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## THE BAPTIST DOCTRINE OF EXCLUSION

CHAPTER IV.—WITNESSING.

Among the many evils and impediments which trouble our churches, and cause such gloom to hang over them, *Witnessing* occupies a prominent place, and has done great injury to the cause of Christ. It originated, I suppose, among politicians; and being admired by some of the members of the church, it was secretly introduced among the people of God; and in its new relation has found many friends and has already accomplished many wonderful things.

It requires certain, and very peculiar qualifications to make a good and successful operator. In the first place he must possess a great deal of discretion, and about as much of low cunning. In the second place, he must have two faces, and be double minded. In the third place, he must have considerable intimacy with the devil; and in the fourth place, he must disregard all the teachings of inspiration, and be entirely destitute of the grace of God. With these qualifications and a little practice he can work very well. Now, the reader may be anxious to know how such a work is carried on in the church. Well, I will tell you a little about it, and only a little, because I have not time or space to give a full account of all the workings of this curious art. It is mostly carried on in the dark, or behind the curtains; and those the operator uses to effect the object, that knows not from whence it cometh. For instance, a member of the church is somewhat offended at another member, and instead of going to him in the spirit of kindness and striving for a reconciliation, as the Word of God directs, he puts on all the dignity that he can gather up, and assumes a very proud and haughty appearance, and says, in a very scornful manner, "I will not condescend to notice such a fellow—I will never let myself down so low as to go to him for an explanation." Now, being filled with spite, and moved by an evil spirit, he goes to work, secretly, to effect the ruin of the despised member. He speaks evil of him to the world, and especially in secret societies where the injured one has no chance to correct the bad impressions made against him, and so it secretly spreads from one to another; and of time in the social circle he is treated with indifference and looked on with suspicion. He strives to ruin him as a man, and a Christian, at home and abroad, by low insinuations and written communications marked, "strictly private;" and thus gathers up every evil report he possibly can, and circulates them without knowing or caring whether they are true or false. He secretly strives to injure him in his worldly business, by insinuating, that although he is a member of the Church, he is not a reliable man in business transactions, and therefore his creditors had better be a little cautious. The member thus secretly operated on soon sees that some of his former friends in business treat him with a little coolness—not as anxious as they used to be to trade with him. There is something rather mysterious and repulsive in their looks and acts. A change has come over them. Thus he is secretly injured in his worldly business, in the social circle, and in the Church. The evil enemies that he breaks out in the Church, causing trouble and great confusion among the people of God.

It is frequently the case that ministers, as well as the private members of the Church, are made to feel the blighting influence of this evil—*witnessing*. For instance a member of the church comes to the conclusion that his pastor does not suit him in every particular. He says to himself, "There are certain little things about our pastor I do not like, and I am sure he will not suit me." He proceeds to complain and to point out, and is too uncompromising to admit me. I don't think it is any of his business where I drink ardent spirits or not; and I am sure it is none of his business if I do permit my children to go to balls, to circuses, to the theatre, or any other place or places of amusement. These are family matters and he has no right to interfere with the government of my family. Indeed I have thought for a long time that he possesses an over bearing disposition, and I think that the most of the church can see it. The fact is, it will not do to keep him another year. If we do our church cannot prosper."

At first he says but little about his thoughts and intentions, except to his own family, and to some particular friends, who, like himself, have a secret dislike for their minister on account of his plain reproaches of the unfruitful works of darkness, and his opposition to false notions and doctrines. With these he labors faithfully—by day and by night; and at the same time secretly operates among the members of the church; and being a man of some influence, leads others to adopt his notions about the pastor. He does not confine his influence among the members of the church alone, but works on the outsiders also. His success gives him great encouragement and after awhile he begins to think it will be safe to utter while he begins to publish. So, after some on Sabbath he reads his notions in regard to being anxious to learn his notions in regard to you like the sermon to-day?"

"Very well," replied brother B. "I thought he did exceedingly well, considering he was very honest, and very much fatigued, when he commended his discourse. As for the doctrine he advocated I find no fault. Did you have any objections to the sermon?"

