

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

“REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET.” PROVERBS 22:28

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CREATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

by M. A. Brawner

So God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. Gen. 1:27

The Word of God is plain. In the creation, God created the male and the female. We read of no other genders created of God. More than this, God chose His own image when He created the man because the text says, “...God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him...”, Gen. 1:27. God was the eyewitness to the creation. He explained what took place. The account has been written down and preserved. Now, all of mankind are called on to take God at His Word.

It is apparent that there is an increasing number of people who either doubt or flat-out reject the Word of God. When it comes to the origin of man, a great number reject the creation account provided by God in the Bible. They choose to adopt the teachings of evolution in the name of science. Even though every claim of the evolutionary origin of man has been explained away by Christian scientists, schools and media refuse to report it. The schools and media choose rather to suggest that people must hold to evolution so that advances in areas of technology and medical care can continue. Yet the teachings of the origin of man and areas of technology/medical care are completely different areas of study. Whether taking the creation or evolutionary position, both are areas of faith. No repeatable studies can be conducted in the area of origins. God has His explanation of how it happened and evolution has its explanation. This is far different than technology and medical care which are both repeatable, verifiable, and adjustable.

The rejection of God’s account of creation has led a growing number of people to question their gender. After all, when people are deceived to believe that their gender is the result of random chance and evolutionary processes, they see no

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WHY I AM A BAPTIST

by H. B. Little

A. T. Robertson (1863-1934) once said, “Give a man an open Bible, an open mind, a conscience in good working order, and he will have a hard time to keep from being a Baptist.” Dr. Robertson gives us the ultimate reason to be a Baptist. The Bible contains the whole of Baptist doctrine. The churches found in New Testament scripture are Baptist in faith, practice, and government. Hence, Dr. Robertson said a person who studies the Bible with an honest heart will find it difficult to be anything but a Baptist. Here are a few examples of our biblical practice, the sum of which, separate us as Baptists from other denominations of Christianity.

First, Baptist Churches strive to receive only penitent believers into our membership. We require a public profession of faith before baptizing members into our churches. This profession must be worthy of a penitent faith. This is clearly a scriptural practice. When John the Baptist came preparing a people for the Lord, he required “fruits worthy of repentance” from those coming to him for baptism, Luke 3:8. During our Lord’s personal ministry, the Savior “made and baptized more disciples than John,” John 4:1. Disciples—in the most general since of the word—are made before they are baptized. Christ Jesus only baptized disciples. This practice is a founding principle of the “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 1:3. This practice was clearly understood and practiced in the New Testament churches. When the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip in the desert of Gaza, “what doth hinder me to be baptized?”, Philip replied in the clearest terms, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” Acts 2:34-35. The harbinger, the Savior, and the evangelist all practiced believers baptism. Baptist churches follow these authoritative examples.

Second, Baptist Churches only baptize by immersion. We understand baptism to be a burial in water. Paul wrote, “we are buried with him by baptism,” Rom. 6:4.

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THE COMMUNION QUESTION SETTLED

by J. M. Pendleton, 1868

Let us all rejoice that the question of communion is at last settled! It is needless to say anything more about it. My readers will of course expect me to explain. Here is the explanation: Mr. Spurgeon has preached and published a sermon on these words, “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit.” In utter disregard of every principle of correct exegesis, to say nothing of his want of Christian courtesy, he makes the text bear on the “strict-communion Baptists.” I do not mean that he finds no other classes who “separate themselves,” but that he considers the separation referred to as illustrated in “strict-communion Baptists.” It is superfluous to say that the various classes of Pedobaptists are delighted with Mr. Spurgeon’s utterances. They agree with him—they indorse him. Even Methodists who glory in their Arminian views forget or forgive his high Calvinism, and exult in the rebuke he administers to those Baptists (and no others deserve the name) who believe baptism and church membership must in all cases precede communion at the Lord’s table. But let us notice the text and context in their obvious meaning. It appears from his epistle that Jude deemed it necessary to exhort the saints to “contend earnestly for the faith,” because “certain men” had “crept in unawares...ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,” These men are described as “filthy dreamers,” as having “gone the way of Cain,” the first murderer, as repeating “the error of Balaam,” as spots in the Christian “feasts of charity,” as “trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever,” from Adam, prophesied of these “ungodly men,” nor Enoch alone; but the apostles of Christ predicted that there “should be mockers in the latter time who should walk after

