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STUDIES IN BAPTISM

by Ray R. Sutton

No. 2: Family Solidarity

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (1 Corinthians 7:14).

Historically, paedobaptists have emphasized that the clause, "but now are they holy," implies the apostolic practice of infant baptism. They maintain that there are two types of holiness in the Bible: *real* and *ritual*. Since the passage says that the children are holy, the question comes as to whether a real or a ritual holiness is meant. If real holiness were in view, the passage would mean that children are *born* into this state. This was the view of Pelagius, who maintained that children were born good. A variant of Pelagianism was advocated by the 19th century theologian, Horace Bushnell, called "natural regeneration."

Orthodox paedobaptists, therefore, hold that the children can be declared "holy" only by some kind of ritual. That rite is called "baptism" in both testaments of Scripture (Hebrews 9:10-19; Acts 2:37 ff.). Although some paedobaptists have taken the clause under consideration differently, and opted to build their case from other passages, certainly most have taken it as a strong indication of infant baptism.

Baptists, naturally, have resisted this interpretation, and point to certain complications that arise from it. For instance, if "holy" means sanctification by water baptism, then the same Greek word translated "sanctified" in reference to the unbeliever should also be taken as pointing to baptism. Thus, the adult unbeliever would be baptized on the basis of the faith of the believer.

This leads to a second problem. Since baptism is a sign of judgment unto redemption, as well as a sign of submission to Christ's government, a difficult problem is created. To be baptized is to be in the church. If unbelieving adults are to be baptized, then *professing* unbelievers will be in the church, which will then have to excommunicate them immediately, a ridiculous situation.

Baptists such as Paul K. Jewett (*Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace*, Eerdmans, 1978) are quick to point out that infant baptism also puts potential unbelievers into the church, but the cases are not analogous. The *professing*

unbeliever, indicated by Paul's calling him or her "unbeliever," is not in the same situation as the *secret* unbeliever, such as Simon Magus. The secret unbeliever, analogous to a reprobate infant, can never be detected anyway by a "believer's baptism" doctrine (better called "professor's baptism").

The problem with the interpretation remains, however. Paul is building a case for the believer to remain with the unbeliever, but if the unbeliever is baptized and immediately excommunicated, that would not be possible. There are two basic avenues to the resolution of the problem. One approach says that "sanctify" in this verse has nothing to do either with ritual holiness or with real holiness. The other approach maintains that "sanctify" has slightly different implications when applied to unbelieving adults and to the children of believers.

Jewett argues that "sanctify" here simply means "legitimize." He is not able to supply any Biblical texts, however, to back up the notion that "sanctify" means "legitimize." His primary proof for taking the word that way is the ancient Jewish commentary, the *Mishnah*. He even tells the reader that the sections of the *Mishnah* where the Old Testament word for sanctify is used were written *after* the New Testament. This approach is certainly less than convincing, but sadly not inconsistent with the general baptistic approach to word study, as when Greek sources are cited to prove that "baptize" means "immerse," when every Biblical usage of the term implies sprinkling (e.g., Heb. 9:10). We must maintain, however, that the Bible is the final authority, and external sources can only be secondary considerations when interpreting the Scriptures.

Jewett's interpretation creates a more obvious problem as well. According to his view, the apostle Paul argues that the unbeliever and believer should remain married because the fact that one is a Christian "legitimizes" the marriage. What this implies, however, is that non-Christian marriages are always illegitimate! Following on this, Jewett argues that the children are made "legitimate" through this marriage. This would mean that the separation of the married couple would render their children bastards! The strictest view of divorce and separation, however, has never argued that divorce retroactively illegitimizes children. Thus, Jewett's objection to the inconsistency of the paedobaptist interpretation has not been replaced by a Biblically consistent argument.

Turning, then, to the **second** line of approach: any reconsideration of this passage must explain the meaning of the Greek word *haglazo*, translated "sanctified" and "holy" in the verse. Clearly the word *means* the same thing both times, but does it *imply* the same things? Clearly it has the same *denotation* both times, but has it the same connotation? If the implications of sanctification are different for the unbelieving spouse and the child of a believer, there must be evidence in the context which indicates that this is so. The qualifying comment in reference to the children, "else were your children *unclean*," provides this evidence.

This phrase sets up a contrast. By means of the sanctification spoken of in this verse, the child has passed from a condition of uncleanness to one of cleanness. Sanctification, in the case of the child, implies cleansing. On the other hand, in the case of the professing unbeliever, sanctification does not imply cleansing, as the very use of the term "unbeliever" indicates.

