

The Berea Baptist Banner

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" Ps. 60:4

The Wonder of Jacob & Esau or God's Love and God's Hatred

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma



Nevertheless, the Bible says, **"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"** (Rom. 9:13). This is a quote from the Old Testament book of Malachi 1:2-3 and of undeniable authenticity. If the Word of God be true---and it is---then God hated Esau and loved Jacob! Romans chapters 9, 10, and 11 which present the sovereignty of God are, I suppose, the most ignored and least loved portion of

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All of us, having been humanists prior to our conversion, still tend toward thinking in humanistic terms. While humanism in politics manifests itself as left-wing socialism and one-world-government-ism and in education and morals as permissiveness: it manifests itself in theology as Arminianism or neo-Arminianism. Because of this inherent humanism or Arminianism within us, when we first hear the Bible teaching that God hates some while He loves others, we often stumble in our understanding or at least in our acceptance of such truths.

The Displayed Banner

By Eld. E. D. Miller

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Ps. 60:4).

One of the most impressive scenes in a large seaport, as New York or Liverpool, to a thoughtful mind, is the display of banners upon its shipping, which symbolize the different nationalities of the earth. In these ports may be seen proudly waving the American flag, the British lion, the French tri-color, and many others. These banners symbolize everything dear to their respective countrymen – country, home and altar. The American, for instance, is our country in emblem, and which guarantees, too,

to every American citizen complete protection to person and property, where he may sojourn in a foreign land. It reminds him that her armies, navy, and treasure are pledged for the protection of his rights as an American. In this sense, too, every government puts a banner in the hands of its citizens or subjects. Should this banner ever trail in the dust, all is lost.

This is the sense in which David employs the beautiful metaphor in the text: **"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee."** David's government was this banner or rallying point to ancient Israel. He was Jehovah's anointed king, Israel's victorious leader, and Israel's

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"Ye are God's Building"

By Nathaniel Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas



for the church of God. Again, an abundant supply of materials is written upon this topic and we will not address this subject further in this manner.

By "privilege" we mean 'showing special favor to' memberships with

Some examples of privileges would be

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John Gill wrote in his *Body of Practical Divinity*, "exclusion or excommunication [from the local church] is a removal of an offender from the communion of the church & from all privileges of membership in the church" (Brackets are NRH)

It is upon this thought that we again take our subject and lesson: "What are some of the privileges of being a member in the Lord's church?" I shall not take the time to establish that when we speak of the Lord's church we are speaking of those local, independent, landmark, sovereign grace missionary Baptist churches. Ample materials have been written upon the subject establishing this as fact. As a TRUE BAPTIST we reject the notion that we are "protestants" of any kind, for never did the Lord's church(es) come out of Catholicism. Nor do we agree that all BAPTIST CHURCHES belong to the Lord. Yet, we believe that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a BAPTIST CHURCH. We reject the notion of the universal, invisible church that all the saved are in. Many have mistaken the family of God and the kingdom of God,

Vessels of Mercy

By Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio



"And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9:23).

Romans chapter 9 is one of the most forceful declarations in all of Scripture of the sovereignty of God in salvation illustrated by the work of a Sovereign Potter. God is the Sovereign Potter who chooses the elect out of the corrupt

mass of depraved mankind according to His own purpose and grace, then fashions them for His glory. They are called vessels of mercy because they are the objects of God's love and

affection which moves Him to change them in regeneration and cleanse them in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The vessels of mercy are here contrasted from the vessels of wrath who are said to be fitted for destruction. They are left in their original miserable state to perish in their sins. If God has been pleased to choose and prepare you as a vessel of mercy your heart should be bursting with love and gratitude because you are by nature no better than the vessels of wrath.

Let us go to the house of the Sovereign Potter and examine the way in which He makes the vessels of mercy, and what uses they are designed for.

THE NATURE OF A VESSEL

1. In Bible times all vessels were originally made out of the clay of the earth. There is no natural beauty in clay.

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Is That Scripture True?

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

The title of this article may sound foolish to you, but I assure you I have put it that way in all sincerity. Practically every Baptist in the world who has not been tampered with by a modernist preacher will say that all Scripture is true. And I am convinced they really think they mean it. But when confronted with specific Scriptures very, very few of them will stand firm. For instance, in Romans 8:29 we read, **"For who he did**



foreknow, he also did predestinate."

In verse 30 we read, **"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called."**

In Ephesians 1:5 we read, **"Having predestinated us**

unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." And in verse 11 we read, **"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated**

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All sinners are Satan's slaves. And like many slaves, they have lost the desire for freedom, and the capacity for it. Only a Divine Power can emancipate those enslaved by the love of sin. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellowship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

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Please let us know your
new address. The post
office charges us \$.50
for each returned wrong
address.

That Scripture True

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according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Some few years ago I attended a funeral that was conducted by a Baptist preacher who lived next door to me. When he came up to the pulpit he looked out toward the audience. When he saw me he looked me straight in the eye and said, "I do not believe in predestination." I realize that I am responsible to my God for whether I believe what He has said in His Word or not. But I am so thankful that I am not responsible for what that preacher believes or does not believe. Four times we are told in the precious Word of God that He has predestinated certain ones. But, that preacher says, I don't believe it! How many Baptists do you know who will deny the doctrine of predestination? Most of them will call you a Hardshell if you even so much as read those Scriptures in their presence.

There are many other specific Scriptures that even most Baptists refuse to believe. But for this particular study may we consider I Corinthians 14:34. There we read, "**Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak.**" In my younger days women knew that Scripture was in the Bible and they obeyed it, that is in the part of the country where I lived. I never heard my mother nor my mother-in-law say a word in church in my life. They were both faithful members of Baptist churches. But they had not been taught theses modern day ways to circumvent that Scripture. In fact I was a grown young man before I ever heard a women speak out in a Baptist Church.

It was only after Southern Baptist Convention preachers came on the scene that women began to ignore I Corinthians 14:34, and to rebel against it, in the part of the country where I lived. The first detour around this Scripture that I ever saw or heard was in a Southern Baptist training course book. The author of this book said that they were having trouble in the church at Corinth, and that Paul told the women to keep silent until the trouble was settled. Many women who had knowledge and oratorical ability and wanted to use it in the church did not think to check the author's statement. It sounded so good they just swallowed it hook, line, and sinker. Had they taken a good look at this Scripture they would have known the author was lying to them. Paul did not say in this church. Neither did he say in the church. He said in the churches. That takes in all of our Lord's churches. Had you told those women that they did not have education enough to tell a plural noun from a singular one you would have been in serious trouble. It takes so little to convince people

that what they want to do is all right. I am made to wonder if that Southern Baptist detour around I Corinthians 14:34 has not played an important part in the break down of the American home. And, furthermore, it just may be that the infamous E.R.A., may be laid on the doorstep of the Southern Baptist Convention. When a person once feels justified in rebelling against God, and against His Word, the sky becomes the limit.

According to a question once sent in to the Baptist Examiner Forum it seems that someone else has found a detour around this Scripture. It seems that somebody has come up with the bright idea that Paul just meant that women were to keep silent only in the matter of speaking in tongues and prophesying. I assume that by tongues is meant to so-called unknown tongues in I Corinthians 14. I wish our translators could have been content to just translate the Greek text in this chapter and to have left off their additions to it. Quite a few Bible readers notice that the words "unknown" in this chapter are in italics. But how many of them know why those words are in italics? You probably know that it means that these words are not in the original Greek. But since they are not in the original Greek what business do they have in the translation? That is not what is meant in I Corinthians 14:34 simply because those (unknown) tongues had not been invented when Paul wrote I Corinthians. But if they had been invented back then, and if the Holy Spirit meant that the women were to keep silent in the churches only in the matter of unknown tongues and prophesying, why did He not say so? Beloved, the Holy Spirit said what He meant and whether we like it or not, He meant what He said.

Then just recently a beloved brother sent me a clipping from some paper that really takes the cake. In an interview Dale Evans came up with a honey. She said that she had spoken in churches all over the world, but that what Paul said about women keeping silent in the churches had always bothered her. But on one of her trips she had a well educated guide who took away all that bothered her. He told her that in the synagogue in Capernaum the men sat on the main floor, but the women had to sit in the balcony. And when the rabbi would lower his voice the women would yell, "What did he say?" He said that it was this interruption that caused Paul to reprimand the women. Dale says, "I was so relieved by that statement." Is it not wonderful when you are bothered about something and someone comes along and removes all that which you were bothered about? What a relief it is. Now Dale can speak in churches all over the world without feeling that she is rebelling against God and against His Word simply because her

guide had explained it all to her.

Now let us take that statement apart and give it a good examination. If it stands up under close examination we should all accept it just as Dale did. But if it won't stand up under that examination, no one should accept it. In the first place, it was at least a thousand miles from Capernaum on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee to Corinth in Greece where this church was located. It is doubtful that the members of this church had ever heard tell of this synagogue in Capernaum where the women were supposed to be yelling. So why should they be reprimanded for something they knew absolutely nothing about. I have no reason to believe that Paul was ever in that synagogue himself. It is true that Paul preached in the synagogue there in Corinth until the Jews began to blaspheme, Acts 18:4-7. But when they did that he shook his raiment and told the Jews their blood was upon their own heads. He then departed from the synagogue and led his group of believers into the home of Justus. In all probability they were organized into a church there in that home. In the second place, Paul is talking to the women in the churches, and Dale's guide is talking about a Jewish synagogue. And they are not even kinsfolk. It sure did not take very much to relieve Dale's mind. So I repeat; it takes so little to convince people that what they plan to do anyway is all right.

It is a serious thing when anyone, whether man or woman, refuses to do what God says do, or when they do something God says not to do. In I Samuel 15 God told King Saul to utterly destroy the Amalgamates, along with everything they possessed. But when Saul and his men saw some fine sheep and oxen they decided it would be better to save them to sacrifice unto the Lord. But remember, God said destroy them. And in verse 22 He says, "**to obey is better than sacrifice.**" There is just no substitute for obeying God's Word. In verse 23 God calls Saul's failure to obey His Word rebellion. Many women today seem to think they can do God a greater service by talking in the church rather than by keeping silent as they are told to do. But still He calls it rebellion. Any time you or I do what God says for us not to do we are rebelling against Him. There is just no valid excuse for our not doing what we are told to do. A Baptist woman once said to me, "If we women in our church were to keep silent the men would spend our money for any and everything." Still God's Word says for them to keep silent. If the men spend the money in a way that is not pleasing to God they will have to answer to Him for it. But if the women rebel against God and against His Word they will have to answer for that. When Saul refused to do what God told him to do because he thought his way was better;

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That Scripture True

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God called it rebellion, and rejected him as ruler over Israel. Could it be that some of our Lord's people will not be permitted to reign with Him in the next world because they refused to obey Him in this one? This applies to men as well as it does to women.

In Ezekiel 20:7 God says that He told the children of Israel to do some things. But in verse 8 He says they rebelled against Him and did not do what He told them to do. Then in verse 21 He says, **"the children rebelled against me, they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments."** Dear Christian women, are you rebelling against God by refusing to do what He tells you to do in I Corinthians 14:34? If you are, please remember that John says in I John 1:9, **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** There are so many who seem to look to their own understanding in an effort to learn why women are to be silent in the churches. But anyone who really wants to know why they were told to do that can learn why by turning to I Timothy 2:11-14. There we find that it is because Eve was deceived in the Garden of Eden. Adam was not deceived. He did what he did with his eyes wide open, but Eve was deceived.

It's an easy matter to prove that Dale Evans' guide was wrong in his explanation. It's an easy matter to prove that the Southern Baptist training course book was wrong on this subject. But I challenge anyone to prove that I Timothy 2:11-14 is wrong. If I were a woman I believe I had rather hear my Lord say, **"Well done, thou good and faithful servant"** than to have the people in the church hear what I had to say.



"Ye Are God's Building"

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AAA, Sam's Club, and Farm Bureau. There are others as well, but by being a member in a group like these, one has privileges that those who are not members do not have!

A "privilege" is the opposite of a "right," for a "right" is that which a person has a just claim to. No one has a right to be a Baptist church member. According to God's Word, a person has no more a right to be a member of the Lord's church than they have a right to be saved. In Acts 2:47 Luke writes, **"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."** Here we are told that the Lord adds to the church. And if God must add one, then it is not a right, but a

privilege! None have a right to the body of Christ. And this is where many Baptist church members have gone wrong. We have forgotten the great privilege of being a member of His church. There are millions saved who never will be members of His church. There are millions who play and pretend at church, but it is not the Lord's. Remember, we are dealing with those churches that are in agreement with **"thus saith the Lord."** Not those who were started by man.

Paul did not only write that the Lord's church at Corinth was **"God's husbandry,"** but he went on to say in that same verse, **"..ye are God's building."** It is this phrase we wish to look at and expound upon as we consider the thought: "The Privilege of the Baptist Church Member." I hope that every member of a sovereign grace, landmark, missionary, Baptist church believes that it is a privilege to be a member of it; that it is the highest privilege we have; for while **".. many are called, but few are chosen"** (Matt. 22:14) even fewer than those chosen unto salvation are submitting themselves to scriptural baptism and being added to His church). Do you count it a privilege to be a member in God's building? or do you only look at the responsibilities of a church member as "burdens" forgetting that **"..his commandments are not grievous [burdensome]"** (I John 5:3)?

Churches of the Lord are filled with aged men and women and the young people seem to flee from the house of God as if it is the house of death itself. Why is this? Perhaps it is because we are not instilling and showing forth the great privilege it is to be God's husbandry, God's building! You who are lost, backslidden, excommunicated or excluded from the privileges of the church body, you who are Catholic or Protestant, you may not see our advantage, our privilege, but this does not mean it does not exist; nor does it stop us from seeing our privileges as members in a New Testament Church of Jesus Christ!

I. "YE ARE GOD'S BUILDING"

This is one of Paul's favorite metaphors for the church for the living God! John Gill wrote, "The previous metaphor is taken from agriculture, this is from architecture. The local-church is God's house, which he himself has built. He hath laid the foundation, which is Jesus Christ; he makes his people to be lively (living) stones, lays them on it; he raises up the superstructure, and will complete the building, and ought to bear all the glory, and in all which he makes use of his ministers as instruments" (*Expositions of the Old and New Testaments, John Gill*).

I think it is worth noting again that Paul is writing unto the church of God at Corinth and he says of them, **"..ye are God's building"**. There were other religious houses in Corinth, no doubt. We read in Acts 18:4, **"And he [The apostle Paul] reasoned in the synagogue every**

Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." Perhaps Paul had this in his mind as he wrote this word unto the church at Corinth, that the synagogue was not the "building of God," but the church was! It is probably true that since the Romans were in power over Greece at this time, that Corinth was home unto much pagan polytheism which still remains today! Thus, Paul affirmed unto them, that they, the church of God at Corinth was God's building and if they were God's building, how then could another be God's building? Scripture is plain: **"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints"** (I Cor. 14:33).

II. CHRIST BUILD'S HIS OWN CHURCH

Well before the day of Pentecost, Christ Jesus said unto Simon Peter, **"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"** (Matt. 16:18). Christ did not build His church upon Simon Peter as the Catholics claim, but upon Himself, as He is the Rock (Deut. 32:4; I Cor. 10:4). I wish to focus on the phrase, **"I will build my church."** This literally means that Christ will be building His church! And so He is. This very moment, every one of the Lord's churches, every church that has been purchased by the blood of Christ, is being built by Him.

Now there are other houses that are being built, but the Lord is not in it! We read in Psalms 127:1, **"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."** The Holy Spirit of God acknowledges that there are other houses that are built, but they are built by men and not by God. And in the day of trial by fire God shall look upon these houses and declare: "They are NOT Mine; I did NOT build them." To the Romanists I dare say that you have built very many large houses, structurally they are sound, architecturally they are magnificent, but they were never built by the Lord. To the reformers I would say you have done a good job of reforming, but you are not the house of God. Mr. Martin Luther, your house is not God's house, it is your house. It will always be your house; and you being dead are not able to build it anymore are you? So, too, is it with you, Mr. Charles and Mr. John Wesley, Mr. John Calvin, Mr. Joe Smith, Mrs. Eddy Baker, you have built your houses, your "churches" if you wish to call them that, but my friend, the Lord did not build them. For He had already begun to build His church, His house long ago, during His earthly ministry; and today, those churches are known as Baptist churches—and Christ is still building them!

III. DEFINITION

Building—"a building, a structure, and edifice!" (Strong's Concordance).

This is used in reference to the church as a building only two times (I Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:21). By "building" we do not mean the actual bricks, stones, plaster, sheet rock/drywall, but as Simon Peter wrote: **"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."** The local, visible, body of Christ is an assembly of individual people. These are the **"lively stones;"** and they are **"rooted and built up in him, established in the faith"** (Col. 2:7) by God in His building.

