

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 Sin of Discontentment

By Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio

"And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread" (I Kings 21:4).

Our text furnishes a prime



example of the sin of discontentment. Ahab reigned over all Israel, enjoyed all the luxuries and possessions that royalty provided, yet he was unsatisfied because he did not have Naboth's vineyard for an herb garden. Like a petulant, spoiled child

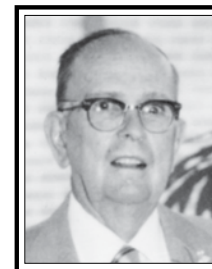
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Reader, Where Will We Go When We Depart This Life?

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

Just how long do you and I have to live? If today should be our last one, what about tomorrow? To be sure, we will be gone from here, but where to? We do not just go, we go somewhere.

In Luke 16:19-24 we see two men who once lived on the earth,



just as you and I do today. One of them died and his spirit was carried directly to Heaven by the angels. The other one died and in Hell he lifted up his eyes. And in this terrible place

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Ambassadors for Christ

By Wayne Cox
(1913 - 2003)

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of



God in him" (II Cor. 5:19-21). Verse 20 of II Corinthians 5 will suffice as the text for this discussion. Paul said, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

By way of introduction, I would

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The Golden Age

By Arthur W. Pink (1886 - 1952)
& Luther C. Peak (1908 - 2004)

(Continued from last issue)

THE GOLDEN AGE IN RELATION TO ISRAEL

"And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land" (Gen. 15:17-18). Here the two great periods of Israel's history were made known to Abram in figure. The vision of the smoking furnace and the burning lamp intimated that the history of Abraham's descendants was to be a checkered one. It was a prophecy in symbolic action; and like all prophecy was to

have a double fulfillment. The order was first the sorrow and suffering, and then the glory and joy. There was first the smoking furnace of Egyptian bondage, and then the burning lamp which typified the brilliant reign of Solomon. After which there was the furnace again, the furnace of the Babylonian captivity, and since Israel crucified her Messiah the furnace has been seven times hotter than ever before. Yet it is written, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isa. 62:1).

A remarkable statement is found in Deuteronomy 32:8, which antedates the actual history of the Jews: "When

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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.

The Golden Age

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the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. Israel is here seen to be present before the mind of God six hundred years before the birth of their father Abraham. Yet, even at that remote period, God assigned to the descendants of the then scattered sons of Adam, their position in the earth according to the number of people which was not then born. Here, then, we learn God's purpose concerning the chosen nation -- Israel is God's earthly center.

In Genesis 13:14-15 we read, **"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."** And again in Genesis 15:18 we are told, **"In that same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the River of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."** The land of Palestine has been given unconditionally to Abraham and his descendants, **"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"** (Rom. 11:29). But these Divine promises have never received anything more than a partial fulfillment. The patriarchs themselves were but sojourners in a strange country, so much so, they needed to purchase a burying ground in it for their dead. It is true that in the days of Joshua Israel entered into possession of the promised land, but it is to be particularly noted

that they entered Canaan under the Covenant of Law (see Deut. 27:1-3, 8-10; 28:1, etc.) and hence their continued tenure of it was conditioned upon their obedience to Jehovah. But, as is well known, they failed to walk in the Divine statutes, and turned aside after false gods. And long did Jehovah bear with their waywardness. Prophet after prophet was sent unto them, calling them to forsake their sins and return unto the Lord and He would abundantly pardon, but in vain. Ultimately the point was reached when God's patience became exhausted, and in judgment upon them He sent them into captivity, from whence nothing more than a remnant has ever returned to their own land. It was to the descendants of this remnant that the Lord Jesus came. To the **"lost sheep of the house of Israel"** He was sent (see Matt. 10:5-7; 15:24). But He received no better treatment at their hands than did the prophets who were before Him - **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not"** (John 1:11). He was despised and rejected of men, and Israel disowned their King and put Him to a shameful death. While their Messiah was hanging upon the Cross, **"Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children"** (Matt. 27:25), and God took them at their word! A few years later Jerusalem was besieged, captured and destroyed by the armies of Titus; hundreds of thousands of Jews were slain, and the remainder of them carried into captivity. Since that time they have been a homeless nation, and wanderers on the face of the earth. Literally has the prophecy of Hosea been fulfilled, **"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king"**

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The Golden Age

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(Hosea 3:4). And yet, in spite of all, they have preserved their national individuality, and have never been absorbed by the other nations.

Now, it is evident that the nation of Israel has been preserved for a purpose, and what that purpose is God's Word makes known. A marvelous future awaits these descendants of Abraham. Jerusalem is now trodden down of the Gentiles, but it is only to continue thus **"until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"** (Luke 21:24). The tabernacle of David, now fallen down, is to be restored (Acts 15:16), and the one who had been for so long the sport of the nations shall yet become their **"head"** (Deut. 28:13).

The restoration of Israel occupies a most prominent place in the Scriptures of Truth, and three things should be particularly noted in connection therewith. First, the restoration of Israel cannot take place until after the Church has been removed from the earth. Second, the restoration of the entire nation will be a gradual one. Third, restored Israel will occupy a much more exalted and glorious position than any it has held in the past, not excepting the reign of Solomon. The first of these three statements is based upon Acts 15:14-17 where we are expressly told that it was not until **"after"** God has taken out of the Gentiles a people for His name that He will return and build again the tabernacle of David. The second and third statements above, will now be considered at more length.

In Zechariah 12:9-10 we are told, **"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,**

the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Here is the starting-point of Israel's moral restoration, namely, the repentance of Judah. Be it noted that this prophecy contemplates the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem only, for it is not until a later date that God deals with the ten tribes. With the above Scripture should be linked II Corinthians 3:15-16, **"But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it (Israel) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."** One of the first consequences of Judah's turning unto the Lord in repentance will be the removal of the veil now upon their heart.

The restoration of the Ten Tribes is brought before us in Ezekial 34 - the whole chapter should be read: a new covenant: **"For thus saith the Lord GOD; behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them among the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed**

upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God" (vss. 11-15).

The ten tribes restored to Palestine shall be united to the house of Judah and the two houses become one again: **"Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them: it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their GOD,**

and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezek. 37:21-28).

With the restored and reunited twelve tribes God will make a new covenant: **"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them saith the LORD; But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"** (Jer. 31:31-45; cf. 32:37-40; Isa. 59:20, 21).

The position which restored Israel will occupy in the Millennium, their distinct and wondrous blessings, their relation to the other nations, the service the Lord will entrust to them, and many other deeply interesting points, are fully treated by the Old Testament prophets. A large volume might well be written on these things, but sufficient here if we touch upon the outstanding features.

The headquarters of the
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The Golden Age

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Messiah on earth during the Millennium will be Jerusalem, **"The city of the great King"** (Matt. 5:35). Jerusalem occupied a prominent place in Judaism of old, but it shall hold a still more important position in the days to come. Even now, signs are not wanting to show that in the near future Jerusalem will be given a place among the leading cities of the earth. More and more will Jerusalem come into prominence, and at the time of the appearance of Antichrist the ancient capital of Palestine will be the great center of the land. But at the close of his career, when the false Messiah throws off his mask, he will seek to blot out everything that bears witness to God. Just before Christ comes back to earth the Man of Sin besieges Jerusalem (see Zech. 14:1-2) and virtually destroys it. But early in the Millennium Jerusalem will again be rebuilt. This re-building of Jerusalem is referred to by the prophet Jeremiah. **"This saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap (little hill), and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof"** (30:18, and cf. 31:38-40).

One of the early acts of the King in the coming age will be the erection of a magnificent temple. **"Thus speaketh the LORD of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule**

upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech. 6:12-13). This temple which is fully described in Ezekiel 40 and 41 will be an imposing structure of vast dimensions, upwards of a mile in extent. Into the temple shall the Shekinah glory enter, and from which it will irradiate the whole earth. **"And, behold, the Glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect was toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house"** (Ezek. 43:2, 4-5).

From Ezekiel chapters 45 and 46 we learn that there will be a restoration of Jewish sacrifices, though with certain modifications. It is to this that Jeremiah 17:26 refers: **"And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, ...and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD."**

The sacrifices and feasts as instituted by God in Old Testament times were anticipative, those offered and celebrated in the Millennium will be commemorative. It is unto this temple the nations shall go to worship the Lord of hosts, (Zech. 14:16-19.) We would point out in passing that there will be no "Ark" in the Millennial Temple. This is in striking accord with Jeremiah 3:16, **"And it shall come to pass, when ye become multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD,**

they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more." The reason why there will be no "Ark" in the Millennial Temple is given in the verse which follows. **"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD: and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem"** (Jer. 3:17).

Out from this Temple shall flow a wonderful river about which not a little is told us. In Ezekiel 47 we read: **"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar... Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over"** (vss. 1, 5). And again in Zechariah 14:8 we read: **"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be."** The Psalmist rejoiced in spirit as he contemplated this river: **"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High"** (Ps. 46:4). The fertilizing value of this river and its beneficent effects are also mentioned by the Psalmist: **"Thou visitest the earth and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of**

God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drip fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; and the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing" (Ps. 65:9-13).

The beneficent effects of the river are also seen in that its waters will heal the Salt (or "Dead") Sea: **"Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneclain; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the**

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Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



Acquaint Now Thyself With Him #2

The Object of Our Trust I Samuel 17: 22-37

The object of our trust is the person of the Lord Himself. We do NOT trust in doctrine, the church, our own works, or anything other than the Lord—His person and His work as REVEALVED IN SCRIPTURES. An unknown God can neither be trusted, served, nor worshiped. If we are going to truly profit in our study, we must earnestly beseech God to apply His truth to the conscience and heart, so that our lives will be transformed by this study.

