

LANDMARK BAPTIST COLLEGE

INDIVIDUAL SOUL LIBERTY, THE CRUX REVISITED

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OUTLINE

Individual soul liberty is a Baptist distinctive which guarantees individual responsibility and volunteerism, even for unsubmitting Church members.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

For Baptists there are seven traceable distinctives which follow them throughout all church history. The well formulated list of 7 distinctives cannot have a greater nor lesser in importance or stature, but there is one that has slid from the limelight in these past 231 years.¹ The concept of “Individual Soul Liberty” should not be allowed to hide in the curtains of time just because it was secured by law in the first amendment of the constitution. Indeed, it needs pulled out, dusted off and remounted on its pedestal as one of the 7 pillars of truth which wisdom hath hewn.

When asking a Baptist to tell their distinctives there is normally a strange and studded silence. Baptists have no catechism, creed, nor standardized confirmation which specifically delineates them nor requires their memorization. When aligning the Baptist distinctions with the name B-A-P-T-I-S-T-S² there is a fonder recognition, but when queried about the 'I' for 'Individual Soul Liberty' there is usually a shameful stammering silence. Even in the syllabus for

1 The author realizes that the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, the Constitution of the United States ratified in 1780 and On December 15, 1791 the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights insisted that Congress make no law respecting or prohibiting the free exercise of religion. The First Amendment gave us Individual Soul Liberty making a more accurate time measurement for soul liberty only 216 years; granted.

2 This alliteration of the Baptist distinctives was first taught to the author through the Sunday School material of Regular Baptist Press. It likely predates them. Bible as SOLE authority; Autonomy of the local Church; Priesthood of all believers; Two ordinances of the Church, baptism and the Lord's supper; Individual Soul Liberty; Separation of Church and State; Two Church offices, bishop and deacon (discarded by most to keep the distinctive count down to seven); and Saved, regenerated, baptized church membership. For brevity, clarity and keeping the count of 7 this author makes the last of these 'Totally saved, regenerated baptized church membership', and drops the last 'S.'

the course that genders this paper there are only six distinctives listed as the 'Individual Soul Liberty' distinctive is coupled with the 'Priesthood of all Believers' distinctive. In the pages which follow this honorable Baptist distinctive will be defined, acclaimed and reestablished on its proper pedestal.

Some confusion is gendered by the interrelationship among the distinctives. 'Individual Soul Liberty' is a member of a trinity of distinctives dealing with Christian liberty. Joined by 'Separation of Church and State', and 'The Priesthood of All Believers', these three make the individual soul responsible for his own actions toward his Creator. This individuality and volunteerism of involvement rubs raw every nerve of ones nature to rule and coerce others into conformity. But the volunteerism of salvation by grace can hardly be over emphasized by a true Christian. Of late individual soul liberty also cuts into the Independent Baptist practice of establishing standards of sanctification whereby ladies can not wear slacks nor makeup, men can not wear facial hair, and a divorced or cross cultural marriage is completely ostracized. Individual soul liberty thus needs a closer examination as to how it fits into a system of belief.

The best definition of individual soul liberty would come from one who saw its most blatant attack. Tertullian, a third century 'Early Church Father'³ held to the Baptist distinctives and is sometimes called "Tertullian the Baptist"⁴ His words about individual soul liberty shall suffice here:

"However, it is a fundamental human right, a privilege of nature, that every man should worship according to his own convictions; one man's religion neither harms nor helps another man. It is assuredly no part of religion to compel religion—to which freewill and not force should lead us—the sacrificial victims even being required of a willing mind.

3 The "Church Father" title is of Roman Catholic origin whereby they, departing from the sole authority of the Bible, rendered to men the 'Fathering' of ongoing traditions of faith and practice that supposedly become The Holy Roman Church's doctrines. In reality there is but one Church Father and it is not Tertullian, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria or Origen! These would better be called Early Church Children.

4 Stringer, Phil, "*The Faithful Baptist Witness*", Landmark Baptist Press: Haines City, FL, 1998. pp 64

You will render no real service to your gods by compelling us to sacrifice. For they can have no desire of offerings from the unwilling, unless they are animated by a spirit of contention, which is a thing altogether undivine”⁵

Soul liberty and soul conscience will quickly become synonymous and couple with free will in this discourse. Notice John T. Christian's book “*History of Baptists Vol I*” makes additions and clarifications to the expanding definition:

“Justin Martyr affirmed similar (to Tertullian) opinions (Apol. I. C. 2. 4, 12), and later Lactantius says: Religion cannot be imposed by force; the matter must be carried on by words rather than by blows, that the will may be affected. Torture and piety are widely different; nor is it possible for truth to be united with violence, or justice with cruelty. Nothing is so much a matter of free will as religion (Lactantius, Instit. div. V. p. 20). 'Dr. Baur, commenting on these statements, says: It is remarkable how already the oldest Christian Apologists, in vindicating the Christian faith, were led to assert the Protestant principle of freedom of faith and conscience as an inherent attribute of the conception of religion against their heathen opponents (Baur, Gesch der Christl. Kirche, I. p. 428).”⁶

It is seen by these references that the Baptist Distinctive of 'Individual Soul Liberty' has a pertinence, depth, and history that make its examination germane to understanding the Baptist heritage. This treatise will examine the departures from individual soul liberty and trace its emphasis or scorn through several characters of history. It will then weigh its necessity in keeping Baptists distinct from errors of Catholicism, Calvinism, and apostasy.

