, and zeal for his glory. If there is no growth there is no life. But I do object strenuously to the reformed doctrine of progressive sanctification, as stated in their own confessions of faith.

While humbly acknowledging, "there abideth still some remnants of corruption," The Westminster Confession says, "They

who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are **further sanctified, really and personally**, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, **by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.**"

**The 1689 Baptist Confession** states the heresy even more explicitly. "This personal work of sanctification is indeed carried further...Sin's mastery is completely broken...Evil desires are increasingly weakened...moving towards a fulness of holiness in the fear of God."

I challenge you to find any place in the Word of God which even hints that our sanctification depends upon us, or that we manage through the diligent discipline of personal graces to make ourselves less and less evil and more and more holy, finally attaining that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord!

**That holiness without which no man shall see the Lord** (Heb. 12:14) **is Christ!** According to the Word of God, our sanctification is a threefold work of grace - **not a work of god's grace and our efforts, but of pure, free grace alone!**

- 1. We were sanctified by God's sovereign decree in eternal election when we were set apart for God to be made holy** (Jude 1).

*Jude 1:1 "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called."*

- 2. God's elect were sanctified by the blood of Christ (declared to be holy) when he died at Calvary and put away our sins with his own precious blood (Heb. 10:10, 14).**

Hebrews 10:10 *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

Hebrews 10:14 *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

- 3. Every chosen, redeemed sinner is sanctified by God the Holy Spirit in the new birth when he is actually given a new, holy nature (1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:6-9).**

1 Peter 1:2 *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."*

2 Peter 1:4 *"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."*

1 John 3:6-9 *"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. (7) Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. (8) He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (9) Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."*



We do not sanctify ourselves. We are sanctified by the grace of God in Christ. Indeed, Christ is our Sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30). The believer's sanctification no more depends upon his works than his justification. If sanctification is essential to salvation (and it is), how can anyone say, "Salvation is by grace alone", while teaching that sanctification depends upon the efforts of man? The teaching of Scripture is that every chosen, redeemed, regenerate sinner is sanctified by the grace of God.

### **The Heresy Of Self-Righteous Assurance**

When I speak of self-righteous assurance, I am talking about assurance based upon the presumption of personal holiness. At present, I have neither the time nor the desire to quote the reformed confessions fully; but both the Westminster and the 1689 confessions of faith state that the assurance of salvation is something to be attained by personal obedience and lost by disobedience, attained by doing those things that are pleasing to God and lost by grieving the Holy Spirit, attained by a satisfactory examination of one's heart or lost by an unsatisfactory examination.

**That certainly was not the case with the apostle Peter** when he said, "*Lord, Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*" **David's** assurance was not based upon his personal holiness, but upon the naked Word of God (Ps. 32; 51; Rom. 4:8). **Biblical assurance is the assurance of faith, not of evidences** (Heb. 10:22; 11:1; 1 John 5:9-13).

**Hebrews 10:22** *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. The Son of God hath not life. (13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

True believers seek with all their hearts to honor Christ in all things. Those who are born of God, being taught of God, deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. They seek to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world, being motivated not by law, a fear of punishment, or a promise of reward, but by the fact that we are debtors to mercy alone.

Being honest people, God's saints could never claim the peace of assurance because of their own personal holiness. We recognize that our best holiness before God is nothing but filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Our best love is indifference! Our best faith is full of unbelief! Our holiest thoughts are filled with the nauseous corruption of sin! Such things cannot give us assurance.

**The assurance of faith is not assurance based upon personal righteousness, but assurance based upon imputed righteousness.** We come to the holy Lord God continually as empty-handed sinners trusting Christ alone as our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Like David and Peter, our assurance is based not upon what we have done, but upon what Christ has done for us.

### **The Heresy Of Legalism**

There is no heresy I know of that is more inherently evil, causes more difficulties, creates more havoc, or runs more blatantly in the face of Holy Scripture than the teaching that believers are still under the Mosaic law and, consequently, obliged to observe sabbath days, pay tithes, and fear punitive measures in this life and in the life to come if they fail to measure up.

**Let me show you what the reformed people say.** Remember, I am not telling you what I think they mean. This is exactly what they say.

**The Westminster Confession** reads, “The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof... informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly...the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof.”