IV. PARTS OF A BUILDING

We want to notice that there are several parts of a building. And being God's building, we find that we are greatly privileged in this.

Foundation: Isa. 28:16; Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 3:10—the foundation of a building is that which all else is dependent upon. And since we are God's building it is fit that we are built upon Him (Matt. 16:18). Other 'churches' or 'religions' (if you wish to call them that) are built, but not upon Christ Jesus. The Church of Rome claims to have been built upon Simon Peter, and while we think much of the apostle Peter, what a terrible foundation he would be. The Church of England is built upon adultery or bigamy, as King Henry the 8th wished an annulment so that he might be married to two women at the same time. There are others that we might go over, but you see, Beloved, that there is only one church that has the right foundation, and that is the Lord's church, which today are well-known by the Baptist name.

Chief Cornerstone: I Pet. 2:6-8—this is the stone which unites two walls; it is the stone by which all other measurements are made from and by which all other stones are built in relation to. It is quite evident that many have left off Christ in their building and so they not only have the wrong foundation, but they have no cornerstone; they have cast Him away and now their edifice is crooked, perverse both in doctrine and in practicality.

Building Materials: I Pet. 2:5; I Cor. 12:24—these materials are chosen, hand picked materials. We read that after all night in prayer Christ chose those who would be apostles and that these apostles were those that were first added or placed in the Lord's New Testament church (Luke 6:12-13; I Cor. 12:28).

As Paul spoke unto the church at Corinth saying, **"Ye are God's building"**—so they were the materials of which God used to build His church. It is a blessing to have a separate facility to meet in, sanctified and set apart for the assembling, gathering of the church of Christ to meet at, but this is not God's building; these are not the bricks, the blocks, the stones that Christ spoke of when He said, **"I will build my church."** Every member of each of the Lord's New Testament church(es) are the material

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- A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS -

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

INTRODUCTION

This book of the Bible begins where the book of Exodus ended, the tabernacle having been erected and God's glory having filled the sacred tent. The subject of this book is the holiness of God and of His people. The holiness of God is based upon who He is in Himself, and the holiness of God's people is based upon the divinely provided and recognized atonement. The sacrifices, priesthood, ceremonies, and seasons described here point, in type and shadow, to the sanctifying work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:1-14). Jesus said of Himself and of the elect which God had given Him and for whom He laid down His life, **"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth"** (John 17:19). Jesus said that the gospel is now preached unto the heathen, **"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me"** (Acts 26:18). The Bible says to those who are saved from their sins by the saving blood and power of Jesus, **"But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"** (I Cor. 6:11). Jesus is the One who sanctifies, makes holy, those who believe in Him and who become the children of God through faith in Him: **"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren"** (Heb. 2:11).

We see Jesus represented in the offerings of this book of Scripture, showing His substitutionary death for sinners upon the cross, though He Himself knew no sin. We see Jesus represented in the priesthood, as He has entered into the heavenlies to appear in the presence of God for us. We see represented in the laws given in this portion of God's Word the laws of Jesus written upon the hearts of believers, whose lives are no longer lived for themselves, but for Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. The believer has been sanctified unto God by the office work of Christ in His atoning death. The believer's worship and service is sanctified to God and acceptable by the office work of Christ as a High Priest over the household of God, making intercession for the believer, and presenting him or her, as well as his or her spiritual sacrifices, unto God. The believer is sanctified in a heart-based keeping of the commandments and teachings of Christ, kept from sin



and made holy in conduct. These things are shown in shadow and type by the temporary appointments established by God for Israel in this book.

The central portion of this system of worship and service ordained by God is the atonement (Lev. 17:11). Without the atonement, the covering for sin, there can be no relationship or fellowship with God. Modern religion denies the need for the shedding of blood, the need for sacrifice and propitiation, and in reality denies the fact of God's holiness and man's sinfulness. **"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission"** (Heb. 9:22). **"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"** (Matt. 26:28). Without Jesus' shed blood, sin cannot be removed or forgiven. Without the atonement, man remains conscious of sin and at enmity with God. Man's sin-guiltiness is not removed and man's sin-darkened heart is not cleansed. Jesus' blood provides a covering for sin, removing the guilt and cleansing the hearts of those who believe in Him so that they might draw nigh to God in holiness, Heb. 9:13, 14). The Scriptures state of Jesus, **"And he is the propitiation [atoning, substitutionary sacrifice] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"** (I John 2:2). Because of the atoning blood of Jesus, the believer is brought into favor with God and able to have a relationship and fellowship with Him.

The believer can no longer live in sin and have fellowship with God. The principle of the laws given unto Israel here is God's holiness. **"For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy"** (Lev. 11:45). This principle governs the life and conduct of the believer in these New Testament times (I Pet. 1:15, 16). Man-made and modern religion makes little of practical holiness; but God makes much of it in the lives of those who are His children. God had delivered Israel from their life of bondage in Egypt, and they were not to live as they once had, but were now to live unto God. The believer has been delivered from the bondage of the world unto sin, and is now to live in purity and godliness, serving the Lord; II Cor. 6:17, 18; II Tim. 2:19; Tit. 2:11-14. **"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness"** (I Thess. 4:7).

The sacrifices, services, priesthood,

and observances commanded in this book were divinely arranged and appointed. Throughout this sacred book we find, **"And the LORD spake unto Moses . . ."** (Lev. 4:1). More so than perhaps any other portion of Scripture, this book contains the very words of God. God ordained the acceptable way of worship then, and God ordains the acceptable way of worship today in and through His Son Jesus Christ. **"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name"** (Heb. 13:15). **"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"** (Eph. 3:21). God does not accept any worship other than that which He has ordained should be offered, John 4:23, 24. Today God is worshipped by born-again persons who have followed Christ in scriptural baptism and are serving Him in and through His kind of local, visible, New Testament church. **"Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire"** (Heb. 12:28).

CHAPTER ONE

THE BURNT OFFERING

The things being spoken of here are types and shadows pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself bare our sins in His own body upon the tree of the cross, and in whom all are saved and justified and cleansed before God by faith in Him. If we read and study these things and miss Christ, who is typically represented, we have missed the truth and meaning contained therein, and shall not be profited. We must ever be getting from God's Word that which He has meant for us to get, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. **"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"** (John 14:6); Eph. 4:13-15, Rom. 15:4, Gal. 3:24-26.

Chapter Outline

- i. Introduction – The Burnt Offering: vs. 1,2
- ii. An Offering from the Herd (also describing the usual ceremony): vs. 3-9
- iii. An Offering from the Flock: vs. 10-13
- iv. An Offering of Fowls: vs. 14-17

I. VERSE ONE.

"And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him . . . saying." These are the words of Jehovah delivered to His covenant-chosen and covenant-redeemed people through His chosen and appointed agent. God delivered these things to His people through His chosen spiritual leader, who was one of their brethren. God has said of Christ, **"Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people"** (Isa. 55:4); as well as, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"** (Matt. 17:5). Likewise we read of Jesus not being

ashamed to call us brethren; Heb. 2:17. Through Moses, God gave His people at that time the ordinances, appointments, precepts, and commandments of divine worship and service; Heb. 1:1, 2; 2:1. The principles of true worship and service unto God have not changed, being as yet those things which are delivered unto us by God: only now they consist of better things than what existed under the law, and are delivered unto us by a better Mediator, even Christ.

"And the LORD . . . spake . . . out of the tabernacle of the congregation." We now see that fulfilled of which God had said, **"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them"** (Ex. 25:8); Ex. 25:22. No more did Moses ascend the mount to commune with God, but God spoke from between the cherubims over the mercy seat. The children of Israel had not enjoyed these things prior to coming out of Egypt and entering into a peculiar relationship with God their Redeemer. He now imparts special commandments unto them. When God dwells among His people, they must of necessity do the things which are of God and which tend to holiness, else His presence will bring in judgment; Ex. 32:34, 35; 33:3; I Cor. 11:29-32.

II. VERSES TWO THROUGH FOUR.

The Word of the Lord was given to Moses to give to the people: **"Speak unto the children of Israel."** The Word of God is to govern our lives, which it can only truly do when once we are born of the Word; James 1:18; I Pet. 1:23. God's Word must govern our worship; Col. 3:16; John 4:24. We are to do that which God directs as He directs; otherwise, our service will be displeasing and dishonoring to Him. The commandments which God gave here applied to all: **"If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD . . ."** The burnt offering is the offering of approach unto and acceptance with God.

"... bring an offering unto the Lord; to draw nigh, because it was not only brought nigh to God, to the door of the tabernacle where he dwelt, but because by it they drew nigh to God, and presented themselves to him, and that for them; typical of believers under the Gospel dispensation drawing nigh to God through Christ, by whom their spiritual sacrifices are presented and accepted in virtue of his." (Gill, John. (*Exposition of the Old Testament* ["The Online Bible", Larry Pierce, 1994-95])).

God was now dwelling in the tabernacle, the tent of meeting; and if any would, as it were, come unto God and have fellowship with Him, then that person must come by way of the altar whereon was offered the whole burnt sacrifice. If

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any man will come unto God today, he must come in the prescribed manner, by the divinely provided way, in and through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, **"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink"** (John 7:37); Heb. 10:19, 20.

The offering being an animal of the herd (of cattle), the offerer was to **"offer a male without blemish."** The animal being offered could have no unsoundness. This speaks of Christ who **"through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God"** (Heb. 9:14); I Pet. 1:18-21, II Cor. 5:21. The offerer was to **"offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle."** This speaks of Christ's free and voluntary offering of Himself unto God as the sacrifice and propitiation for our sins. **"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself"** (John 10:17-18). The animal was brought to **"the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD."** This offering was made in the sight of God and men. Jesus offered Himself, as it were, **"before the LORD,"** as His sacrifice was to satisfy God and sanctify men to God-ward. **"Behold the Lamb of God!"** (John 1:36). Jesus' offering of Himself was first and foremost unto God, Heb. 9:24.

"And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him." The offerer here identifies himself with the innocent victim. The animal being sacrificed pictured Christ who would die in the sinner's place; Isa. 53:5, 6, 11. The blameless one took the place of the guilty. **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"** (I Pet. 3:18). God does not overlook sin; much rather, He provided a Substitute whose blood would pay for and provide a covering of sins for those who trust in the One who died, His only begotten Son. This speaks of the imputation of the sins of the guilty one upon the head of the sacrifice. The sins of the believer are imputed to Christ, and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believing sinner. Here the offerer identified himself with the dying one by putting his hands on the head of the animal. The sinner identifies himself with Christ who died on Calvary by believing on Him for the remission of sins. None are saved whose faith is not in Christ. **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"** (Acts 16:31). Faith in Christ is the spiritual counterpart to the putting of the hands on the head of the offering. The one whose faith is in Christ is in effect saying, "I stand or

fall with Jesus. I claim nothing but His blood. All I have and all I am I cast away: I want - I cling to none but Jesus!"

"And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." When all was done as prescribed, the sacrifice was accepted as that which covered the sins of the offerer. Without an atonement (a covering) for sin, none could approach unto God. The only ground upon which you and I can have a right relationship and fellowship with God is the atoning and sanctifying work of Jesus Christ. The atonement, or covering, signified that the sins of the sinner were done away through the substitutionary death of the sacrifice. Jesus' death was accepted by God in the place of guilty sinners, and by faith in Jesus the sinner is cleared of all sin-guiltiness and is made to stand before God as a righteous person, covered with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God sees only that which is pleasing in Jesus His Son; and He sees the believer as one with Christ; Eph. 1:6-7. The saved sinner is one who is accepted by God in Christ. He or she is reconciled to God through the atonement which Jesus secured by His death upon the cross; Eph. 2:13-18; 3:11, 12. **"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission"** (Heb. 9:22); Lev. 17:11. Without the atonement, there is no putting away of our sins, and therefore no way of approaching God. The only way for any to come unto God is through Jesus Christ and faith in Him.

III. VERSES FIVE THROUGH NINE.

"And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD." The death of the offering pointed to the death of Christ. This is the stumbling stone and rock of offence to many unbelievers, the death of Jesus upon the tree of the cross. **"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness"** (I Cor. 1:23). The condemnation of sin was put upon the innocent substitute. If Jesus did not die, then the price of our sin debt was not paid, and we are justly condemned to death. God's grace is manifest in sending Jesus in the flesh to suffer for sin and

bear the just condemnation of the sins of His people. **"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man"** (Heb. 2:9). The blood of the sacrifice was taken by the priests, and sprinkled **"round about upon the altar."** The blood is that which made atonement for the soul. Jesus said, when instituting a new and better type of His sacrifice of Himself for sins, **"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"** (Matt. 26:28); Heb. 12:22-24. The blood of sprinkling speaks of the way being open for the believer to worship and serve God. **"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"** (Heb. 9:14)?

The animal was flayed, or skinned (the skin being given unto the priest), and then **"cut into his pieces"** (Lev. 1:6). The priests would **"put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire"** (Lev. 1:7), after which, the various pieces of the sacrifice would be placed upon the wood to be consumed by the fire. All things had a divine arrangement. The scriptures state that Jesus, **"by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"** (Acts 2:23), was crucified and slain. Special instructions were given with regards to the inwards and legs of the offering, which the priest was instructed to **"wash in water."** This points to the purity of Christ both in His inward thoughts and motives, as well as in His outward behavior and life; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; I Pet. 2:22, 23. The inward thought of Jesus was, **"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"** (Ps. 40:8). The outward character of His life was that He **"went about doing good"** (Acts 10:38). Jesus paid for the sins of our inward thoughts as well as the sins of our overt acts, that both the behavior of our lives and the inner most thoughts and intents of our hearts might be sanctified unto God.

The burnt offering was wholly

consumed upon the altar. This offering was all for God. **"And the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD."** Jesus offered Himself wholly unto God upon the cross of Calvary in the place of guilty sinners. Knowing full well His death which He should suffer, He prayed, **"O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done"** (Matt. 26:42). He offered Himself wholly unto God. Jesus' offering of Himself was completely acceptable and pleasing unto God, Eph. 5:2. God was pleased with Jesus' offering. Nothing we could offer would ever please God, for all we are and do is corrupt with sin. Jesus' complete righteousness satisfied God's justice and holiness.

IV. VERSES TEN THROUGH THIRTEEN.

These verses record the instructions specific to the burnt offering **"of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats,"** as opposed to of the cattle, as an ox or bullock. The general requirements and procedure were the same, as the offering must be **"a male without blemish,"** whose blood was sprinkled **"round about upon the altar,"** the various parts laid **"in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar,"** with **"the inwards and the legs"** being first washed **"with water."** We note a new detail here given, that the offering was to be killed **"on the side of the altar northward before the LORD."** God ordered every particular. Nothing which has to do with salvation has been left to man, but God has done all. **"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"** (Eph. 2:8, 9). This offering of the flocks, as with the offering of the herd, was to all be brought and burnt upon the altar. **"It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD."**

V. VERSES FOURTEEN THROUGH SEVENTEEN.

The third category of burnt offering was **"of fowls."** Two types of birds were designated, **"turtledoves,"** or **"young pigeons."** This provision is made for those who owned no herds or flocks and were too poor to obtain an offering of those kinds; Lev. 5:7. God is no respecter of persons; Rom. 2:11, 12; 3:9-12. The rich sinner as well as the poor sinner is bound for hell without Jesus Christ; I Tim. 2:1-6; 4:10. So, the believer in Christ, be he or she rich or poor, great or small, high or low, is saved and safe and bound for the presence of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This offering had specific instructions, as to the killing of the animal, the disposal of the blood, the plucking away and disposal of the bird's **"crop with his feathers"** on the east side of the altar **"by the place of the ashes."**

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Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	95.9.....	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680.....	5,000 AM
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
KARI, Blaine, WA.....	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m....	550.....	5,000 AM
KCNW, Kansas City, KS....	Saturday 10:00 - 10:30 a.m....	1380.....	2,500 AM
KLNG, Omaha, NE.....	Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.....	1560.....	10,000 AM
KWDF, Alexandria, LA.....	Wednesday 2:30 - 3:00 p.m....	840.....	8,000 AM
DXUM, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 2:30 - 3:00 p.m.....	819.....	10,000 AM
DXDS, Digos City, Philippines...	Sunday 12:00 - 12:30 p.m....	1161.....	1,000 AM

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The filth of the bird was not burnt upon the altar, corresponding to the washing of the inwards and legs of the bullock, lamb, or goat, and thus signifying the sinless purity of Christ.