"Well, no, not much. It is true that I thought he was rather too hard on other denominations, in exposing their false doctrines; and that he is so strong against all worldly amusements, and the use of ardent spirits as a beverage. I am afraid he will injure himself and the Church by such a course. Indeed, some of the members, I find, are talking about this very thing, and blaming our pastor very much. You know that some of the best praying members think that it is their privilege to drink a dram when they please, and when they please; and many of them are strongly in favor of worldly amusements, and say there is no harm in them. And that some of our best members are secretly marrying, with other denominations. He is, I will venture to offend them, for it will be too great a loss to us. For my part I

think he preached the truth, but I don't think it best, at all times, to preach the truth, for it is calculated to offend the brethren."

"Why do you find fault with our pastor," said brother B. "for exposing false doctrines, and for reproving the works of darkness, when you are the very man, who argued him to the very thing of which you complain? I think if members will violate the plain teachings of inspiration, they ought to be reproved, for it is the business of the minister to rebuke and reprove evil doers?"

"It is true I did say something to him, a good while ago, about noticing certain doctrines advocated by some of our friends who differ with us, &c., but, as I am in a considerable hurry just now, I will explain that more fully to you some other time."

Although he meets with some opposition, and some discouragements, yet he continues his evil work, professing, at the same time, great friendship for the pastor, and especially when in his presence.

Soon he meets with another member of the church, and says to him, "I am glad to see you brother C. This morning, for I want to have a little talk with you about church matters. The year, you know, is drawing to a close, and according to our custom, we will soon be called on to select a pastor for the ensuing year, and it is time we should be thinking and talking about this thing."

"I have not troubled myself much about it," replied brother C. "because I thought our present pastor would be retained, and as I suppose he will do about as well as any we can get."

"He may do very well, but he has been preaching for us two or three years, and I think it best to have a change; for it is not long, in my opinion, to keep a minister too long—he becomes so common. It is true he is a good preacher, and has been very successful in building up the church, but there are certain things about him I don't like; and in addition to this the other denominations are so much opposed to him—you don't know how great the opposition is. On this account some of us have thought it would be best to have a change; and more than this, he is not as friendly to our order as he ought to be; I have been watching him for some time in reference to this very thing. I have learned from certain things he has said to me that he is opposed to us; and it will never do to keep him as pastor of our church. We must have a minister who is with us in these things."

"It is true," replied brother C. "I would like to have a minister who could be with us in these things, but at this late hour, I don't know where we could find one; and then it would look like treating our pastor with a little contempt to turn him off without a proper notice."

"Oh, you need not be uneasy about a preacher, for I have had my eye on one all the time, and I have conversed with him about this thing, and he is willing to come, provided we will elect him; and I am sure he will suit us exceedingly. We must work with all our might and get him—and I think we can succeed."

Thus he secretly works against the minister, and when the day for choosing their pastor comes, this *wit-wor* has his preacher mentioned and the church is informed that he can be had.

The unsuspicious plan of electing a pastor every year, and this unchristian, low, and undervaluing plan of removing and of electing pastors has been a great hindrance to the spread of the pure principles of the religion of Christ.

By the means of *wit-wor*, our churches are governed by a few, instead of the majority, in the election of pastors, in the removal of pastors, and in all other important matters. Thus the design of God in the government of the church has been perverted, and a new order of things established, which has and will prove a curse to the church. The pastoral relation, by this new order of church government, has been made uncertain, and consequently undesirable. Ministers who respect themselves, and wish to do good by preaching the gospel, are not willing to place themselves in a situation to be secretly abused and injured by the *wit-wor* who infect our churches.

If a minister is called to take charge of a church, and he accepts the call, he can scarcely have to begin to make arrangements for entering another field of labor. What he does is done amidst confusion and trouble. The church receives but little benefit, and the minister must bear the blame.

On account of such evil workings in the church, ministers become discouraged, and consequently cannot prosecute the work assigned them with zeal and energy; and those who have impressions to preach are hindered from entering the ministry.

Bro. Graves—I wish to say a few words to my brethren in West Tennessee about Madison College.

