



# BBC UPDATE

## Bible Baptist Theological Seminary is Available Online!

Dr. Thomas Strouse



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Bible Baptist Theological Seminary, under the auspices of Bible Baptist Church, has seminary courses online for credit towards seminary degrees, including the Master of Biblical Studies, the Master of Divinity, and the Doctor of Ministry degrees. The current courses available are Theology Proper, History of Christian Doctrine, New Testament Introduction, I and II Peter, and first semester Greek. These courses may be taken at any time with no pre-requisites. The student merely logs on the web site, follows instructions for textbooks and assignments, downloads the syllabus, views each lecture, and submits all requirements including papers, collateral reading, and exams. This is one of several avenues for obtaining a seminary degree from Bible Baptist Theological Seminary (along with residential courses and off-site modules), which is known for her strong ecclesiological and bibliological positions. For further information, contact the Dean at [drtms\\_bbts@juno.com](mailto:drtms_bbts@juno.com) or visit the web site: [www.bbc-cromwell.org](http://www.bbc-cromwell.org)



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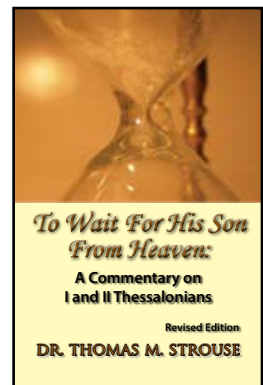
*BBTS Class "Screen shot" from the website.*

## Revised Edition of I & II Thessalonians Coming Soon!

Dr. Thomas Strouse's book *To Wait For His Son From Heaven: A Commentary on I and II Thessalonians* will be revised and reprinted. Of late there have been many speculative and unbiblical voices clamoring to express their supposed knowledge for the date of the Second Coming of the Lord. Serious, consistent commentary on Scripture, and especially on eschatological books such as I and II Thessalonians, is the need of the hour. Too many are unskillful and not careful with the text of the Bible, and hence they posit faulty statements that only advance the purposes of the enemy.

It is my prayer that the saints of Bible Baptist Church, and of other New Testament assemblies, will be instructed in and edified by the truth of this commentary.

Dr. Thomas M. Strouse



## Satan's Ecumenical Religion

By Dr. Thomas Strouse

### I. The Lies of the Garden

Shortly after the sixth day of Creation (cf. I Tim. 3:7), Satan deceived the perfect couple through the instrumentality of the serpent, giving his alternative and anti-Christian world view. He posited two subtle and effective lies which permeate all false religious systems up and through the Tribulation. *"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die"* (Gen. 3:4). First, Satan denied God's prediction and offered the opposite teaching—no death. Deathlessness to man was the promise. Second, the Scripture revealed, saying, *"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"* (Gen. 3:5). Couched in the term knowing (עִירָא, γινώσκω),<sup>1</sup> Satan claimed deification for Adam and Eve. The promise to man was deification. Corollaries to this include no salvation for the body or flesh—flesh is evil.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the resurrection of the body is denied. Satan's alternative theological system was not Theism, but Pantheistic (known also as "catholicity") in scope, Gnostic in nature, and Antichristian in conflict. Therefore, it is predicted that his religions, cults, and philosophies would be re-packaged historically and religiously with an emphasis on deification of all, reincarnation of man, denigration of the material world, works salvation in this life, and some sort of purging advancement after physical death. The word "God" would refer exclusively to the non-material realm as "abstract existence," "divine thought," "ideas," "energy," "Over-soul," "mind," "the endless all," "the ideal," etc.

All ancient and modern religions, cults, and pagan philosophies teach more or less obliquely the following satanic tenets. 1) Deity is housed in the flesh for some reason (polytheism leads to pantheism). 2) Deity needs to escape the flesh of man through purging of "sin" and "evil" in this life, and advance in the πλήρωμα to spirituality through reincarnation. 3) "True" reality is in the spiritual universal mind, soul or intellect. 4) The fullness (πλήρωμα) of the real existence of deity, or the archetypal ideal existing in the invisible heavens, has emanations down to the imperfect phenomenal manifestations of that ideal, locked in the material world, through aeons, angels, or other intermediaries, who help the spark of divinity housed in evil flesh back to Godhood through the πλήρωμα. 5) Pseudo-Christian religions teach that Jesus Christ is spiritual but not in the flesh (Docetism), or that Jesus is a mere man in physical body but not the divine Christ (Adoptionism). 6) Since man is good (= god), man advances in this life and the afterlife and avoids any permanent judgment such as hell (hell is an illusion, it does not exist, or man is annihilated).