The bullock may have referred to the strength of Christ as a faithful servant of His heavenly Father, never failing to do His good and perfect will; and yet with regards to His sufferings on the cross, He said, **"My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death"** (Ps. 22:15). The lamb speaks of Christ's harmlessness. **"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"** (Isa. 53:7). The goat speaks of Him as being considered guilty in the place of His people. **"He was numbered with the transgressors"** (Isa. 53:12). The turtledoves and pigeons speak in one sense of Christ's meekness and humility, and their violent death shows the violence of His death. **"Who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living"** (Isa. 53:8). In all cases, we find that this offering was all consumed upon the fire, **"a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD."** In each case, the offering was acceptable and pleasing unto God. The offerer was not accepted based on anything in himself; and the sinner is not accepted based on anything except the merits of Jesus Christ and His shed blood. Do not stay back from coming to God by Jesus Christ because of any unfitness in yourself! The only fitness any man, woman, boy, or girl can ever have before God is that which is imputed to him or her by faith in Jesus Christ. **"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness"** (Rom. 4:3). **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"** (I Tim. 1:15).



"Ye Are God's Building"

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that Christ used to build His church.

As a member of a local, independent, missionary, landmark, sovereign grace, Baptist church, if you do not believe that you and you alone have the privilege of being God's Building—then you had best quit, close up, sell the building and disband—for if we do not believe in the privilege of the Lord's church(es) over others—then we are saying that one

church is as good as another. Beloved, if we believe that we have not this privilege of solely being God's building, then we are wasting our time and I reiterate that if we think that the Lord's church and men's churches are of equal value, then we would be better off to close up our doors, sell the meeting-houses and stay at home. If we say that we have no privilege over Protestants, so-called "Baptist Reformers," Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and anyone else, then we are calling God a liar and are committing a sin tantamount to blasphemy.

Beloved, we are God's building! even as Paul wrote, **"..Ye are God's building"** unto the church at Corinth! And we ought not to be ashamed of any of it. If others wish to be God's building then let come over, let them **"put their lamp upon the lamp stand,"** let the Lord add them and have God temper the body together.

Laborers: Eph. 4:11-16—here we see that Paul speaks of gifts of which Christ has bestowed upon His building. These gifts are individuals as well as the offices and roles that the individual members are in the church. Ephesians 4:11 tells us that **"He [Christ] gave 'some' apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers"** (Emp. N.H.). The word "some" means "churches." Christ knows the exact need of everyone of His churches. He knows if they need a pastor, an evangelist, or a teacher. Nothing is left up to the building, but Christ buildeth and bringeth in those He would see fit to use.

The Work of the Laborers: Paul tells us that the work of these laborers is for 1) **"the perfecting of the saints,"** 2) **"the work of the ministry"** 3) **"the edifying of the body of Christ"** 4) **"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,"** 5) **"unto a perfect man,"** 6) **"unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,"** 7) **"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive,"** 8) **"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"** 9) **"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."**

Now God has only placed these laborers in "His building." It is only here that His people are built up, edified, taught, shepherded, indoctrinated, reprov'd, corrected, instructed in righteousness: **"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (II Tim. 3:16-17). And this is a great problem with Christendom. A great majority of people

are spiritually ignorant, yea may I say willfully spiritually ignorant. They are indoctrinated, but it is not with truth. They are taught, but it is not with **"Thus saith the LORD."** They go to "churches," but are not edified or built up in truth, but in false doctrine, because those who teach them are nothing more than **"clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots: Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever"** (Jude 12-13).

GOD HAS NEVER PLACED ONE OF HIS LABORERS IN A CHURCH THAT IS NOT HIS! Therefore those, in such "churches" are either not the Lord's or they are outside the revealed will of the Lord!

V. THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING GOD'S BUILDING

I believe this privilege is quite clear. That we are built up, edified, made perfect through the preaching of God's Word, taught the full doctrine of the Scriptures and not creeds of men. I believe this is a privilege since the Lord does add unto His church (Acts 2:47), that Christ has given unto His churches **"pastors and teachers"** for this work (Eph. 4:11-16), further that Christ has said He would build His church (Matt. 16:18). Beloved, He is still building today. Are you being built by Christ? Are you instructed in the way of God more perfectly? In order to have this privilege, you must submit to scriptural baptism, which is the door into the church, putting your lamp upon the lamp stand, and giving heed to the Word of God as His laborer edifies and builds up the building of God. Only then will you experience this great privilege. The privilege of being God's building is a spiritual privilege. Perhaps this is why so many flee from God's building in the day in which we live. So many folks are carnal. And we have nothing to offer the flesh. We are a **"spiritual house."** A great majority of so-called "Christianity" has drawn nigh to God with their mouths, honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him (Matt. 15:7-9). The purpose of God's building is to glorify God. It is not to make us "feel good"; to entertain us, but praise, worship, glorify, and honor God and Him alone (Eph. 3:21). Thus it is a spiritual privilege of which many with fleshly appetites are not interested. We who are desirous to take up our cross and follow Him, shall enjoy this privilege with the saints of old saying, **"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness"** (Ps. 84:1, 10). AMEN.



GLEANINGS

Familiar Talk

Christians, have you studied well the objects and ends of life? Our great Creator must have had wise and good purposes in giving us a being so complex and wonderful. The physical machinery of man is a thousand times more wonderful and more perfect than any, yea, than all the works of art. His bone and sinew, joints muscle, flesh, skin, vein, artery, sight, hearing, taste, feeling, and the varied and wonderful complexity of his animal being, must have been for a good purpose. But all this is subordinate to his intellect – the power to think, to reason, to conclude and to deduce. There is something in this above bone, and flesh and blood – too nice for definition – too capacious for comprehension. Yet this, in turn, is subordinate to his moral and religious being. His religious nature lifts him from earth – things sensual and devilish – to things pure and God like. The religious gather up the merely intellectual and take it to the bosom of God. Or the rather when man's whole nature was fallen and defiled, the adorable Redeemer rescues him and lifts him, as a religious being to the bosom of His Father, as trophies of His own divine and human offering upon the cross.

Say, Christians, have you profoundly thought of the purposes of your existence? A being so wonderful and so wonderfully redeemed must have a great mission. Do we think of this? Or is all the man swallowed up in the carnal? Do we reverse the heaven-appointed order, and make the greater, the nobler subject to the less, the ignoble? Are money, farm mules, merchandise, the gratification of fleshly lusts, the great purpose of your lives? Do we study for Christ, plan for His cause, labor for His kingdom, and give for Christ?

Christians, do you keep in mind that you will not stay in this complex form much longer? Do you verily know death is near, even at the door? That the monster "rides upon every passing breeze, and lurks in every flower?" Some who read this will read nothing more from the unworthy one who writes it. And others, stricken ones, will think of it with bleeding hearts. To your work, O Israel! What you do must be done quickly. Great Father! How much to be done with so little time to do it. But our religious being, with all that is spiritual, looks toward the mysterious "beyond," where we shall see God and Christ as He is and shall know as we are known (*The Baptist*, April 26, 1873).

*"How short and hasty is our life!
How vast our soul's affairs!
Yet foolish mortals vainly strive
To lavish out their Years."*





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Worth of the Word

"I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches" (Ps. 119:14).

For years the psalmist had read and studied the Bible. His heart had overflowed with joy as he had come to see the profound doctrines it contained. The precious truths of the Word meant more to him than the wealth of the kingdom of Israel. As a prosperous man rejoices in his riches, the psalmist rejoiced in the **"unsearchable riches of Christ"** found in the Holy Scriptures.

THE ONLY AUTHORITY

No convention or church has a right to impose upon us tests and tenets other than those written and expressed in the Bible. **"It is written"** should preface every article of faith in the creed or confession. We are not bound by the best of human formulations of truth allegedly found in the Bible. Should a man or a church command us to believe a doctrine expressed in uninspired language, we ought to say, "Away with your creed." **"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"** (Isa. 8:20).

The New Hampshire Baptist Confession or the Philadelphia Baptist Confession must never be put on equal par with God's Word. To do so would make us guilty of Phariseism. In the time of Christ the Pharisees had lost sight of the Scripture by creeds and traditions. **"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? . . . But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"** (Matt. 15:3,9). Today we are in danger of substituting old Baptist confessions for the Word of God. The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice for the people of God. When we yield obedience to confessions of men, we surrender our God-given right of personally searching the Scriptures and become a slave.

Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us in John 5:39: **"Search the scriptures."** The Bible must not be merely read; it must be diligently searched. This search is not for curiosity's sake, but that we might know what truth that God has been pleased to reveal unto us. Search the Scriptures for beyond them there is no higher authority or further witness. **"Thus saith the Lord"** is an infallible and unchangeable declaration of truth, not to be modified in any degree or sense. The Bereans were commended for their search of the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11).

Christ condemned those ignorant and unskilled in the Word: **"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God"** (Matt. 22:29).

INSPIRED BY GOD

In II Timothy 3:16 I read: **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."** The word translated **"inspired"** literally means "God-breathed." The word **"given by inspiration"** means that the sacred writings are the results of a certain influence exerted by God upon the human writers. Inspiration is God speaking through men. The Bible is just as much the Word of God as though God spoke every single word of it with His own lips. This is true of every word in the original autographs, and it is true of translations as long as they follow the original Hebrew and Greek words.

The inspired men who wrote the Bible did not write by their will. They wrote the words which were given them by the Holy Spirit: **"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth"** (I Cor. 2:13). Though written by human hands, the Bible is not of human origin. Simon Peter said: **"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"** (II Pet. 1:21). The word **"moved"** means when moved upon by the Spirit to do so. The Spirit was miraculously present with the writers and kept them from all error, whether they revealed truths previously unknown, or recorded truth already familiar.

Inspiration does not deny that there are varieties of styles in the Bible. John, Peter, and Paul had their own distinct styles. The Bible is God's message expressed in the choicest, the most appropriate, the most expressive, of human words. The very best words were divinely employed to convey Divine sentiments with a view to all the circumstances and conditions of mankind across the ages considered.

But has not the Bible been translated into many languages? Has this not destroyed the inspiration of the Bible? It seems to me that Christ wanted His Word translated. When He spoke to Hellenistic Jews, He quoted from the Septuagint Greek translation. When He addressed native Jews, He quoted

from the Old Testament Hebrew. The very fact that our Lord Himself quoted from a translation is a sanction for our translating this Book into every language that every man in his own tongue may read the wonderful Word of God.

But are all the translations as inspired as the original autographs? It would be wrong to believe that all translations were inspired of God as were the original writers. The translators of our King James Version have given us a beautiful and precious English version, but they were not infallible in this great work. The few defects in our King James Version are capable of easy correction. If all these defects were removed, the deity of Christ would be more conspicuous, sovereign grace plainer, and church truth most distinctly defined.

The translators of the "original 1611" King James Bible said in the front of their translation "To the Reader": "The very meanest translation of the Bible in English contains the Word of God, nay, is the Word of God. As the king's speech, which he uttered in parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the king's speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrases, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere."

THE BOOK FOR ALL TIME

The Word of Truth is a book for all time and all seasons. The world never goes beyond God's Word. In so many cases the world is a thousand miles behind the Bible. For instance, in about the last hundred years scientists have discovered that human life is in the blood. But some 3,500 years ago Moses wrote in Leviticus 17:11: **"For the life of the flesh is in the blood."** The Bible is not a book of science, but when it speaks of matters of science it is true to the facts. Science never rises above the Scriptures; it is always found far below it. When so-called scientific facts disagree with the Bible, it is **"science falsely so called"** (I Tim. 6:20). Scientific books are often out-of-date, but the Bible is always up-to-date.

How many books are widely read today which were written 2,000 years ago? Can you name any? Very few if any. Books, like popular songs, become popular and then go out-of-print. There is no demand for them, for the period of their usefulness is over. Not so with the Bible. Although it is thousands of years old, it is one of the best sellers. The Book of the Lord has overleaped the ages and remains in eternal youth. **"For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever"** (I Pet. 1:24-25).

Tribes have perished from the earth. Religions have come and gone. Shrines have fallen and altars have been overturned. Great cathedrals have

crumbled into the dust, leaving not one stone upon another. Popes and presidents have appeared and disappeared, for **"the fashion of this world passeth away"** (I Cor. 7:31). But the Bible remains, speaking in many languages around the globe. It is found in the soldier's knapsack, in the halls of Congress, and upon the preacher's pulpit. It shall live for ever as it is the Word of the ever-living God. The Word of Truth contains all that can give us peace on earth and the prospect of glory to come.

AN INTELLIGIBLE BOOK

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). The Bible was not written for our confusion, but for our understanding. The Word of God is written on a 7th grade level. It is in general written in an orderly and logical manner. Like any book, it requires study and more study to understand it. The Book of the Lord cannot be understood by the unregenerate: **"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"** (I Cor. 2:14). Nevertheless, every born-again person can understand much of the Bible if he will read and study it. But to fully comprehend its meaning the Spirit of God Himself must become the interpreter of His own words.

The straight and narrow way is clearly marked so that he who runs may read it. The Bible is a highway in which a wayfaring man, though a fool, needs not err (Isa. 35:8), for it is everywhere marked by God's commandment. In places of doubt and uncertainty it says: **"This is the way, walk ye in it"** (Isa. 30:21). To the Christian pilgrim, it is **"a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path"** (Ps. 119:105). The Holy Writ is a chart which marks all the rocks and reefs, if we heed it and sail our frail bark by it, it will bring us safely into the haven of rest at last.

But I heard some person say, "The Bible has some very difficult passages." If God's Word were without difficulties, it would be an exception to the universal law. Do not nearly all books have troublesome sections? Men value most that which

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Worth of the Word

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requires great sacrifice to discover. The Bible itself declares that it contains **“some things hard to be understood”** (II Pet. 3:16). But these few difficulties do not imply the Bible is unintelligible and not worth reading. Men do not throw away secular books because they contain some hard passages. Then why throw away the Bible because it has some hard sayings?

I am thankful for the difficulties in the Bible. Parts of the Bible describe infinite things in finite speech. There are some things about God we do not comprehend, for how can the finite grasp the infinite? Zophar asked: **“Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea”** (Job 11:7-9). The Apostle Paul exclaimed: **“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”** (Rom. 11:33). How can man comprehend the incomprehensible God? How can a creature of time understand **“the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity”** (Isa. 57:15). These difficulties do not argue against the holy Book; they are rather an evidence that it is the living Word of the ever-living God.

I hear another person say, “But some misuse the Bible.” I do not deny this. II Peter 3:16 says: **“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”** The best of things can be misused and abused. An automobile can be used to run over a man and kill him. Because some fool may dare to abuse a car in such a fashion, does that mean that people should cease to purchase and ride in a motor vehicle? Certainly not. Some people have perverted drugs into poison. Does that mean you should never take any drug to aid your body in the recovery of its health? No one would say such. The abuse of a thing is a reason for reprobating the abuse, not for abstaining from the use. Some may pervert the Scriptures to their own destruction, but that is not valid reason why we should not read the Book of the Lord. Remember, Peter said those who **“wrest”** the Scriptures are **“unlearned”** and **“unstable.”**

A BOOK FOR LIFE AND DEATH

Do you want to know the best moral standard? Do you want to know about things which make life worth living? Then go to your Bible. Paul said: **“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things**

are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8). Would you adorn your life and character? Consider the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. 5:22-23).

“John Bunyan, locked up for twelve years in Bedford jail, with his Bible and concordance for his constant and almost only companions, produced and set forth to the world his immortal dream, written with such beauty of style and in such chaste and simple manner, as to make it classic in English literature. So perfect and matchless were the intellectual and spiritual culture of this unlearned ‘tinker of Elstow,’ that the scholarly John Owen testified before the king: ‘Your Majesty, if I could write as does that tinker in Bedford jail, I would gladly lay down all my learning.’ Where did John Bunyan get his culture? In fellowship with Moses in the law; with David in the Psalms; with Isaiah and the prophets and holy men of God, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; with Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; with Paul, Peter, and all the rest who wrote and spoke, not in their own thoughts, nor in words of man’s wisdom, but God’s thoughts, in words which the Holy Ghost giveth” (*In the Volume of the Book* by G. F. Pentecost, p. 50).

Stand before the Bible like a mirror, and you will see your faults and follies. If you want to improve head and heart, go to the Bible. It shows the way to make progress and calls you to go on to perfection (Heb. 6:1). It opens before you a highway of holiness, leading upward and still onward, until it reaches the Celestial City. This holy Book teaches you the best way to live, the noblest way to suffer, and how to die the death of the righteous.

OUR OFFENSIVE WEAPON

The Christian calling in this evil world is like that of a soldier (I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7). We are in enemy territory, and we have but two offensive weapons: the Bible and prayer. If we are to defeat sin and Satan, we must use **“the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”** (Eph. 6:17). This is the Christian’s “Excalibur” which makes him who wields it invincible.

