

It is the unanimous, universal opinion of virtually all mankind, at this hour, in this world, that Westboro Baptist Church is a cult and not a church – certainly insofar as plainly-expressed and publicly-expressed opinions are concerned. But, Beloved, our enemies suffer from a total lack of evidence to support their slanderous attacks upon us. Ignorance of the Bible and church history betrays every word they speak on the subject; as the Savior said to their ancestors, to wit:

**“Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”
(Matt. 22:29.)**

These people think the 5-Points of Calvinism has something to do with marketing a new brand of beer from Texas, and Arminianism is a country lying northeast of Turkey. In 1742 a group of Baptist preachers met in Philadelphia for purposes of drafting a Baptist Confession of Faith; and found themselves in near-perfect accord with the Second London Confession of Faith (1689); and in those days people took an interest in such spiritual matters. As Dr. John Bright (head of the department of history at Washburn) said: *"In those days the people took very seriously the question of the Philippian jailor, 'What must I do to be saved?'"* Acts 16:30.

"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, SIR, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." (Acts 16:25-32)

Put that same question to the average preacher nowadays – fresh out of the KU school of religion – and you are apt to get responses such as these: Well, what do you think about it? Well, you know science has thrown more light on the Bible and church history than we used to have, to say nothing of the discoveries of geology and the impossibilities of having a Flood of Noah's day, and the holocaust of Lot's day. Etc. Hence you see the value of the Old Baptists and their invaluable Confessions of Faith; to wit: enabling us to do our duty in accordance with such passages as the following:

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince (i.e., confute, overwhelm with sound argument) the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."
(Titus 1:9-11)

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness (i.e., rather, hardships), as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Tim. 2:1-4)

"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: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, When I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, 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 for ever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are mumurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's person's in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 1-25)

You may see, beloved, how beautifully our ancient and highly-respected Baptist brethren confessed their love for the Holy Scriptures; to wit:

"The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience; although the light of nature, and the works of

creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; Yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these: OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi. OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy; To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation. All of which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God."

Make no mistake. We are to diligently labor in the Word and doctrine, holding fast the faithful word as we have been taught; and be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us; and study to rightly divide the word of truth; and the things that we have heard among witnesses we should commit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. (**II Tim. 2:2.**) But in the final analysis, that blessed Book the Bible is able to take care of itself.

***"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."* (Isa. 8:20)**

Beloved, hearken to the wisdom – and eloquence – of our God-fearing Baptist ancestors; to wit:

"We may be moved and induced by the testimony of good men who stray from the Scriptures to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style; the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God); and the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellences whereby it gives solid evidence that it does respect the genuine Word of God. Yet, notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Ghost, bearing witness, by and

with the Word in our hearts. Does it meet the Inward Test? Go with that. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down, or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men (or the Book of Mormon!) Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly. The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture, so delivered, our faith is finally resolved. God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without his providence; yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. God, in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without them, and against them, at his pleasure. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first Fall of Adam, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness, of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God does often leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and corruptions of their own hearts. That they may be humbled and drawn closer and more watchful in walking with the Lord. So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good."

I love you.

Amen.