### II. Historical Examples of the Lies

#### Ancient Religions

##### Babylonianism

The religion of Babylon, or Babylonianism, had its roots in the rebellion in the land of Shinar, from which Nimrod founded Babel (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9). The nimrodian rebels built a tower to reach into the heavens as their gateway to deity ("gate of god" = Babel [בְּבֵל]). Presumably the tower represented the *pleroma* (cf. Col. 2:9) and man's advancement to godhood. This was the beginning of the movement to build, through masons and builders, towers, ziggurats, pyramids, and pillars, all of which represented

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<sup>1</sup> The term Gnosticism comes from γινώσκω and refers to religious or special knowledge. Satanic Gnosticism has been around since the Garden, but many want to use the term as a technical expression for the AD second century fully-blossomed Gnosticism.

<sup>2</sup> Lucifer, as a created spirit being, apparently was not interested in salvation of the material body (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezk. 28:12-17).

as phallic symbols the rejection of the Seed Promise (Gen. 3:15). Their focus upon astrology, including the naming of star constellations, the geocentric zodiac, and occultic practices, fostered pantheism. The biblical revelation of the religion of Babylon denoted that it was polytheistic (and ultimately pantheistic)<sup>3</sup> as the prophets declared. Isaiah revealed the polytheism of Babylonianism, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground" (Isa. 21:9), as did Jeremiah, "Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, *even* they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens" (Jer. 10:11), and likewise Daniel, "There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3:12).

Furthermore, Babylonianism was permeated with sorcery (Dan. 2:2), astrology and magic (Dan. 2:10), giving evidence of the lies of the Garden in which men strive towards deity through self-help in this life and afterwards (reincarnation). Lucifer's pantheistic proposal through the king of Babylon that "I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:12-14) laid as foundational the Garden Gnosticism of Babylonianism.

### Egyptian Religion

As Mizraim<sup>4</sup> became the father of the Egyptians (Gen. 10:6), he no doubt perpetuated the lies of the Garden among his people. The Egyptian religion was based on the divine pharaoh who helped devotees with *ka* (life force) to advance in the next life. Horus, the son of mother Isis and father Osiris, became the reincarnation of Osiris when the father was killed by Set. Scripture teaches that Pharaoh was a divine authority in his own right (Ex. 5:2), and his religion was polytheistic. The LORD showed His superiority over the Egyptian polytheistic pantheon, saying, "*For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD*" (Ex. 12:12). His plagues were upon Egyptian deities, as Moses revealed, saying, "*For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments*" (Ex. 33:4). It is obvious that Egyptian deities associated with inanimate objects (i.e., the Nile) and well as creatures and animals (i.e., swarms and cattle). Although somewhat complex, the religion of Egypt fostered the lie of reincarnation and progress toward final deified spirit in the entombment practice.

### Canaanite Religion

The Bible characterized the religion of Ham's son Canaan (Gen. 10:6) as idolatrous and immoral. Moses warned the Jews that they needed to recoil from and reject all of the religion of Canaan. Its pantheon contained El or Elohim (Dt. 7:25), Baal and Asheroth (= "groves" [Jdg. 3:7]), and Mot (death). The occultic practices of Canaanite religion were condemned, as Moses declared, saying, "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. <sup>10</sup> There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, <sup>11</sup>Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. <sup>12</sup>For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee" (Dt. 18:9-12). These religious practices were not only idolatrous but also immoral, giving the Canaanites the sensual means by which they could participate with deities and advance in personal deification. Jehovah forbade worship of pillars, as Moses warned, saying "Thou shalt not plant thee a grove (*asheroth*) of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt

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<sup>3</sup> Polytheism (many gods) leads to the worldview of Pantheism (all is god) since there must be the ultimate authority (cf. Acts 17:23). Biblical revelation posits Theism, or the doctrine of the personal and one (albeit triune) God separated from His creation (*vide* Dt. 6:4; I Jn. 5:7; and Gen. 1:1, respectively).

<sup>4</sup> This is the KJV transliteration of the Hebrew מִצְרַיִם for "Egypt."