Our warfare is not carnal, or after the flesh (Eph. 6:12). Paul told the Corinthians in II Corinthians 10:3-5: **“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every**

thought to the obedience of Christ.” We can best whip the Devil with the all-prevailing weapon, **“It is written”** (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). It is a hopeless task to expect to defeat the Devil with anything less than the Divine Weapon. The enemy cannot withstand the Sword of the Spirit. Kings and keisers, popes and potentates, fall before the Bible. With it in our hand, we can go forth conquering and to conquer!

MAKE WISE TO SALVATION

Heaven be praised for the Word of God! It is **“the word of salvation”** (Acts 13:26). It is the only book in the world that can make us wise unto salvation: **“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”** (II Tim. 3:15). When accompanied by the Holy Spirit, who opens the understanding and gives spiritual light, the Bible makes one wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The Word must be mixed with faith in Christ before any person can be assured of his own salvation (Heb. 4:2). The Bible causes one to see there is salvation in none other than Christ. More than any other book; it points to Christ’s sacrifice for peace and pardon.

The purpose of the Gospel of John was to bring men to faith in Christ as the Messiah: **“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”** (John 20:30-31). Only those who believe in Jesus Christ can know that they have eternal life. By faith in the written Word of God one comes to see that Christ is his life, and that Christ gives life. The believing is a means to an end, and that end is our having **“life through his name,”** or through His blood and righteousness.

There is no salvation without faith in Jesus Christ: **“But he that believeth not shall be damned”** (Mark 16:16). Faith is taking God at His Word when He speaks of Christ: **“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son”** (I John 5:10). There is no faith in Christ apart from the hearing of the Word of God: **“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”** (Eph. 1:13). This is why Paul called the Bible the word of salvation (Acts 13:26). Without faith in Christ men are everlastingly lost. Jesus said: **“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”** (John 8:24). Those who would deprive the common people of the Bible, would deprive them of the means of salvation.

CONCLUSION

1. If revelation had been left to oral

transmission, it would have reached us in a distorted condition (John 21:20-23). Tradition distorts truth into falsehood. Thank God for His written revelation. What would we do without God’s fixed and everlasting Word?

2. The Bible sets forth age-lasting truth. It was written afore time for aftertimes. It is the most up-to-date book in the world. It was not written to confuse or entertain us, but to instruct us. Practical observations are more necessary than critical expositions. For our instructions Moses wrote, David sang, Solomon taught wisdom, and the experience of Job was recorded. The psalmists and prophets all wrote for us. The true Author behind the human authors guided in its composition with a view to instructing for all time.

3. The Bible does not contain some of the words of God; it is the Word of God! It contains things which concern our everlasting peace. It is incumbent upon all men and women to read and study the Bible with all diligence. Converse with others about it. Make it your friend and counselor. Meditate on it day and night. Put into practice the directions in it.

4. Christ and the Scriptures are inseparable. The Lord Himself said of the Scriptures: **“They are they that testify of me”** (John 5:39). Toward Him all the lines of ancient history converge. From Him all lines of modern history diverge. The Bible is all about our Lord Jesus Christ. It concerns Jesus the revealed, the redeeming, the risen, the returning, and the reigning Lord. Do you know Him? Do you believe the record God gave in the Bible about Christ? Is He your Lord and Savior?



Vessels of Mercy

(Continued from page 61) ◊

So it with God’s elect. By nature we are not beautiful, but rather repulsive and sinful in the eyes of God. There was nothing in anyone of us that attracted the holy eye of God. In fact He saw us in our sins, filled with impurity and iniquity, defiled with depravity, unfit and unacceptable in His sight (Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 1:6; 64:6).

2. Clay in its original form is dead, lifeless, and without form. This adequately describes our original nature. We were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). We were ruined by sin, without spiritual form, and good for nothing (John 6:63; Rom. 7:18).

3. Clay cannot mold itself into a vessel that is pleasing to the Potter. Likewise, no man can so overcome his depraved nature as to mold himself as an object of God’s mercy and grace. Just as it is impossible for clay to make itself into a beautiful vessel, it is just as impossible for depraved mankind to perform so many good works as to beautify themselves

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Vessels of Mercy

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with righteousness sufficient to make them acceptable to God (Rom. 8:7-8). Salvation is not earned by the works of men, it is freely given by the grace of God.

4. Vessels are originally made empty. When vessels are first formed they possess nothing until filled by the owner. We were all once filled with self-righteousness, self-trust, false hopes, and faulty religious notions. But when God began the work of grace in our hearts He emptied us of all that so that the only thing that we could receive was the righteousness of Christ. God's elect were once vessels filled up with themselves, but praise God, He has emptied us and filled us with trust in Jesus Christ alone. All we are, all we have, we owe to God's grace. Paul asked the following question of the Corinthians: **"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"** (I Cor. 4:7)? He answers the question in I Corinthians 15:10 by stating **"But by the grace of God I am what I am. . ."** We are merely vessels who have received of His mercy, goodness, and love. If we run with gratitude and praise, it is only because God has been pleased to fill us with His grace. If we do anything that is honoring to God or pleasing in His sight, as vessels it is only because God has worked in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). Every true vessel of mercy must confess that **". . . Christ is all, and in all"** (Col. 3:11).

THE MAKING OF THE VESSELS OF MERCY

1. Every potter has a plan that he forms in his mind before he begins his work of fashioning the clay. No potter comes to the wheel in a haphazard way, hoping that some good will come out of his work. No, he has a plan, a pattern that he executes in order to make a useful vessel. Likewise, God as the Sovereign Potter devised a plan to make the vessels of mercy. Our text declares that the vessels of mercy were afore prepared unto glory. Before the world began, in the sovereign decree of election, God chose us in Christ and determined to fashion us as vessels of mercy according to His own pleasure and will. God's plan to fashion the vessels of mercy into trophies of grace is as eternal as He is (Jer. 31:3; Eph. 1:4; II Tim. 1:9).

2. When a vessel is formed by the potter the clay is entirely passive. Whatever that vessel becomes it owes to the work of the potter who skillfully molds and shapes it. Likewise, every aspect of our salvation is entirely of God. We are regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, justified by faith in the sacrifice of Christ. If we are saved vessels of mercy we owe it all to the sovereign work of our Heavenly Potter.

God is the elect's sovereign Potter who is pleased to create within them a new nature (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) which fits them for the presence of God.

3. Once the plan is formulated, and the clay is formed, the vessel then must be placed in the fires of the kiln to cure it and prepare it for use. Likewise, God's elect must go through the fires of conviction of sin before they are ready to receive the fountain of grace that flows from Christ. So many people are merely religious vessels who have never been cured by the heat of conviction. As a result they are unable to receive the truth of God's sovereign grace. Every true believer has been first convicted of sin before receiving the grace of Christ. I will never forget how the fires of conviction burned within my heart and mind. God made me pass through the fiery mount of Sinai's law, making me feel my guilt and corruption, before I was brought to the foot of Calvary's cross and made clean by the blood of the Lamb.

4. After the vessel is cured in the fire, it must be cleansed and washed before it is used. Likewise God's elect are washed in the blood of Jesus Christ at the point of faith in justification, fitting them for use. I will never forget the glad and joyous day when Jesus Christ washed me and made me clean through faith in His blood. It was as if the Sovereign Potter completely immersed me in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. My vessel was submerged in a sea of unending grace and mercy. I experienced the forgiveness of sins. I was made clean and righteous in the sight of God through Jesus Christ who said unto me, "Be thou clean."

VARIOUS USES OF VESSELS

1. Vessels are made to hold valuables and treasures. God's elect have within them the unsearchable riches of Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 4:7). What makes the vessel valuable, as a general rule, is what it contains.

2. Vessels are used to carry water from one place to another in order to refresh the thirsty. God's elect are vessels filled with the living waters of the Spirit of God (John 7:38-39). As vessels filled with the grace of the Spirit we are commanded to carry the refreshing news of the Gospel from place to place in order to refresh souls that have been made thirsty by the power of God. Proverbs 25:25 declares: **"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."**

3. Some vessels are used to carry water for bathing and cleansing purposes. Likewise God has appointed His ministers as vessels to carry the sanctifying truth of the Word of God (John 15:3; 17:17) to cleanse and sanctify the Lord's church. Christ is pleased to cleanse His church through the power of the Word as Ephesians 5:26-27 declares: **"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious**

church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

4. Other vessels are made for the express purpose of beautifying the Potter's house. They are carefully formed and painted by the Potter to reflect His glory and show the expertise of his workmanship. Likewise God's elect are **". . . his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (Eph. 2:10). As God's choice vessels it behooves believers to behave in such a way **". . . that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things"** (Titus 2:10), by being **". . . careful to maintain good works"** (Titus 3:8). God has been pleased to place some (not all; I Cor. 12:28) of His choice vessels in His house, which is His church (I Tim. 3:15). As these vessels serve the Lord faithfully in His house they bring glory to their Maker as Ephesians 3:21 declares: **"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."**

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS DRAWN FROM THIS METAPHOR

1. Let us praise Almighty God, the Sovereign Potter, for His eternal love in marking us out as His vessels of mercy, then forming us by His regenerating power, and cleansing us through the justifying righteousness of Christ's blood. By nature we are not better than the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction as we were out of the same depraved lump of lost mankind. Unworthy and undefiled as we were, God determined to make us partakers of His matchless and sovereign grace. As God's elect our heart's should be filled with praise, wonder, and humility that we would bear the title of **"vessels of mercy."**

2. Let us also remember that as vessels we are subject to the defilement of the world and the filth of indwelling sin. Let us daily pray for God's sustaining and sanctifying grace to enable us to be vessels of honor by taking heed to the admonition of II Timothy 2:21-22 which states: **"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."** If we expect to be vessels used by the Lord for His glory we must daily bathe ourselves in the Word of God and **". . . cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"** (II Cor. 7:1).

3. As God's vessels of mercy let us never forget the purpose for which we were formed by His grace. Our lives are to be solely committed to bringing glory to our Maker. As His vessels we have been commissioned to carry the water of life

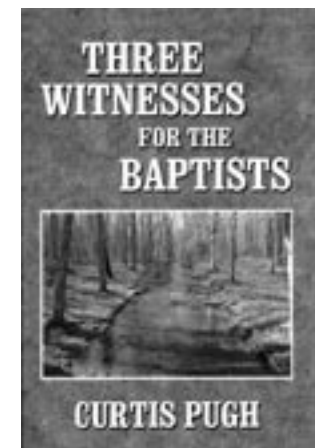
with us every where we go by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through a changed life and a clean testimony we should echo the Spirit's declaration contained in Revelation 22:17: **"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."**

4. Even the best, most durable, and beautiful of earthly vessels made by men are subject to crack and leak. Earthly vessels are often broken and destroyed through neglect or carelessness. As God's vessels of mercy in this life we are often broken by sin and disfigured by the temptations of Satan. Yet, because we are God's workmanship we can rejoice in knowing that one day every flaw will be removed and every broken piece of our lives will be made whole by God's glorifying grace when we are completely conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. God's vessels are never beyond repair. In fact there is coming a grand and glorious day when all the **"vessels of mercy"** will have every imperfection removed. All of God's vessels of mercy will be put on display **"that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"** (Eph. 2:7).



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1. What is the meaning of Isaiah 43:18, "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old?" - Mississippi

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This verse is in consideration of the restoration of Israel. Verse 19 is also part of what is being said, "Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isa. 43:19).

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"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise" (Isa. 43:18-21).

The contrast here is between the "old" things of verse 18 and the "new" thing God will do in verse 19. The old things are the fleshly, physical things of this world, mundane, continual struggles with our carnal natures. One of my favorite hymns *God Leads His Dear Children Along* is based upon the first two verses of this chapter; Isaiah 43:1-2, "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

I think the meaning of the passage is that God is going to save His people. First of all, in salvation from the penalty of sin in the new birth. "Therefore if any

man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

Secondly, He will providentially rejuvenate us presently from the power of sin in our daily sanctification. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:16-18).

And thirdly, we are commanded not to remember the former things, because of the new thing God will do when He will ultimately transform our mortal tabernacle unto the immortal glory of the salvation from the very presence of sin. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: FOR THE FORMER THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY(emphasis TMS). And he that sat upon the throne said, BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW (emphasis TMS). And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:3-5).

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In the verses preceding the one under consideration the Israelites are reminded of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the judgment of Pharaoh and his chariots of war by drowning. In like manner, God promised His elect nation deliverance from Babylonian captivity. However, these great feats of Divine power and deliverance will pale in comparison with what God has in store for His elect people. A new thing (43:19) is promised which will

include the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection as the means of ultimate deliverance, not from physical foes but from the guilt of sin and the condemnation of the law. The Lord Jesus Christ is the author of a new and living way. Remembrance of physical deliverance from earthly foes cannot begin to compare with deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan through the finished work of Jesus Christ (43:25-26). Salvation in Christ is what the Almighty wants His people to remember first and foremost.

As much as Israel has gloried in her past, there is coming a new day that will make the former things forgettable. God has appointed a day when elect Israel will be regenerated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and will look upon the Messiah in repentance and saving faith. They will be restored to their land in peace and enjoy the glories of the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth. As beautiful and miraculous as Israel's history has been, their future holds spiritual glories that will fill them with joy and peace unlike anything they have ever experienced.

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I believe the verse in question; Isaiah 43:18, "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old" should be read along with Jeremiah 23:7-8 which states, "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land."

I believe that the former things and the things of old are talking of Israel's past experience with Egypt, their bondage, seeing Pharaoh's army drowning in the Red Sea, the battles which they dealt with along the way, and most important, their sins, verse 25 of Isaiah 43 says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." He also says in verse 19 of Isaiah, "Behold, I will do a new thing."

Two things come to mind, one is the new land, their own land, Jeremiah 23: 8 says, "But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north

country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." That land which was promised to Abraham; that land flowing with milk and honey, the land they can call their own.

Today we have so many that dwell on the past. They say that this or that has happened to them, they can't let it go. They forget we have a new land promised us; a new land which I believe is the new earth Revelation 21. This old earth is not our home, but the new earth will be. Why dwell in the past, you can't change it? Israel couldn't do anything about their four hundred years of captivity, which was in the past, so the Lord said, "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old." Jesus said, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:20-21).

Secondly, which is the most beautiful reason of all not to "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old" is found in Isaiah 53:1-12: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What are some of the challenges of being a pastor in today's society (i.e. Things that have been easy, things that have been hard, things that were a blessing and things that were a curse or a problem)? – Mississippi

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Matthew 24:12 declares: **"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."** Sin, immorality, and brazen wickedness in our world has had the effect of desensitizing and demoralizing the people of God. In 25 years of pastoring the Lord's people, I have witnessed a growing coldness, apathy, and spirit of indifference permeating our churches. Where there should be a growing fervency in the study and hearing of the Word, there seems to be a lack of desire. Where there should be a burden for the souls of men, there seems to be a lackadaisical attitude about witnessing. Where prayer and worship should be a delight to the soul, there seems to be a mechanical going through the motions. Where attending church should be an event we look forward to and long for, there seems to be a take it or leave it mentality. Instead of taking up the cross daily by putting self to death in order to serve the Master, I fear that many folks only serve the Lord when it is convenient for them. Instead of our lives influencing the world as we act as salt and light, I fear that the world has influenced our churches more than we want to admit. Instead of worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness and simplicity, I fear that many folks would prefer entertainment and excitement. These are some of the challenges that can dishearten and discourage a pastor in today's society.

With that said, I thank God for the dear saints who keep their eyes on the prize and keep pressing toward the mark. I am encouraged by those who are faithful no matter what circumstance may come their way. I thank God for those precious vessels who are fit for the Master's use by setting their affections on things above. Dear saint of God, let me challenge you to break free from the religious status quo. Make a difference by being faithful to the house of God, teaching your children the truth, studying and applying the Word, being a Gospel witness every day for the glory of God. Strive to put God first in your individual life, your family, and your church. **"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and**

worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:12-14).

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I can tell you from my experience of being a pastor in today's society, that when I read God's Holy Word, the challenges I have are the same as those who were pastors in the first century.

I have almost completed the study of Titus, and as a pastor and a member of one of the Lord's churches, I and the church have been found wanting.

I can sure tell you there is much room for improvement. A serious and honest study of Titus with the intent of obedience at the forefront, will cause any and all of God's people to be greatly convicted of their disobedience.

The instruction in the book of Titus is not merely a guide; it is a series of instruction for each and every member no matter what the age or gender. This instruction is not an option but a command to the churches to be observed and enforced by the pastor of the church.

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"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves... .. lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:1, 5). Probably the biggest challenge facing pastors today is cold hearts. The world has no desire to come to church anymore. No matter

how many folk we visit or talk to on a weekly basis, the attendance continues to dwindle. This spills over even in the membership as some become SMO (Sunday Morning Only) members and neglect the other services of the church.