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their own ungodly lusts." What a graphic delineation of the character of wicked men is this! Well does Jude say, in the language of Mr. Spurgeon's text, "These be they that separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit." Now Mr. S. and the Pedobaptists who indorse him, in applying this language to strict-communion Baptists, virtually place them in the same category with the ungodly men described by the apostle Jude. The question is not whether we strict-communion Baptists deserve to be placed in that category. For the sake of the argument let it be conceded. Then I insist the communion question is settled. For if we, who believe in close baptism (that is in the baptism of believers) and therefore in close communion, are so wicked as to be "sensual, not having the Spirit," we are utterly unfit for a place at the table of the Lord. The descriptive epithet translated *sensual* is the same employed by Paul when he says "the *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit." If this is true of the *natural* or *sensual* man he certainly has not the Spirit, for he cannot receive the things of the Spirit. If this is the condition of strict-communion Baptists they are manifestly unworthy of any Christian privilege. And those words of artful delusion—"we shall all commune together in heaven"—must be used no more. Those with whom Mr. Spurgeon identifies strict-communion Baptists will never enter into heaven; for to them "is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." They are to go to a place "As far from God and light of heaven, As from the center thrice to the utmost pole."

How then stands the matter? Clearly thus: If we close communion Baptists are such ungodly persons as Mr. Spurgeon and his Pedobaptist allies represent us, they cannot as *honest*, not to say *Christian*, men invite us to commune with them. On the other hand if we are not the ungodly persons Mr. S. and his Pedobaptist allies say we are—that is if they slander us—we cannot invite them, knowing them to be slanderers, to commune with us. What they say of us is true or it is false. If it is true they cannot commune with us. If it is false we cannot commune with them. Hence intercommunion is a thing not to be thought of. I have therefore placed at the

head of this article the words, "The communion question settled."

I give Mr. Spurgeon due credit for all the good he has done. I have often spoken and written of him in terms of high commendation. He is a wonderful preacher, but in many things a very inconsistent man. In one of his sermons, for example, he expresses the opinion that the gospel cannot be preached unless Calvinism is preached; and yet he invites to his communion Methodists, many of whom, to say the least, hate Calvinism as much as they hate sin. Read his sermon on "Baptismal Regeneration" and see with what eloquent severity he applies his sarcasm to the "sponsors" who according to the "Book of Common Prayer" promise at the christening of infants that they renounce the devil, etc. These sponsors, however, he invites to commune with him, for he says he cannot be "separate from the Episcopalians." Mr. Spurgeon often speaks truthfully and forcibly of the act of immersion as the only baptismal act, and then in communing with unbaptized persons nullifies his testimony in favor of immersion. Alas for such inconsistencies. Open communion, so called, is the greatest deception of the nineteenth century. There is in fact no such thing. There is not a Pedobaptist sect that communes with all it baptizes. Pedobaptist denominations do not, to any great extent, commune with one another. They say a good deal about it when they wish to excite prejudice against Baptists, but they do not practice it. How often do they commune together in New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, etc? Will it be said that no house in any of these cities can hold them all? This is true but if "open communion" is the great thing they say it is, they ought to arrange to come together in some wide street, or square, or park, and there commune. Then I could believe them sincere.

Who could think of Mr. Spurgeon's course and not wonder how he hoodwinks the people? "He is a liberal Baptist," they say. Yes, he invites Pedobaptists to his communion. This is the proof of liberality. But does Mr. S. ever dispense with service in his Tabernacle that he may be present at the communions of Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Independents, etc? I presume not. The truth is, "open communion," of which so much has been said and written, is a

delusion and a cheat. It has no logical foundation to rest on.

From *The Baptist* Newspaper, Memphis, October 3, 1868. Provided by Jim Duvall of Baptist History Homepage.

GRAVES ON JOHN 3:5

J. R. Graves (1820-1893) was a Baptist preacher and author. He wrote many good books and was editor of the *Tennessee Baptist* for 46 years. Ben Bogard described Bro. Graves as "the greatest preacher, the most forcible writer, the ablest debater and strongest editor of his day. His equal has not yet arisen." Pillars of Orthodoxy, page 208.

The following letter was written to a Baptist preacher in Missouri who had been discussing baptism with a Church of Christ minister. This minister had used Graves as a Baptist authority who taught water baptism as a spiritual birth. In the letter, Bro. Graves explains himself giving an interpretation of John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." He wrote:

My position touching John 3:5 briefly is this: Nicodemus, a natural man, is desirous to know the qualifications requisite for citizenship in Messiah's kingdom—which at that time consisted of his one visible church. The Savior gave him the information sought, viz.: He must be qualified to see—i.e., idealize, comprehend His Kingdom first—and this done by spiritual discernment only—for all that appertained to His kingdom was spiritual, viz., its doctrine, its membership—its mission. He must be a *spiritual* man to understand spirit things, and this is gained only by a spiritual birth. It was necessary further to be *born* of the Spirit—i.e., undergo that moral change wrought by the spirit which is expressed by the figurative expression "born from above"—of the Spirit. He must be a new creature in Christ Jesus before he can comprehend the nature of the kingdom as the duties or responsibilities he takes upon himself in becoming a citizen of it. He must be a saved man before he is qualified for the rite that places him *within* the Kingdom—a member of the Spiritual family of Abraham.