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make thee. <sup>22</sup>Neither shalt thou set thee up *any* image; which the LORD thy God hateth” (Dt. 16:21-22; see also 12:3). He denounced the perverted concupiscence towards lewd images, as Ezekiel denounced, saying, “Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them” (Ezk. 16:17). Baal worship also involved astrology and sodomy (II Ki. 23:5-7). The Canaanite religion is another example of the variegated manifestation of the lies of the Garden with its multiple deities (polytheism/pantheism) and religious immorality (spiritual advancement through sexual perversion).

## Hinduism

Although Hinduism has been called “the oldest religion of the world,” its roots go back to at least 1500 BC.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, man is locked in Samsara or the cycle of rebirth, advancing upward with Karma to reach Moksha, or final union with the spiritual essence (Brahman).<sup>6</sup> The variations within Hinduism have reduced down to the two basic lies of the Garden, namely, deification through many reincarnations.

## Platonic Philosophy

Plato (427-347 BC) was the understudy of Socrates (470-399 BC) and the teacher of Aristotle (384-322 BC). He wrote the 36 dialogues and 13 letters, including the following works: *Euthyphro*, *Apology of Socrates*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Cratylus*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Parmenides*, *Philebus*, and *Symposium*. He ushered in Greek philosophy (and later neo-Platonism), and influenced the world of the New Testament era and the specifically the Apostolic Fathers and subsequent Patristics. Secular philosophers observed the following:

The contact between the Greek and the Hebrew worlds created a new problem, that of explaining and justifying the Hebraic religious view, and later the Christian outlook, in terms that would make sense to those who did not accept either the Old or New Testament picture of the world. As St. Paul discovered, the message of Christianity sounded like nonsense to the Greek philosophers. When he spoke to them at Athens, they ridiculed him. Jewish and Christian thinkers began to try to state their religious beliefs in terms that would be reasonable to someone schooled in Greek philosophy. They attempted to show that the assertions of their religion were justified on the standards employed by the Greek philosophers. Philo Judaeus, of the first century A.D., and the early Church Fathers Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-220) and Origen (A.D. 185-254) argued that the religion of the Bible was compatible with Platonic philosophy. They contended that philosophical reasons could be given for accepting certain religious views, and that various religious contentions could be interpreted as ways of stating philosophical theses. Over the next several centuries, many theories from the writing of the Greek philosophers were employed by theologians to clarify or justify their religious convictions. Proofs of the existence of God, and theories about His Nature were set forth to provide a rational justification for the religious knowledge-claims of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and of the Mohammedan religion.<sup>7</sup>

Also, philosopher Fishler noted, saying,

Plato’s thoughts on God, which are among the most difficult to comprehend, found their way into both the Christian religion and Western philosophy. This could not take place however, until the Idea of the Good of Plato had been transformed into the One of the neo-Platonists and adapted to the Christian religion by St. Augustine, Origen, Dionysius the Areopagite, John the Scot, and other key figures of the Christian Church<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The king of Media reigned over India in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (Est. 1:1; 8:9), albeit the Persian religion was no doubt akin to the doctrines of Satan.

<sup>6</sup> In distinction, Brahma is the lower deity or creator god of the material creation.

<sup>7</sup> Avrum Stroll and Richard H. Popkin, *Introduction to Philosophy*, third edition (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 342.

<sup>8</sup> Max Fishler, *What the Great Philosophers Thought About God* (Los Angeles: University Book Publishers, 1958), p. 19.

Since he had founded the Academy of Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the western world, the philosophical thought of the Greco-Roman world into which Christianity came was platonic. The un-regenerated Patristics therefore seemly attempted to Platonize Paul.

Hatch identified Platonic philosophy as Gnostic in nature, saying,

The chief philosophical expression of Dualism was Platonism. Plato followed Anaxagoras in believing that mind is separate from matter and acts upon it: he went beyond him in founding upon this separation a universal distinction between the real and the phenomenal, and between God and the world...the creative energy of God is spoken of as the Demiurgus, who himself made an ideal world...<sup>9</sup>

Hatch elaborated, observing,

These unbodied Forces, which are here called by the Platonic name of Forms, are elsewhere spoken of in Stoical language as Reasons, sometimes in Pythagorean language as Numbers or limits, sometimes in the language of the Old Testament as Angels, and sometimes in the language of popular mythology as Daemons.<sup>10</sup>