Church membership is taken lightly, and if they don't hear what they want or expect, off they go to another church-seeking gratification and entertainment or validation and endorsement. **"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils"** (I Tim. 4:1). **"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears"** (II Tim. 4:3).

There are probably not too many challenges that are unique to 'modern' pastors. All through the ages, they have been primary targets of Satan and his minions. They have always "lived in a fishbowl" for all the world to see, but the apostle Paul warned Timothy of this, too. **"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil"** (I Tim. 3:4-7).

The challenge to **"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"** (II Tim. 4:2), continues to be a difficult one in these modern times of divisive heresies. So many pastors today dare not preach the truth because of powerful deacon boards or influential members. The pastor's allegiance (as well as every church member) is to God alone! Jesus Christ is the Head of each church!

I've had to preach what I thought were hard sermons to preach even here at Big Creek. The church stands for some very strong doctrine that some may disagree with, but as pastor, I can't hide behind the pulpit and just remind folk that we believe thus and thus. I have to preach and teach from the Word of God and show the "Thus saith the LORD" that is necessary for every tenet and creed of our Declaration of Faith.

Pastors have a difficult time to not be ignored. With Dr. Phil and so many other psychologists (Christian or not) out there, folks think that pastors are not necessary to their emotional and spiritual well-being. It's tough to compete with those degrees! It is really a challenge to show folk that the Bible is God's handbook and is relevant to all ages. Psychologists, I'm sure have their place, but shouldn't your number one source of wisdom and discernment be the pastor the LORD has

given you?

Another way pastors are ignored is doctrinally. I remember talking to my eye doctor that went to a 'fundamental' church somewhere in West Virginia. He told me that his pastor was having a Bible study on Wednesday night, because during the summer the attendance was so low. He informed me that he, himself wasn't attending either, but only because the pastor was teaching through the book of The Song of Solomon- and the brash doctor 'already knew everything in that book from a previous study'! Can you imagine? The pastor didn't have anything left to teach him!

May God give us all as Christians the grace necessary to overcome the daily challenges we face!

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The question that is before us, "What are some of the challenges of being a pastor in today's society?" But actually the questioner was asked "What challenges in particular" and the questioner's reply was, "Things that have been easy, things that have been hard, things that were a blessing and things that were a curse or a problem." So with that said, I would like to answer the question based on those premises.

Let me first say this question opens many issues I have had in the past 22 years as pastor. The old saying is "You don't know what some people go through until you have walked in their shoes." That truly can be said of being a pastor, and many things that Paul said he went through can surely be appreciated as a preacher of the gospel today. This question has stirred memories that I have had bottled up for years and I will not try to unleash all the emotions that are built up with those memories but I will quote Paul here with all sincerity, **"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you"** (II Cor. 2:4). So it was as Paul wrote, I also write, with much sorrow and many tears because of the love I have for God's people. To me there will never be a greater heartache in this life, than to pastor one of the Lord's churches and God's people, and as I ponder that thought, I can only wonder at the heartache God's people, myself included, cause Him.

Let me stop here and let the reader know, I believe I could write a book

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Forum #1

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He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Oh dear reader, what a Saviour we have, the one that would do all that, not only for Israel who was their Promise, but for us who is our **"all in all."** **"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all"** (Eph. 1:22).

Dear reader, **"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old"** but instead, **"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"** (Heb. 12:2). God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

(Continued from page 71) ◊

on my experiences as a pastor. With that said I would like to answer each "Particular Challenge" of this question that the questioner put forth starting with "Things that have been easy." I have had to really ponder this one and I have to say for me, nothing has been easy, even after 22 years I find myself in a "stressful" and "scared to death" situation everyday, even as I write this answer. I have never been able to put my finger on it but there seems to be a great sense of urgency today, I have even discussed it with my pastor and we haven't figured it out yet. I am sure some of my fellow pastors know what I mean, or maybe it is just me.

How can having the greatest office and responsibility in the world and trying to feed God's people, be easy? What is easy about seeing people dying and going to hell? What is easy about seeing people neglect the house of God or not give back a small portion of what the Father in Heaven has given them (a pastor should never be the treasure, talk about heartache)? What is easy about preaching a lost person's funeral or any funeral for that matter, or joining a couple together in holy matrimony, wondering if the marriage will last? What is easy about going to the nursing home and hospital week after week and hearing the screams of strangers and loved ones

who are dying, and trying to give them some kind of comfort and hope as a minister? Easy, you ask, no I am afraid I have to answer again; there has not been anything easy being a pastor, at least not for me.

Next, "Things that have been hard," I would have to say the hardest things have been, first and foremost, seeing many Baptist preachers being taken home to be with the Lord. There are three preachers in particular, Elders Oscar B. Mink, Milburn R. Cockrell, these two being my pastors for many years, and John R. Lenegar who was my very best friend. I would converse with these men, cry with these men, and gain great strength and help from these three men. Only those who were as close or closer can know the sorrow I felt and still feel with their departing and the sorrow of no longer having the pleasure of their company as well as their council. I no longer can visit nor just pick up the phone and talk with them, which I had done many times. There are still pastors I dearly love that are still a great encouragement to me today that the Lord has not yet taken, but these three men that are no longer with us had the greatest influence on my life as a preacher.

The second hardest thing that's been a challenge as a pastor has been seeing those who have miserable lives because they would not heed the warnings given from the pulpit, and who flagrantly disobeyed God's Word and had no respect for His house. I have had those who have stood and looked me in the eye and say they did not like me as a person, but loved me as their pastor and tell others the same. I have asked myself many times how that could be when I had the greatest care and love for them and their soul, even to the point that I was willing to die for them! To see their pride and arrogance come out, and that they think they know more than the one who cares the most for their very soul, **"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you"** (Heb. 13:17). The reader must know in themselves how it is to love someone so much only to see them waste their life on other things than to serve a Holy Sovereign God! Along with that, I must say it has been most difficult and hard to see God's people unwilling to acknowledge their sins and refuse to repent to the Lord's church, only to be excluded and no longer receive the blessings from the Lord.

We could continue along this same line of thought, but let me say this before I move on. I believe when God calls a man to the ministry He instills such a love for His people and His church that I haven't the words to express such love, and for them to have such a lack of respect, not only for the preacher but the office,

just tears at every fiber of my being, to spend years of preaching the truth, **"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth"** (Gal. 4:16)? And then come to the realization that God's people have not heard one word of what has been preached, is gut-wrenching and heart-sickening to say the least.

One more challenge that just came to mind that has been hard, I don't know how others feel but it is the lack of respect and bickering that I have seen over the years between Baptist preachers. I again find myself asking the question, "What does God think of this?" I never thought I would see the day when another fellow pastor would be so disrespectful not to give another preacher of the same faith the time of day, may God help us.

This next challenge "Things that were a blessing" is probably the easiest of all. I would have to say without question, the thing that was a blessing has been seeing people saved. There is not a greater blessing to me than to see God save His people and then having the honor of baptizing them into His church. Seeing my daughter saved and baptizing her into the church was the icing on the cake, if you will. It is an amazing blessing to see the fruit of ones labor; all the negatives become positive when a soul is saved. Along with that, seeing one come forward confessing their sins and getting things right with the Lord is the next best blessing to me as a Baptist preacher. Praise the Lord for His love, mercy and kindness toward His people.

Another blessing is that God has given me a people that love me, and I truly love them. I told a visiting preacher that we had a good match and after being there for the day he told me I was right, not only could he see it, but he could feel it as well, praise the Lord!

Now to the last challenge, "Things that were a curse or a problem." One of the curses I see as a Baptist preacher is just plain and simple, being born, (Job 3:3-26).

Why would I say such a thing you might ask? Well I think Jeremiah said it best, **"Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame"** (Jer. 20:14-18)? Again, verse 18 says, **"Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with**

shame?" Oh how true are those words, especially to a Baptist preacher.

Sin would have to be the second curse for me as a Baptist preacher, it is a curse to all, but for a preacher it is beyond words. Like Paul said, **"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin"** (Rom. 7:18-25). It is not just the present sins that we commit but those that Satan reminds me of over and over, even the sins committed before I was saved.

Many believe Paul's thorn in the flesh was his eyes, not seeing as clear as he would like so he could do more writing but I have a different view. First, here is what Paul said about his thorn, **"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me"** (II Cor. 12:7-9). I believe Satan buffeted Paul with the remembrance of Stephen's stoning and with the persecution he inflicted on many Christians and the Lord's church before he was saved. I am in no way comparing myself to Paul but I am constantly reminded of who I was before the Lord saved me and called me to the ministry. It is a feeling of being unworthy and unfit for the preaching of God's Word, even though I can say as Paul did, **"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong"** (II Cor. 12:9-10). The memories of those things are still there and I believe Satan uses them to try and bring preachers down.

Imagine if you will, how Paul must
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Forum #2

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have felt being reminded over and over again how he loved to persecute those that were now his brothers and sisters, he had a joy to see their death, but now he suffers with the memory of their cries. I am sure he had much sorrow in remembering what he had done, but also had peace that Christ forgave him. One of the greatest things I look forward to when I depart this life, next to seeing my Saviour's face, will be knowing I will never, ever, sin against Him again. What a glorious day that will be. Selah!

Finally, the other curse or problem I would mention is not being able to quit. I probably will not be able to explain this very well, but I have been angry, mad, upset, disappointed, and to the point I thought I was going to lose my mind and I just wanted to chuck the whole thing, but through it all, for the last 22 years, I have not been able to give it up. There are several Scriptures that come to mind; **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword"** (Rom. 8:35); **"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God"** (Eph. 3:19); **"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"** (Phil. 4:7). Through all the pain, hurt and anger there is a peace I can't explain and though humanly speaking I wanted to quit so bad, I can't find it in me to do so, nor can I see myself not pastoring one of the Lord's churches. I think my wife sometimes would love to hear me say those words, "I quit," but until the Lord takes away the desire, I will keep on keeping on, **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"** (Matt. 26:41). Pray for us, pray for Baptist preachers, pray for your pastor. Not only is he worth your time but he needs them more than you know.

Lastly, here is a poem written many years ago by my first pastor, may it be a blessing to you as it has been for me. God Bless!

ROGER REED

THE FAITHFUL PASTOR

By Oscar B. Mink

*Sunshine or bitter cold the air,
The pastor's work is always there.
He is often the object of scorn,
His labors with contempt adorned.
Yet, he never ceases to care,
Ever seeking man's eternal welfare.*

*At the end of the week
Sunday's service complete,
The pastor spent and weak,*

*Yet, strong in his love for the sheep,
And thankful to God for their keep.*

*The Lawyer's profession do not decry,
MD's in their field faithfully try.
Educators are great we agree,
And police officers are good to see.
They are all mighty fine,
Helping with problems of time,
But it is the faithful pastor,
Who warns of eternal disaster.*

*The worldly no eternal danger can see,
With them, life is but one great spree.
No hurdles in the race they run,
Evil they do not shun,
Their time spent in revel and fun,
Soon life on earth is over and done.
Then the hell they lament,
Our life on earth in pleasure spent,
To the faithful pastor we did not look,
And cared nothing for His Holy Book.
Divine wrath our hearts have rend,
God's pastors warn of this awful end.*

*Young men with souls so frail,
On a downward trek toward hell.
Young girls so fair of face,
Doing despite to the Master's grace.
The pastor calls, "O, reckless youth,
Behold Jesus, the Way, Life and Truth."*

*No man has more in his stores,
Than a pastor with a flock he adores.
In face of much struggle and strife,
He pursues the work of his life.
Upon the church he has often leaned,
And from them much strength gleaned.
Then one day by amazing and free grace,
The pastor beholds his Shepherd's face,
And is drawn into the Saviour's embrace.
Standing with the pastor at his right,
His precious flock, who walked in light,
Having escaped the dark and eternal night.*



Jacob & Esau

(Continued from page 61) ◊

the Bible among both the false religionists of our day and spiritual babes.

Despite the fact that the Bible teaches in clear words that God hates some persons, most preachers today loudly proclaim God's love to all mankind. Despite the fact that we have no record of any apostle saying, "God loves you and wants to save you" or even "God loves you" countless pastors, revivalists, conference speakers, and writers of books dare to preach what no man under divine inspiration ever did preach. It may surprise you to learn that the word "love" does not appear even once in the Book of Acts! Old Baptists maintained and their spiritual children yet affirm that the knowledge that God loves you is not a part of the Gospel, but is a matter of assurance of salvation!

While I do not profess to have perfect understanding of these things, nor do

I profess to have any new light from God on the subject, let me suggest the following five things.

1. THE DIFFICULTY OF THE PROBLEM:

The thing that should trouble us is not that God hated Esau, but rather that He loved Jacob! However, because of the popular lie told by the religionists of our day, most people believe that God loves everyone equally. This lie has been repeated so loudly and so persistently by the false prophets of modern Protestant evangelicalism and accepted as true by organized "Baptists" that the thinking of almost all peoples of the world falls in line with it. The Roman Catholic Harlot is the mother of this lie for freewillism is the basis of her perverted doctrines and so great is the influence of this doctrine that most "Baptists" speak well of Romanism by saying something like, "Well, we're all trying to get to the same place."

I repeat, the wonder of Romans 9:13 is not that God hated Esau, but that He loved Jacob! If you understand the Bible teaching regarding the holiness of God and the total depravity of humankind, you will have no trouble understanding how a holy and just God would hate a sinful, un-repentant, uncaring, unbelieving Esau with a perfect and holy hatred.

2. THE DEFINITION OF LOVE AND HATE:

We should not understand either the love or the hatred of God in mere human terms. God's hatred is a holy hatred in perfect harmony with His holy justice. That means that God would never hate any person in an unholy or unjust manner. Rest on that! God is absolutely holy and absolutely fair. Never into all the eternities shall even one creature ever be able to truthfully accuse our God of being unfair! **"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"** (Gen. 18:25).

Similarly, God's love is a holy and just love. To say else is to accuse God of wickedness. Consider this: human love, the love we know naturally, is based on selfish, prejudiced feelings. We love those who agree with us, who please us, or who somehow minister to our selfish feelings and desires. In short, human love is a matter of the emotions. It is sentiment. It is at best the Greek word *phileo* or "brotherly affection" toward those of our own kind. Our human love does not even follow what we know to be right. All of us are capable of loving things which are wrong and harmful.

God's love, *agape*, can be contrasted with human love as being primarily a love of the intellect rather than mere sentiment or emotion. God's love is a love which determines to do good to the object of love regardless of the cost involved to the one doing the loving. Using this definition of love, we see how that only a regenerate person can exercise this kind of love and also how that God's love is

not static. By not being static I mean this: while we may have tender feelings toward our brethren in distress (emotions); often we cannot think how to properly help them (intellect); and if we could think of such a help, we could not put it into effect (will). Thus though we may have tender feelings toward someone, we can do nothing in and of ourselves to remedy their situation. However, since God is not limited as we are, He has loved with an everlasting love (emotions); has known exactly what was required to remedy the situation (intellect); and has undertaken to carry out the salvation of those whom He loves (will). God's love always results in beneficial action toward those whom He loves. For instance in Jeremiah 31:3 God says, **". . . Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."** God, being eternal, never, if I may be allowed to use the popular terminology, "falls in or out of love" for His love is everlasting AND, because of this love He draws those whom He loves with lovingkindness. God's love, then, involves His whole person (intellect, will, and emotions): determines good to the object of His love regardless of the cost to Himself: and since **"none can stay His hand"** God is able to bring to pass exactly what is required to save those whom He loves.

Similarly we know that God's hatred is both holy and just. Never think that God is unfair by hating both sin and the sinner! By the way, the popular little ditty, "God hates the sin, but loves the sinner" cannot be true of Esau! Neither is it true of **"all workers of iniquity"** (Ps. 5:5); **"the bloody and deceitful man"** (Ps. 5:6); **"the covetous"** (Ps. 10:3); or **"he that soweth discord among brethren"** (Prov. 6:19): all of whom the Bible clearly says that God hates!

It seems clear to me that the word "hate," when used of God, has nothing to do with malicious spitefulness or any of the base and petty emotions of sinful men. God is not a sinful man that He should feel or act as we do! All thoughtful people will realize that God in revealing Himself to us makes use of anthropomorphisms or anthropomorphic terms: that is, He uses human characteristics to describe something nonhuman. For instance God is said to have a finger, a hand, an arm, eyes, an ear, etc. although we know that **"God is a spirit"** (John 4:24). In similar fashion when God has threatened to do a certain thing (thus by such threats and warnings bringing about a change in man's behavior) and then mercifully not carried out that threat, He is said to have repented or changed His mind though we know that **"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. . ."** (Num. 23:19). So, it seems to me, in like manner God is said to hate a person when He does not

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love them---that is, when He does not determine to do them good in spite of their sinfulness regardless of the cost to Himself.

