

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists arose, as a distinct body in America, in the second half of the eighteenth century, by a protest of the more rigid against what some considered a general laxity of doctrine and looseness of church discipline consequent upon the prevalence of Arminian doctrines as set forth by Methodism. Its great leader was Elder Daniel Parker, a native of Virginia, who was ordained in Tennessee in 1806 and labored in that State and in Illinois and Texas.

This doctrine was not allowed to be taught during the dark ages. There were a few men who contended for it; one leader by the name of Donatist who lived 250 years after Christ was here on earth in visible form; and later Peter Waldo, the founder of the Waldenses, of medieval times. The theory of the Two-Seed as a principle of doctrine has existed since apostolic times and farther back. The first fountain head that broke out was back in the Garden of Eden when God said: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. 3: 15. After the Reformation the leaders of this doctrine had more liberty and freedom to preach and teach the doctrine of Two-Seed.

The denomination at present does not emphasize the extreme Calvinistic doctrines which they stressed in its early history, when these Baptists formed scattered churches rather than an organized denomination. They differed from the Primitive Baptists chiefly in the degree to which they carried their theological opinions and ecclesiastical principles and were frequently called by the same names, "Primitive," "Old School," and "Hard Shell"; the special feature of their belief was gradually recognized, however, and they became popularly known as the "Two-Seed Baptists." As a result of this general similarity, the distinction between them and the Primitive Baptists has not always been clearly drawn and this fact probably accounts to some extent for their decreasing numbers at successive censuses.

As distinguished from the Primitive Baptists, the Two-Seed Baptists believe in the resurrection of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, and that the two seed are in the spirit and not in the flesh. They emphasize the doctrine of salvation by grace. They believe that God's people are a spiritual generation and they did exist in Christ before the world was: Eph. 1: 4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy without blame before him in love": Eph. 1: 7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Again we find in II Tim. 1: 9-10, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel": Prov. 8: 22-25, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth: when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." Therefore we emphasize the doctrine of salvation by grace and not by works: Eph. 2: 8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

We believe that the ordinances such as communion and foot washing are taught in the Bible and are to be observed in the visible church. We do not believe that the work of a paid ministry is necessary to save sinners, as Christ came to save sinners and He said He finished His work.

DOCTRINE

The phrase "Two-Seed" indicates one seed of good and one of evil, both of them spiritual and not of the flesh, the good seed emanating from God, and the evil seed from the devil; the earthly generation of mankind is the field in which

¹ This statement, which differs somewhat from that published in vol. II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1926, has been revised by Elder E. R. Little, McMinnville, Tenn., and approved by him in its present form.

both are manifested, the field, however, being no part of either. The field has no power of its own to resist, but must and does develop or manifest what is sown in it, as shown in the parable of the wheat and the tares. Neither seed can change its character, but must reproduce after its kind. We do not divide the Adamic race, nor can we change the decrees of God; but as He declared the origin and the destiny of the parent or progenitor in the beginning, we claim that, as He cannot change, neither does He change either the origin or destiny of any one of His generation. This is manifested through the visible generations of Adam. Thus, it is the crop which is gathered and not the field, the atonement being for the redemption of the good seed, which are the children of God. Divine justice being satisfied, then wisdom is justified of all her children which are the good seed; the children of God return to Him in heaven and the children of the devil are returned back to him in the lower regions of eternity.

ORGANIZATION AND WORK

In their church government the Two-Seed Baptists are thoroughly independent, each church controlling its own affairs. Associations are formed, but for spiritual fellowship rather than for church management. What are ordinarily known as church activities do not exist among them, although they believe in good works, but not as the world looks at good works. Individuals may contribute to benevolences as they see fit, but organized benevolence does not exist.