Brother—Years ago, you felt it to be your duty to your own fruitful and lovely West Tennessee, your duty to your own who will soon take your place in the great drama of life; and to God, whose you claim to be, to build up and sustain a denominational school in this division of the State; one in which your sons might be educated and trained for the great-god life here before them. As a life-struggle in which, while engaged in scientific studies, they would not be liable to be led off into the mass of error which from under the parental roof. You knew your own sons would amply able to accomplish this desirable object, and you went to work with a hearty good-will. You selected a central and healthy location and built a house that is an honor to the denomination. The trustees have secured the services of an able and efficient faculty, at the head of which stands the accomplished christian gentleman, J. B. Hamilton, A. M. who was graduated with distinguished honors at St. Johns, Cambridge, England and has twenty-two years. He is undoubtedly one of the very best qualified teachers in the whole south-west. A number-one specimen of

the christian gentleman, and your sons, if they possess a tinge of their Sires, worth, cannot be otherwise than pleased with him; and I learn that the other members of the faculty are fully competent to discharge the duties of their station, and to complete the whole, the President has recently purchased in the city of Philadelphia, a splendid philosophical apparatus. All things needful therefore to assist your sons in ascending the rugged bill of science are ready and in waiting there.

You have setled only in the initial step in this matter; and every real Baptist who visits Spring Creek, in Madison County, will feel a sort of home pride while he stands and gazes at this beautiful and commodious structure, which your liberality has reared; but when he examines the catalogue of the school for the last year or two and sees that only some sixty to seventy students have been in attendance and remembers that there are in West Tennessee alone not less than twelve to fifteen thousand Baptists possessing an immense amount of wealth, with hundreds of sons who must be educated somewhere or remain in ignorance, his heart sinks within him. He asks, why all this expense and preparation, if you are too parsimonious to retrain the institution your own hands have built? Why are you your own College maintaining only a scabby and precarious existence, when you are so able to make it a very splendid in strength and a free of life in usefulness. It did well for a while, what now hinders you? Brethren, if you let Madison College die for the want of your patronage, it will be an lasting disgrace upon the denomination in this part of the State!

Better never to have blown your trumpet, assembled the hosts of Israel to battle, than to let your courage all occur in the presence of the enemy. There ought to be not less than two hundred students in Madison College from West Tennessee, and I must believe that you, my brethren, will do better in the future for this school than you have done in the past—when you take this thing under serious advisement. Our enemies are already predicting the failure of this institution and laughing in their sleeves at your indifference. Will you, O will you, fulfill their predictions and satisfy their desires? By the memory of your own loved Gals, Dodsons, Finlays and Wrights and others who now sleep in Jesus. Your Days, Youngs, Crosses and others who still survive them, I would summon you to the rescue and shall hope to see you true to yourselves, your sons, your country and your God.

I am very truly yours,  
A. A. SANDERS.  
For the Tennessee Baptist.

"DIALOGUE ON MISSIONS NO. 6." RE-VIDEED.

In reviewing these dialogues it is our object, so far as we are able, to correct the errors of the anti-Mission Baptist when misstated, and to state them at a proper time, whenever omitted; and moreover to notice how the writer states facts, and by what means he arrives at conclusions. We showed in our former review how Mr. Campbell was made to relinquish, unanswered, his first and proper demand, and reply upon one, not only unsuitable to decide the point in dispute, but one which the Old Baptist disclaim. Mr. Shepherd must think our Campbell one of the greatest simpletons in all the world, when he is required to spend a whole day in proving to him that there is no command on this subject, nor any necessity for there to be any; and that his demand, not only militates against his own practice, but if carried to its legitimate conclusion would virtually deny that we ought to have the Scriptures.