Consider Luke 14:26 where Christ said, **“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother. . .and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple”** (Luke 14:26). While some have tried to make such statements as this mean only that we must love ourselves less than we love Christ, the usage of the word **“hate”** surely requires more than that. Christ certainly does not mean that we must give up all emotional attachment to our parents and families or that we should cease caring for our own selves for that matter; for Paul writes, **“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church”** (Eph. 5:29). In this context Paul commands that a man love his wife and we can be sure that the Holy Ghost writing through Paul does not contradict Christ! Does not Christ mean that when coming to Him and in living for Him there must be such a value and importance given to Him that those who come must be willing to abandon, if necessary, all else for Him?

3. THE DANGERS OF MISUNDERSTANDING:

A. The Danger of Making God Responsible For Men Going To Hell: I believe that this matter of “hatred” ought to be understood as the act of God abandoning those who are not the objects of His love. I think this harmonizes with the whole of Scripture. Above in Jeremiah 31:3 we saw that God, because of His love, drew those whom He loved to Himself. Hatred, being the opposite of love, would necessitate in this case that God does not draw to Himself those whom He hates. He merely leaves them alone. He abandons them to themselves and their own course of action. He does not supernaturally interfere to give them seeing eyes or hearing ears. He does not do anything to hinder them from coming to Him if they would, but they will not of their “own free will” because their “own free will” is in accord with their sinful nature which causes them to think contrary to the Word and will of God. Men are not lost because God hates (abandons) them, but rather because of their own rebellious sinful selves. God does not put roadblocks in the way of sinners coming savingly to Him! Men and women who go to Hell go there because they are sinners and simply receive the due reward of their deeds!

B. The Danger Of Making The Cause Of God’s Love To Be In The Sinner: Some would have us think that while God hates (abandons) some sinners because they are sinners and will not

come to Him, conversely, He loves some because they are not sinners or, perhaps, not sinners to the degree that others are. This is simply not true! To maintain that the cause of God’s love to some is within man is to deny the Spiritual teaching that all men are sinners and totally depraved. Romans 3:10-18 and 5:12 & 18-19 clearly teach the sinfulness of all mankind and further teach that this depravity or bent toward sinning came from our father Adam. If the cause of God loving Jacob was in Jacob, then Jacob must have been a perfect or sinless man and we know Jacob to be a liar and a scoundrel---a supplanter or trickster. In our modern terminology, Jacob was a crook! He was every bit as proud as his brother Esau and less honorable in some ways. Jacob was a sinner and no better than Esau!

I submit to you that if God had left Jacob alone, Jacob would be in Hell now! If that is the case, then the cause of God loving Jacob could not have been in Jacob! Let us ever hold fast to the principle that the cause of God’s love toward some sinners is rooted in God and not in those sinners whom He loves!

The election by God of some sinners to salvation is based on God’s love to those sinners. The Holy Ghost makes it crystal clear in I Corinthians 1:26-28 that God has not chosen those who possess that which is desirable or commendable or humanly good. Rather, **“God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. . .And base things. . .and things which are despised. . .”**---such statements are made as illustrative of the calling of the saints for Paul writes, **“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.”**

If a man takes an expensive imported piece of high quality wood and makes a charming statue, or a beautiful item of furniture, or a fine gun stock out of it, his intelligence, skill, and ability are manifested to all who behold his workmanship. On the other hand, if a man takes a piece of worthless, damaged, cheap trash from the garbage dump and makes a beautiful item far superior to the workmanship of any and all others, his intelligence, skill and ability are manifestly superior to all contenders. So the Sovereign of the universe has chosen to allow His creatures to fall into the ruin of sin and from the garbage dump of humanity selects not the best of the ruined lot, but rather most often the worst, and eventually will display them to all creation as His glorified sons made like unto His only begotten Son in Whom He is well pleased!

4. THE DESIRABILITY OF PREACHING THESE TRUTHS:

God’s love toward sinners being rooted in Himself and not bestowed on those who somehow by their own goodness “qualify” for such love is of great

encouragement to come to Christ to even the worst of sinners who may think themselves beyond the love of God and the salvation such love provides. Such preaching can by the Holy Ghost reach the lowliest for whom Christ died and give them courage to come to Christ.

To the proud and self-righteous unbeliever such preaching is disruptive for it humbles the sinful pride of man. Such as these require the mortar and pestle of the Word if they shall ever be broken over their sins so as to come savingly to Christ. Such preaching will anger some, but as the Holy Ghost will regenerate all the elect, even some proud self righteous sinners will be saved.

Such preaching of God’s sovereign hatred and love puts man in his proper place before God. In our day when men boast they are masters of their own destiny and many take pride in being self-made men such preaching is needed lest men think they shall achieve such great goodness as to demand entrance into eternal bliss.

If we would preach like Jesus who preached sovereign grace, election, and the particular love of God toward some when He cited the Gentile widow and her son whom the prophet fed while widows in Israel suffered genuine want during the famine, and when He mentioned that many lepers were in Israel but only one was healed, namely Naaman, another Gentile, (Luke 4:25-28) we must preach that God loves some while He sovereignly passes others by. Such preaching will cause prideful self-righteous folk to be filled with wrath toward the preacher just as it did that Arminian crowd in Nazareth’s synagogue, but it is necessary to alert the careless who think they will turn to God and be saved at their own whim and in their own time for through such preaching men can be enabled by the Holy Ghost to see their helplessness. May God raise up among us preachers who will boldly preach the sovereignty of God in all things regardless of the cost to themselves in dollars, popularity, pulpits, annuity programs, and denominational positions! I urge every member of scripturally baptized Churches of Christ called Baptists to fervently pray that God will raise up men to proclaim His greatness, holiness, and particular love to His sheep.

Let no man say that such preaching is dangerous and ought to be withheld from the common saints or from newborn saints or from the lost. Peter, in his first sermon after Pentecost said, **“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain”** (Acts 2:23). If we would follow the example of Spirit-filled Peter we will preach a sovereign God who controls all things and who loves whom He pleases.

Such preaching of the sovereignty of

God in all things---including His love toward sinners---brings praise and glory to Him. In Acts 4:24-30 the **“company”** or church in Jerusalem which was made up not only of well taught longer term members who had personally walked with and been taught by Christ Himself, but also of newborn saints saved only a short time previously is seen to praise God saying, **“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, FOR TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE”** (Acts 4:27,28) (Emph. CP). What a comfort and peaceable thing it is to saints to know that God is sovereign, not only in the affairs of men and governments, but also in His love to them for they, better than others, know of their own sins and feel within themselves that awful bent toward sinning that we call the sin nature. I repeat, the wonder of Jacob and Esau is not that God hated Esau, but that He loved Jacob who was every bit as much a sinner as was his brother.

The wonder, saint of God, is that God loves you and me, but He does and He does not love us because of our faith or because of any goodness within us, but rather His love is sovereign (independent of outside influence and control) and eternal! Let us glory in Him!

5. THE DAMNATION WROUGHT BY NOT PREACHING THESE TRUTHS:

In conclusion may I submit that I believe great harm and eternal damage has been done by failing to preach the sovereign love of God for His particular people. The preaching that God loves everybody alike is a comfort to those who continue in sin for if God really loves them, surely He will not send them to Hell. Thus men are made careless by the very preachers who ought to be warning them of judgment to come!

Men hold God in low esteem who think that God loves everyone and consequently wants to save everyone for then God is reduced to a rather pitiful Being unable to accomplish what He wants to do. How sad must God be for most of those whom He loves (according to this view) will perish in everlasting destruction in Hell. Do preachers really expect men and women to worship and confidently trust in such a false god as they preach---a god who cannot bring to pass even the salvation of one whom he loves?

The God of the Bible, the God preached by John the Baptist, Christ, and His apostles is the Almighty Sovereign proclaimed throughout the Old Testament. Let His saints in His churches rejoice and confidently praise Him and wait, as does our Lord and

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Saviour Jesus Christ, “...expecting till his enemies be made his footstool” (Heb. 10:13) for God who has promised is able to bring to pass His Words in Revelation 3:9, “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not” (false professors) “but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED THEE” (Emph. CP). Faithful beloved sheep of the Lord who serve in the Lord’s churches, mocked and persecuted though you may now be, do not despair! Surely one day, according to the Word of God, you shall be honored and held forth as the objects of God’s particular, peculiar love before the false religionists who now are in the ascendancy. Then they, who have held themselves in high esteem and in prideful arrogance have denounced the truth as fanatical heresy held by awful, ignorant, and narrow Baptists, shall know that God has loved you! Then they shall bow the knee and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of God the Father! Amen.



Displayed Banner

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center or unity. God gave this banner to Israel.

In these relations, David was but the type to carnal Israel of His Son and Lord, Jesus Christ, who is given for an ensign to the people (Isa. 11:10), a center or unity to spiritual Israel. The idea is expressed metonymically in the text, but the government of Jesus is the banner which He gives those that fear Him. His government is chiefly made known to us in the great system of truths which He has left us in His Word. For this reason Jesus Christ is, first, the center of unity for those that fear Him; secondly, in His great system of truth He is to be displayed by them.

I. Jesus Christ is the center of unity for those that fear Him. His system of truth is contained in the Bible; yes, I may say in the New Testament. Here we read, II Tim. 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Among the many attempts by uninspired men to give a summary of what Jesus Christ taught, the best, in my judgment, is by I. Newton Brown, and published in the “Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,” which he edited. This summary contains eighteen articles, which are generally believed by Baptists to reflect the

teachings of Jesus Christ on these topics. It has no ecclesiastical value aside from this. These articles may be seen in a very convenient form in Dr. Pendleton’s Church Manual. If the system of truth which Jesus Christ taught in the Bible is not complete in doctrine and in order, so that it is perfectly adapted to the moral wants of our race in all the ages, he of necessity could not be this center of unity. That which is imperfect is not unity. It is a cardinal principle with Baptists that Jesus gave His people in the New Testament a perfect system of doctrine and of order, so that there is nothing for them to do as legislators. Their duty is simply to believe and obey. Hence, Baptists reject tradition as authoritative; so also the decrees of councils, the acts of general assemblies, general conferences, general associations, and all other human authorities whatsoever. These are not condemned as worthless; they may have literary merit or historical value, but are wholly rejected as authorities in matters of doctrine and order, as taught by Jesus Christ. The reason is, such bodies are unknown to the New Testament, and tradition is invoked only to teach that which it is confessed is outside the New Testament.

We are always in this respect in the very citadel of our holy religion, and shall we heed any voice than that of Jesus? This center of unity is everywhere given to Jesus in the Bible. Thus Moses, as quoted by Peter in Acts 3:22: “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.” Thus the eternal Father, at His baptism: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And again on the Mount of Transfiguration: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). Thus Paul, Phil. 2:9-11: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” In the volume of inspiration, Jesus is not only the center of unity, “the head over all things to the church, Which is his body” (Eph. 2:22-23), but He sustains this relation to the intelligent universe itself. “All power is given unto me,” said the ascending Jesus, “in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). “Let all the angels of God worship him” (Heb. 1:6), proclaimed the eternal Father upon His entrance into glory, after His sacrifice and triumph on the earth. How potent His name. With what authority does He speak! His banner, too, is planted upon the strongholds of hell. It waves over the dark dominion of death, and brings back the victims of the grave to life. “He has the keys of death

and of hell.” This is the “Captain of our salvation.” When we do anything in His name, what do we then but proclaim the authority of Him who sitteth upon the throne? When we invoke His presence in our assemblies, what do we but invite the presence of “all power in heaven and in earth” to meet with us? Is sin reprov’d? His burning eye must be made to flash upon it, “who knows what is in man? Are the distressed saints comforted? His voice must be heard calling above their sorrows, “Be not afraid; it is I;” or “**Io, I am with you always, even unto the end**” (Matt. 28:20). Is the sin sick soul healed? He is the great Physician. Then let us ever

*“Follow the paths of Jesus,
Walk where His footsteps lead,
Keep in His beaming presence,
Every counsel heed.”*

II. This banner is to be displayed as all-sufficient – Jesus, the center of unity.

1. From the pulpit. The command of Jesus to every preacher of His is, “Preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15) One reason among others is, “For God has ordained, through the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.” The pulpit, when used faithfully, is armed with the power of God. It is one of the principal agencies in saving sinners and in publishing the name and truth of Jesus. “Christ crucified” should be the burden of every message from it. The preacher should glory only in “the cross of Christ.” This kind of preaching is the world’s only hope. Millions are today perishing without Christ. Shall we stop telling the “story of the cross,” “God’s remedy for sin,” to preach politics, literature or science? Read again the commission of the Master: “Go ye into all the world and preach this gospel” (Mark 16:15) – tell the news of salvation – “to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Hear Paul, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called” (I Tim. 6:20). Hear him concerning himself: “Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel” (I Cor. 9:16). The ministry “are the angels of the churches;” the called of God; the bearers of “glad tidings.” How exalted their mission! How beautifully are they described by the prophet Isaiah, 52:7. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet (i.e., the running) of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.” Who would not be such a minister!

*“How charming is His voice,
How sweet His tidings are!”*

Brethren, learning cannot take the place of vital piety, nor logic the glowing love of the heart. “**Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, (love) I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal**”

(I Cor. 13:1) This is strong language. No church should, by any means, despise learning in its minister; but if a church should ever have to choose between learning or piety, let it not hesitate. A learned, pious, faithful minister is one of God’s best gifts to any people. Such should be held in high esteem for their works’ sake. Fear and shame are two lions in some ministers’ paths. These lions roar at the them, too they per the presence of men, and are ashamed sometimes to tell all the truth. These are like light houses with lights on but one side. Such should read the solemn words of the Master. (See Luke 12:4-5; Matt. 10:28-33; and of Paul, too, Rom. 1:16; II Cor. 11:21-28.)

There is an instructive incident related of Bishop Latimer, in substance, as follows: “He preached a very searching sermon once before King Henry VIII, and his court. It gave great offense to his majesty. He summoned Latimer to preach again the next Sunday evening. But in this he was to retract what he had preached the Sunday evening before. Latimer appeared promptly in the pulpit at the appointed hour. The chapel was filled with people. There, too, sat Henry. Latimer began this discourse in a soliloquy barely audible in this language: “Hugh Latimer, dost thou know to whom thou goest this day to preach? To the high and mighty, the King’s most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offend. Therefore, take heed how thou shalt speak; choose pleasant words this day, and avoid everything that would in anywise displease.” Suddenly rousing himself, as if just then conscious of where he was, he repeated in ringing, thrilling tones: “Hugh! Hugh Latimer! Dost thou know from whence thou camest this day – upon Whose message thou art sent? Dost thou know Him who is present to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart; Who beholdeth all of thy ways? Dost thou acknowledge the Almighty God, Who is able to cast both soul and body into hell forever? Therefore look about thee well, and look within thee well, Hugh Latimer, and be sure that thou deliver this message faithfully.” He then repeated the former sermon with greater boldness than on the previous Sunday. Henry’s wrath was entirely disarmed. He promoted Latimer, and was thankful the he had one faithful man in his kingdom. O, that every pulpit had this spirit, that great men, and rich men, as well as humble and poor men, might be made to see and feel their own sins! Then would Jesus be displayed in the power and majesty of His truth. This is the end of preaching. In it, too, is manifest the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. In the pew. I would that all the disciples of Jesus could appreciate this, that Jesus is to be displayed in the pew or from the pew. My text is constantly reminding me of its military allusion.

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Displayed Banner

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The displayed banner! Ours is floating from the very battlements of heaven! Has it no inspiring power for the pew? The number of active "soldiers of the cross" in the pew is astonishingly small, compared with the whole number. But few lead in prayer in the social prayer meeting, or in "the service of song in the house of the Lord," and fewer still "have a word of exhortation for the people." Brethren, we are witnesses for Jesus. "Shall we be dumb?" Cast your eyes abroad; see the toiling laborers in the Master's vineyard! Some are well nigh exhausted; others have fallen. Shall we not bear some of "the burden and heat of the day?" or

*"Must we be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease?"*

*No! Let these words rather inspire our
hearts:*

"Sure I must fight if I would reign."

This conflict should begin with our own lethargy. This, like a vampire, is sucking our life's blood. Luther, in one of his sermons, represents Satan in a general meeting, hearing the reports of his servants' work. One had succeeded in turning loose a menagerie, and thereby destroyed all the Christians in that place. "Well, what of thee?" said Satan, "their souls were all saved." Another had turned loose the cast wind upon the sea where a ship was sailing with many Christians aboard; the ship was wrecked and all saved." A third reported that he had tried for ten years to put one Christian to sleep, and had finally succeeded. At this Satan rejoiced, and the night stars of hell shouted.