Regarding the sabbath day, which they tell us was changed to Sunday, we are told, “This Sabbath is to be kept holy unto the Lord when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations; but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.”

That is what the reformed folks say. I ask you to simply read for yourself what God says in his Word about the law and sabbath day observance. **This is what God the Holy Spirit says in the**

**Book of Inspiration** (Rom. 6:14-15; 7:4; 8:1; 10:4; Gal. 3:13, 24-25; 1 Tim. 1:8-10; Col. 2:16-17).

Romans 6:14-15 *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (15) What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."*

Romans 7:4 *"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."*

Romans 8:1 *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

Romans 10:4 *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."*

Galatians 3:13 *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."*

Galatians 3:24-25 *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."*

1 Timothy 1:8-10 *"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; (9) Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,*

*(10) For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."*

Colossians 2:16-17 **"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: (17) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."**

The bare reading of these Scriptures, without comment of any kind from me, should convince any unprejudiced mind that there is absolutely no sense in which believers are under the law. In Christ we have been brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

**The only way sinful men and women can honor God's holy law is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:31).**

Romans 3:31 *"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."*

The law of God demands two things of every person: righteousness and satisfaction. The only way we can establish, uphold, maintain, and honor the law is by offering it what it demands. The only way we can do that is by trusting the Lord Jesus Christ, who has both fulfilled the righteousness of the law and satisfied the justice of the law as the all-sufficient Substitute for those who trust him.

Legalists are really antinomians. They call their sinful lives righteous and comfort themselves with a sincere effort at obeying the law. Thus, they bring the law of God down to their own level.

That does nothing to honor the law. That dishonors and would destroy the law.

**Believers are motivated and inspired not by law, but by gratitude and love in serving and worshipping Christ** (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 John 3:23). We do not serve Christ for fear that God might punish us, or because we hope to gain reward from him, but because we love him. Our heavenly Father punished our sins to the full satisfaction of his justice when he sacrificed his darling Son for us. He chastens us in love, to correct us; but he will never punish us again. God's servants are not mercenaries!

**We keep no sabbath rest except the blessed sabbath of faith in Christ** (Heb 4:9-10). This is not an optional thing. Sabbath keeping is not a matter of indifference. It is strictly forbidden by the inspired Apostle (Col. 2:16). The Old Testament sabbath was a picture and type of the believer's rest in Christ, the blessed rest of faith. Coming to him, believing sinners stop working for acceptance with God. We rest in him, looking to him alone for acceptance with our holy Lord God.

### **The Heresy Of Sacramentalism**

The reformed doctrine, again retaining the garments of Rome, teaches that baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments rather than ordinances of worship. **A sacrament is a religious rite or ceremony by which grace is conveyed to the one who receives it. An ordinance is simply a symbolic picture of grace.** There is a huge difference between the two.

**Presbyterianism teaches that baptism, as they call it, the sprinkling or pouring of water, is a sacrament by which grace is conveyed and sealed to those who receive it.**

“Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace... Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him **a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, or his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins...** Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.” (Westminster Confession) The confession goes on to assert that baptism is properly administered, not by immersion as the word baptize necessitates, but by sprinkling or pouring and that it is to be administered to both believing adults and their unbelieving infants. Yet, it has the same significance to both.

**There are several things about this doctrine that are horribly evil.** There is no place here for minced words. If these things were matters of indifference, or insignificance, I would never subject myself to what I know will come as the result of publishing this tract. The doctrine of infant baptism and its accommodating doctrine of sprinkling for baptism are horribly evil things.



There is no biblical precept or precedent for either infant baptism or sprinkling. There is not an example in all the Word of God of any infant anywhere ever being baptized by our Lord, or his Apostles, or anyone else. We are never told to do it. It is religious ritual with less biblical support than might be mustered to defend the pope's miter!

The baby sprinkled is presumed to be regenerate. The child is sprinkled because there is hope that since it has been baptized (sprinkled with water), it is safe. It is raised in the church and presumed by all to be regenerate, unless it proves otherwise in later years. Thus, the sprinkling is considered the effectual companion of the regenerating grace and power of God the Holy Spirit. In the Word of God no one is considered regenerate until he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism is never said to seal anyone into the covenant of grace or to seal the grace of the covenant to anyone. It is God the Holy Spirit who seals believers in Christ (Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30). Circumcision is never compared to baptism in Scripture. It did not picture, or typify baptism. It typified regeneration, that circumcision not made with hands (Col. 2:11), by which we are brought into union with Christ and have sealed to us all the blessings of God's covenant grace in Christ.