Let us hear what he says: "But if you contend that we are not at liberty to use any means for the promotion of the Redeemer's cause, but such as have been specifically mentioned in the New Testament, then you take hold of an anti-Scriptural agency when you take hold of the press—and more, you must contend that it is wrong to print and circulate the Bible. Indeed according to your principles and practice, we ought to be destitute of the Scriptures, especially as they are now printed." This is the "unkindest cut of all," and proves one of two facts; either that you have assigned to the anti-Mission Baptist an improper demand, or that they are incapable of comparing two ideas together. We know there is no sect more strictly biblical than the Old Baptist, and none that would sacrifice more to maintain it in its primitive purity. Then to say that they held to principles that would utterly discard the Bible, or that they are incapable of perceiving the logical consequences of their own arguments, is to assert, that they have little sense. Arguments that lead to conclusions contrary to admitted facts are worse than no arguments. They betray a weakness somewhere, either in the subject matter, or in the writer. Again, he quotes from the writings of Eld. J. B. Jeter, the following extract: "The (Missionary Societies) propose to convert the world to Christ—is this right? They propose to accomplish the work by the promulgation of the Gospel of Christ—is this authorized? They propose to diffuse the light of the Gospel by sustaining and encouraging men who believe and love the Gospel, and exemplify its excellence in their lives to proclaim it among the heathen—is this authorized?" The writer then asks: "Does not this extract present the true sentiment?" We suppose it does. And it is against this *avowed sentiment* of the anti-Mission Baptist war. We have seldom seen this "sentiment" couched in language so bold; *MISSIONARY SOCIETIES PROPOSE TO CONVERT THE WORLD TO CHRIST!*—If this language be true and has its natural meaning, so wonder the Old Baptist say:—That in these days there will come seducers and false teachers, denying the very existence of a God, and small trim away many. For early the power of God is attributed to the Missionary Societies. If this is the "sentiment" that our Virginia brother says is true, we will have a worse time with him than we had anticipated." But we do not wish to use this now. We call particular attention to this extract as we may have use for it hereafter. Again, and in line, you say, that "when we last appeared you demanded of us to show you where the Lord has said definitely, that you should organize Missionary Societies—this demand I consider inconsistent with your

own practice." Yes, so palpably inconsistent is it that we would be much surprised if you could find any man of sense among the Old Baptist who will father it. And we must say (if our brother will pardon us,) that it seems to us, that no really intelligent man would have assigned it to them. But Mr. Campbell (what a stupid lost he is,) allows Mr. Shepherd to assign him whatever position he pleases, without interposing an objecting word. "But you say, let us look at this demand according to the principles of reason and the light of God's word." Well, you say, the commands of Christ are specific and must not be changed, but the means necessary to be used in order to render obedience to the commands were not specifically mentioned—that such means and such only, may be used as do not violate the commands of Christ." We remark that any means made use of in carrying into effect a command, cannot be said, by any means to violate that command. The Lord has commanded that his Gospel should be preached to every creature—now any means made use of for the spread of the Gospel, though highly improper, will not violate that command of Christ. You say that only such means as do not violate the commands of Christ may be used. Then there must be other commands—and since they may be violated in the use of means, they must necessarily so far, regulate the means. But you have already proved that the *avowed* principle of Christianity do not require any commands to regulate this matter—that it is something *circumstantial*—of necessity left to be decided by time and circumstances. If time and circumstances be the proper tribunal to decide the means to be used for the spread of the Gospel, then Christ's commands cannot be violated; for Christ ought never to have made any commands concerning a matter that is to be decided by "time and circumstances." Because by meddling with a matter that was of "necessity" so to be left to something else, he might have his commands interdicted, and he put to open shame. We see that this matter cannot be carried beyond the jurisdiction of the Bible without falling into gross absurdities. How far the commands of Christ, taken as a whole, regulate the means to be made use of in the promotion of his cause upon the earth, it is not our business now to examine. But we regard it as a radical error to depend upon anything that is essential to the existence of the Church of Christ, by anything but the Bible. But, after all, perhaps, we ought to allow that our brother has proved the demand of Mr. Campbell erroneous. And if it had not been that there is some points in this dialogue which will serve us upon a future occasion, we need not to have noticed it at all. "But to-morrow (says Mr. Shepherd,) we will compare our system of Missions with the Apostolic plan, and see if we cannot discover a striking resemblance." There may be a "striking resemblance" and yet be as distinct as air and water. The Old and New Dispensations have "striking resemblances," yet they are not one and the same. But we must close. A.

THE SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST CHURCH POLITY.

1st. Do the acts of one Church bind every other Church in the World?