If each one of Christ's disciples would spend half an hour, or even the half of that in fervent prayer to God, for, first, a deeper work of grace in his own heart, and secondly, for his blessing upon the preached Word and the outpouring of his Holy Spirit upon the congregation, before going to the house of worship, there would be no more complaint of the want of power in the pew; for the power of the Highest would be there. Then we would go to the house of God expecting to meet Him; and could say of a truth, "Jesus is here."

Something like this seems to have been the custom of the apostles and early Christians; for we read, "**These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren**" (Acts 1:14). They were all filled with the Holy Spirit in their "**upper room**" before they went to the temple on the day of Pentecost. If we would imitate them in this, what might we not expect. We could not ask too much. But how often do we go to the house of God expecting nothing! God's blessing upon His people is not chance work, but

according to a determined plan. It is this: "**I will yet, for all this, be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the Lord**" (Ezek. 36:37-38). The language of Jesus, in Matthew 7:7-11; 11:28-30, is addressed to us.

3. From the religious press. What a potent influence has God raised up in the printing press! Who can estimate it! Its power is felt in every land, and in nearly every family. I will not enlarge this point, but simply add: That it is most desirable that they who control this powerful engine, should display Jesus in His truth from their books. Many read but little else than the weekly religious paper. It ought to be food for the hungry poor, and breathe, too, the very spirit of Jesus. It ought to make its readers feel week after week like "dwelling deeper with Jesus."

4. And by these means is now being thus displayed. The time seems to be rapidly approaching when we will have to change the tense of our utterances; not is to be, or shall be, but is preached in all the world. This will express the glorious truth which has been the burden of so many prayers. "The earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the channels of the great deep." The sun now never sets upon the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The morning prayers and praises of His people encircle the globe. True, there is much yet to be done. Every working church and each member adds its or his part to the final result - the displayed banner - "**because of the truth**" in every land and tongue. For Jesus has said: "**This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come**" (Matt. 24:14). "**Amen, and amen.**" The prayers of His people will then be ended.

Remember, conclusion, first, the blessed Jesus is displayed in "His fullness" in His truth, the object of faith. He is Prophet, Priest, and King. Every burdened sinner may find in Him "rest unto his soul." Yes, salvation for believing in Jesus. "Whosoever believeth in Him has everlasting life."

In view of this great truth-

*"Nothing, either great or small,
Remains for me to do;
Jesus died and paid it all-
Yes, all the debt I owe."*

*"Till to Jesus' work you cling
Alone by simple faith;
'Doing' is a deadly thing-
All 'doing' ends in death."*

Secondly. Believer in the Lord Jesus, remember that your work for Jesus will not be done until you arrive, as Bunyan has it, in the land of Beulah, upon the delectable mountains. Then, when old

age presses heavy upon you, still it will be a life of trust. (*The Baptist*, May 3, 1873).

*"Work till the last beam fadeth,
Fadeth to shine no more:
Work while the night is dark'ning,
When man's work is o'er."*



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read.

Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

DRUG COMPANY: LET 11-YEAR-OLDS BUY MORNING-AFTER PILL

(WNS)--The maker of the Plan B morning-after pill is asking the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to allow girls as young as 11 to be able to buy it without a prescription. Girls younger than 17 currently need a prescription. The "morning-after pill" is given to women within 72 hours of sexual intercourse to prevent pregnancy. The pill contains high concentrations of the hormones found in oral contraceptives and may cause an early abortion. "Parents should be very concerned that the FDA and the drug company are trying to sell this drug to minor girls without the parent's knowledge or consent," Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America, told Fox News.

PENNSYLVANIA GOVERNOR FIRES EMPLOYEES OVER ABORTION CASE

(WNS)--Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett announced sweeping changes on Feb. 15 in the two state departments that failed to stop the atrocities at Kermit Gosnell's abortion clinic in Philadelphia. Gosnell has been charged with murder in the deaths of seven babies and one woman. "This doesn't even rise to the level of government run amok," Corbett said at a news conference. "It was government not running at all. To call this unacceptable doesn't say enough. It's despicable. ... People died." He said seven state employees have either resigned or been fired since the grand jury report was released in January. Four others named in the report had resigned earlier. The governor said abortion clinics will be subject to the same standards as hospitals and other medical facilities in the state. They will be randomly inspected once a year, with half of them being inspected twice a year.

TEXAS SENATE PASSES ULTRASOUND BILL

(WNS)--The Texas Senate on Feb. 24 approved a measure that would allow a woman to see an ultrasound image of her baby before an abortion. She also would receive an explanation of the images. "Considering

the magnitude of the decision to have an abortion, it is crucial that Texans understand what is truly at stake," Republican Gov. Rick Perry said in a statement.

Republican state Sen. Jane Nelson also supports the bill. "Yes, sonograms are a standard of care," she said. "But they also affirm life." Statistics show that for women who are abortion-minded, seeing an ultrasound can turn their hearts and minds toward life. The measure now goes to the Texas House, which has a two-thirds Republican majority. Twenty-one states have provisions giving women the opportunity to view ultrasounds before abortions are performed.

LAWMAKER SEEKS TO PRESERVE "MOTHER," "FATHER" ON FEDERAL FORMS

(WNS)--Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., has introduced the Parental Title Protection Act to require all federal agencies, contractors and government-sponsored enterprises to use only the words "mother" and "father" on their forms. The State Department riled family advocates when it announced in December that it planned to redefine family by using "Parent 1" and "Parent 2" on children's passport applications. The plan later was changed to include "mother/father/parent."

Forbes said his bill "seeks to preserve the sacred relationship mothers and fathers share with their children." "Referring to parents as 'Parent 1' or 'Parent 2' on official government documentation is a bureaucratic attempt to redefine traditional parent roles," he said. "These subtle, but nonetheless significant, changes undermine the traditional American family relationships that have served as the bedrock of our nation since its inception."

GROUPS ASK CONGRESS TO CRACK DOWN ON OBSCENITY

(WNS)--Nearly 60 national and state groups are calling on U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to enforce federal laws against illegal pornography. Dozens of U.S. lawmakers have already signed on to letters to Holder that are being circulated by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Reps. Mike

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McIntyre, D-N.C., and Randy Forbes, R-Va. Federal laws prohibit distribution of obscene pornography on the Internet, on cable and satellite TV, through the mail and in retail outlets. Yet, there has not been a single new federal obscenity indictment since President Obama took office. "Porn harms people; porn harms children — and with lifelong effects," said Patrick Trueman, the CEO of Morality in Media and a former chief of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Criminal Division, at the Department of Justice.

MONTANA PARENTS SUE OVER SEX ED, AS HOUSE VOTES TO EMPOWER PARENTS

(WNS)--Parents and others in Helena, Mont., are suing their public school district over a controversial sex-education curriculum that took effect in October. Family advocates say the program teaches too much, too soon. For example, second-graders are taught that "Individuals and families have a variety of values as it pertains to sexual behaviors." The curriculum in Helena and elsewhere led the state House to pass legislation Feb. 21 that would ensure parents are notified about such classes ahead of time. Also, the bill would prevent any group that sells abortion from teaching sex ed in schools. "It's necessary and a reasonable response to what (has) happened in Helena," Jeff Laszloffy, president of the Montana Family Foundation, told the Helena Independent Record. Republican Rep. Cary Smith, who introduced the bill, said, "We need to, as legislators, continue to strengthen parents."

MARYLAND, HAWAII WORK TO ERODE MARRIAGE

(WNS)--The Maryland Senate voted 25-22 on Feb. 23 in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage. The House and governor are expected to support the legislation. "This is about our culture. This is about generations. This is about our children," said Derek McCoy, president of the Association for Maryland Families. "And I think it's fair enough to say that we need to keep marriage the way it's currently defined in this state and not allow one small group to say we want to redefine it for everybody else." Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie is expected to sign legislation today to give the benefits of marriage to same-sex couples. Civil unions would begin Jan. 1, 2012.

TWO-THIRDS OF AMERICANS SAY KIDS NEED THEIR DAD

(WNS)--More than two-thirds of Americans say women having children without a dad to help raise them is bad for society, according to the Pew Research Center. Yet, more than 40 percent of births in the U.S. are to unmarried women. Researchers asked 2,691 adults whether they considered several trends to be good, bad or of no consequence

to society, including: more unmarried couples raising children; more single women having children without a male partner to help raise them; and more people living together without getting married. About a third of the respondents generally accepted the trends; a third is tolerant but skeptical; and a third considers them bad for society.

MARRIAGE LEGISLATION IS ALL OVER THE MAP

(WNS)--Gay activists and their allies are hoping Maryland and Rhode Island soon will become the sixth and seventh states to allow same-sex marriage. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire, Vermont and the District of Columbia have legalized gay marriage. Legislation to redefine marriage could get a vote in the Maryland Senate as soon as next week. The House has not taken up the issue yet. Similar legislation is pending in the Rhode Island House. In Hawaii, the House and Senate have passed separate bills to legalize civil unions and extend essentially all of the benefits of marriage to same-sex couples. Democratic Gov. Neil Abercrombie has said he supports civil unions. Lawmakers in Colorado and Delaware are expected to consider civil union legislation soon. Wyoming, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and New Hampshire also are planning to introduce marriage-protection amendments this year.

CHRISTIANS WHO ATTEND CHURCH REGULARLY FACE AND HAVE LOWER DIVORCE RATE

(WNS)--It's a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce. But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate. Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced. Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce. "Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction," he said.

OBAMA NAMES NEW FAITH ADVISERS

(WNS)--President Obama named 12 new members to his advisory council for the Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships Office on Friday evening, including the head of the Episcopal Church, Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, who in 2003 voted to approve the consecration of the church's first homosexual bishop, which was the catalyst for the

church's split. In 2006 Schori became the first female primate (or head) of the Episcopal Church, which is part of the global Anglican Communion, and she is theologically liberal, referring to "Mother Jesus" in her first sermon as the top bishop. She has said her mission is to heal the divisions in the church, but theologically conservative congregations have continued to leave the denomination in droves. Congregations have left because of the ordination of the openly gay Bishop Gene Robinson, Schori's installation as head of the church, and the continuing erosion of core theological commitments like belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

OBAMA AND ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER DECLARE DOMA UNCONSTITUTIONAL

(WNS)--The Obama administration will no longer defend in court the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defines marriage as between a man and a woman and bars federal benefits to same-sex couples. President Obama now deems the act, which Congress passed in 1996 under President Clinton, unconstitutional, according to a letter U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder sent to congressional leadership Feb. 23. Two cases challenging DOMA are pending before the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, so the administration "had to act," said White House spokesman Jay Carney. "It was under a court-imposed deadline to make this decision." Obama has long opposed DOMA but his administration defended it as established law. During his campaign to become a U.S. senator, he called the law "abhorrent" and as president he has said it is "discriminatory" and "interferes with states' rights." But the president has previously said, with regards to DOMA, "We have a duty to uphold existing law."

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION STRIKES CONSCIENCE PROTECTIONS FOR PRO-LIFE MEDICAL PROVIDERS

(WNS)--After nearly two years of warnings, the Obama administration is moving forward with plans to weaken federal regulations designed to protect pro-life medical providers. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced in late February that it is striking elements of a 2008 Bush administration order that bolstered the ability of medical caregivers to refuse participation in procedures they find morally objectionable. The changes do not go as far as the administration originally intended or as conservatives feared: wiping out protections in their entirety. But, according to Matt Bowman of the Alliance Defense Fund, it "leaves the how and if of enforcement of conscience protections completely under the discretion of an agency which says it agrees with Planned Parenthood." The new regulations lower the priority of conscience protections, stating that such rights should be trumped by other issues like patient access. Calling the 2008 protections "unclear and potentially overbroad in scope," the Obama

administration is changing elements of the conscience protection regulation largely dealing with contraception.

FAMILY ADVOCATES CELEBRATE PRO-LIFE LEGISLATION

(WNS)--Life advocates are celebrating legislation that is popping up in state legislatures across the country. In Indiana, senators voted 39-9 Feb. 22 in support of a bill that would provide women seeking abortions written information about the procedure and its risks. It now goes to the House. A measure that would provide abortion-minded women with pro-life options passed the South Dakota House, also on Feb. 22. It now goes to the Senate. Under the legislation, women would need to meet with an abortionist at least 72 hours before the procedure. Also, they would need to consult with a pregnancy resource center about life-affirming options. The Missouri Senate General Laws Committee is considering a bill that would make it a felony to abort a viable baby after 20 weeks. "...They are, as all human life, valuable and need to be protected," said Republican Senate President Pro Tem Robert Mayer, who sponsored the legislation.

CONGRESS LIKELY TO PUT PRO-LIFE POLICIES INTO LAW

(WNS)--The U.S. House of Representatives is one step closer to voting on a bill that would convert several pro-life policies -- also known as riders -- into law. The House Judiciary Committee voted 23-14 on March 3 in favor of the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, which was introduced by Reps. Chris Smith, R-N.J., and Dan Lipinski, D-Ill., and has close to 210 co-sponsors. H.R. 3 would prohibit taxpayer funding for abortion in all federal programs; currently a patchwork of such policies must be approved annually. The bill also would codify conscience protections for health care workers who object to abortion and other actions. Committee member Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, said: "While there are strong views on both sides of this issue, one thing is clear: The federal funding of abortion will lead to more abortions."

MISSOURI HOUSE PASSES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AMENDMENT

(WNS)--Legislation designed to safeguard the religious liberties of Missouri residents has passed the state House with a 126-30 vote. HJR 2, sponsored by Republican Rep. Mike McGhee, would amend the state Constitution to clarify the rights of Missourians to pray and acknowledge God in public and private settings. "We are trying to make clear in the supreme law of our state that our religious freedoms are those intended by our Founding Fathers," McGhee said. "It's time for us to take a stand on behalf of our freedom to express our religious values in the public square." The bill includes a key provision stating that public school students have the right to pray and acknowledge God

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in school. Students also would be assured of the right to express their religious beliefs in written and oral assignments.

MORE PHILADELPHIA ABORTION CLINICS CLOSED AFTER INSPECTIONS

(WNS)--In early November, two Philadelphia-area abortion clinics closed and the abortionist retired after a state inspection revealed nightmarish conditions at the facilities. After a drug raid in February 2010 revealed horrific conditions at the Philadelphia abortion clinic of Kermit Gosnell did the state Health Department decide to inspect all of the state's 22 clinics — for the first time in more than 15 years. In early November, the state discovered disgusting conditions at two more clinics — including fetal remains in cabinets and outside. Abortionist Soleiman M. Soli, 73, decided to close both of his Abortion as an Alternative Inc. clinics and retire. The reports were provided recently to The Associated Press by the office of Gov. Tom Corbett.

SOUTH DAKOTA PUSHES PRO-LIFE LEGISLATION

(WNS)--Pro-life legislation is on the move across the country, including in South Dakota, Oklahoma and Texas. A groundbreaking bill in South Dakota would create a template for other states, said Allen Unruh, co-founder of the Alpha Center, a group of pregnancy centers in the state. He said: "It does three things: It stops all coerced abortions. Every woman has to sign an affidavit that she's not being coerced. Second, the abortionist must examine a woman at least 72 hours before an abortion. That's a huge deterrent. Third, it requires a woman to go to a pregnancy care center to get counseling before an abortion." Pro-abortion groups already have threatened to sue over the measure, which is awaiting Gov. Dennis Daugaard's signature. Life advocates are raising money to defend the bill in court.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS ISLAMIST EXTREMISTS BLAMED FOR ATTACKS

(WNS)--At least one Christian is confirmed dead and several others are wounded in attacks in Ethiopia blamed on a large, well-organized group of Muslims, church leaders told Jonathan Racho, International Christian Concern's regional manager for Africa. More than 4,000 Christians in the Jimma area of western Ethiopia have been displaced because of the violence this month. The group also set ablaze 59 buildings and at least 30 homes belonging to Christians. The attacks began March 2 after Muslims accused a Christian of tearing up a copy of the Quran in the city of Asendabo. Church leaders claimed the torn Quran was planted as part of a planned attack by an Islamic extremist group that rallied thousands of Muslim to

burn Christian buildings and homes starting in Asendabo, and then spreading to Chiltie, Gilgel Gibe, Nada, Dimtu, Uragay, Busa, and Koticha, according to Compass Direct News.



Proof of God

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

Many men have set out to prove the existence of God. Of course, as Baptists, we usually disdain any effort to prove the existence of God, since if a person will not believe the Scriptures (which plainly teach of God) then there is no point in seeking to witness to that person — because salvation comes through the Word of God.