II THE DEPARTURE FROM INDIVIDUAL SOUL LIBERTY

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” (II Peter 2:1)

The Example of Individual Soul Liberty

Surely throughout Scripture the individual conscience of every man doing what is right in his own mind is in constant emphasis. Also constant is the fallen and rebellious mankind

⁵ Tertullian, “*ad Scapulam*” 9 c. 2

⁶ Christian, John T., “*A History of the Baptists Volume I*”, Chapter II, from <http://www.pbministries.org/History/John%20T.%20Christian/voll/>

attempting to impose his will upon others. Indeed, the departure from individual soul liberty began at the fall of man and his rebellion against God. With the Bible as the sample, God never uses force as a means to move the will of man. When Jesus came he appealed to the soul conscience to call believers that would follow him. There was never an irresistible grace applied, nor an improper persuasion applied. Those who would not, were not compelled. Indeed, you could say the opposite is true. Jesus said; “ *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*” (Lu 14:33)

Consider also his interaction with the rich young ruler. The Bible says that “Jesus loved him.” His hearts desire would seem to be that this young studious scholar be one of his disciples. Jesus could have made it easy on him, or compulsory for him to be his disciple. He did neither. The man went away sorrowful, of his own free will. This volunteeristic character of God's calling is boldly manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is boldly announced in the 'whosoever wills' of the New Testament. But it is equally present in the Old Testament. In it, God is whooping in the affairs of man to bring about a certain end i.e. the arrival of his Messiah (Hebrew), the Christ (Greek) to atone for the world's sin and then to purge the world from sin. In each step of this precious Old Testament process sin is judged with a firm hand while belief and faith is treated with tender blessing. That is the whole extent of God's compulsory techniques. On any individual, in any dispensation, the process is always voluntary, never compulsory. Even in the choosing of a nation as his own, and the laying down of the law that would keep them holy for generations, this volunteeristic character can be traced throughout. God's plea is ever present. “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*” (Isaiah 1:18)

The consequence for rejecting his way is equally decreed, (“ *A blessing, if ye obey the*

commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day,” Deut 11:27-28) but the decision for any individual direction is always a voluntary free will decision.

To witness further this volunteeristic character of God's present filling of His Kingdom one can simply rehearse God's simple plan of salvation. That title is taken from Dr. Ford Porter's little Gospel Tract⁷ which is so familiar to Independent Baptists and has been responsible for thousands of voluntary decisions to receive Christ and enter into His Kingdom. Jesus said; “*Except a man be born again*” with a spiritual birth he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. (John 3) He said; “*Except ye be converted, ... ye cannot enter the Kingdom of God.*” (Matt 18) He could have said; “Except ye baptized with water!” He could have said; “Unless one's sins were sprinkled away as an infant!” He could have said; “I'll also accept those forced in by sword of Roman citizenship!” No! Entry into his kingdom is wholly voluntary based on the individual soul liberty of a “whosoever will”.

In the epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul develops a dissertation on ones entry into the righteous Kingdom of an all Righteous God. Therein the individual soul liberty is highlighted when he says,

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Romans 10:9-11)

This entry requirement is obviously based on an individual's ripe age and understanding, and a voluntary and individual soul conscience decision and acceptance of Christ's belief system.

⁷ Porter, Robert Ford, “*God's Simple Plan of Salvation*” Lifegate, Inc, www.godssimpleplan.org

Entry into the Kingdom of God is based on the volunteeristic character of individual soul liberty.

Thus the Bible shows individual soul liberty throughout. It is miraculously shown in the Old Testament. God is moving the affairs of men to bring about His chosen end. It is stupendously shown in the New Testament. Especially in Christ's calling, choosing and ordaining his disciples. It is more assuredly shown in His calling out believers. All of these exemplify the soul consciousness of man and the individual soul liberty held by man.

The Montanists, Tertullian's Staunch Stand for Individual Soul Liberty

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” (John 15:18)

Man has always exhibited a propensity to compel others into accepting their own belief system. This compelling will swiftly lead one to restrict, control or violate another's soul conscience or individual soul liberty. One can see in Christ's example and teaching a wholly volunteeristic character of Christianity. Jesus promised persecutions and executions to his followers because of man's propensity to compel their own beliefs against the Son of God. These persecutions and executions are documented in the Acts of the Apostles. They are further described in *“Foxes Book of Martyrs”*. They are expertly chronicled in Carol's *“Trail of Blood”*, and of late has been historically referenced in Baptist history books. Early on, Montanists and more particularly Tertullian⁸ arose against this new venue of man's propensity to physically compel. Now supposed Christians were using compulsory techniques to force the unwilling and unconverted into the Kingdom. The earliest form of compulsory entry into the Kingdom of God would have involved infant Baptism. This entry level error bloomed into such apostasy as to give its opposers the well deserved Baptist title that is held today. Tertullian (155 – 230 AD)