To *enter* the Kingdom he must enter some local church—since the Kingdom is composed of all the existing local churches, as the United States is of all the 38 States. The church is, and can be,

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reason why they should not be able to question it. Bible believers know God assigned them their gender. They trust that, no matter what confusion may arise, God gave them the gender they are supposed to have. The rejection of the testimony of God in this area of life is having an increasing level of impact on the live of men and women, boys and girls.

It is more and more frequent that we hear it reported that our country is experiencing a gender identity crisis. By rejecting God, people are experiencing what it is like to try to live life under the influence of the wisdom of men. They are being told that feelings may arise which cause them to wonder if they should be the opposite gender. This confused state has a medical name: gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is defined as a sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. Counselors claim that the only answer to this situation is for a person with this diagnosis to enter treatment. Supposedly, the confusion will subside if one would enter the process of changing their gender.

The current practice is to begin inducing young boys and girls with strong doses of hormones of the opposite sex in an effort to change their gender. Hormone doses are being induced even before children reach puberty. The impact is far from the removal of the confusion that got the whole process started. Boys and girls go through bodily changes and are frequently being sterilized by this medical procedure impacting the rest of their lives. Even if they do open their eyes to see the error of their ways, the consequences will remain with them. This is truly one of those cases where the cure is much worse than the affliction. I believe the devil loves to see all of this take place.

There are a number of people who claim that those who experience anxiety over their gender really cannot help it. It is suggested all they really need to do is follow their heart to overcome their confused feelings. The idea is, "To thine own heart be true." It is stunning how many parents defend their children using this reasoning. The scriptures warn us

about the deceitful nature of our hearts. Man has a fallen nature which was plunged into sin when the first man willingly disobeyed God. Through our natural lineage from him, all of us bear a nature in our flesh which is given to ungodliness. Our hearts lean toward that nature and ought not be trusted. Consider these scriptures addressing the workings of the heart.

God shared the character of our hearts when He said, "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jer. 17:9. Just consider how deceitful the heart is. This scripture says it is "deceitful above all things." This means there is nothing out in the world we have encountered more deceitful than our heart. How then can we trust it? If we were to have business we needed to conduct in our local community and knew of a certain person in that business who was notably deceitful, would we go to that person with our business? It seems apparent how a mature person would answer that question. Yet, in the matter of a person distressed over their gender to say they feel they must "just follow their heart" is to go to the most deceitful influence around. Let's not be found supporting such an idea. The heart is so deceitful we should avoid following its direction.

Notice also what the Lord told us gets a person into a "defiled" state. Mat 15:18-20 says, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are *the things* which defile a man..." It is from the heart that men find themselves engaged in the things listed in these verses. Following the deceitful heart is how a person ends up in great defilement. As a person goes down this path of defilement, they go farther and farther from God. They build the wall of sin and iniquity between them and God all under the pretense of going where their heart is leading them.

God calls on us to trust Him with our hearts so that He can protect us. See the following Proverb for this instruction: Pro 23:26 says, "My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways." Remember that no one is able to pluck anything from the hand of God. A heart

that is given up to the hands of God is a heart that is safe.

Rather than listening to the heart, we are told to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd. As humble sheep, committed to following Him, we are insured to be safe from the strange allurements in this world. John 10:4-5 says, "And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

There are examples in the scriptures of men and women committing terrible sin. God forgave and redeemed each and everyone of those who would come to Him with sin broken hearts and contrite spirits. They came to Him as their Creator acknowledging that He is the designer of their bodies and ought to be the author of their lives. We should recall how Paul reminded the Corinthians that, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1Co 6:11. So then, God is willing to forgive and wash each and everyone who will surrender to Him.

We live in a day when issues such as gender identity are going to grow more and more common. People are being instructed to ignore God and His word. This is suggested as if God is the root of their problem. Nothing could be farther from the truth. God is the only true solution anyone in anxiety and distress truly has. He is the rock which steadies in the storm. He is the anchor, both steadfast and sure. There is no other refuge for man. Let us then point confused and distressed souls to Him as the true designer of our bodies. No matter what our heart may try to tell us, God made no mistake when He made us. Let's then go on and trust Him to author our lives. As willing sheep, let's hear His voice so He can guide us through the darkness of this world in which we live.