### First Century Mystery Religions

The pagans of the first century were mesmerized with the current array of mystery religions, such as Mithraism, Dionysianism, and Cybele worship, all of which were various blatant forms of the Gnostic lies of the Garden, and which competed for their devotion. Louis Berkhof accurately summarized these expressions of the lies of the Garden, stating,

We cannot discuss the various Gnostic systems, such as those of Valentinus and Basilides, but can only briefly indicate the teachings of Gnosticism in general. A trait of dualism runs through the whole system and manifests itself in the position that there are two original principles or gods, which are opposed to each other as higher and lower, or even as good and bad. The supreme or good God is an unfathomable abyss. He interposes between Himself and finite creatures a long chain of aeons or middle beings, emanations from the divine, which together constitute the Pleroma or fullness of the divine essence. It is only through these intermediate beings that the highest God can enter into various relations with created beings. The world is not created by the good God, but is the result of, probably, a fall in the Pleroma, and is the work of a subordinate, possibly a hostile, deity. This subordinate god, is called the Demiurge, is identified with the God of the Old Testament, and is described as an inferior, limited, passionate, and vengeful being. He is contrasted with the supreme God, the source of goodness, virtue, and truth, who revealed Himself in the Christ...in a phantasmal body, or as an earthly being, with whom a higher power or spirit temporarily associated himself.<sup>11</sup>

### Patristics

The Catholic Church fathers (patristics), had been schooled in Platonic philosophy in their pre-Catholic Church “conversions,” and carried this philosophical worldview into their understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures. Seeburg lists a series of common characteristics of the Gnostic heretics with whom the Patristics interacted.

1. “The world of spirit and that of matter stand dualistically opposed to each other, as above and below, as good and bad.”
2. “From the spirit-world...which is internally agitated by the aeons...the present world appeared by emanation or evolution.”
3. “The spirit is imprisoned in the body.”

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<sup>9</sup> Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publ., 1995 reprint), p. 177-179.

<sup>10</sup> Hatch, pp. 185-186.

<sup>11</sup> Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 47-48.

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4. "Redemption originates in the world of spirit. The Redeemer is Jesus Christ. He is a celestial aeon."
6. "Redemption has to do chiefly with the pneumatic."
7. "In keeping with the whole trend of the system of Gnosticism, there is found in it no recognition of the resurrection of the dead, nor of the early Christian eschatology as a whole. The return of the spirit freed from matter to the pleroma marks the end."<sup>12</sup>

Selwyn observed about Greek philosophy and its impact on the patristic doctrine of God, saying, "Greek philosophical theism had always been hampered by its besetting tendency to assume a dualism between 'the One' and 'the Manifold'...tending towards a concealed ditheism...This tendency can be traced...in Plato, who distinguishes between God and the 'Idea of the Good.'"<sup>13</sup>

It should be noticed in the order of Aeons that *ekklesia* refers to "the heavenly church" which is "the archetype of the lower church." The Patristics who repudiated the overall system of Gnosticism nevertheless subscribed to the Greek philosophical notion of a universal, invisible, ideal church of which earthly and material churches are mere inferior manifestations of the true church. Ignatius was the first patristic to use "catholic" with "church," saying, "where Jesus may be, there is the universal (catholic) Church."<sup>14</sup> The *Didache* (c. AD 125) revealed the widespread and early usage of a universal or "catholic" church among the Patristics.

1. "...so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom."<sup>15</sup>
2. "Remember, Lord, Thy Church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Thy love; and gather it together from the four winds—even the Church which has been sanctified..."<sup>16</sup>

Origen ("child of Horus") lived from AD 185-254 and was a prolific writer (6000 volumes), including the *Hexapla*. He was declared *anathema* in 553 and consequently never canonized by the RCC because of his Gnostic teachings.

It was the age when Neoplatonism was beginning to control thought. Starting with God as the abstract Existence (to en), advance was made through the divine Thought (noos), the conceived order of things, the universal soul, to this world, in which the souls of men live imprisoned in matter. The task before them is escape from the sensuous by asceticism and ecstasy, through the medium of mystical symbolic rites.<sup>17</sup>

Origen claimed a three-fold approach to Scripture, namely, the somatic (literal), the psychical (moral), and the pneumatic (spiritual), arguing that the spiritual is the ideal. He posited the doctrine of a second god.