8 Montanus and Montanists failed to accept the sole authority of Scripture, believing rather the dangerous idea that God was still revealing new truth to man outside the truths sealed by the apostle's pens. Tertullian was more a Baptist than a Montanist as his writings indicate his complete acceptance of the sole authority of Scripture. (Stringer, Phil, *“The Faithful Baptist Witness”*, Chapter 9 pp63-64)

wrote an interesting thesis “On Baptism” wherein he separates saving grace from Baptismal water and scoffs the baptism of a child who is too young to comprehend such saving grace.⁹ In his downgrade of a child baptism practice he cites the verse to “*suffer the little children to come unto me*” correctly clarifying that it has nothing to do with baptism. As early as the 3rd century, then, there were those trying to justify the baptism of children prior to their acceptance of the saving grace of faith. Individual soul liberty includes the consideration that an individual must have enough reason to exercise his free will. Thus Tertullian not only gave a clear statement defining individual soul liberty, but he also correctly scorns any practice of infant baptism which would violate it. The drift into that error would be persistent and culminate in the Roman Empire's mandate of a catholic infant baptism. A universal violation of individual soul liberty which violates a parent's free will and the infant's free, yet underdeveloped, will. Although this violation is a major error, and assigns believers the name Baptists, Baptizers, or Ana-Baptists for life, it dwarfs in comparison to oncoming violations of individual soul liberty.

Donatists vs St. Augustine and Individual Soul Liberty

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9)*

Genius is enamored with genius. Charles Hadden Spurgeon and John Calvin were enamored with the genius mind of Saint Augustine.¹⁰ Saint Augustine, however, was the genius

9 Tertullian, “*On Baptism*”, Translated by Rev S. Theill Chapter XVIII pg 33 (soft copy) www.forerunner.com/churchfathers/x088.23.tertullian_on.html Note that the author doubts Rev. Theill's translation accuracy of the phrase “sacrament of baptism” throughout. Tertullian's work in Greek and Latin needs to be scrutinized to remove the translation error disseminated by Jerome's faulty translation from the Greek whereby they devised 'penance' (Latin mistranslation) instead of 'repentance' (Greek Bible Word), 'sacrament' (Latin mistranslation) instead of 'mysteries' (Greek Bible Word), 'New Testament priests' (Latin mistranslation) instead of 'presbyters' (Greek Bible Word).

10 Spurgeon said it himself "You may take a step from Paul to Augustine, then from Augustine to Calvin, and then well, you may keep your foot up a good while before you find such another." Fullerton, William Young, “*Charles Haddon Spurgeon A Biography*”, Spurgeon Archive, www.spurgeon.org Chap 20 p184 (soft copy)

that brought individual soul liberty under constant threat and peril for 1600 years! In his “*The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists*”¹¹ one finds his railing accusations against this Baptist distinctive. In this treatise Augustine took the Scripture about going into the highways and hedges to 'compelling them' to come in (Luke 14:23), and the Scripture about two swords being enough (Luke 22:38) and justified, in his mind, and in the Roman Catholic mind to follow, and in the Protestant minds to follow that, the use of a state constable and governmental law to force people to conform to 'Christian' dictates. This is, in embryo, the appalling doctrine of the two swords, held by the Roman Catholic church still today. The bad exegesis of these Scriptures so permeated Augustine that his conclusion was that God himself made salvation mandatory by the predestination of souls to heaven or hell. This error and robbing of individual soul liberty via the Catholic doctrine of the two swords, and the Protestant doctrine of predestination of souls has entangled Christendom for 1600 years!

Augustinian error fell from St. Augustine (AD 354 -480) Bishop of Hippo, North Africa, in two major areas, the first in the doctrine of the church, and the second in the doctrine of salvation. The two areas of error met where salvation was compulsory, and individual soul liberty vanquished. In Augustine's mind salvation could be forced upon a soul by infant baptism or by his doctrine of the two swords, wielded by the Roman Church. But he also devised that God himself had to force salvation onto totally depraved souls by his Sovereignty. All the errors of catholicism are in embryo stage in the teachings of Augustine.¹² So too, is the predestination errors of Calvinism. These errors came to full and wretched bloom in the Roman Catholic

11 Augustine of Hippo, “*The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists*”, NPNF1-04 Edited by Philip Schaff (1819-1893) Eerdmans Publishing Company and published on the internet by The Library at Calvin College at www.ccel.org

12 Sir Robert Anderson, “*The Bible Or The Church*” 2nd ed. London, Pickering and Inglis. “The Roman Church was molded by Augustine into the form it has ever since maintained. Of all the errors that later centuries developed in her teaching there is scarcely one that cannot be found in embryo in his writings.”