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WHY I AM A BAPTIST

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John's baptism of believers was "in the river of Jordan", Mark 1:5. It was not with water from the river of Jordan. John baptized where there was "much water", John 3:23. Much water is not needed to sprinkle or pour water on a person. It is needed to submerge a person in water. The word baptism is a testimony to the act itself. In the days of the apostles, Greek was the most prevalent language in Palestine. And the New Testament was originally written in Greek. Most words in the English New Testament are translated from the original Greek New Testament. However, the word baptism was not translated into English. It was transliterated. This means the Greek word for baptism was just written in English letters. The word baptism means "that which is dipped". This definition can be found in any honest Greek-English dictionary, such as Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon. If the original word for baptism had been translated, it would have been translated to "dipping" or "immersion". The Biblical act of baptism is immersion in water. Baptist churches practice Biblical baptism: immersion in water.

Third, Baptist Churches only practice strict communion. We understand that the Lord left His supper to be observed in His churches. When the Savior instituted the ordinance, He told His faithful apostles, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom," Luke 22:29-30. We understand that only faithful baptized penitent believers have a right to partake of the Lord's supper. This is the example our Master left when He gave the ordinance to the apostles. Peter spoke of their qualifications as faithfully following "the Lord Jesus...beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us", Acts 1:21-22. Paul, speaking by the Spirit, taught strict communion among the churches. He wrote to the Church at Corinth, "But now I have written unto you...if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat...do not ye judge them that are within? ...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." 1 Co. 5:11-13. Paul reminded

the church to strictly observe the Lord's supper. He said with a "wicked person"—an erring and unruly church member—"no not to eat." Notice, he did not say "know not to eat". He said "no not to eat". He used this wording to place emphasis on when to share the Lord's table with the wicked. In today's language, "no not to eat" is equivalent to "not even to eat". How often then should open communion be tolerated? Should it be tolerated in the name of cooperation? It should not be tolerated, "not even" for better cooperation. Should it be tolerated in the name of Christian charity? It should not be tolerated, "not even" in the name of Christian charity. Should it be tolerated if all the participants have sincerely examined themselves. It should not be tolerated, "not even" with the sincerely self-examined. The Savior and New Testament churches practiced strict communion. Baptist churches follow the Biblical example by practicing strict communion.

Fourth, Baptist Churches have no ruling class within our membership and are democratic in our government. The Head and Founder of the New Testament church made every member equal in it. He told the disciples, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Mat. 23:8-11. The churches of the New Testament operated as pure democracies. Consider how the churches received members. Paul wrote to the Church at Rome and recommended to their membership faithful Phebe. To the whole church, he says "receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints", Rom. 16:3. Consider how the churches chose officers. When the Church at Jerusalem needed deacons, Peter gave advice to the Church at Jerusalem, "brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business", Acts 6:3. The advice of Peter "pleased the whole multitude: and they [the whole multitude, or the church] chose" seven deacons whom the apostles ordained to the work, Acts 6:5. The Lord Jesus established a democratic church and this form of government was maintained by the apostles. Baptist

churches follow the Biblical example and are pure democracies.

H. Boyce Taylor (1870-1932) once said, "If you can't find it in the Bible it isn't Baptist doctrine; if it is Baptist doctrine you can find it in the Bible." This is the ultimate reason to be a Baptist. We strive to teach the Bible for our faith. We strive to practice according to the New Testament example. This is evident when we are examined on who and how we baptize. It is evident when we are examined on who we admit to the Lord's table. It is evident when we are examined on our form of church government. In these weighty matters, we are distinct from all other denominations of Christianity. For this reason, I am a Baptist.

GRAVES ON JOHN 3:5

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entered only by baptism—1 Cor. 12—added to Christ's statement here his position (the Campbellite preacher's) is an unfounded assumption.—No salvation *out* of the Kingdom. Salvation is the precedent qualification for the Kingdom. All who enter must be saved outside. Only the *saved* were added to the church. Acts 2, last clause, NONE BUT THE SAVED CAN BE SCRIPTURALLY ADDED. We are, must be, dead—dead to sin before we are buried with Christ by baptism—Rom. 6.

The sophism of Ritualists touching John 3:5, is their claim that the Kingdom of heaven is ultimate glory. It is not, but a visible organization on this earth—see v. 6. Christ had not alluded to anything in heaven as yet but something on the earth—his church organization which is here considered as His kingdom. Since having but one church, they were one, and the same spiritual regeneration, precedes any overt act of the creature—and this to enable him to see—i.e., comprehend, understand the nature and duties of it, but added to this—and that is the force of "and"—baptism is necessary to enable one to *enter* his Kingdom. Translate thus—except one be born of water in addition to being born of the Spirit he cannot become a member of My church, or a citizen of My kingdom. I want no stronger text to overthrow Campbellism. I write *currente calomo*, being in great haste preparing to depart West.

Yours truly,
J. R. Graves