Nonetheless, we meet with subordinationistic features in Origen. The Son is the 'second God'...He is not the absolutely Good and True, but he is good and true as an emanation and image of the Father...thus Origen's doctrine of the Logos reflects the conception of his age. Christ is God as is the Father, like him eternal; yet he is the 'second God' and dependent upon the Father.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, he expounded, saying,

The Son serves him [God] here as Mediator. A definite number of incorporeal spiritual beings,

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12 Reinhold Seeburg, *The History of Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 95-98.

13 E. Gordon Selwyn, *Short History of Christian Thought* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1949), pp. 28-29.

14 John B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 84.

15 Lightfoot, p. 126.

16 Lightfoot, p. 127.

17 Seeburg, p. 146.

18 Seeburg, p. 150.

originally all alike, was a first created. To these belonged, however, free-will, which is inseparable from their existence. But their moral decisions were different. Man, who was intellect, by reason of his fall from God, cooled down into soul, since he lost his participation in the divine fire. The condition of all creatures is regulated by their respective merits. God has bestowed upon all creatures a material corporeity. Their bodies were framed to correspond with their merit—those of divinities, thrones, and powers were light and ethereal; those of the stars, which are also living beings (i.e., Plato and Philo), brilliant; those of Satan and the devils, as being the creatures who fell first and more deeply than others, coarse and dark...this accounts for the origination of the world, which hence had a beginning in time... the place and country, circumstances of birth, etc., are appointed to everyone in accordance with his condition in the pre-existent state."<sup>19</sup>

According to Origen, "After the ascension [of Jesus] the human was entirely absorbed in the divine."<sup>20</sup> Origen taught baptismal-regeneration, saying,

Baptism...is actual purification." He said "fire baptism of martyrdom...washes away sins." He taught "pre-natal existence." He stated the Cyprianic ecclesiology, saying, "Outside the church there is no salvation." He affirmed, "The process of purification and instruction begun on earth is continued after death. The good, clothed in a refined spiritual body, enter 'paradise' or 'a certain place of education, and auditorium or school of souls'...the wicked...experience the fire of judgment...not a permanent punishment, as imagined by the simple, but a process of purification...However, the wicked along with the good, 'also attain the goal' of entering into the sphere of Christ."<sup>21</sup>

Milton Hunnex summarized the influence of Platonic teaching on Augustine and subsequent "Christianity,"

Thought and experience attend to structure the world in terms of the opposites characteristic of dualism, such as mind and matter, good and evil, reality and appearance. This prevalent tendency is opposed by another tendency of reflective thought, to seek unity in the apparent diversity of the world. Hence when a cosmic dualism is advanced, it is often subordinated to some overarching and absolute reality such as God or the Idea of the Good, as in Plato. Popular thought, however, finds the dualistic distinctions of mental and material, this world and the next, easier to comprehend. In Western philosophy, Platonism established the character of most dualism until it was modified by St. Augustine into its Christian form as Augustinianism. Until challenged and largely replaced by Aristotelianism in the thirteenth century, Platonism (or, as it was later called, Augustinianism) was the predominant philosophy of the West. The renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the scientific revolt of early modern Europe tended to revive its influence. It has exhibited a perennial vitality either as a dualistic form of idealism or as mysticism. Platonism is characterized by a spiritualistic view of life and a high regard for the capacity of the human mind to discover absolute truth. It is the ancient origin of both dualism and idealism in the West, and it has permanently influenced the character and concerns of Christian theology and philosophy.<sup>22</sup>

Augustine (AD 354-430) is considered the greatest Western Father who influenced the Roman Catholic Church with his Neo-Platonic philosophy until the ascendancy of Aristotelianism through Thomas Aquinas (13<sup>th</sup> century). He studied Plato's dialogues and then was attracted to Manicheism. He lived in immorality until his turn the Catholicism. He wrote *Confessions* detailing his spiritual journey. After the fall of Rome in 410 to the Goths, he wrote the *City of God* defending the Roman Catholic Church from the charge that she weakened Rome to allow for the sacking. Seeburg summarized his Neo-Platonic influence, saying,

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19 Seeburg, p. 151.

20 Seeburg, p. 153.

21 Seeburg, pp. 156-159.

22 Milton D. Hunnex, *Chronological and Thematic Charts of Philosophies and Philosophers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1986), p. 31.