Imperial Church of the medieval period. When Constantine (AD 306-337) saw the political advantage of replacing the mandatory Roman paganism with a mandatory 'Christian' paganism he locked arms with the Roman Church and brought a second sword, a steel sword, into the mix. The Church at Rome took the allegorizations of Augustine and concluded with him that Jesus said to sell your garments and buy swords and that two swords are sufficient.¹³ (Luke 22:38) Constantine commanded that there be 'one state ordered religion' for 'one unified empire.' This scheme used God's Sword of the Spirit, supposedly wielded by the Roman Church, united with Man's Sword of Steel wielded by a magistrate to force the Kingdom of God upon all the Roman Empire. What became called Constantinianism, (or compulsory Christianity, vs. voluntary salvation by faith via free will) is found in its embryonic stage in Augustin's theology. Leonard Verduin writes in *"The Reformers and Their Stepchildren:"*¹⁴

"It was Augustine, he perhaps more than any other, who supplied the Constantinians with arguments from the Scriptures (or rather with arguments fastened upon the Scriptures) where by coercion was rendered theologically respectable. The expression found in Luke 14:23, "*Constrain them to come in,*" rendered in Latin *Compelle intrare*, was exactly what he needed in his running battle with the Donatists.

"The followers of Donatus were offering to secede from the "fallen" Church and to go their own way, a step which the advocates of "Christian sacralism" (Constantinianism) could not permit, for it would strike at the very heart of their dream of a faith common to all in the empire. Hence they let it be known, early in the conflict, that schism would not be permitted but would be opposed, if need be with arms. Thereupon the Donatists pointed out that this would be to deviate from the policies of the Master, who had not raised a finger, much less a sword, to restrain people from going away. More than that, when a sizable group walked out He had confronted His disciples with the wistful question, "Do you not also want to go?"¹⁵

"To this line of thought – the cogency of which had not escaped him – Augustine replied:

"I hear that you are quoting that which is recorded in the Gospel, that when the

13 St. Augustine of Hippo, *"The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists"* LC Call no:BR60, Palm copy pp338, html npnf104 iv.ix.XIX page_195

14 Verduin, Leonard, *"The Reformers And Their Stepchildren"* Grand Rapids Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. @1964 p 65

15 It should not surprise anyone but should be noted that Augustine of Hippo, AD 345-480, did not quote the 1611 King James English of John 6:67"Will ye also go away?" Augustine was more into Latin.

seventy followers went back from the Lord they were left to their own choice in this wicked and impious desertion and that He said to the twelve remaining 'Do you not also want to go?' But what you fail to say is that at the time the Church was only just beginning to burst forth from the newly planted seed and that the saying had not yet been fulfilled in her "All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve him." It is in proportion to the more enlarged fulfillment of this prophecy that the Church now wields greater power – so that she may now not only invite but also compel men to embrace that which is good." (Augustine's *Letter to Donatus*, No. 173 as printed in *Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed, Philip Schaff, Vol. 1.)

"Here we have an early representation of the notion that the Church of Christ was intended by its Founder to enter into a situation radically different from the one depicted in the New Testament. Here we have the beginnings of the notion, which reigned supreme in the minds of men all through the medieval times, that part way into the Christian era a change was intended by the King of the Church himself – a change whereby the world of apostolic times would become obsolete. This change was identified with the Constantinian innovation. This idea set forth by Augustine controlled the thought and the theology of European man all through medieval times. It led to all sorts of theological absurdities ..."¹⁴

The theological absurdity that God preselected individual souls for salvation and forces his will on them with an irresistible grace is but one more of the problems of Augustinian's compulsory salvation theology. His compulsory salvation via infant baptism, via 'be baptized' or 'be burned' or via God's Sovereignty has caused many a Baptist, Anabaptist, Donatist, Waldensian, and Believer their martyrdom. Baptists need not lean toward it in any form today, especially not in the realm of election or foreordained salvation of some individuals.

Augustine gets worse in his error as he continues to allegorize and misconstrue Scripture as follows:

"This (namely the 'enlarged fulfillment' idea which now puts the Church in position to coerce) He (Christ) shows plainly enough in the parable of the wedding feast; after He had summoned the invited ones ... and the servants have said 'It has been done as you ordered and yet there is room' the Master said 'Go out in the highways and hedges and compel them to come in in order that my house may be full.' Now observe how that it was 'bring them in' and not 'compel them,' by which the incipient condition of the Church is signified, during which she was but growing toward the position of being able to compel. Since it was right by reason of greater strength and power to coerce men to the feast of eternal salvation therefore it was said later ... 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.'"¹⁴ (Augustine's *Letter to Donatus*, No. 173)

He goes on with his theology of coercion into the kingdom with this taunt to Donatists:

“And so if you (Donatists) were strolling quietly outside the feast of eternal salvation and the unity of the holy Church then we would overtake you on your 'highways'; but now that you verily by many injuries and cruelties which you perpetrate upon our people, are full of thorns and spines, now we come upon you in your 'hedges' to compel you. The sheep which is compelled is coerced while it is unwilling, but after it has been brought in it may graze as its own volition wills.”¹⁴ (Augustine's *Letter to Donatus*, No. 173)