We must have more than head knowledge of the great God—Jehovah. We must take what we know, what we learn from what God has revealed and we must put it into practice in our very own lives. Goliath had challenged Israel for a man to fight, and David alone was willing to answer those taunts because he knew his Bible and he knew his God (Richard D. Phillips, *Commentary on I Samuel*). Observe, “David said moreover, **The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine...**” (I Sam. 17:37). What confidence David had in the Lord! Observe how that David put it into practice in His life time and again. David had “acquainted Himself with God, and was at peace, thereby (the acquainting of Himself with God), good did come to him...” (Job

22:21).

WE CANNOT TRUST WHOM WE DO NOT KNOW

It is imperative that we know the Scriptures. That we believe the Bible. That it is not merely a book of ideas or thoughts. It is also just as imperative that we “live by faith” putting these revelations into practice. God is not known by words on a page alone, but as A.W. Pink stated, “God is only truly known in the soul as we yield ourselves to Him, submit to His authority, and regulate all the details of our lives by His holy precepts and commandments” (*The Attributes of God*, A. W. Pink; in the Preface). Observe these verses: John 7:17: “**If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.**” John 13:17: “**If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.**” Daniel 11:32: “**...the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.**” Hosea 6:3: “**Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.**”

Spurgeon stated that “The proper study of the Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can engage the attention of a child of God is the name, the nature, the person, the doings, and the existence of the great God which he calls his father” (*The Attributes of God*, A.W. Pink; Chapter 17 The Contemplation of God).

We will follow a similar outline in our study. We will note the following: The Name(s) of God, The Attributes, The Person Being of God, and The Doings/Works of God

All of these will be observed, yet we will not have begun to scratch the surface on His perfections. We will not be able to comprehend He who is incomprehensible. When we are done we will still be able to say with Job “**Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of him**” (Job 26:14).

I. THE NAMES OF GOD

“**And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them**” (Ex. 6:3). In the ancient Hebrew culture, a name meant so much more than just what you called somebody; it reflected a person’s character. Satan means “opposer” or “adversary”; Devil means “accuser” or “slanderer.” This tells us a lot about Satan’s role as he opposes God and man and seeks to accuse both. We also see Jacob in the Bible meant “heel grabber” or “trickster,” and he lived out his name as he tricked his brother and stole his birthright and also tricked his uncle Laban and took his lambs. Names are a reflection of character in the Bible. God is one God. He has many names. Each name is a revelation of Him and who He is. Wayne Grudem said this about God’s names: “The many names of God in the Scripture provide additional revelation of His character. These are not mere titles assigned by people but, for the most part, His own descriptions of Himself. As such they reveal aspects of His character.” So when we look at the Names of God He is revealing to us about Himself.

II. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

“**And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation**” (Isa. 25:9). This is our God. The word “attribute” means “a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something.” These are inherent parts or characteristics of our Lord. While each of these is unique to the Lord. We also find that the whole sum of them in one being is also unique to our God alone.

III. THE BEING OF GOD

For the purpose of our study we will refer to the parts of God as His being. For instance, if you were to describe a person to a sketch artist, you would describe how they looked, their eyes, their nose, their mouth, their ears, etc. In the Bible the Lord has revealed to us about His person so that we may describe Him to our souls, to others, to one another.

IV. THE WORKS/DOINGS OF GOD

“**I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings**” (Ps. 77:12). God has doings. He has works. We must observe them. We must look upon them. We must meditate, think upon them. We must talk of them. John wrote: “**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). Beloved these are written that we might believe and have life through His name. That is true for the

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Little Hills

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lost, as well as the saved. These “signs,” works, doings of Christ are written that we might believe and have life, abundant life. **“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”** (John 10:10).

THE NATURE OF GOD

For the purpose of our study, when we refer to “The Nature of God” we will be referring to what the Scriptures reveal who God “is” or to be “called.” David recorded of the Lord, **“I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler (shield), and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower”** (Ps. 18:1-2).

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Observe what David just recorded. **“...in whom I will trust...”** (Psalm 18:2). Why was David able to say that? Because of all the things the Lord was to him. Why was the Lord all these things to him? Because He is revealed to be that to His people in the Scriptures. We will find that the Lord is all-sufficient. Let us say now with great confidence The Lord is whom I will trust.



The Golden Age

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bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for

meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine” (Ezek. 47:7-12).

The City of David will be the Metropolis of the whole earth: **“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”** (Micah 4:1, 2).

Great topographical changes will usher in the Millennium, one of which will be the literal elevation of Jerusalem above the level of the rest of the land, and possibly to the highest point in whole earth, which may have been leveled during the Tribulation Period (see Rev. 6:14). One of the topographical changes is described in Zechariah 14: **“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south ... All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it (Jerusalem) shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses”** (Zech. 14:4, 10). Further reference to this is also made by the Psalmist. **“Beautiful**

for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King” (Ps. 48:2).

During the Millennium the land of Palestine will be apportioned equally among the twelve tribes, a separate section being set apart for the priests and Levites (see Ezek. 47 and 48) and upon thrones shall sit twelve apostles judging the twelve tribes of Israel: **“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration (i.e. the Millennium) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”** (Matt. 19:28). Apparently it was to this that Isaiah referred when he wrote, **“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment”** (Isa. 32:1).

Many are the passages which describe Israel’s Millennial glory and blessedness. The last six chapters of Isaiah are occupied more or less with this theme, and from them we quote a few portions. After speaking of the Redeemer’s return to Zion (Isa. 59:20-21), the prophet cries, **“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee”** (Isa. 60:1). The prophet continues, **“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and the kings to the brightness of thy rising... Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my**

favor have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. ... The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, the city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. ... Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified” (Isa. 60:3, 9-12, 14, 20-21). The Lord shall **“...appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowman and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named of the Priests of the LORD: men shall**

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call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (61:3-6). And again, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah (married): for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" (62:2-4).

Not only will Israel enjoy glorious blessings themselves, but, in the Millennium they shall be a blessing to "all families of the earth" (Gen. 12:3). Then will be fulfilled that word, "He shall cause them that come to Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. 27:6). And further we are told, "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass" (Micah 5:7). Thus will be realized the eternal purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. Thus will be vindicated God's righteousness dealings with His ancient people. Thus will be wrought out the counsels of the most High who separated unto Himself Abraham and his descendants to be a lasting object lesson to the other nations of the earth, to be the outstanding witness of His sovereign favors, and to be the instrument for

bringing, ultimately, blessing to all peoples. Thus will be displayed the faithfulness of Jehovah by fulfilling, literally and completely, the many promises made of old to the patriarchs and prophets. Thus will be seen the great reason why the Almighty has kept the Jews through all their strange vicissitudes and preserved them through all these many centuries. Thus will end the long dark night of Israel's sorrow, to be followed by the morning without clouds. Thus will be manifested the matchless grace of the God of Jacob who will yet take the very people who rejected and crucified His beloved Son and make them "the head of the nations, and no longer the tail," and who will bless them with blessings before which even the prosperity and glories of Solomon's reign shall seem as nought.



Reader, Where Will

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of suffering and torment in the flames, we can still hear this man as he begs, not for a whole bucket of water, not even for a glass of water, but for one tiny drop. Then in Luke 13:28 we can listen to the crying and hear the gnashing of teeth in this dreadful place, and if we read Revelation 20:15, we can see who will be doing the crying, gnashing of teeth and begging for water.

The important thing for us to consider now is, "Who is in danger of going to this terrible place?" "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4), because "...the wages of sin is death..." (Rom. 6:23), and "...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Romans 3:23 includes YOU and it includes ME, but there is a

way of escape.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned (or lost): but he that believeth not is condemned (or lost) already, BECAUSE he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18) (emph. EGC).

"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).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

WHAT MUST I BELIEVE

"..That Christ died (paid a penalty) for our sins, according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3-4). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

So it is either believe, or be damned to an eternal Hell, where there is weeping and wailing, gnashing of teeth and begging for water.



Ambassadors for

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like to point out two things: First, I am quite cognizant of the fact that Paul is speaking concerning the ministry in particular and the Lord's church in general, for, said he, "Unto us he hath committed the word of reconciliation," and secondly, Paul presents God as the One who is doing the beseeching.

You know we have people today that get the idea that it is the alien sinner who is admonished to beseech the Lord, but here in the text we are told that God does the beseeching. He said, "we

are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." He said that God is the One who does the beseeching. The alien sinner does not believe in Christ. He does not have the blood. He cannot approach the Throne of Divine Grace because he has no right. The only way whereby men can approach God and get into the Holiest of Holies is by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19-20). Let us keep the record straight then, and point out to men that it is God who beseeches the alien sinner to become reconciled to Himself.

It is said that God is propitiated and man is reconciled. Certainly, the Bible does not teach that God becomes reconciled to man, but that man becomes reconciled to God, and in Christ's vicarious suffering upon the cross God is said to be propitiated. The word propitiation has more than one meaning. It has been said by some that it means to appease God. However, I do not like that expression. I do not think of God as some avenging God waiting for someone to appease His wrath. It is used in the particular sense that Christ, in His death upon the cross, satisfied the justice of God, and in that respect God has been appeased, and only in that respect.

But we are concerned primarily with the central thought of verse 20 of II Corinthians 5. We are concerned with being "ambassadors for Christ." I know that the Divine Commission was given to Christ's church, I know that the preaching of the Gospel and the baptizing of the ones who hear and believe was given exclusively to Christ's church; but I do know, also, that there is such a thing as Christian radiation, Christian witness and Christian

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testimony.