Most usually, those that seek to prove the existence of God will seek to do so in a scientific and secular manner. And, usually, the scientific conclusion that man will come to, is that it is impossible to prove, without any shadow of a doubt, the existence of anyone (or anything) without a visible or physically tangible experience with that person (or thing). And, I might add, that even a legitimate interaction that one person might have with that elusive being, is not enough to prove that person exists for everyone, because how can one believe in the existence of a person (or thing) without a personal experience?

Well, I must say that there is much in this scientific approach that bears some merit; the only problem with this approach is that we are dealing with depraved and defiled human beings, that cannot be expected to attain to the spiritual sight that is necessary to "see God"; and "believe in Him." It is true that God is invisible, and we, in the flesh, cannot see Him, for He is a Spirit. The Lord Jesus told the woman at the well, "**God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth**" (John 4:24). The lack of spiritual sight with man makes it impossible to prove, through the normal scientific methods, the existence of God. In fact, the only way that man could have the spiritual sight necessary to "see God" would be if man were quickened and made alive; and if that were the case, then there would be no need to prove the existence of God to anyone, for all would be saved.

However, what I want us to do today is to examine some methods, other than actual sight of God, through which we can find proof of God. We read in I John 4:12, "**No man hath seen God at**



any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." This verse presents the dilemma that scientists face in trying to prove the existence of God: "**No man hath seen God at any time....**" And remember, the Lord God told Moses, "**..Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live**" (Ex. 33:20).

Let me insert something here: I want you to understand, that, in this message, I am not speaking of proof of Jesus Christ; surely He was seen and handled and noticed by men in the flesh (see I John 1:1-3) — both during His earthly ministry, and on the occasions of His preincarnate appearances — whenever He took upon Him flesh. But, we might say, what about His claims of deity? What about the fact that He claimed that He was the Son of God? Remember, Jesus told Philip, "**.. Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father**" (John 14:9)? Surely science has tried to prove (or disprove) the deity of Jesus Christ. But, I am not talking about the Lord Jesus Christ and the flesh that He took upon Him. What I want us to notice is how that we can see and feel the proof of God, all around us, even today.

So, given the fact that "**No man hath seen God at any time;**" and the promise that "**there shall no man see me, and live;**" it becomes quite improbable, scientifically speaking, to prove, through physical sight, the existence of God. However, let's go on, and examine some verses that give us means by which we can see plain proof of God.

LOVE

There is something that exists today, that could not exist at all, if it were not for God. The first thing that I want us to notice in the beginning of this message is "Love." Twice in I John 4 (the other "love chapter"), the Apostle John uses the phrase "**God is love**" (vv. 8, 16). And once in the chapter, he uses the phrase "**love is of God**" (v. 7). What I think it is important for us to notice, is that love itself, would not exist if it were not for God. And, further, the very existence of love is a substantial proof of the existence of God.

God's Love Toward Us - "**And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him**" (I John 4:16). So, "**No man hath seen God at any time**" but, multitudes of men have dwelt with God, and God has dwelt with them. This is because of the love that God has for His children. Isn't it amazing, that we cannot see God, but we can live in Him, and He can live in us? Well, this love that God has for us, is a proof of God. Again, it is a proof that is very difficult (or impossible) to scientifically relate or prove to another person; but, nonetheless, it is a proof that

cannot be denied, in the lives of each and every one of the children of God, upon whom the love of God has been bestowed.

Our Love Toward God - How could any man, become a lover of God? If we cannot see Him, and if science cannot recognize Him, how outrageous it is, humanly speaking, that men and women would love God? And, even further, how astonishing is it that men and women would love God (the Invisible, and the Unknown in the minds of worldly science) so much, that we would live for Him, and even, on occasion, die for Him? Certainly there must be something to this love! "**Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us**" (I John 4:17-19). The world might behold the love or devotion that a man or a woman might have for their God, and they might pause to wonder or even to marvel at that love. That love denies fear! That love provides boldness! That love makes perfect! What a love it is! And, when the world will enquire of an individual about that love, that individual will reply, "**We love him, because he first loved us.**" Surely, this love and this confession of the source of that love, is a proof of God! How could such a love exist without God?

Our Love One to Another - Another aspect of love that is a proof of God, is the love that we have, one for another. The Apostle John besought his brethren thusly: "**Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God**" (I John 4:7). Here is proof of God: "**every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.**" You see a result of the life that comes from God; and a result of the knowledge of God; is that we become brethren and we "**love one another.**" Why is this so? Well, it so because "**love is of God.**" Through the grace of God, and the love that He has for us and the love that we have for Him, we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, manifest a sort of divine love one for another. It is this love that you feel and experience in the churches of Jesus Christ; It is this love that you feel and experience when you fellowship with sister churches; It is this love that you feel and experience when you meet or help or support some missionary, that perhaps, you had never met or helped before. The love that we show to one another is proof of God.

You know, naturally speaking, it is amazing that men — depraved, defiled, wicked, and irrational men — can get along in this world, and that men can, even more importantly, love one another. Besides the fact that the brotherly love

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Proof of God

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the children of God have toward each other is a proof of God, we also must admit, that without God, there would not be any kind of love or peace between even natural men and women. To quote the hymn,

*"For the joy of human love, Brother, sister,
parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above, For all
gentle thoughts and mild;
Christ our God, to Thee we raise This our
hymn of grateful praise."*

Any peace, or good will, or love, or gentleness that exists on this earth, is proof that there is God. The Apostle Paul told the Galatians what they could expect in the flesh and in the world: **"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"** (Gal. 5:19-21). If there were no God, then these things that we have just mentioned would be all that there was. However, since there is God, we can find proof of Him in the existence of the following: **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"** (Gal. 5:22-23). And these things exist, not only in Heaven, but even here on Earth. Surely, these good and wonderful emotions and traits are proof of God!

THE PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD

I have just mentioned the Holy Spirit, and the fruits that He propagates. So, I think that it would be good to notice the Holy Spirit Himself as a proof of God. Just before the Lord went to the cross, He told His disciples, **"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"** (John 14:16-17). (By the way, remember what the Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman? He told her that those who would worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Well, here we find reference to both the Spirit and the Truth – the Holy Spirit of God. It seems that those who would worship God must do so through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and the strength and presence of the Holy Spirit.) And then a little later, He said again, **"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the**

Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27). There are a lot of things that we could notice in these verses that we have just read in the Gospel of John. But, let me point out just a few things. First, notice that the **"world cannot receive the Spirit of truth,"** because **"it seeth him not, neither knoweth him."** However, on the other hand, those that are the children of God will receive that Comforter, and **"he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."** The presence of the Holy Spirit within the children of God is a proof of God. And, in fact, the presence of the Holy Spirit within the children of God should normally be a powerful distinction between those that are saved, and those that are not saved.

We notice, also, that the Lord Jesus makes it clear that the Holy Spirit **"proceedeth from the Father."** Where does the Holy Spirit come from? Where is the place (or person) from which He emanates? Is it not from the Father in Heaven? Well, this, then, is proof of God: the Holy Spirit comes from Him.

And, we notice, also, that as the Holy Spirit comes forth **"from the Father,"** He goes forth to **"testify of"** the Son of God. Do men believe on the Son of God? Are there men, and women, and boys, and girls on this earth that have received the testimony of the Son of God? Well, if they have, then this is proof of the Holy Spirit and His work and the Father from which He comes forth! We should also notice that it is our duty and privilege to witness of the Son of God also. I know this because the Lord Jesus Christ also said, **"...And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."** And that **"witness"** of the disciples has been shared with us, and now we share it with others.

If we go back to I John 4 we will see that John again mentions this Holy Spirit as a proof of God: **"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit"** (I John 4:13). If nothing else will convince a person of the existence of God, at least this will: When the Holy Spirit takes up abode in a person's being, then that person must know and believe that there is God, and that there is the Son (of Whom the Spirit testifies) and that there is a Saviour and that there is peace in God.

PRAYER

Another interesting proof of God that can be found in I John, is that of prayer. We read in I John 3:19-22, **"And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep**

his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." The existence of prayer is a proof of God. This is really a very basic and logical approach as a proof of God. Even naturally speaking, men have always felt the duty to pray. It is an awful thought to consider, that men and women have been praying since Adam, and there is none to hear them! Why, even the heathens have always prayed, though they prayed to gods that were not God. But, still, this desire that men have to pray is proof of God. In fact, prayer itself, in some scientific circles even, could be enough proof of God – though men will not believe in the Saviour, perhaps we can say that prayer might prove to some men that there must be some sort of God or Higher Being.

Do we pray, and see our prayers answered? Or, do we pray and know that our prayers are heard? Well, this is proof of God. In the Old Testament, the Lord taught the children of Israel concerning the prophets that would arise and speak to them. We read in Deuteronomy 18:21-22, **"And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."** And then later, we read about the prophet Micaiah in the time of Ahab, king of Israel. When the people did not want to believe the prophecies of Micaiah concerning the portent of death and defeat, then Micaiah said unto Ahab and the false prophets, **"...If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me..."** (I Kings 22:28).

Maybe it seems that these Old Testament verses I have just read are not related to the topic at hand. But, the point I want to make is that when we see a person who is blessed; or when we see that prayers are heard; isn't this proof of God? Shouldn't the faithful and effective prayers of righteous men and women be enough to prove there is a God that hears their prayers? This is especially true when we see the results of those prayers and the fulfillment of those requests in such a manner that they are seen and beheld by all the world. In reality, we must contribute the effectiveness of the prayers of God's saints to either sheer coincidence, or to the existence of a faithful and loving and careful God.

OBEDIENCE

Let me give you another proof of
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Shipping Chart

Order Value	Add
Minimum	\$5.00
\$25.00-49.99	\$6.00
\$50.00-74.99	\$7.00
\$75.00-99.99	\$8.00
\$100.00 and Up	FREE

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 2-1-2011 to 2-28-2011

Beginning Balance	\$6,470.47
RECEIPTS:	
Anonymous	2,500.00
Art & Blanca Jeffery, Center Point, LA	100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Berea B. C., Westpoint, TN	50.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
David Drewitt, Vancouver, Canada	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
	3,095.00
TOTAL	9,565.47
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	640.00
Radio Time (Philippines)	1,000.00
Dividing Check	500.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	2,140.00
	\$7,425.47
Interest	+ 0.27
	7,425.74
Less Corbin, KY des.	-2,323.72
ENDING BALANCE	\$5,102.02

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$523.72
RECEIPTS:	
Anonymous	2,000.00
TOTAL	2,523.72
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	200.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,323.72



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 2-1-2011 to 2-28-2011

Beginning Balance	\$2,314.07
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	54.69
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	150.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Dale Myers, Fossil, OR	90.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, OH	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Harold Flynn, Craigsville, WV	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	200.00
Joyce West, Excelsior Springs, MO	4.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA	75.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumersville, AR	50.00
Rose Young, Senatobia, MS	100.00
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	58.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Anonymous	840.00
Sub Total	\$3,585.14
TOTAL	\$5,899.21
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	581.00
Postage	730.75
Supplies	35.31
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,973.02
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,926.19

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Baptist Church of Rural Hall, NC will be having revival services beginning Wednesday, May 11th thru Sunday, May 15th. Elder Andy Proctor from Inverness, FL will be preaching.

Service times are Wednesday thru Saturday at 7:30 p.m. nightly and at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday morning, followed by lunch provided by the ladies of church. Service will continue at 1:00 PM with no service that Sunday evening.

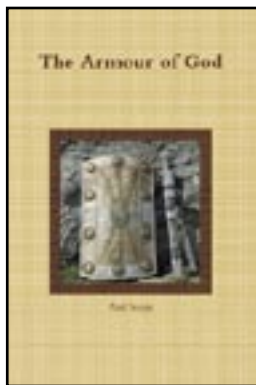
All are invited to attend any and all of the services, if you are unable to attend, please pray for the revival. For more information contact Brother Marty Foor at (336) 692-7199.

Bible Believers Baptist Church of Naples, Idaho will be holding their 2nd Annual Bible Conference Friday, July 1st thru Sunday, July 3rd. Speakers will be announced at a later date. For more information contact Pastor Paul Sandelin (208) 290-4625 or (208) 267-3255 or email biblebelieversbaptistchurch@gmail.com

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Northport, AL will be conducting revival services Friday, July 22nd thru Sunday, July 24th. Elder Andy Proctor is the scheduled speaker.

Service times are Friday at 7:00 p.m., Saturday at 10:00 a.m. with lunch following, and Sunday at 10:00 a.m. with lunch following. All are invited to attend.

Elder Paul Stepp pastor of the Indore Baptist Church of Indore, WV has just completed a book titled *The Armour of God*. The book is a commentary on Ephesians 6:10-20. The book expounds on Paul's teachings concerning the armour that the soldiers of Jesus Christ must wear in order to fight in the cause of Christ. The book is available in print and is also available as an ebook.



The printed book is available from our bookstore. The ebook is available from www.lulu.com. The book contains 150 pages and the suggested retail price of the book is \$12.99.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Northport, AL has released an app for the Apple iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch as well as the Android. It can easily be found by searching "sovereign grace"



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Is That Scripture True? by E. G. Cook p. 61
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"Ye are God's Building" by Nathaniel Hille p. 61

in the iTunes app store. The Android version can also be found by searching the same phrase in the Android market.

With the app you can hear sermons, read their weekly newspaper article and much more. If you have one of the listed devices you are invited to download the app.

The Grace Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, NC is in need of a pastor. The church believes in the Doctrines of Grace, the local church, and is Pre-millennial. Interested brethren should contact Deacon Cletus Snyder at 336-788-5753.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or Email recoffeypot@aol.com or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or Email jamijoe@wowway.com.

The Bethel Bible Baptist Church, PO Box 85, Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.

Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.



Proof of God

(Continued from page 79) ◊

God. In the previous point, I read this verse: "And whatsoever we ask, we

receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:22). Do men seek to please God and to obey Him in this world? Of course they do! Though the number of those that seek to obey Him seems fewer than ever before, still, there are men and women who openly call upon God, and make it known that they are trying to please and obey Him. Are any men or women successful in this endeavor? Well, by every account there are some that are obedient. To me, the fact that some are obedient unto God, is a proof of God – and not just a proof of the existence of God, but a proof of the help of God. We read in Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." You see, the fact that men have a "will" to be obedient unto God, is a proof of God. And the fact that any man actually does the things of obedience to God is a proof of God. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:2-3).

FAITH

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (I John 5:4-5)? I know that many men and women have an appearance of faith. And I know that many men and women throughout the history of the world, have demonstrated some measure (or type or semblance) of faith. But, the faith some men and women demonstrate, is of such power and purity that its very existence, indicates there must truly be a God that is the basis for such faith.

As John says in this passage, there are some that "overcometh the world." Like we said at the beginning, when we were discussing the love of God and our love

towards Him, there are some shining examples of men and women, and even children, which have overcome some incredible situations, through love, and through the faith and trust that they have in God. Surely, these examples of awesome and incredible faith must be proof of God. How could a man suffer the loss of all things, and to count them all but dung (see Phil. 3:8-9), except it were for the faith that he had in a Higher Being? How could a man suffer humiliation and pain and death at the hands of a mob, and never cry out or seek to escape (see Acts 7:54-60), if it were not for the faith that comes from God?

Whenever you or I might encounter a faith that will overcome the world, no matter what it might be that the world might bring against them; and whenever you or I might come upon some person who possesses a faith that seemingly allows them to endure all things, and to persevere in the cause of Christ, no matter what might be the cost; then, in that situation, you and I are standing in the presence of the proof of God.

CONCLUSION

I know that I don't have to prove to any of you today about the existence of God. But, perhaps, as we study these proofs of God, it will make Him more real to us, and cause us to consider just how important He is to us, and what He means to us and the world around us.

You know; many times we depend on the beauties and the grandeurs of this creation to prove that God exists. We will tell others that this creation is just too marvelous, and intricate, and balanced, to have been an accident; but, this creation must have been created by a creator. Sometimes we depend on this approach as our primary proof of God. But, do you know, that out of all of the creation which God has made (at least out of all of the creation that we can see and know), man, himself, and in particular, the saved individuals from amongst mankind, must be the most evident, and most visible, and most tangible proofs of God? Indeed, this places a responsibility and a privilege upon the shoulders of every one of the children of God, that they should bear witness to the existence of a gracious and forgiving, and yet just and righteous God.

As we consider these proofs of God I have mentioned previously, I think we will find that if we perform our duties and responsibilities as we ought, then by our very lives and examples, we will demonstrate the proof that God does exist. In the end, isn't this really what our lives are about? Aren't we just here as ambassadors of Christ, and servants of God? I think we will be doing what we were created to do, if the world around us can see proof of God in our lives and in our examples.