Leonard Verduin, researching for the “Calvin Foundation” itself, shows in his book these Scripture twisting, aberrant theology forming quotes of Augustine. He also demonstrates his antecedent role in Constantinianism, or compulsory salvation by a sword wielding, infant baptizing church. We, here, understand them as forming another large theological blunder concerning compulsory salvation in the doctrine of predestination that would bloom into its ugly TULIP under John Calvin. Again it is reiterated in the Biblical doctrine of election that salvation is always a free will voluntary decision of a free moral agent. It is never compulsory. It is never to be coerced, not by a Roman sword, not by the baptism of an infant, not by a decree of God, not by a doctrine of election, not by a foreordaining of individuals to salvation, and not by a fatalistic foreknowledge of God. Not coerced, nor mandated in any way by man nor God it is ever left as the voluntarism of “*Whosoever will may come.*”

Samuel Fisk¹⁶ develops the Latin Vulgates contribution to this violation of individual soul liberty in both Acts 2:47 “*Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved,*” and in Acts 13:48 “*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*” In error here, the Vulgate's Latin forcefully implied God's compulsion by election. It is seen from his examination that translation errors in the Latin Vulgate greatly

¹⁶ Fisk, Samuel, “*Calvinistic Paths Retraced*”, Biblical Evangelism Press, @1985. pp 69-70

propagated the error of individual election first conceived by St. Augustine. The gross error plummeted through centuries of Roman Catholic salvation by coercion and then took root in John Calvin's fertile ground of misconceptions concerning these Scriptures.

Augustinian development of both the doctrine of two swords and the predestination of souls to heaven and hell, eliminated individual soul liberty in practice. By twisting Christ's words Augustine errantly put a steel sword behind the word compel. By inserting his philosophy of original sin and predestination of souls he perverted free will for 1600 years. Even Baptists have not recovered from his error today. Calvinism still creeps in to attack man's free will and his individual soul liberty.

III INDIVIDUAL SOUL LIBERTY AFTER THE FIRST AMENDMENT

“ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;” (Revelation 3:7)

To this point individual soul liberty has been examined in the light of a soul's salvation decision. But the emphasis has included man's domineering desire to compel others into their belief system. When the belief system is errant, the compulsion is more domineering. Individual soul liberty is pertinent to every aspect of a man's relationship with his creator. It is an umbrella that reaches over both separation of church and state, and the priesthood of all believers. Its impact reaches into every aspect of man's relationship with God. Certainly Catholics and Protestants have been in the grossest violation with their compulsory dictates. In Switzerland in the 1500s Baptists were burned at the stake by Catholics or drowned in chains by Protestants. Individual soul liberty was banned by law. But the passing of the first amendment to the constitution eliminated the grossest violations of this Baptist distinctive. Interestingly, violation

now swings to the Baptist themselves, and then to a 'religion' that denies it is such. Another chapter could be written here about Baptists securing the first amendment to the American Constitution¹⁷ in order to secure individual soul liberty. But afterwards, Baptist have also been guilty of violations against this Baptist distinctive.

Baptists violate their own distinctive.

*“A righteous man falling down before the wicked
is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.” (Proverbs 25:26)*

Baptist have trespassed individual soul liberty in three ways. When one robs free will they trespass this distinctive. Reformed Baptists, Primitive Baptists and those Baptists holding to Calvinism not only trespass free will, but they totally obliterate it. Thus, the Augustinian theology of predestination of souls has repeatedly crept into Baptist circles with disastrous effect on free will, and thus trespassed into soul liberty. These errors have been covered under Protestant violations, it is unfortunate that they need mentioned here.

A second Baptist trespass of individual soul liberty has occurred in the area of standards. Certainly it is Biblical to require a level of holiness among church members. In his book *“The Church that Jesus Built.”*¹⁸ Dr. Ron Mason showed the perpetuity of Baptists by showing the perpetual existence of believers who got saved right, and then got baptized right. He could have just as easily included that after this they lived right. That would have encompassed the whole commission to 'preach the gospel, 'baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit', and then to 'teach them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.' Indeed, Dr. Mason did show the perpetual existence of believes who did these three, but he only called out

¹⁷ Grady documents this well in Chapter 9 “Free Indeed” (p162-169) of his book *“What Hath God Wrought, A Biblical Interpretation of American History”*

¹⁸ Mason, Ron, *“The Church that Jesus Built”* Challenge Press, www.lvbaptist.org

the first two as a necessary requisite for being faithful to Scripture. Being faithful to the commandments of Christ is necessary for remaining in fellowship with Him and in fellowship with other believers. It is now necessary to discern a difference between a conviction and a command, i.e. The difference between a preference violating practice, and a fellowship breaking violation.

If a Christian convert has no conviction about, say, the movie house, women's slacks, or cigarettes, and Christian fellowship is broken to bring that one into compliance with a pastor's idea, then individual soul liberty has been transgressed. The individual soul conscience has been coerced into compliance. Now if a Christian should remain in rebellion about a direct command of Christ, a church should discipline them in a Biblical manner in Christian love. But ostracizing one or having critical spirits toward one over any other convictions often violate this Baptist distinctive. There is no Scripture saying "Thou shalt not go to movies!" One should preach against worldly entertainments, but not ostracize over it. There is no Scripture condemning women in slacks (or linen breeches as a preacher twisted it.) One should concern themselves with dress, modesty and testimonies, but not ostracize a saint over it. There is no Scripture saying "Thou shalt not smoke!" One should teach against the bondage of sin and the smell of ones testimony, but not be inflicting with ones own judgment against the smoker. When one ostracizes, separates from, or condemns without just Biblical cause and without His love and compassion, they quickly violate individual soul liberty; they coerce others because of one's own convictions. One tries to do God's job for him with their own coercion. Many an insecure pastor has forced compliance to a hobby horse conviction by undo coercion. Remember man has always exhibited a propensity to compel others into their own belief system, and this compelling will swiftly lead one to restrict control or violate another's soul conscience or individual soul

liberty. A Baptist pastor who uses his pulpit, personality, or intimidation to force their own belief system is a Baptist who is violating a Baptist distinctive of individual soul liberty.