Special Question.—Has one church the right to admit, and to exclude from her membership whomsoever she pleases, without reference to the action of any other church in the world?

The *Religious Herald*, to convince the South-Western Baptist, beyond a reasonable doubt that his positions (see No. 1, in this paper) are scriptural, presents the following additional arguments:

RECEPTION OF EXCLUDED MEMBERS.

The South-Western Baptist thinks that the reasoning of our article on this subject "is a little inconsistent, if not sophistical," and that we have, "after all, begged the question." We do not complain of the free interchange of thought, which elicits truth, involves dissent, and outgrown dissent is a step in the path to ultimate agreement. If the matter were worthy of the space necessary to a full discussion, it would be no difficult to clear away the fog of individual prejudice from the clear light of the truth of our article. But we prefer to resume the general subject, and to throw further light, if we can, upon the justice of our position; regarding for incidental or subsequent notice, the objections of the Baptist to that position as we have already stated it.

I. (1) Christ has endowed the churches with independence, one of another.

(2) This independence empowers every church to regulate its own fellowship. In other words, every church, by virtue of its independence, possesses the right to determine, for itself, and by its own act, whether it will receive or reject applicants for membership.

various denominations, have industriously fanned the flame of sectional strife. And if this far fabric should fall to the ground because its beams and posts have rotted, and have determined to hold together no longer, who is to blame for it? Brethren editors, what share of the blame is yours? Ponder this question. I pray you. Have you your duty?—I have you sought to allay passion and prejudice? Has your mighty influence always been on the side of calm reason?

I cannot excuse even the fair dames of our land from taking an interest in politics. Now do not be alarmed; I am not going to advocate the propriety of woman's rights' conventions, nor the propriety of woman's being found in public places, contesting with the other sex for the palm of loyalty to our government; but every true American sister, wife or mother must be a patriot.

As our Revolutionary mothers moulded bullets, nursed the wounded and sick, cheered the desponding, and sent to heaven unceasing prayers for the success of American arms; so must the present generation of American women perform the in-door work of politics—Not her's to mould the deadly laden bullet, but to mould the young lords around her into the bright, golden, active, living principles of stern virtue and truth. To do this effectively, she must know enough of politics to denounce the name politician in his better sense. Not her's to nurse the sick and dying near the stony battle-field; but to administer useful medicine to the body politic. To cheer the desponding in an intelligent way, or sister, can speak words of cheer and comfort to the jaded statesman, when clouds of strife and discord cover the political heavens?

But after all, earnest prayer is that by which she can effect most. Our God listens to the weak as readily as to the strong. There is no computing the influence of prayer to the Lord of Hosts, in bringing victory to our standards. This is no telling how often our country has been saved from impending ruin in answer to the earnest whispered prayers of God's people. And shall we forget our strength in these days of peril and strife. The God of Jacob is our refuge." "We will lift up our eyes to the hills whence cometh our help. Our help cometh from the Lord of Hosts."

DISCUSSION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF BAPTIST CHURCH POLITY.

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any part of it. It does not renege in the membership of the excommunicated church. It does not restore to him the recommendation of that church to the fellowship of others. It simply admits him to her own fellowship, and gives him a recommendation from herself; while the excommunicated church is "free as the air" to accept or reject this recommendation, according to her own pleasure. In all this, certainly, there is not a shadow of compromise. How do we plead for control even in its mildest form—the power to rescind the case for a new trial by the judiciary which has already passed upon it. No. An excommunicated church cannot require the excommunicated church to sit in judgment upon the question again, and confirm or reverse its former decision. What the excommunicated church has done with its own membership and recommendation is final—irrevocable except by its own act; or to examine whether it should have done, anything else with them. (2) It can not confer a report of the excommunicated church, if a church, in issuing the sentence of excommunication, not only cuts a man off from its own membership and recommendation, but decides that other churches shall not admit him to their membership, nor give him any recommendation. The position inverts the excommunicated church so far as that man is concerned, with the whole ecclesiastical power of Christendom! It is all one, for him and for us, as though there were no church but that on the face of the earth. No reasoning can put any other color upon it.