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"Satan's Ecuementical Religion"

There is innate in the soul an 'interior sense,' which apprehends the nature of things rough their intelligible forms. This species intelligibilis is not attained, but innate. But here Augustine launches out into the 'intelligible world' of the Platonic system—into the contemplation of the ancient fantasies of the original forms of all existing things. The contemplation of the eternal becomes for him—in genuinely Greek spirit—salvation...These are the fundamental intellectual lines within which the thought of Augustine moved. First, voluntarism (God is Will and man is will; love is blessedness). Then, the Neo-Platonic intellectualism (the contemplation of the intelligible world is blessedness). Both are, in a marvelous way, interwoven, and over all lies the enchantment of inner and personal experience...There exists for him but two great realities: God and the Soul...He did not, like Origen, develop a theological system, but he furnished to his age a wealth of fruitful religious and speculative ideas, giving back to it in a purified and profounder form what he received from it. His 'doctrine' is deficient in unity, combining the most violent contradictions (gospel and philosophy, Catholic tradition and religion, voluntarism and intellectualism, etc.); but his writings proved stimulating in an unparalleled degree.<sup>23</sup>

His view on ecclesiology was platonic in nature and expression. He was forced by the anabaptistic Donatists to expand on his Cypriatic view of 'church.' When they pressed against the impurity of Augustine's visible catholic 'church' and argued for their pure church, he developed a two or third-fold meaning of church. Seeburg stated,

From a critical point of view, the Donatistic objection is not with justification, for the church of the sacraments and the church of grace can only with the greatest difficulty be intellectually harmonized... we may, accordingly, speak of a two-fold, or even a three-fold, definition of the church in Augustine... The kingdom of God is thus for Augustine essentially identical with the pious and holy; but it is also the episcopally organized church.<sup>24</sup>

Further Seeburg elaborates,

The church as an enclosed garden, paradise, consists of the sancti and justi. Then appears as equivalent: 'the certain predestinated number of the saints,' and from this again: 'the number of the just.' Yet many of the predestinati are now living carnally and unworthily—are heathen and heretics. And yet these are all to be considered as included in the enclosed garden, the church, which originally consisted of the holy and righteous.<sup>25</sup>

Seeburg summarized Augustine's view of the church.

In it the best and worst elements appear side by side. It is Evangelical and Catholic; superior to the world and compromising with the world; at once, true and untrue. Theoretically contemplated, it is a malformation without parallel: practically considered, a redundancy of large conceptions and impulses—not an organism, but a vessel full of fermenting elements.<sup>26</sup>

For Augustine, the true "catholic church" was the invisible realm of the elect within the visible catholic church. This position was the predicable position of Neo-Platonism, emphasizing the Idea of "church" within the spiritual realm as "true," and any corporeal manifestations of "church" as weak, inferior, carnal, and secondary. The Donatistic appeal to the visible assembly as the pure and true church was an abomination to any thorough-going Gnostic Platonist who viewed the corporeal as evil and to be rejected and abandoned.

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<sup>23</sup> Seeburg, pp. 310-312.

<sup>24</sup> Seeburg, pp. 325-326.

<sup>25</sup> Seeburg, p. 326.

<sup>26</sup> Seeburg, p. 327.



## To Be Free



Pastor Cas Reeves

'To be free' is to have a personal liberty that allows you to live an independent life in safety and privilege and to pursue life exempt from harm and bondage. This kind of freedom or liberty comes with a price.

The United States of America paid the price of blood to form this great nation; and it has continued to pay the price of blood to maintain this freedom. War after war and conflict after conflict has seen our young men give of their blood to keep freedom alive unto this day for the citizens of our freedom loving country.

There is another realm of freedom and personal liberty. It is the spiritual realm, which frees a man from the bondage of his sin, and exempts him from the penalty of sin, making possible a life with his God. It is a freedom that gives a man liberty to live in truth, and to please His God forever.

*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life (Romans 6:22).*

This spiritual freedom also came to us at the price of blood. It was the blood of the Son of God, Jesus Christ

## DEVOTIONAL CORNER

that was shed on the cross that we might be saved through His sacrifice for the remission and forgiveness of our sin.

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14).*

This is real freedom, and this freedom is found in truth, which refers to the word of God. It is the scriptures that reveal truth, which in turn reveals freedom. This freedom is found in Jesus Christ. Simply said, 'to be free' is to believe the truth and to receive Christ.