This is presented in the last invitation found in the Word of God. Jesus said, **“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”** (Rev. 22:17).

In the first part of the text you will note that it is the church, the Spirit and the Bride. The Bride is the Lord's church (II Cor. 11:2). And notice again in the text: **“Let him that heareth say, Come.”** That is Christian radiation, individual Christian radiation.

Incumbent, therefore, upon every child of God is this solemn obligation to invite men to come to Christ. And then he said, **“Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.”** So I am not doing violence to the Word of God when I use verse 20 in the sense I am going to use it--individual. Christian radiation. We are “Ambassadors for Christ.”

I think couched in this verse are three major thoughts: namely, an ambassador must represent and be a citizen of a certain country; second, how is it that one becomes a citizen of a country; and third, what is the solemn obligation incumbent upon an ambassador? Those are the three thoughts that are suggested and taught in this marvelous verse.

First of all, let us notice that the Apostle Paul is suggesting in the text that in order for one to be an ambassador, he must be a citizen of the country he represents. Certainly, the United States would not employ some foreigner, someone who was not a citizen of this country, to represent it as an ambassador to another

country. So in order for us to be ambassadors for Christ, we must be citizens of the country that we represent.

“Well,” you say, “now, Brother Cox, of what country are we citizens?”

In the third chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Philippian brethren and verse 20, the Apostle Paul makes it plain that we are citizens of Heaven. The word conversation there means citizenship. So Paul said, **“For our citizenship is in heaven.”** Therefore, we are citizens of Heaven. I have said before, and I say again that the old songs that some of these hillbillies sing and call religious hymns, have more truth than poetry in them. You know the song that says we are strangers just passing through? There is a lot of truth in that. God's people are strangers upon the earth, inasmuch as they are not a part of the world in which they live. Jesus said repeatedly, in the prayer that is recorded in John 17---and certainly, it is a marvelous prayer because of the things taught therein - (talking about believers), **“They are not of the world, even so I am not of the world.”**

However, He went on to pray that God would not take them out of the world, but that He should keep them from evil, or the evil one. Now Jesus said that His people, those for whom He was praying, were not of the world any more than He was of the world. And then second, He also said that He did not pray for the world, but He prayed for those whom God had given Him out of the world. God's people live in the world, to be sure, but they are to remain aloof from and of the world.

James said in the Epistle that bears his name, “If any man”---I want you to get this now---**“If any**

man is the friend of the world, he is an enemy of God” (James 4:4). And in I John 2:15-16, the Apostle John points out that we are not to have anything to do with the world; that we are not to love the world, and he goes on to say **“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”**

So the child of God is a citizen of Heaven, and so being citizens of Heaven, then it is our duty to represent Heaven. We have something to tell. We are representatives of another world. We have something to tell the people with whom we come in contact. We have a story to tell. If we would be ambassadors as we should, and the ambassadors that we ought to be, we should tell others about the country of which we as Christians are citizens.

You may say, “Brother Cox, how is it that men become citizens of Heaven?”

Well, that is a good question and it deserves an answer. We become citizens by the New Birth and Adoption. I want to point out to you the meaning of adoption and its benefits, but first: we become citizens of the heavenly country by the new birth. Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, **“Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** In verse 5, **“...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”** Then again in verse 6, **“That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”**

From these passages one could pause and preach a lengthy sermon on the New Birth, but suffice it to say, Jesus points out the necessity of the New Birth if

one hopes to be a citizen of the kingdom of God. It is absolutely necessary. If one is to enter the kingdom of God, he must first experience the New Birth. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it; he must be born again. It is the birth of the spirit. It is the spirit of man being born of the Spirit of God.

I John 3:9 John points out that, **“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”**

That word “seed” comes from the Greek word SPERMA, and it means the very life of God. In the New Birth, therefore, God imparts His own life in the believer's heart; then the believer becomes a child of God by birth, and he has the life of God imparted to him. I would like to throw this in for good measure, how in the name of common sense can one who has experienced the New Birth in whom God has imparted His own life, how can that one so sin as to be finally lost in Hell? How can that be?

So we become citizens first by the New Birth. Now the birth of the Spirit is not an act of reformation on the part of the would-be religious fellow, but it is actually a birth of the Spirit. Reformation of life, good works, nothing takes the place of the New Birth. There is no substitute for it. If men would enter the kingdom of God, they must first experience that birth that is from above. This is necessary; this is a prerequisite. God said that men **“must be born again.”**

I want you to notice in John 1:11-13, the Apostle John said (talking about Jesus), **“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many**

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as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

They were born by the will of God. So men actually are born into God's family, and by that they become citizens along, however, with experiencing the act of adoption. Now, what is adoption? Adoption is that free and sovereign act of God, by the which, He takes one that has been born of the Spirit and adopts him into His family, giving unto him all the rights and privileges that belong to His mature sons and daughters. We are, then, prepared for the inheritance. I said once before---and I think some people misunderstood, but it is true nonetheless---there is no way for a man to become unborn. We are born into this world and are the children of the Devil. Now you just might as well face up to that fact. No use hiding your head in the sand as the proverbial ostrich and say, "I just can not see that." Notice Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Genesis 6:5-6, Romans 8:7-8, Ephesians 2:1-3. On and on I could multiply the Scriptures that teach specifically that men are born into the world children of the Devil. You can not undo a birth, whether it be spiritual, or whether it be physical. There is no way whereby that birth can be nullified or voided. Alright, that is the second reason that adoption is necessary. We experience the New Birth, we are born as children of God, but we are still---I want you to get this---there is still an affinity, a relationship to the Devil, so God adopts us into

His family and transfers us out of the kingdom of the Devil, into the kingdom of His own dear Son. That is exactly why adoption is necessary. So we become citizens both by birth and by adoption.

Paul said in Ephesians 1:5: **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."**

And in Galatians 4:4-5: **"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons" ---not shall be after awhile but "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father."**

Then, the third and last thought I want you to see is this: to be a good ambassador, we have a message to tell. We should be concerned about the country that we represent, and at the same time, concerned about those with whom we come in contact. You know, you rub elbows every day with folk who are lost. I said before and I say again, for it will bear repeating over and over, that men without Christ are lost. There is no use denying that; they are. The most pathetic person in this world, therefore, is the person who is lost, without hope, without God. One that is void of spiritual life, one that does not have Christ, one that is dead in trespasses and sins, one for whom the very flames of Hell is licking at all times, that is the most pathetic person in the world. For whenever a person dies without Christ, there is only one place to which he can go, and that is to Hell. He cannot go where Christ has gone, but he must go to Hell. The man, the woman, the boy and girl who dies without

Christ, they die and go to Hell.

We are citizens of a better world than Hell, and we should be so much in love with that other world that we would be inviting other folk, those with whom we come in contact every day, we should invite them to go with us, and we will **"do thee good."** We ought to tell them about the other world. Tell them about the Ruler of the other world. Tell them about the Christ we love and serve and believe in. We ought to become concerned about people about us who are without Christ.

The average Christian does not give the lost a thought. He is contented to go his own way. He does not care whether the world goes to Hell or not. He is not concerned with anyone but himself and his own little private world. Well, I will tell you the greatest Apostle that ever lived, the greatest preacher outside of the Lord Jesus, was Paul, and here is what he said in Romans 10:1: **"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."**

Paul had a desire for Israel's salvation, and he prayed to that end, that they might be saved. And in I Corinthians 9:20-22 he further adds, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: To the strong, I became strong that I might gain the strong. To the Jew, I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jew, and was made all things to all men, that by all means, I might save some." Paul was determined, regardless of the cost, to represent Heaven as it ought to be represented. He was willing to go to any lengths to try to win people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I will tell you the time has come when the average Christian cares nothing for it. He will not represent the country of which he

is a citizen. He does not tell folk about his country. He does not talk about the heavenly country. He does not talk about the other world. He talks about this world, because the world has gotten into the Christian. It is bad enough for a child of God to have to live in the world without the world getting into the Christian.

Let me tell you this in closing: if you are a Christian, a child of God, then it behooves you to become an ambassador for Christ, that we might beseech the lost to become reconciled to God; that we might do all that we possibly can to get folks saved. That is our duty as Christians. Amen.



Discontentment

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Ahab was found lying in a fit of depression by his idolatrous wife, Jezebel. Ahab's covetousness and discontent led to his murmuring and whining to his wicked wife. Jezebel, seeking to cure her husband of his despair promptly arranged for Naboth to be falsely accused and executed. In this case the disease of discontent led to the murder of an innocent man.

Discontent is a sin which swells and enlarges if it is allowed to go unchecked. It is easy to see how the drops of discontentment in the life of Ahab developed into a deluge that overwhelmed and destroyed him. Ahab was not content to take of a wife of the children of Israel, the covenant people of God. Instead he willfully chose wicked Jezebel, an idolatrous devotee to Baal. She was largely responsible for leading Ahab to take up the worship of Baal. Ahab was not content to worship the true and living God of Israel, so he turned to idolatry

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and false gods. Jezebel not only hated the true God of Israel, she also despised His prophet, Elijah. Ahab also counted the man of God his enemy. In I Kings chapter 21 we find Ahab drowning in discontent. He was not content with his possessions as king, he must also have the vineyard of Naboth. His sin of discontent ultimately resulted in the judgment of God upon his posterity as revealed in verses 17-29.

The sin of discontent is a disease which afflicts saved and lost people in our world. It is a plague which is rarely diagnosed for what it really is; an evil and wicked sin. It is a sin which strikes at the very heart of God and His providential dealings with man.