(3) We do not make the churches courts of review. The church that proposes to receive an excommunicated person, can not construe the excommunicated church to give an account of its proceedings. It can not demand the records of that church. It can not confer a report of the case, either in writing or by oral representation. It should request these things—request them as testimony to aid in the consideration of the question, whether the excommunicated person possesses the faith, repentance, and godly life, which constitute the essential of membership. But if this request be disregarded, there is no help for it. The excommunicated church, if it will, can maintain an unbroken and perpetual silence. Other churches must get at the testimony in the case, as best they may, by the request of the excommunicated church. (4) Now, was there ever a court of appeal, without the power of control, or even the power of review? The conception is held in its absurdity.

But for the great length of this article, we should like to inquire whether the position of the Baptist is not itself a little inconsistent? We must close, however, by expressing the cordiality with which we reciprocate the kind regards of that paper.

FORGIVE US, AS WE FORGIVE.

Mr. Whitefield once rebuked Gov. Oglethorpe, of Georgia, when about to set a wrong precedent, and saying in great exclamation, "Theascal shall suffer for it, for he knows I never forgive such offences." "If you never forgive," said Whitefield, quietly, "I hope you never sin, or never forgive yourself God." There is instruction in the following dialogue, set forth in the Middle Ages, when the great lords and knights were always at war with each other, one of them resolved to revenge himself upon a neighbor who had offended him. It chanced that on the very day of his departure, he met a man who had been his enemy was to pass near his castle, with only a few men with him. It was a good opportunity to take his revenge, and he determined to let it pass. He spoke of this plan in the presence of his chaplain, who tried in vain to persuade him not to give up this project. "Will you not said a great deal to the duke about the sin of what he was going to do, but in vain. At length, seeing that all his words had no effect, he said,

"My lord, since I cannot persuade you to give the man up, will you will you at least consent to come with me to the chapel, that we may pray together before you go?"

The duke consented, and the chaplain and he knelt together in prayer. Then the merciful Christian said to the revenging warrior, "Will you repeat after me, sentence by sentence, the prayer which our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught to his disciples?"

"I will do it," replied the duke.

He did it accordingly. The chaplain said a sentence, and the duke repeated it, till the same to the petition, "Forgive us, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Then the duke was silent.

"My lord, duke, you are silent," said the chaplain. "Will you be so good as to continue to repeat the words after me, if you do so do so." "Forgive us, as we forgive them that trespass against us." "I cannot," replied the duke.

"Well, God can not forgive you, for He has said so. He Himself has given us this prayer. Therefore, you must either give up your revenge, or give up saying this prayer; for to ask God to pardon you on your part only, is to ask Him to take vengeance on you for all your sins. Go now, my lord, and meet your victim. God will meet you at the great day of judgment."

The iron will of the duke was broken.

"No," said he, "I will finish my prayer: My God, my Father, pardon me; forgive me as I desire to forgive him who has offended me; lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil."

"Amen," said the chaplain.

"Amen," repeated the duke, who now understood the Lord's Prayer better than he had ever done before, since he had learned to apply it to himself.

Feed humility but starve pride.

Better with a poor man's soul, than please a thousand rich men's ears.

Never be ashamed of the gospel, its plainness, simplicity, and plainness are its glory.

Endeavor to set such an example, as you would wish all your flock to imitate.

Sow in hope of a harvest, and reap in fear of loss.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth." When the Christian makes this declaration, he should be understood to say, "I know that a Redeemer—a Divine Redeemer—that is the Lord Jesus Christ is the Redeemer—and that he is my Redeemer."

And to utter this language from the heart shows how much it expresses, a matter of certainty to the soul, in its true and stripped of all creature comforts! It is to have a sure title to eternal life; for the promise of this exalted Redeemer is: "Because I live, ye shall live also."

The Christian's prayer should be ready to say, "My God, my Father, pardon me; forgive me as I desire to forgive him who has offended me; lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil."

He who confides his desires to his soul wants, is more wise, more rich and contented, than any other mortal creature. The system upon which he acts, is pure and simple, with simplicity and true greatness; and seeking his felicity in innocent obscurity and peaceful retirement, he devotes his mind to the love of truth, and feeds his highest happiness in a contented heart.

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