A third case wherein Baptists have violated individual soul liberty involves easy believism. If a Catholic stands with a magistrate and insists that one convert to his church or suffer dire consequences, one is compelled to be an unwilling participant, one's free will, thus their individual soul liberty has been violated. When a Baptist and his witness refuses to leave one's living room unless they repeat a sinner's prayer and confess Christ, one is compelled to be an unwilling participant, one's free will, thus one's individual soul liberty has been violated. One is done with the power of the magistrates sword. The other is done with a zealous persistence. Both violate the Baptist distinctive.

Since the time Baptists were involved in securing separation of church and state and ones individual soul liberty, they have systematically violated the latter distinctive. They have done this with a mandatory salvation via the faulty doctrine of election of souls. They have done this with a mandatory conformance to personal convictions. And they have done this with a persuasion in soul winning that has errantly turned to a compulsory sinner's prayer. In the first instance one requires God's Sovereignty to work the will of man. In the latter two one attempts to do the work of God for Him. These are fine lines of distinction, to be sure, but gross violations have occurred in all these areas. Lifting individual soul liberty back to a limelight as a Baptist distinctive might better keep Baptists walking in the Light.

The Secular Humanists' Intolerance of 'Individual Soul Liberty'

“O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:” (Psalm 7:1)

The examination of individual soul liberty since the first amendment made it a legal entity

would not be complete without the examination of the Secular Humanist's onslaught against it. They may call themselves 'free thinkers' and say they promote tolerance, but their intention is to stamp out religion.¹⁹ They are quick to walk all over individual soul liberty.

The Secular Humanist will tolerate only their religion in the public square.²⁰ Towards all other religion they are intolerant. By a carefully thought out definition 'religion' is the entity in mankind that strives to answer the questions, “Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? and How do I get there?” The humanist tries to deny being a religion by saying that they have no belief in a deity nor a transcendent order. Thus they and Buddhism both would not be a religion! No! As much as Buddhism and Hinduism are religions, Secular Humanism is a religion and not just a philosophy. They hold up their god the 'atheistic naked square' and insists that he be the only god allowed in the public school system. For them no other idea or answer to the question, “Where did I come from?,” will be tolerated; only one answer allowed, their god, the 'atheistic naked square', must be the answer to all these questions. They insist that their god be substituted into the pledge, and that the God who caused the founding of this great country be erased. They insists that their atheistic naked square be hung to cover every occurrence of the Bible's commandments that form the basis of all law in this country. They demand that their god, the atheistic naked square, be the only one printed on money. The motto that was instrumental in founding this country, “In God We Trust” must be erased and their god must be inserted in its place. They will not tolerate, and they would prohibit the presence of any god but theirs.

They have their 'articles of faith' (The Affirmations of Humanism²¹), and they do have

19 Mclay, Wilford M., “*Secularism -- Will It Survive?*”, states “we associate it (Secular Humanism) with an order in which religious expression is rigorously banished from public life and in which proscription of all but the most private expressions of religion becomes codified in law and enshrined in public policy—in short, if you mean a “hard” or “positive” secularism, which offers itself as a truth superseding all others”

20 Kurtz, Paul, “*God in the Public Square: The Hallelujah Choir*”, Free Inquiry magazine, Volume 21, Number 2.

21 “*The Affirmations of Humanism*” at www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=affirmations

their transcendent order to which they aspire. (A Secular Humanist Declaration²² Issued In 1980 By The Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism, and the Humanist Manifestos of 1933 and 1973) These affirmations and declarations deal with ethics and strive to answer the questions “Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? And How do I get there?” Just because they insist that the answers be absolutely void of a 'supernatural' or of a 'salvation from God' they think their atheistic answers are not a 'religion,' and thereby, they secure absolute privilege to banish and twist laws to prohibit all other answers. Like other religions, they do this with a vehement denial of the supernatural, yet they exhibit a vehement prohibitive intolerance of those who would embrace one. Secular Humanism is not only a religion; it is a very intolerant one.