A.W. Pink wrote the following in 1952:

“Discontent! Was there ever a time when there was so much restlessness in the world as there is today? We very much doubt it. Despite our boasted progress, the vast increase of wealth, the time and money expended daily in pleasure, discontent is everywhere. No class is exempt. Everything is in a state of flux, and almost everybody is dissatisfied. Many even among God’s own people are affected with the evil spirit of this age.” (*Comfort For Christians*, p. 82)

DISCONTENT IS THE MOTHER OF MANY EVILS IN THE WORLD

1. Adam and Eve were not content with the Paradise God place them in. They just had to covet the only tree forbidden by God in all the garden. Their rebellious discontent plunged the entire human race into spiritual death, corruption, and

condemnation. Romans 5:12 declares: **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”**

2. Israel was not content to serve the true and living God so they sought out other gods. They violated the principles which God had laid down in the moral law. As a result they often found themselves overrun, taken captive, and ruled by the heathen. God promised to judge Israel for idolatry as Deuteronomy 31:16-18 reveals: **“And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.”**

3. Through the centuries discontent has led nations to fight and war against one another over lands, wealth, possessions, power, and prestige. This lust for more has only increased as time marches on. Violence and warfare will mark the last days and will intensify during the Tribulation Period. Jesus warned: **“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For**

nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:6-8).

4. It is the sin of discontent which motivates a man or woman to violate their marriage vow to lust after another in thought or deed, resulting in the horrific sin of adultery. Matthew 5:27-28 declares: **“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”** Sadly the sin of discontent will cause a man to forsake the wife of his youth in favor of another, resulting in divorce. Only 100 years ago divorce was rare. Now, in the age of discontentment with nearly everything, divorce is not only common, it is to be expected by many. Discontent with a marriage partner may be as easily cast off as an old pair of shoes. Men and women filled with lust in their eyes and hearts greedily make advances on those outside of the sacred bonds of marriage. As a result, we live in an age where the covenant of marriage has nearly been dissolved by the disease of discontent.

5. Discontent for the natural use of the body has led homosexuals to seek perverse ways in which to satisfy their insatiable lust. Homosexuals and transgenders are rebelling against the way they were created. God has given them over to a reprobate mind according to Romans 1:24-28: **“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own**

bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use unto that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another: men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meat. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” The normalizing of deviancy and perversion has resulted in child abuse, multi-genderism, pedophilia, and bestiality.

6. Many who are unthankful and discontent with their lot in life plunge headlong into the world of drugs and alcohol. They become self-idolators, caring only for their desire for instant gratification. Instead of turning to Christ and the promises of the Word of God they willfully seek satisfaction from damaging sources. They deceive themselves into thinking they will escape their present troubles, only to find themselves helpless slaves to their addiction. Proverbs 23:29-35 reveals: **“Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath balling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine, when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself**

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Discontentment

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aright. At the last it bitter like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." What is said about alcohol in these verses can easily be applied to drugs as well. It is rare to find a family where someone is not snared in addiction.

7. Discontent with the tried and true way of raising children and training them with Biblical principles, atheists and secular humanists have turned to the flawed reasoning of carnal men. For centuries countries all over the world have benefited by the methods of child rearing and education set forth in Holy Scripture. Over the past 150 years or so the secular elites have attempted in various ways to take control of the minds of children. They deny the truths of Scripture in favor of the perverted philosophies of wicked men. The results have been devastating. Children are being raised with no discipline, no work ethic, no sense of personal responsibility, and no respect for authority of any kind. Our universities have devolved into centers of atheistic anarchy, bitterness, entitlement, and hatred. Proverbs 23:22-26 states: **"Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. The father**

of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." The result of forsaking this counsel is revealed in Proverbs 29:15: **"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."** Jeremiah 8:9 and 12 declare: **"The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?...Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD."** Sadly, many young people are void of any training in morality or respect. Few parents take seriously the charge of Proverbs 22:6: **"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it."**

8. Discontent over lack of possessions has led many to buy things they can not afford or pay for. In our age of entitlement everyone feels as though they deserve everything they want no matter what the cost. Instead of saving to buy necessities, most folks go into debt way over their heads to obtain things they really can not pay for. Many stay in the bondage of debt their entire life. Many ruin their testimony by defaulting on loans or declaring bankruptcy. My parents taught me a simple lesson when I was young, do not buy anything you can not pay for. At the root of covetous desires is the disease of discontent and an inability to

exercise temperance and patience. Psalm 37:21 states: **"The wicked borroweth and payeth not again..."** Proverbs 22:7 declares: **"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."**

9. Sadly, the sin of discontentment is also prevalent in professing Christianity.

Not satisfied with the simplicity of the Christian faith in worship, doctrine, practice, and evangelism many have turned to entertainment and business models to "get the job done." Our world has become so saturated and overwhelmed with the idol of entertainment over the past 50 years, churches feel as though they must offer entertainment of all sorts to get and keep "new converts."

Not satisfied with the tried and true Biblical methods of evangelism, many have forsaken the simplicity of sharing the Gospel, praying for sinners, and leaving the work of salvation to God. In the place of sowing the pure seed of the Word of God among all men praying that God would be pleased to save them, we now have a plethora of "ways" to get sinners to bow their head, pray a little prayer, commit to Christ, escape hell, and be "eternally secure." Much of today's "evangelism" is nothing more than a "sales job" borrowed from the secular business world that guarantees "success." Predictably the gimmicks, gadgets, gizmos, and frills aimed at attracting and enticing sinners is producing results! Worldly methods of evangelism combined with the skill of emotional manipulation produce unregenerate "converts." Sadly, many of the results consist of false religious professions and enlisting new names on the church rolls. When we use

fleshly methods of evangelism we can expect to produce carnal Ishmael's. II Peter 2:15, 17-19 describe the false teachers and their "converts": **"Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness...These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."**

10. I fear that the sin of discontentment has also crept into the Lord's churches. Frustrated by lack of results I think some preachers and church members find things to be dissatisfied with. When things do not go their way some preachers and church members hop from church to church hoping to satisfy their "itch." They go from one greener pasture to another, never really putting their roots down or staying long enough in one place to get established. Pastoring and being a member of a New Testament Baptist Church requires faith, humility, long-suffering, patience, compassion, and love. We must learn to be content with where the Lord places us and make sure we are not moving from church to church to satisfy our discontented desires.

A.W.Pink gave a scathing rebuke to the spirit of discontentment:

"Discontent, though few appear

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What effect has social media had on churches? Good or bad?

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I am sure that I could log on to the Facebook and find arguments for and against social media and its effects on churches and the culture at large. Many folks in our day regard the internet and Facebook as the final authority and arbiter of controversies large and small. I think it was Abraham Lincoln who first coined the phrase "If its on the internet it must be true."

I am not sure that I am qualified to answer this question without a decided bias. I must painfully admit that I am a tech dinosaur. The older I get it seems I am turning into a sentimental curmudgeon who longs for the simpler times of days gone by when much of socialization occurred face to face with actual people who spoke words to one another. We did not communicate with emojis but with actual facial expressions, laughter, voice inflection, and tone. Way back then we did not get our news from Twitter or Facebook. Some people actually got newspapers, read them, and then discussed the news of the day with family and friends. I remember when folks used to go out to restaurants to eat dinner together and engage in fellowship and conversation with one another. Back then people actually looked at one

another when they talked! Nobody was staring at a machine checking their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, texts, or whatever.

Lest anyone charge me with hypocrisy, I acknowledge that I am on the Facebook. I clearly remember my first encounters with the Facebook. I got depressed as I read all the updates of people whose lives and churches seemed so wonderful and fabulous! The more I read, the more I felt like a complete failure. Over time I realized a lot of people on the Facebook only put the "good stuff" on there to impress their Facebook "friends." Even then, some people were stretching the truth or presenting, ahem, "alternate facts" attempting to hike up their like and share totals. When I found out the Russians were using the Facebook to try and get people to vote for Donald J. Trump I was appalled! I did not need Facebook or the Russians to vote against crooked Hillary!

Seriously, social media, like anything else may be used for good or bad. I use it to keep up with old friends, post articles I have written, announce church meetings, etc. In this way I believe that it may be useful if it is used in moderation. However, I believe that in large part social media is actually causing people to be less social. I fear it is hindering real face to face fellowship and social interaction. There is a lot of false stuff on social media that can deceive the unsuspecting and undiscerning. There is an awful lot of gossip and tale bearing on social media. I cannot believe some of the wicked things people

dare to say online that they would never say face to face. People seem to be more calloused and crude, with little respect for authority, and no regard for proper manners. I understand that much of Twitter is a digital swamp (I have never been on the Twitter). The point is, that much of social media is really bad and may be used for evil. I think that the Socialists, Communists, and radical Muslims have skillfully recruited many people to their wicked political systems using all forms of social media.

The harsh reality is that many young people use social media for everything. I fear it is desensitizing them in many respects. Sadly, many folks are on social media more than they read the Bible, pray, witness, or worship. It can be very distracting and a huge time waster. The use of social media is not going away any time soon, perhaps never. May God give us wisdom to use it in a way that we can reach some people with the truth.

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To answer this question effectively we need to know what "social media" is. Most people today pretty much know, but in case it is unclear to some I will try and shed some light on it for them.

"Social media" is websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Also, "social media" is a series of websites and applications

designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently and in real-time. There are more definitions, but I will let the reader search them out if they are that interested.

