

## PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS ARE NOT CALVINISTS

About fifteen years ago, a schism developed among some Primitive Baptist ministers concerning what I will later identify as “Calvinism”. The schism led to a manifestation of unsound doctrine which produced a division among the ministry. Consequently, it was necessary to “...*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*” (Rom. 16:17). It is very important that we understand the correct meaning and application of the text referenced. To “*mark*” is to “fix one’s eyes upon”. In other words, we need to know who is preaching that which is contrary to the truth. To “*avoid*” is “to turn away from” or “keep aloof from one’s society”. In order to prevent confusion, there must be a distinction made between the advocates of truth and the advocates of error. The specific application of this principle must be determined by each pastor. Some pastors serve congregations that have been troubled or partially infected with error while others serve churches who have very little knowledge of it. In either case the pastor has the responsibility to take the necessary action to save his church from error. At the least, the minister advancing the error should not be allowed into the pulpit. Any action beyond that should be based on the attitude and actions of the minister in error. Remember, however, that our purpose is to save the offender. Therefore, he needs to be exposed to truth in a forum that does not provide opportunity for error to spread ( ). We must “...*count him not as an enemy but admonish him as a brother.*” (2 Thes. 3:15). This takes wisdom on the part of the pastor and church who are trying to save him. To our detriment, some pastors make the issue a matter of public debate from the pulpit. Consequently, to borrow an expression from our forefathers, their “hobby horse” is the cause of an unbalanced diet of spiritual food for the sheep. The best way for pastors to protect their spiritual children from error is to preach the truth with specificity. We need not be unnecessarily distracted with the counterfeit if we establish our flocks in the truth. If the “marked” ministers return to “the faith once delivered to the saints”, reconciliation may then be

With these thoughts in mind, I would like to address an article which was recently published in..... which has caused some to question the doctrine of “the preservation or perseverance of the saints”. Until recent years, it had been my experience that the terms had the same meaning when used in reference to our eternal salvation. To “persevere in grace” or to be “preserved in grace” simply meant that we can’t lose our eternal salvation because it is based on God’s grace and not our works. Our articles of faith as well as the writings of our forefathers illustrate how the terms have been used interchangeably.