Sanctified yet unclean? To understand this we need only look at the condition of one kind of unbeliever in the Old Testament, the stranger in the land. Since he was in the land, he was sanctified, but he was not clean. He was to keep the law of the land, including the sabbath, keeping it *holy*. On the Day of Atonement, he was expressly commanded not to do any work (Lev. 16:29), and this sabbath observance was conformity to holiness (Gen. 2:3; Ex. 31:13). At the same time, however, the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement did not cleanse him (Lev. 16:30ff.); it only cleansed the citizens of the kingdom.

Against this it might be argued that the stranger could be pronounced clean after violating the law against eating animals that die by themselves or are torn (Lev. 17:15,16). Yet, Deut. 14:21 tells us that the unbeliever may indeed eat such food; it is only forbidden to the Israelite. Thus, the idea is that the Hebrew is obliged to cleanse himself, while the stranger is not obligated to do so, but may wish to be cleansed so that he can carry on normal business relations with his Hebrew neighbors. It is analogous to a criminal's being declared "not guilty" in the civil realm, but still being regarded as guilty by God and by the church.

It is important to see that it was his proximity to the believing community which led to his being regarded as holy. As an unbeliever, he certainly would not keep the law of God in any other culture, and that law would not be adjudicated anywhere else. It was the influence of the word of God in the life of the believing community which sanctified him. By living in the same sphere of life as the believer, he was sanctified indirectly by the word of God, which was applied directly to the unbeliever (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

With this background, we are able to understand Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 7:14, "the unbeliever is sanctified by the believer." He does not believe in the true God, but is sanctified by the relationship which he sustains to his spouse. He may remain in that relationship as long as he desires, and of course lives in general obedience to the law of God. If, on the other hand, he desires to leave, then like the Old Covenant stranger in the land, he is free to leave (1 Cor. 7:15).

By way of contrast, the children are said to be no longer

unclean, which means they have been cleansed. All cleansings in Scripture are by the sprinkling or pouring of water, and this implies water baptism.

To draw this out somewhat: first, the only individuals designated clean in the New Covenant are those in the church (Eph. 5:26). In contrast to their unbelieving parent, these clean children are regarded as *in the church*. One is added to the church by baptism (Acts 2:41,47).

Second, the ceremonial cleansings of the Old Covenant are called baptisms in Hebrews 9:10. Old Covenant baptisms, no less than Old Covenant circumcisions, were frequently placed on entire households, as in Numbers 19:18, and this again implies that the children of a believing parent are sanctified and cleansed by baptism (as implied in Acts 16:15).

Third, children are not in the same category as the stranger in the land. The stranger is a free man, but children are categorized with servants (Gal. 4:1-2). In the Old Covenant, servants were circumcised as soon as they joined a Hebrew household, even if ignorant of the faith (Gen. 17:13; Ex. 12:44). Circumcision and cleansing-baptism are united in the New Covenant rite of Holy Baptism (Col. 2:11-13), and baptism is applied to those in the household of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). Here again, then, we see a category distinction between the holy but unclean unbelieving adult, and the holy and cleansed child of a believing parent. In terms of the Biblical structure as a whole, the unbelieving stranger in the land cannot be circumcised or cleansed except voluntarily; but in terms of the Biblical structure as a whole, the child and the servant in the believing household are automatically cleansed upon entry into the household.

In summary, the sanctification of the unbelieving spouse simply means that he or she has come within the circle of the influence of the kingdom. The sanctification of the child, however, means that he or she has been set apart and cleansed by baptism.

Some practical observations: *First*, in an atomistic culture, such as ours and such as that of ancient Corinth, it is the covenant of God which brings families into a unity, even embracing cooperative unbelievers. *Second*, Baptists who refuse the sacrament to their children have placed them in the situation of the stranger in the land, instead of in the situation of the children of the covenant. Just as the strangers were sometimes converted, so the children of Baptists are influenced by the life of the covenant. The children of Baptists are holy, but not cleansed. This is not to excuse their misinterpretation of and disobedience to Scripture, however.

Third, in the event of separation or divorce, the children must go with the Christian parent, for they are Christian children. *Finally*, from this passage can be seen the power of the New Covenant, in that the unbeliever does not defile the Christian, but rather the believer sanctifies the pagan. Life flows from Jesus Christ, overcoming death and defilement (Luke 8:40-56). The result will be not only the re-establishment of Godly families, but of Godly civilizations, since the "promise is to you, your children, and to those who are afar off" (Acts 2:39ff.)

AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

by Gary North

No. 2: The Common Purse

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not (Prov. 1:10).

"Crime does not pay." This is a familiar slogan in the United States. Yet it is obvious that crime is on the increase in the secular humanistic nations of the West. The ability of criminals to steal, defraud, and murder the innocent has increased rapidly since the 1940's. The police arrest few criminals, the court system frees them, and they go out to commit crimes again. So few criminals are brought to justice that the expected penalties of crime are insufficient to reduce significantly the number of crimes that are seen by the criminals as economically beneficial.

As the cost of crime prevention by the civil government increases, and the cost of criminal acts by the criminals decreases, we see an increase in the number of crimes. It is in part simple economics. The expected benefits outweigh the expected costs of crime. But Proverbs points to a world of cause and effect. Even though the civil government has failed in its task of reducing crime, the costs to the criminal are still high. There is a built-in self-destruct mechanism in all criminal conspiracies. There is no honor among thieves, contrary to the familiar Western proverb. There is only criminal behavior.

The sinners entice a man into crime by offering him a share in the proceeds. "Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse" (Prov. 1:14). They call a man to entrap the innocent, to spill innocent blood. The goal is great wealth, to "fill our houses with spoil" (1:13b). But who is to police the thieves? Who is to monitor the purse? If it pays to spill innocent blood, why shouldn't it pay to spill the blood of one's partners in crime? The restraint of God's law is not part of the psychological make-up of criminals. There is not the same degree of self-government that we find in societies that bring up their children to fear God and respect His law. Therefore, coercion within conspiracies must be far greater. Fear governs them.

The writer is contrasting two ways of life: God-fearing and God-hating. He is contrasting the economic results of the two ways of life: prosperity and destruction. The righteous bring good judgment to their daily lives; the unrighteous bring bad judgment, violence, and destruction. The evil that men practice against the innocent becomes part of the psychological make-up of the evildoer. They cannot escape habitual patterns of existence. They lash out against their colleagues.

The author of Proverbs understood this. "For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird, And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof" (1:16-19). The criminal conspiracy, the secret society, the brotherhood of blood: all are caught in the inescapable ethics of their own presuppositions. They believe that other men are fit for the slaughter. This attitude cannot be restricted easily to the world outside the "household" of the brotherhood.

The common purse is their downfall. How can men

assess the economic value of the contributions of other men? The free market gives an assessment of each man's contribution to production. The competitive auction for labor, for capital goods, for raw materials, and for all other scarce economic resources provides prices by which we can evaluate what we are worth to others in the market, as well as what they are worth to us. This competitive structure is based on open competition in the absence of coercion. Free pricing, the profit-and-loss sheet, and the legal right to transfer ownership are essential to our knowledge of what different things really cost. Economic freedom brings us accurate knowledge, and therefore more wealth.

The criminal conspiracy is coercive. It is a collective. Like the socialist economy, it cannot permit open competition for men's services. Criminals cannot openly advertise their services to other "consumers." Also, most brotherhoods are closed societies: members cannot leave in response to higher bids from other criminal conspiracies. Thus, it becomes difficult — in fact, almost impossible — for the members of a criminal band to assess the economic contribution of each member.

Here is the *curse of the common purse*. The way that criminals decide who is to receive what portion is by coercion. The strongest get the largest portions. But this places a premium on ruthlessness. The bloodthirstiness of criminals is enhanced by the very nature of collective ownership. They all share one purse. The source of the capital in the purse is not economic production, but rather *economic pillage and destruction*. This is why criminal conspiracies and socialist governments are often run by the same people. The concept of the common purse which is filled by means of stealing the wealth of the productive is common to both *criminal conspiracies* and socialist and communist *political conspiracies*. In both cases, to cite Hayek's chapter in *The Road to Serfdom* (University of Chicago, 1944), the worst get on top.

Secrecy is basic to such societies. But this secrecy is not limited to those outside the brotherhood. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (1:17). Those who are intent on snaring unsuspecting birds become masters of concealing nets. Traps are sprung on those who least suspect them. For this reason, every member knows that he is a potential bird, and he "must live a life of continual wariness. To escape the trap, and to set an even more secret trap, are thoughts on the minds of all members of the criminal band. They snare the helpless as a way of life. These habits are not abandoned within the conspiracy.