Some examples of social media sites and applications include:

1. Facebook— The world's largest social media site.

2. Twitter – A real-time, micro-blogging social.

3. LinkedIn – Social networking site focused on connecting the world's professionals.

4. Pinterest – Pin-board style site for sharing interests through images.

5. Instagram –Photo-sharing and editing mobile app.

Additional sites that you may or may not have heard of:

1. Vine – mobile app for sharing 6 second looping videos.

2. YouTube – social media site for sharing and viewing original videos.

3. Tumblr – micro-blogging site for sharing video, audio, photo, and text.

4. Google+ - Google's social media site which helps with SEO.

5. Snapchat is a mobile messaging application used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings.

I talked with a friend and I would like to quote them (having their permission of course) before I answer the question. I would ask that the reader would keep this in mind while reading the answer I will put forth. Here is what they said: "Having worked in the field of media transmission for almost 50 years, I have wrestled with that first question myself. I finally concluded that, like a gun, technology can be used for good or evil. The real question is who is behind it?"

Do not forget a lot of pastors use

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. The word “charity” is mentioned many times in Scripture. What is “charity?”

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The English word “charity” is used in a couple of forms, 29 times in the New Testament, while the primary Greek word *agape* is used 116 times in 106 verses. From the English translators’ perspective, *agape* evidently means “love,” as 86 of those instances, that is how it is delivered in the context. Once, it is translated “dear” in a very poignant verse in Colossians 1:13, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear (*agape*) Son.” I think that epitomizes the usage of the word “charity/*agape*,” by pairing it as an attribute of Jesus Christ. Selah! Think about it!

The basic definition of “charity” in modern usage comes from “loving acts of grace;” the action of giving to the unfortunate. When someone says that they are too “proud” to accept “charity,” it would more appropriately be said “grace.” Because, if they are allowed to work for the gift, it would still be a charitable act of the benefactor, simply because they “loved” or desired to do so. Still receiving charity, even though it is no longer grace, as they labor for the charity benefits.

Perhaps it would profit us to allow the Bible to define charity? **“And above all these things put**

on charity, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col. 3:14). Charity is the “blessed...tie that binds” God’s people together, as the song appropriately goes. As God’s children are commanded to “love one another,” it will cement our friendships and our relationships with charity and love. Nothing will offend us, as we unite in this perfect bond of charity, that will work out fruits of peace, contentment, joy and brotherly kindness. **“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; And to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity”** (II Peter 1:5-7).

A second Bible verse that defines charity: I Timothy 1:5, **“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”** The goal (or end) of the law (commandment/Bible) is said by Paul to be charity. In other words, the goal of every commandment is to ultimately work out love and charity in our lives and our obedience. The results of following the Bible will be acts of charity, **“out of a pure heart.”** There is no law formed by God, which does not presuppose charity and love as a result. If we pattern our lives after the Holy Scriptures, then we will live lives of love toward God and every soul that we meet. Christ again sums this thought up perfectly in Matthew 22:35-40, **“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked**

him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Can not go wrong with love/charity/*agape*. Selah! Think about it!

The last passage we will look at is I Corinthians 12:31, **“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”** This last verse of chapter twelve is the powerful prelude to “the love/*agape* chapter of charity.” The Apostle calls it **“a more excellent way”** that he is going write to about. **“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: ...And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity”** (I Cor. 13:4-8, 13). This chapter reiterates our first two points that **“charity never faileth.”** It is always the right thing to do and it will never fail, but always be successful. And there is nothing greater than charity and love. It is simply put, the most powerful attribute in the created universe. It saves lost men, because of God’s eternal, unending love for them, and it curses unrighteous reprobates into fiery Hell because of God’s eternal,

unfailing love for righteousness and pure holiness, unattainable by any child of Adam, outside of the unmerited sovereign grace of God, enacted by charity. Wow! It certainly is a **“more excellent way.”** Selah! Think about it!

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The word “charity” is used 27 times in our King James Bible. **“Charitably”** is used once. I admit without apology that I love the King James Authorized Version. It is the only Bible I have ever read, memorized, preached from, and studied in my 38 years of new life in Christ. I am not a Greek or Hebrew scholar, I know little of the languages the original manuscripts were written in. I am savvy enough to do word studies in the Greek and Hebrew with the linguistic tools I have in my library. I do not consider myself to be an expert on manuscript evidence. I simply believe that God, in His providence, raised up some men like John Wycliffe, William Tyndall, and the translators of the King James Bible to give us an English translation that we can trust and rely upon. To my knowledge I have never taken it upon myself to offer a correction to the King James Bible, nor do I ever intend to. My aim is to allow it to correct me. These are my personal convictions and I have faithfully made them known to the saints at the Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church, whom I have ministered to the last 25 years. With that said, I would

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Forum #1

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social media to get their messages and schedules out, even in this dark time.

But it is still the individual's sinful nature that creates those circumstances and not the technology itself. As much as I personally dislike social media, I think that it is an important distinction to make."

They went on to say: "Satan is the prince of this world. He is driving most things because he is driving most people. He drives the political establishments of nations, why would he ignore such a useful tool as social media on the internet which encircles the entire earth!

He is in the driver's seat but the Holy Spirit controls his speed limit...for now...soon though, he will be going wide open..." Wise words! What this person relayed to me is a good analogy of what is true about "social media."

Two questions are asked here, so let me answer them together. The good that "social media" has had on churches is that there is a world of information to help anyone; especially preachers finding information on the Biblical level. Out of all that is listed above, I only use Google and I am not thrilled about how it works but the information given above was done by searching on Google. I also have a "smart phone" and I text. But the computer (websites) and iPhone are the extent of my "social media." Also many churches today live stream their services.

But I personally am not a fan of this, and here is why. I just received the American Family Association (AFA) Journal in the mail. I will not get into what the whole article was about but the

title of the article was "Big Me, Little God." Here is the part of the article I would like to relate to this question. It was taken from a 2016 Barna study and this is what it revealed; "Many who profess Christ in America lead lives that reflect the culture more clearly than they reflect the Savior. How has this happened? Other Barna research reveals only 34 percent of Christians claim to read the Bible on their own. Beyond that, only 35 percent actually attended church in the last seven days. All this begs the question: What is the solution? Reverse the order."

So in my opinion, the bad that affects the church today is, many Christians believe they do not have to go to church to be a Christian. They now can watch any sermon on "social media" which I believe violates the teaching in Scripture. Holy Writ says, **"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come"** (I Cor. 16:2). **"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"** (Heb. 10:23-25).

The forum question that was asked for May's issue 2016 was; "Some Christians say that having a television is evil. I have always thought it was no different than having a radio, computer, or telephone. Are all these devices evil?"

Again, these devices along with "social media" are not evil in themselves but can be used for either. The shooter that just killed

17 people in Florida used "social media" to learn how to build a bomb, and get the word out that this is what he was planning. But on the other hand, "social media" was used by the students at this school to keep in contact with their parents and each other. So in this case "social media" was used for both good and bad.

So as my friend concluded; "I finally concluded that, like a gun, technology can be used for good or evil. The real question is who is behind it?"

For me, the most important question is, how are the Christians and the church today going to use "social media?" **"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices"** (II Cor. 2:11). I hold in my hand right now my iPhone, and I am typing on my computer, I can use both to pursue my lust or my knowledge. May God grant us the grace to make the right decisions!

For the record, I oppose Facebook because of what I have read and seen years ago from my fellow Baptists. I deleted my account (there is no such thing, it is still there, but in figurative speech it is not there unless I would reactivate it). What I am trying to say is you are never totally rid of it. I have spoken to others that have done the same. I believe it is a powerful tool that has hurt others. "Social media" has been used to make fun of and bully others that have brought about suicide and mental harm. Please consider that, when asking if "social media" is good or bad.

My final thoughts on this matter is as I have stated many times before, I would rather have a cabin in the mountains and be isolated from the world than to be involved in any way with "social media!" But, I have been

called to preach and I am bound by my calling to keep the Great Commission that my Lord and Savior commanded. **"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"** (Matt. 28:18-20). And "some" "social media" has helped me in the process.

My time is short, I have lived the longest that I will ever live from here on out, and I will leave this place of wickedness and evil soon enough! God grant me the ability to "keep on keeping on" until the end. God Bless!

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"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues" (Matt. 10:16-17).

Social media has undoubtedly had a bad liberalizing and modernizing effect on the Lord's churches, and much more on America's morality, as a whole. The safe haven of the Lord's Baptist churches is shrinking, and the sheep are in the midst of

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Forum #1

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wolves; being delivered up to the councils and secular “synagogues” of soap boxes and relative truths of the Devil.

Christ, in our text verse, is admonishing us to remember that the sheep need to be careful! We need to shelter the young sheep, and social media does the opposite in allowing the wolves to roam freely into our homes and even into our children’s bedrooms. Selah! Think about it!

Is there ANY good in social media? In the forums of commenting on events in society, we end up reducing ourselves to the weakest moral link. Very few folk stand for the truth, and the ones that do attempt it, are called down as bigots, prejudiced and narrow-minded. **“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world”** (Phil. 2:14-15). This second usage of the word “harmless” in our New Testament, begins with a caution to **“do all things without murmurings and disputings.”** Wow! Going to have to cancel all my Twitters and Facebook comments, trying to straighten out the world and its liberal inclinations away from God’s Eternal Word!

The Lord’s church is better equipped to establish a website for its members and to shine the light of truth with their sermons, articles, quotes, etc, that do NOT establish a forum of **“murmurings and disputings.”** More like John the Baptist of old, **“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation**

of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matt. 3:7-10). God’s people are to be proclaimers, not debaters, or worse yet, what Baptists have mostly become, because of peer pressure-watered-down compromisers of the truth. Selah! Think about it! Is there ANY good in social media? It is the exception, rather than the rule. The rule is that social media is a ruthless tool of Satan.