The intolerance of the Secular Humanist has taken them so far as to defy and redefine 'Separation of Church and State', founded, termed, secured and sternly held to by red blooded Baptists. Their definition requires separation of God and country and separation of Holy Bible and country. God and Bible out, their god, the atheistic naked square put in and mandated as the only answer to matters of religion. The religion of Secular Humanism has effectively insisted that their philosophy of 'Where did I come from and why am I here?' be the only tolerated answers addressed in public schools. No other religions will be tolerated. If one strives to address these questions without bowing to their god, they will be prohibited, banned, and forcibly removed. Only the Godless atheistic naked square is allowed to address these questions. They particularly villainize Christianity because it is the founder of this free country and founder of the public schools that they have invaded with their intolerance. They say that Christians have been given a 'disproportionate privilege' and thus, like affirmative action, the Christians must be banished

²² “A Secular Humanist Declaration” at [www.secularhumanism.org/ index.php?section=main&page=declaration](http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=declaration)

completely to make up for the disproportion. They label Christians as intolerant and league with the ACLU to erase any remnant of prayer, pledge and precedence, (especially the precedence of the 10 commandments and presence of the Holy Bible that the 10 came from.) Secular Humanism is an intolerant religion and is now the only condoned religion in public school system, only their atheistic naked square can be worshiped as the creator. They are the only ones allowed to address the questions “Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? And How do I get there?” All others are banned. Others are not tolerated and Christianity which produced the public school is singled out as especially heinous.

The Secular Humanist's Intolerance of 'Individual soul Liberty' constitutes a huge stepping stone whereby they have restricted the free exercise of religion and gained a majority thinking in society. A majority opinion about intolerance of the free expression of religious beliefs about man's origins does not make it constitutionally acceptable. A majority thinking that a wall of separation need exist between God and country does not make it constitutionally viable. A majority thinking that man must have gotten here without the intelligence of the supernatural, ... thus two rocks and some dirt naturally got together and naturally by random chance, produced amino acids that spontaneously generated life that naturally kingdom-iated, phylum-iated, class-iated, order-iated, family-iated, genus-iated, and finally naturally by random speciated! Untill one species even got a PHD, ... this wildly hypothetical majority opinion does not license the silencing of the other (more reasonable) hypothesis in the science classes of America just because it alone relies on 'naturalism.' These are unconstitutional acts of the humanist atheistic religion. Humanists are so swift to erect walls between their religion of atheistic naturalism and anything which might be supernatural, that they cannot tolerate critical analysis or free thinking in their presence. They just want to make sure all such 'religion' is separated from them and their society,

especially their court owned school classrooms. This swift thoughtless wall of separation leaves them in the dark where they want to be, but they are evangelical, wanting everyone else to share their darkness. They are wall builders, fundamentalists, whom they hate, are wall busters. The war is not slight.

The Secular Atheistic Humanist first reject the Bible as the word of God. That, of course, is their prerogative, but then like any other religion or philosophical persuasion they do their dead level best to get as many others to follow their philosophy down this vein. Again, this is their prerogative until they cross a constitutional right wherein they forbid one from the free practice of one's belief and one's religion. They have done this when they use the court system to keep the Bible out of the public square, particularly out of the public's school. The decree that teachers, who believe the Bible, must now act like, teach like, and converse like they are Bible rejecting atheists, violates the free exercise of their religion. This forced acting like there is no Bible and there is no God is what violates the constitutional rights of teachers and students. The violation of the constitutional right of free speech and free expression of religious beliefs is particularly coming to bear in the science class, wherein it violates the rights of students, and violates the rights of a free society, and free thinking. It violates my rights, as my religious convictions forbid my use of the public schools wherein the 'religion' of atheism is mandated by the courts and by the gross intimidation of the ACLU. The courts forcing the beliefs of one philosophy and world view into the science classrooms of America is a violation of the constitution.

It is obvious that the Secular Humanists have redefined the term separation of church and state in a manner that threatens individual soul liberty. Their attack is brazen. If it is true, as said by a news caster about Saudi Arabia, that a countries religion is what it is teaching in its school system, America is in serious trouble. Individual soul liberty is an important Baptist distinctive.

It needs to be elevated in emphasis because it is under blatant attack by Secular Humanists.

IV INDIVIDUAL SOUL LIBERTY TILL JESUS COMES.

*He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.
Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation of Jesus Christ 22:20)*

This treatise has briefly examined man's ongoing propensity to compel another into his own belief system. Such compelling, when done with the sword, the magistrate or with persecutions has a bloody history of violation of man's individual soul liberty. Violations, started early in Christendom, even as Christ promised that it would. When these violations became a part of a Catholic Christendom, one knows that Christ is not. As tares sown amongst the wheat Catholicism has poisoned the name of Christ with Roman Christendom. Protestantism did not come free of the tares. Luther never intended to leave Romanism²³ and John Calvin's three strongholds of doctrine are predestination of souls, infant baptism, and a strong church ordered state. All three dash into the Baptist distinctive of individual soul liberty. It is unfortunate that even the Baptist, long time contenders for the freedom of man's will to choose before God, also have these tares in their field. But, even so, God is the only one who can remove such tares and he has decreed when they would be removed.²⁴

23 "The charge lodged with many variations, was that the Reformers has begun well but had spoiled their beginning when they reverted back to medieval pattern of things." Verdun Chap 1 p37