The doctrine of infant baptism makes the grace of God run in and come to sinners by physical pedigree. Whereas the Word of God declares plainly that grace has absolutely no connection with one's earthly parentage (John 1:12-13; Rom. 9:16).

John 1:12-13 *"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."*

The doctrine of infant baptism also destroys the biblical doctrine of conversion. The child raised under the presumption of regeneration cannot be expected to experience conversion. He has nothing from which to be converted, and no one to whom he must be converted. It is presumed that that was all taken care of with a few drops of water when he was a little baby. That is presuming an awful lot!

**Baptism is an ordinance of divine worship to be administered to believers only, and by immersion only (Acts 8:36-39).**

*Acts 8:36-39 "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? (37) And Philip said, **If thou believest** with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (38) And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. (39) And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."*

It is a picture of the gospel. The one thing required as the pre-requisite for baptism is faith in Christ, as Philip required it of the Eunuch. Immersion portrays the whole gospel of redemption by Christ. Believing sinners stand before God accepted because of their death with Christ. By baptism we confess to all the world that we trust the crucified, buried, risen Christ alone as our Savior. Being buried with him and rising up out of the watery grave, we declare both our determination to walk with Christ in the newness of life and our blessed hope of the resurrection in the last day. Therefore,

baptism is always represented and spoken of as a burial (Rom. 6:4-6; Col. 2:12).<sup>3</sup>

**Both Presbyterians and Reformed Baptists make the Lord's Supper a sacrament by which, according to the 1689 Baptist Confession, "Those who, as worthy participants, outwardly eat and drink the visible bread and wine in this ordinance, at the same time receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and receive all the benefits accruing from his death."**

I do not need to prove to you that that is not the teaching of the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:23-29).

**1 Corinthians 11:23-29** *"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: (24) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. (25) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. (27) Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. (29) For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth*

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<sup>3</sup> I do not bother to even address the folly of those who try to prove that the word baptize might mean "sprinkling" or "pouring" because it is sometimes used in reference to washing cups and platters. What nonsense! The ordinance of baptism has nothing to do with washing dishes! Wherever the ordinance is described in the Word of God it is called a "burial" (Rom. 6:4-6; Col. 2:12).

*and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."*

When we eat the bread and drink the wine, we do not feed upon Christ. We simply remember him. The bread is the body of Christ only in a symbolic way. It is not the body of Christ physically, spiritually, or mystically. The same is true of the wine. Eating the bread and drinking the wine, we remember our Savior and what he has done for us with worshipful reverence.

The Lord's Supper does not convey grace. It simply shows by outward sign how grace is conveyed to sinners. Just as each believer takes the bread and wine for himself, so sinners must take Christ for themselves by faith. He cannot be conveyed to you by someone else. Once you have taken the bread and wine, it is yours forever. Even so, once you feed upon Christ by faith, he is yours forever.

The Lord's Supper shows forth the Lord's death until he comes again. That is its purpose. Just as the bread is broken before you, so the holy human body of our all glorious Christ was crushed to death beneath the wheel of God's justice. Just as the wine is squeezed from the grape, so the blood of Christ was squeezed from his body in death as our Substitute.

In the Lord's Supper, as in baptism, that which qualifies us and makes us worthy recipients of the ordinance is faith in Christ, discerning the Lord's body. Our worthiness is not ourselves but our Savior. It is Christ, only Christ, always Christ who makes us worthy before God!

These are issues of immense importance. Be sure you understand the teaching of Holy Scripture in these areas.

1. The Word of God alone is our only rule of faith and practice.

2. Salvation is in its entirety by the free grace of God in Christ, without works, conditions, or qualifications of any kind to be met by us (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."*

3. In Christ all who believe are forever and entirely free from the law.
  - Free from its curse!
  - Free from its covenant!
  - Free from its constraint!

May God the Holy Spirit be pleased to seal these things to your heart and grant that you may walk in the peace and joy of faith in Christ, and never again be brought into the bondage of religious tradition.

AMEN.