Any venture into the world is hazardous, beloved reader. Walking out your front door is hazardous. The question is, how well are our sheep protected? As we walk out the door and hop into our cars, it is not too dangerous, yet, is it? I remember asking dad or mom in the front seat to turn on the radio or tape player. Selah! Think about this! There was only one tuner and volume control and dad controlled it. He knew if something bad came on, to change the station. Now, with iPhones, earbuds, Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, etc, all of a sudden, we have seven radio controls in our van. It is very hard to keep the sheep safe, now. And as we examine our church pews and look in vain for our children, it is very clear that we have not. We have lost the battle to social media and we are about to lose the war for the morality (and existence) of America the beautiful. Selah! Think about it!

“For such an high priest

became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7:26). If we have any hope for revival, it must be found in following the example of Christ. The third and final usage of the word “harmless” speaks of Jesus Christ. It is not that He will not rule with a rod of iron and punish the wicked “harmfully,” it means that Jesus lived a life that did not tempt or harm others to do evil. Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. That is what we need, and the opposite is what has become (if not always, as I believe) of social media. It is one of the chief instruments of Satan to destroy the Lord’s churches. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

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never presume to be hateful or ill-mannered toward those who use other English translations. I have learned that there are some things I must agree to disagree with my brethren.

The reason why I felt I needed to make the statements above is because nearly every new English Translation apart from the old Wycliffe and the King James translates the Greek word *agape* to “love” in the English rather than “charity.” “Love” has a lot of definitions and applications in the English language. I admit that the modern meaning of “charity” is that of mere charitable giving or benevolence. However, *agape* “charity” or “love” in the old English seems to indicate a higher measure of love that signifies sacrifice rather than mere sentiment or emotion. It is instructive that the word “charity” is used 8 times in I Corinthians 13

to describe *agape*. It is the kind of love that most resembles God in Christ, who willingly gave His all for His elect, to redeem them from the ravages of sin and eternal destruction. We are urged by the New Testament writers to have this fervent, earnest, consistent, sacrificial, and Christ like charity displayed in our lives. Perhaps use of the word “charity” in the old King James is translated that way to remind us how extraordinary and magnificent the love of Christ is compared to the common way in which love is flippantly used in every day conversation. **“Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness”** (Col. 3:12-14). **“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins”** (I Pet. 4:8).

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The word “charity” is found 28 times in the New Testament and in every instance it means “love.” Not just “love” but “*agape* love” and is used in the New Testament to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, **“And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love**

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Forum #2

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wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

Also it references to the love God has for the elect, "**But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**" (Rom. 5:8).

This is one definition which I found that I thought sums up the word "charity" very nicely: "The Greek word *agape* is often translated "love" in the New Testament. How is "*agape* love" different from other types of love? The essence of *agape* love is goodwill, benevolence, and willful delight in the object of love. Unlike our English word love, *agape* is not used in the New Testament to refer to romantic or sexual love. Nor does it refer to close friendship or brotherly love, for which the Greek word *philia* is used. *Agape* love involves faithfulness, commitment, and an act of the will. It is distinguished from the other types of love by its lofty moral nature and strong character. *Agape* love is beautifully described in I Corinthians 13."

If the reader will look, Paul uses the word "charity" nine times in I Corinthians 13. And concludes that, "**And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity**" (I Cor. 13:13). I believe this type of love is very essential to the Christian's life. God Bless!

ROGER REED

Discontentment

(Continued from page 11) ♦

to realize it, is sinful, a grievous offense against the Most High. It is an impugning of His wisdom, a denial of His goodness, a rising up of my will against His. To murmur at our lot is to take issue with God's sovereignty, quarreling as it does with His providence, and therefore, is a being guilty of high treason against the King of the universe. Since God orders all the circumstances of human life, then every person ought to be entirely satisfied with the state and situation in which he is placed. One has no more excuse to grumble at his lot than has another." (*Pink's Exposition of Hebrews*, p. 1144)

It is painfully obvious that the sin of discontentment permeates every aspect of the human condition. It is a sin readily practiced but scarcely recognized for what it is, rebellion against God and His providence.

MAJOR CAUSES OF DISCONTENTMENT

1. One of the root causes of discontentment is the sin of covetousness which is forbidden by the Moral Law as revealed in Exodus 20:17: "**Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.**" It is quite apparent that a breach of the tenth commandment involves having an inordinate obsession with what other people have that you do not. At the root of covetousness is discontentment with what you presently have and a strong desire to get what others have, often by any means. A covetousness person is not satisfied and content with what he has so he goes after

what others have. The pursuit of "things" motivates a covetous person which is why it is a sin that is identified as idolatry in Colossians 3:5. It is sad that temporal, material things are sought after more vigorously by most people than eternal and spiritual things. Jesus warned against this dangerous sin when He told the story of the rich man in Luke 12:15-21. Luke 12:15 states: "**And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's soul consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**" Someone once asked a wealthy and powerful man how much he needed to be satisfied and his reply was: "Just a little bit more."

2. The second cause of discontentment is an attitude of ingratitude and unthankfulness. God has given to all men the gift of life. All receive good gifts that flow from God's bounty. If you have any measure of health, strength, intelligence, happiness, and temporal provision it is due to God's mercies flowing freely. You have clothes on your back, food in your belly, and much more if you would only reflect on God's goodness. I Timothy 6:8 declares: "**And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.**" If you are saved by sovereign grace the entire spiritual treasury of God in Christ has been showered upon your unworthy soul. How dare we mope around in a state of unthankful discontent?

Jeremiah Burroughs, the old Puritan wrote in 1648:

"It is too much for a child to be discontented in his father's house, but if you have taken a poor beggar boy, who lay begging at your door, into your house, and set him at your own table, could you bear that he should complain

that some dish is not well dressed, or the like? You could not bear it if your children should do it, but you could bear it a great deal better from them than to hear such an one do it. But you are a poor beggar, and God has, as it were, taken you into His great family, and if the Lord has been pleased to raise you higher, so that now you have a competence, that you may live as a man, to be of use and service in the place where God has set you: now will you be discontented because you have not everything that you desire?...Know that this is an exceedingly great aggravation to your discontent, when you are raised from a very low condition, and yet you cannot be contented with what you have." (*The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, pp. 179-180)

3. The third cause of discontentment is found in the constant comparison of yourself to others. In the Scriptures this is called emulation or jealousy and it is a vain exercise that is identified as one of the works of the fleshly, carnal nature (Gal. 5:20). II Corinthians 10:12 states: "**For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.**" Rather than reflecting on all the blessings that you have been given, you often find it necessary to question God's provision to you by comparing it to what others have. Why do I not have this or that like so and so? Why do I not have more? This is a ploy of wicked politicians to cause discontent among people, hoping to incite class warfare. Jealousy and envy of others are

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wicked sins that inflame the sin of discontentment. Its what caused Asaph to write: **“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well night slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked...So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee”** (Psalm 73:2-3, 22). Asaph’s folly was in comparing himself to others and envying the prosperity of the wicked. We must not engage in this foolish and ignorant exercise. It does nothing to enhance our spiritual growth, rather we find ourselves questioning God and His provision.

4. The fourth cause of discontentment is worldliness. Christians have increasingly bought in to the lie that we should have everything the world offers to enhance our happiness. Whether it be designer clothes, fancy cars, big houses, or fat stacks of cash many professing believers are caught up in pursuing a phantom dream. We ought to be pursuing God and delighting in His presence rather than mindlessly going after the trinkets the world has to offer! I John 2:15-17 commands: **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”** Matthew 16:26 asks a powerful question: **“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his**

own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

The greater our satisfaction and delight is in God and His ways, the less discontent we will be. The things of the world, its praise, popularity, possessions, prestige, and power will have no hold on our affections. Oh, that our experience may be like that of David in Psalm 16:5-9 and Asaph in Psalm 73: 24-28 after he had learned of the vanity of worldliness.

5. The fifth cause of discontentment is the evil of being self-willed. Instead of being satisfied and submissive to God we find ourselves wanting what we want, when we want it, and a willingness to do anything to get what we want. This sinful desire enables us to go our own way without regard for the Lord or His counsel. When we are self willed we think that we can manage our lives better than the Lord. When self will comes into play we can justify our discontentment as we pursue a course of rebellion against God. Self will leads many discontented people to plunge headlong into the quagmire of debt and financial irresponsibility.

Ahab and Haman are two examples of self willed people whose discontent led to their destruction. They were determined to have their own way and God judged them for their rebellion.

6. The sixth cause of discontentment is a distrust of God or a lack of faith. When we become dissatisfied with our circumstances enough to be discontent it shows a lack of trust in the Lord’s protection and provision. A prime example of this is the nation of Israel during their wilderness wanderings. They failed to believe the promise of God and His ability to provide.

They had already rejected His promise to be with them when they feared the inhabitants of the land and refused to go into the promised land. That unbelief and lack of trust was evident as they continued to discontent and filled with murmuring. Psalm 106:24-25 states: **“Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word? But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.”**

TELL TALE SIGNS OF DISCONTENTMENT

1. Murmuring, complaining, bellyaching against God and the circumstances that He providentially brings into your life. Since the Bible clearly teaches that God appoints and ordains all things our murmurings are ultimately against Him. Ephesians 1:11 declares: **“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”**

Our murmuring often goes something like this:

“I am not as wealthy as I should be...I do not have this or that but I deserve better...If only I were like so and so...If only things were different I could be happy...If only our church was like...” and on we could go. These complaints may apply to how we view our marriage, family, job, church, finances, etc. Often times we find ourselves murmuring in our thought life, not daring to give voice to our complaints. However, we must remember that our Omniscient God sees and knows every thought and every complaint lodged in our depraved hearts. We often murmur about things that we cannot change. As an individual you must accept some basic things about yourself and your circumstances. Your

gender, body type, looks, height are all things under normal circumstances you can not change.