24 *Mt 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

NOTES

- 1 The author realizes that the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, the Constitution of the United States ratified in 1780 and On December 15, 1791 the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights insisted that Congress make no law respecting or prohibiting the free exercise of religion. The First Amendment gave us Individual Soul Liberty making a more accurate time measurement for soul liberty only 216 years; granted.
- 2 This alliteration of the Baptist distinctives was first taught to the author through the Sunday School material of Regular Baptist Press. It likely predates them. Bible as SOLE authority; Autonomy of the local church; Priesthood of all believers; Two ordinances of the church, baptism and the Lord's supper; Individual Soul Liberty; Separation of church and state; Two church offices, bishop and deacon (discarded by most to keep the distinctive count down to seven); and Saved, regenerated, baptized church membership. For brevity, clarity and keeping the count of 7 this author makes the last of these 'Totally saved, regenerated baptized church membership', and drops the last 'S.'
- 3 The "Church Father" title is of Roman Catholic origin whereby they, departing from the sole authority of the Bible, rendered to men the 'Fathering' of ongoing traditions of faith and practice that supposedly become The Holy Roman Church's doctrines. In reality there is but one Church Father and it is not Tertullian, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria or Origen! These would better be called Early Church Children.
- 4 Stringer, Phil, "*The Faithful Baptist Witness*", Landmark Baptist Press: Haines City, FL, 1998 pp 64
- 5 Tertullian, "*ad Scapulam*" 9 c. 2
- 6 Christisn, John T., "*A History of the Baptists Volume I*", Chapter II, from <http://www.pbministries.org/History/John%20T.%20Christian/vol1/>
- 7 Porter, Robert Ford, "*God's Simple Plan of Salvation*" Lifegate, Inc, www.godssimpleplan.org
- 8 Montanus and Montanists failed to accept the sole authority of Scripture, believing rather the dangerous idea that God was still revealing new truth to man outside the truths sealed by the apostle's pens. Tertullian was more a Baptist than a Montanist as his writings indicate his complete acceptance of the sole authority of Scripture. (Stringer, Phil, "*The Faithful Baptist Witness*", Chapter 9 pp63-64)
- 9 Tertullian, "*On Baptism*", Translated by Rev S. Theill Chapter XVIII pg 33 (soft copy) www.forerunner.com/churchfathers/x088.23.tertullian_on.html Note that the author doubts Rev. Theill's translation accuracy of the phrase "sacrament of baptism" throughout. Tertullian's work in Greek and Latin needs to be scrutinized to remove the translation error disseminated by Jerome's faulty translation from the Greek whereby they devised 'penance' (Latin mistranslation) instead of 'repentance' (Greek Bible Word), 'sacrament' (Latin mistranslation) instead of 'mysteries' (Greek Bible Word), 'New Testament priests' (Latin mistranslation) instead of 'presbyters' (Greek Bible Word).
- 10 Spurgeon said it himself "You may take a step from Paul to Augustine, then from Augustine to Calvin, and then-well, you may keep your foot up a good while before you find such

- another." Fullerton, William Young, "*Charles Haddon Spurgeon A Biography*", Spurgeon Archive, www.spurgeon.org Chap 20 p184 (soft copy)
- 11 Augustine of Hippo, "*The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists*," NPNF1-04 Edited by Philip Schaff (1819-1893) Eerdmans Publishing Company and published on the internet by The Library at Calvin College at www.ccel.org
- 12 Sir Robert Anderson, "*The Bible Or The Church*", 2nd ed. London, Pickering and Inglis. "The Roman Church was molded by Augustine into the form it has ever since maintained. Of all the errors that later centuries developed in her teaching there is scarcely one that cannot be found in embryo in his writings."
- 13 St. Augustine of Hippo, "*The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists*" LC Call no:BR60, Palm copy pp338, [html npnf104 iv.ix.XIX page_195](http://html.npnf104.iv.ix.XIX.page_195)
- 14 Verduin, Leonard, "*The Reformers And Their Stepchildren*" Grand Rapids Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. @1964 p 65
- 15 It should not surprise anyone but should be noted that Augustine of Hippo, AD 345-480, did not quote the 1611 King James English of John 6:67 "Will ye also go away?" Augustine was more into Latin.
- 16 Fisk, Samuel, "*Calvinistic Paths Retraced*", Biblical Evangelism Press, @1985. pp 69-70
- 17 Grady documents this well in Chapter 9 "Free Indeed" (p162-169) of his book "*What Hath God Wrought, A Biblical Interpretation of American History*"
- 18 Mason, Ron, "*The Church that Jesus Built*" Challenge Press, www.lvbaptist.org
- 19 McClay, Wilford M., "*Secularism -- Will It Survive*," states "we associate it (Secular Humanism) with an order in which religious expression is rigorously banished from public life and in which proscription of all but the most private expressions of religion becomes codified in law and enshrined in public policy—in short, if you mean a "hard" or "positive" secularism, which offers itself as a truth superseding all others"
- 20 Kurtz, Paul, "*God in the Public Square: The Hallelujah Choir*", Free Inquiry magazine, Volume 21, Number 2.
- 21 "*The Affirmations of Humanism*" at www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=affirmations
- 22 "*A Secular Humanist Declaration*" at www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=declaration
- 23 "The charge lodged with many variations, was that the Reformers has begun well but had spoiled their beginning when they reverted back to medieval pattern of things." Verdun Chap 1 p37
- 24 "*Mt 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*"

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