*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32). And if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free in deed (John 8:36).*

Many of us will celebrate our political freedom on July 4th. But how many will celebrate their real and eternal freedom in Christ. Have you received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? If you have, you are free forever. –CAR

### Quotes From the Past:

#### David Brainard, 1718 – 1747

Early American Missionary



David Brainard

Excerpt from his diary posted  
November 20, 1743

*"I have now baptized, in all, forty-seven persons of the Indians. Twenty-three adults and twenty-four children... Through rich grace, none of them as yet have been left to disgrace their profession of Christianity by any scandalous or unbelieving behavior"*



Bill Gagnon and daughter, Sophia, sang a beautiful special.

# THE BOOK CORNER

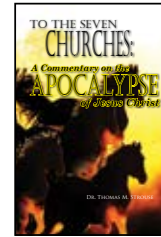
The Book Corner

10

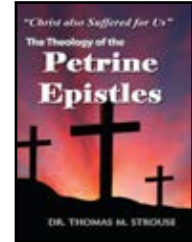
Photos

## The Book Corner

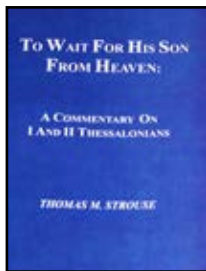
These Books may be purchased through **Bible Baptist Church**:  
40 Country Squire Rd.  
Cromwell, CT 06416  
860-229-5387



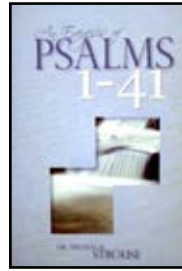
Revelation  
\$30.00



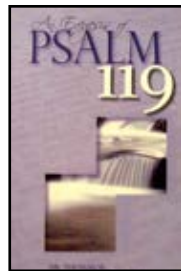
Peter  
\$20.00



I & II Thessalonians  
\$10.00



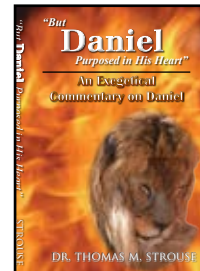
Psalms 1 - 41  
\$20.00



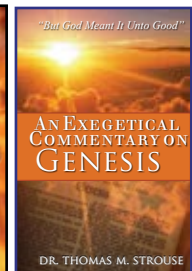
Psalm 119  
\$20.00



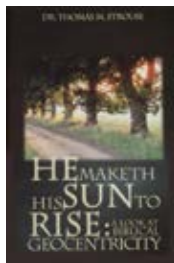
Spiritual Gifts  
\$8.00



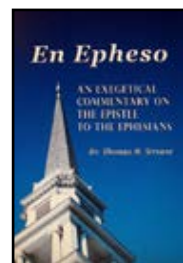
Daniel  
\$20.00



Genesis  
\$20



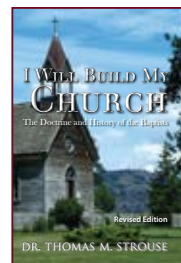
Geocentricity  
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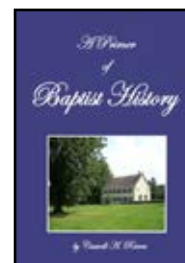
En Epheso  
\$20.00



Jonah  
\$10.00



I Will Build My Church  
\$15.00



A Primer of Baptist History  
\$20.00

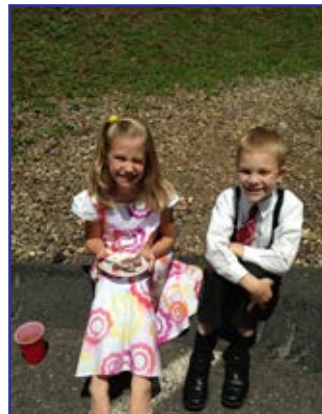


The Lord God Hath Spoken  
\$15.00

## BBC Fellowship



The children enjoy Sunday fellowship meals outside on beautiful June days!



There was time for a quick game after a Wednesday evening service!

If you have any news for the next issue of the BBC Update, please send to the Editor, Cas Reeves, at either

bbts@stny.rr.com  
hbc5923@stny.rr.com



### Bible Baptist Theological Seminary

A ministry of Bible Baptist Church

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