Satanism exhibits certain recurring features: secret oaths, signs, and communications; death threats to any who would break the vow of secrecy; malicious intent against those outside the secret order; the quest for wealth and power by means of coercion against the productive members of society; and the common purse. It was not an accident that Judas was a thief, that he secretly conspired against Christ, that he was possessed by Satan, and that he controlled the apostles' purse (John 12:6). The temptations associated with the common purse are so great, that the Bible specifies that those who control church finances must live otherwise blameless, public lives (1 Tim. 3). What goes into the purse in a godly society is limited: the tithe for the church, and minimal revenues for the civil government in its purse. The society of Satan is the society of the universal common purse.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CALENDAR

by James B. Jordan

No. 8: The Old Covenant Sabbath

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat from it, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.'" (Genesis 2:16-17, NASV).

The Old Covenant, made with Adam in the beginning, was probationary. It was up to Adam "to keep it or not to keep it. If Adam broke the covenant, in that day he would die. As we know, Adam did fall, and so the Old Covenant became a covenant of judgment and death to him.

How does the sabbath fit in with this? Well, the sabbath was inaugurated when God rested from His works (Gen. 2:1-3). Man also was given works to accomplish, under the Old Adamic Covenant. The weekly sabbath was a picture (type) and foretaste of the reward that would come when the Old Probationary Covenant was finished. Adam would be sealed in an estate of righteousness and blessedness, and would rest with God forever. [Let us postpone for the time being a consideration of what rest in the Biblical sense involves.]

The sabbath, coming at the end of the week, was the time of evacuation or judgment. On that day, God looked over all His works, and relaxed and appreciated them. So too man, on the weekly sabbath, was to relax and enjoy the Person of God, the works of God, and his own good works. On the final sabbath, God would pronounce all of mankind's faithfully performed works good, and man would receive the eschatological blessing of unlosable and eternal life. This would be a New Covenant, not probationary but indefectibly established. Mankind would be transfigured, given a Spiritual body (in the sphere of the Spirit), and heaven and earth would be joined.

This did not happen. Adam sinned, and so on the sabbath day of judgment, when it came, God pronounced man evil and all his works bad, and sentenced him to unlosable and eternal death. This happened on the day of the LORD, on the day of judgment, on the day he ate of the fruit.

God, however, determined to save humanity. To do so, two things had to be accomplished. First, the terms of the Old Covenant had to be met. A new Adam would have to act as covenant head and fulfill the terms of the probation. This would secure the New Covenant for humanity.

But second, the curse of the Old Covenant had to be removed. The new Adam would have to take the place of the first Adam and undergo the judgment of the Old Covenant, which is death, separation from God. Jesus Christ, very God and very man, did these two things. By taking the curse of the Old Covenant, He removed His people from its bondage. By fulfilling the terms of the Old Covenant, He sealed His people into the promised New Covenant.

The Old Covenant has been fulfilled "by Christ. He has entered into the final sabbath rest. He has been given the transfigured, Spiritual body, now called a "resurrection" body because it is given on the other side of a "passage through the death-curse of the Old Covenant. Heaven and earth are sacramentally joined, as the Spirit brings His true body and blood to His people each Lord's Day. As Scripture says of Him, "The One who has entered His (God's) rest has Himself also rested from His works, as God did from His." (Hebrews 4:10)

Christ no longer keeps the weekly sabbath day. In Him, the type has reached fulfillment.

How about us? It might seem that, since we are in Christ, and thus in the New Covenant, and no longer under the probationary Adamic Old Covenant, that we are in a continual sabbath. This is true. Insofar as we are in Christ, we are in the fulfillment of the sabbath. There is no sabbath day in the New Covenant; the New Covenant is a continual sabbath.

BUT, we have not personally yet moved into the sphere of the resurrection body. We still live in the first, or old, creation. We are still supposed to carry out the Adamic cultural mandate. This is an Old Covenant task, but it is fulfilled now in the only way it can be, with New Covenant power. The New Covenant reestablishes the Old Covenant tasks in the sphere of non-probationary Spiritual power. The New Resurrection Covenant is being applied in the Old Preresurrection Creation environment.

Because of this, we still look forward to the return of Christ, the final Day of Judgment, and the eternal sabbath rest. As Hebrews 4:9,11 say, "There remains therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God . . . Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall . . ." insofar as we have not yet come to the eternal sabbath, the weekly sabbath is still important for us. As long as we are still involved in work (for six days), we are also involved in rest (on the seventh day).

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