Murmuring is what brought God’s judgments and chastening upon the nation of Israel when they wandered in the wilderness. They murmured about water (Ex. 15:24; 17:2-3), they murmured about food (Ex. 16:3-4), they murmured about Moses and Aaron as leaders (Num. 16:41-50). Each time God would solve a problem it seemed as though the Israelites would find something else to murmur and complain about. Their murmurings and unbelief ultimately kept them from entering into the Promised Land. Oh, that we would learn a valuable lesson from them! As long as our hearts and mouths are filled with complaints against the Lord we will not have victory and joy in the Christian life. I Corinthians 10:6, 10-13 state: **“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted...Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for our ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”**

2. When a murmuring and complaining attitude gains momentum it often breeds

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negativity. If you are not satisfied with the little things of life and you allow that to go unchecked it will not be long until you are negative about many things. When you have a negative attitude you will find yourself ready to complain or argue for no apparent reason. It will be easy to start arguments with your wife, yell at your kids, be uncooperative with coworkers, and have a bad attitude at church. When your complaining festers into a negative spirit you will start alienating people. People will not want to be around you because you actually start to look for things to be negative about. It is a curse to be negative all the time. Proverbs 17:14 declares: **“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.”**

3. Those who are in the funk of discontent often are not satisfied to keep their complaints and negativity to themselves. They will begin to spread the bitterness and discontent to others by finding things to stir up strife about. This is why John the beloved apostle had to expose the threat that Diotrephes posed to Lord’s church. III John 8-11 records: **“We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth. I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved,**

follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good is of God: but he that doth evil hath not seen God.”

Among the things that God hates and considers abominable are: **“An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations...A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren”** (Prov. 6:18-19).

4. Another sign of discontentment is a lack of spiritual growth and a diminished appetite for the things of God. In the Scriptures this condition is referred to as “leanness of soul.” The Israelites of old complained and murmured until they got what they lusted after and then God sent them leanness of soul. Psalm 106:13-15 reveals: **“They soon forget his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.”** It is far better to be content with what you have in a spirit of gratitude and enjoy spiritual communion with God than to have everything your soul lusts after! Proverbs 15:16-17 declares: **“Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.”**

5. Discontentment is often accompanied with anger and bitterness that leads to physical afflictions and infirmities. God sent a plague upon Israel for their murmuring and spirit of discontent. If you want to make yourself physically sick fill your daily life with ingratitude, discontentment, anger, and bitterness. Proverbs 17:22 states: **“A merry heart doth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”**

6. Discontentment often is evidenced by anxiety, worry, and unbelief. Failure to believe God’s Word and act upon it is what brought curses upon the nation of Israel as outlined in Deuteronomy chapter 28. God warned the Israelites about discontentment and unbelief: **“And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it ere even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see”** (Deut. 28:64-67).

7. Discontentment and continual dissatisfaction with your material possessions will lead to the curse of debt, trouble, and financial ruin to your home. Discontentment with the present often causes people to presume upon the future and go into debt, often buying things they cannot afford simply because they want them. How often do you seek the Lord concerning your finances? How often has discontentment led you to disregard the principles of the Word of God to plunge headlong into disastrous debt and financial bondage? Proverbs 22:7 states: **“The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”**

Ecclesiastes 4:6 declares: **“Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.”**

THE WICKEDNESS OF DISCONTENTMENT AMONG CHRISTIANS

1. Discontentment is rebellion against the Providence of God. There is some debate as to whether Saul, the first king of Israel was saved or not. Leaving that aside, there is no doubt that his life furnishes us with a prime example of the wickedness of rebellion against God. Saul was plainly instructed to not take any of the spoils of battle from the Amalekites, nor was he to spare any of the survivors of battle. Saul was not content to do things God’s way, he leaned to his own understanding and took matters into his own hands. Often the rebellion of discontentment reveals that we think we know better than God as to how we ought to live our lives. Saul spared Agag, the leader of the Amalekites, and saved the best of the flocks thinking that he would show his devotion by offering special sacrifices of the spoils to God. When confronted with his sin of rebellion, Saul defended his actions by saying he had done all that the Lord had commanded. Those who are caught up in the rebellion of discontentment do not think right. They do not see things as God does. They become blinded and spiritually insensitive to the goodness of God and His direction. Saul was severely rebuked by the prophet Samuel and stripped of his authority as king. I Samuel 15:22-23 declares: **“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than**

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sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

What a lesson for us! It is never right for us to take matters into our own hands and rebel against the instruction and Providence of God. We must learn to be content with His providential dealings in our lives. Anything less leads to sins of rebellion, stubbornness, and idolatry.

2. Discontentment characterizes the lives of the ungodly, who live according to the lusts of the flesh. As God's people we are called to behave as children of the Light, reflecting the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we are discontent with God's providence, provision, and protection we are acting like the reprobates who are void of spiritual discernment. Jude 16 states: **"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."** Let us be careful not to murmur and complain against God like the reprobate do.

3. Discontentment is a bad testimony for us to have before the unsaved world. When we express discontentment we are in effect saying our lives with God are no better than their lives without God. We cannot be effective in our witness for the Lord if we cannot show the world that we are satisfied with Him and the circumstances He has placed us in. Philippians 2:13-16 ought to

be our standard to live by: **"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputing: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."** If we acknowledge and believe that God is working in us, let us be careful not to complain against His Providence.

4. The state of discontentment is foolish if we really believe in the absolute sovereignty of God and that He has ordered all the affairs of life. If we really believe that God "works all things after the counsel of His own will" then we must admit that we accomplish nothing when we have a discontented attitude. We waste time by complaining against God's providence in our lives. We provide a terrible example to friends, family, and the world at large when we murmur about things large and small. Job had to rebuke his wife for her foolish behavior: **"...Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips"** (Job 2:10). We would do well to remember this verse when we are tempted to engage in the foolishness of discontentment.

5. Discontentment is evil because it hinders our service to God. The ultimate aim of every believer ought to be to glorify God in every circumstance of life through obedience and cheerful submission to His will. We must learn to take the bitter with the

sweet if we are to truly glorify the Lord on a daily basis. It is the reality of life that we are going to face difficulties, afflictions, hardships, disappointments, and trials. We must learn that God has sovereignly ordered and appointed all things for our good. Romans 8:28 clearly states this truth: **"And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."** If we are to serve well we must acknowledge and embrace the **"all things"** God has placed in our lives.

I close with a quote by Jeremiah Burroughs:

"Oh, what an ugly face has

this sin of murmuring and discontentedness! Oh, what cause is there that we should lay our hands upon our hearts, and go away and be humbled before the Lord because of this! Whereas your thoughts were wont to be exercised about providing for yourselves, and getting more comforts for yourselves, let the stream of your thoughts now be turned to humble yourselves for your discontentedness. Oh, that your hearts may break before God, for otherwise you will fall to it again! Oh, the wretchedness of man's heart!" (*The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, page 168).



Gleanings for the Young & Old

The Missionary

by Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

The door slammed hard behind her, echoing in the morning stillness. She looked down the rutted road and saw in the daylight what had caused the hard, bumpy ride the night before. "I can't believe they call it a road," she murmured to herself. Her eleven-year-old eyes swept the horizon cluttered with dirty brown thatch huts, spaced haphazardly amongst the outdoor fire pits and barely keeping the intruding jungle at bay.

Her eyes rolled heaven-ward and with a practiced nonchalance quoted from memory, **"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."** Oh Lord," she continued, "why me?" Her shoulders slumped and

she sat down hard against the wall of the hut, her new home. She moaned again.

An hour later, Kari, a young woman came to the door and looked down that same rutted road, "Kar...!" she was interrupted by the grunt coming from the wall beside her. "Oh, there you are, sweetie! Breakfast is about ready, but I need some more water. Could you go to the well and get me some?" She pointed with her pail to the center of the village where other children and women were coming to and fro. When Kari's gaze froze on the scene, she gently bumped the bucket against her daughters shoulder.

With a tremendous sigh, signifying to her mother how much this was costing her, she slowly got to her feet and shuffled toward the busy well. Sure, easy enough for my parents, she thought, they're used to this. They've been here a

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year already. But what about me? Why couldn't I have stayed with Ma-maw and Pa-paw?

As she neared the well, the chatter grew louder and more animated. A boy was regaling the waiting crowd with a story about some chickens and a pig. Kari was surprised at how well she was able to understand the fast-talking child. It had taken her some time to pick up the native accents on the four-day ride to the village, but the tutorial immersion in the language for the last six months had definitely worked. Despite herself, she joined in the laughter at the conclusion of the tale. The native boy caught her eye toward the end of the narrative and his theatrical expressions of rolling eyes and contorted features pictured exactly the look of the amazed pig that had been bested by the chickens.

At that, the crowd of folk dispersed, with those that had lingered for the end of the tale, passing others still waiting patiently in line. Other diversions popped up and the boy was left standing alone. He brought his full pail over to her and stuck out a skinny hand. Without thinking, Kari shook hands with him and then before she could look down to see if it had gotten dirty; the boy's charismatic personality grabbed her again. "Hello, missionary girl!" he grinned so hugely that Kari thought his face would split. "My name in Engedi." He bowed slightly toward her, "I, too, am a Christian!" he proudly finished.

As the next few weeks went by, Engedi was one of the few bright spots in poor Kari's life. Being told of the differences of primitive jungle life and seeing pictures, even the short week

spent in Karoo, had not prepared her for the rude awakening of losing all of her modern cultural conveniences. But Engedi was so fun to be with, so considerate of her shortcomings, that he could make all of her frustrations go away. She looked forward to his visits and the Bible study, where she still had an edge on him in knowledge. He would pepper her with queries that made her search within herself for why she did believe this or that about the Scriptures. "Why did God do this? Or why did He let His people go through that?"

"Questions, questions, questions!" Kari laughed, "That's all you ever do!"

Engedi cocked his head slightly, "How else will I learn?" he asked plaintively. "I want to be a missionary like you, to others- to tell them about my Saviour! I need to have all the answers!"

Kari reached over to touch his hand, "You've got them already, Engedi." At his quizzical look, she burst into laughter, "Right here, you wonderful boy," she indicated his Bible, which was open before him.

The sound of his own laughter pealing throughout the village was pure joy to the children, and many came running to see what the popular Engedi was so tickled about. Kari watched in amazement as the earnest young boy took the simple idea she had given him and wove it into a marvelous story about how the deep things of the universe became a clear picture to every one of us, through the Word of God. Engedi's witness of his beloved Saviour captivated the other children. His gift of storytelling enraptured not only the children, but also the adults that found the genuine truth of the gospel that was constantly woven in his parables.

At home later, she would reflect upon what had happened. Why didn't I think of that story? she thought. Why can't I be the witness that Engedi is? I feel so trapped. Me, in my white skin and foreign culture, how can I ever be the missionary that Engedi is? Useless! That's what I am! I might as well go back to America!

A few weeks later, Kari and her parents prepared for their visit to another tribal village across the ridge. They carefully packed enough supplies to get them there and back. Two of the converted Christian men from the village were also going with them and they gathered their packs as well. The two tribes had had very little recent interaction and their heritage was of bitterest enmity. However, it was a requested visit to learn about this Jesus Christ, that they had heard about. Engedi begged to go along, and finally one of the tribal men agreed to take him. Kari's dad encouraged them, reasoning that the more it looked like a family was coming, the more likely their welcome reception.

Their hike was through areas where there were no roads or paths, so Kari was thoroughly exhausted at the end of the first day's marches. It took three days of paced traveling for them to reach the village. Kari would never forget the fierce faces of the people awaiting them. They were adorned with much more paint than Engedi's tribe ever used. Fragments of bones were used to adorn and even disfigure themselves.

Nevertheless, they sat down peaceably enough around the central fire to hear what the missionaries had to say. One of the men acted as an interpreter for Kari's dad. He spoke for some time on the existence of a Creator God named Jehovah. As he

turned toward the guilt and sin of mankind, the natives grew restless and indignant, but the voices of the Christian men never wavered. The fierce faces glowered at the children and Kari's mother. Kari attempted to hide behind her mother's skirts, but found that Engedi was already there! She was astonished at the fear in his wide eyes! He whimpered as he whispered to her of the terrible acts attributed to this enemy tribe in the stories of his childhood. Kari tried to reassure him, and she found herself less fearful as she went to God's Word to strengthen the boy's courage. "Remember Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Engedi! The Bible says **..he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.**"

Her Scripture recitation was interrupted, at this point, as the interpreter stood up boldly and pointed at the chief, "You are sinner! Holy God must judge sinners with everlasting pain and torment!" At the panic and terror that resulted from this declaration, the fierce wailing and shouting picked up in volume. All around the small group, the villagers picked up their weapons and danced around the fire, moaning and wailing, then shouting angrily at the newcomers. All through the various reactions, the Christian interpreter stood as still as a granite statue. When the chief finally gathered his principal warriors to stand menacingly in the face of the man, he finally fell to his knees with face upturned and loudly shouted, "I, too, am a sinner! The Holy God Jehovah must also judge me with everlasting pain and torment!"

Confused, the chief and

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warriors hesitated. Kari's dad walked in between the men and began talking. The interpreter never budged from his kneeling position, but faithfully translated every word. Kari's dad also acknowledged the sin of every man, but told of the sacrifice that was made by the Son of God to come and live a perfect life without sin – no sinner! Awed looks replace the ferocious ones as the story of the redemptive work of Christ was told in its entirety. The mock trial and the scourging of the Divine One. Then the cruel nails of the cross and the three hours of darkness and agony to pay for the sins that we could not pay for throughout all eternity.

The hour was late and the sky was showing the first signs of dawn when the assembly dispersed. Some mocked when they realized that the Christians were claiming that Jesus Christ had risen again from the dead; others walked away saying they would think about it and come again tomorrow night to hear more, but to Kari's and Engedi's incredulous eyes, many of the chief men and women believed and would not leave the Christians. They desired only to hear more about the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind. Obviously convicted of their sin, they found peace in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. With the joy of their salvation evident, their fierce faces transformed into peace and love for Christ and His brave missionaries that had brought them their new Hope.

As Kari and Engedi later looked back on the two weeks spent in the camp of the enemy, they realized anew that the power of the Gospel is not in the missionary, but in the Holy Spirit. God used His Word

to spiritually convict, where in the flesh it only seemed to enrage. The power of the Holy Ghost entered beyond the physical eye and wrought a work inside of the violent heathen to the saving of their souls. John 3:7-8, **“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”**

As they watched the tireless work of her parents and the two native men in presenting the whole Word of God, the children felt unfit and unable to help. But as Kari noticed the children watching them with intent eyes, she found herself making motions toward them. As Engedi watched, she tried to signal to them of the events that were happening. It wasn't long before Engedi took over. His obvious talent of storytelling could bridge the gap of a simple language barrier. Soon the camp was filled with children's laughter as David and Goliath, Daniel in the lion's den and other Bible stories and parables came to life through Engedi's antics. Kari again was mesmerized and awed by the boy's gifts.

Soon, with the attention all focused upon Engedi, Kari found herself again unnoticed. Feeling useless among this crowd of jabbering children speaking an unknown tongue and unable to communicate instantly with them as did Engedi, who was already picking up some of the native's words, she started to slip away back to the tent. Engedi saw her out of the corner of his eye. He stopped in the middle of his tale and ran over and dragged her to the center of the ogling children. He shook his head at her and motioned for all the children to be silent. With

his pidgin language picked up from the few days, mixed with a flurry of motions and gestures, he progressed to tell the children a story that Kari could not make out. She felt exposed and used, as Engedi constantly indicated her and brought her to the attention of his rapt listeners. Engedi just grinned and laughed when she tried to ask what he was telling them.

He finally finished and with a flourish went to Kari's feet and before she realized what was happening he kissed one. She was too shocked to react and was barely able to stand and keep the other children from doing the same. Indignant now, she tore herself from their clinging grasp and ran off.

Engedi followed after, trying to stop her, but she fled to the safety of the tent. Her temper lost, she flung herself at the boy as he tried to come in as well. “How could you humiliate me so!” she shouted. Every attempt by the astonished boy to talk was met with her clenched fists pummeling him, so it was not until she had worn herself out that he was able to ask her what was the problem.

Filthy from the tears and dust, she just sat in a pathetic heap in the middle of the tent. Tears kept flowing and after pushing away any attempts to console her, she exhaustedly finally gave up and let the persistent boy put his arm around her and she finished up her cry with her face in his shoulder.

“I'm sorry, Engedi! I really am!” she finally turned to look him in the face. His tender and expressive eyes held only sympathy and love as she could finally see. “It's just that... Oh, I don't know how to say it! I feel so inadequate and useless all the time!” She turned shamefacedly away, “Dad and mom are so good with the people.

Ranyed and Larobi are so brave and good. And you! You already have the children learning about Jesus! And all I do is get in the way!”

Engedi's eyes welled up with tears as he tried to cut in, but Kari wasn't finished yet. A little fire returned to strengthen her pathetic voice as she concluded, “And that little trick of yours to kiss my feet, to make fun of me because I can't keep up and understand.”

“No, Kari! NO!”

Kari pushed him down again, and got up, “I know that I'm useless, but you don't have to make a mockery of me in front of the children!” With this last burst, she turned her back on him and fell silent, immersed in her sorrow.

Engedi stood looking at her for a few moments, gathering his thoughts. Finally his voice huskily came, charged with emotion, “Kari, my sweet angel, Kari.” She stiffened, but he took no note, “Don't you know? Can't you see, Kari?” To her stolid back, he chuckled, but even without turning Kari could tell it was joy, not mockery that made him laugh. She hesitantly turned her questioning face toward him and took in the love shining in his eyes.

“See what?” she sniffed.

“What you are?” he continued before she had a chance to reply, “Kari, you are the greatest missionary heart I know!” He changed tack and asked, “Do you know what Kari Kalatti means?”

Curiosity was getting the better of her. “I've heard you call me that, but you never will explain it!” she protested.

“Kalatti is a special word my people use for their spiritual guardian. A 'guardian angel' you Americans might call it.” He paused to fall on his knees in front

◊ (Continued on page 22)

Gleanings Young & Old

(Continued from page 21) ♦

of her and gently reach out to wipe a teardrop from her stained cheek. “Do you know what I said when I kissed your foot out there?”

Kari became rigid again with the beginnings of indignation at the memory, so Engedi quickly went on, “What I told the children was the verse in Isaiah 52:7, ‘**How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet 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.**’ Kari sweet Kari Kalatti! Don’t you realize the work the Lord has for you?”

At the stunned look in her eyes, he continued. “Who was the first to show me how important the Bible is with all the answers?” In her silence, he answered, “You, Kari!”

“Who was the one who kept pointing the way when someone was struggling with God’s commandments? You, Kari!”

“Who was the one, when we were both cringing in fear at the fierceness of the warriors and chief painted for murder, that reassured me again with God’s Word? You, Kari!”

Kari couldn’t control herself anymore. She grabbed his shoulders and looked earnestly into the eyes of the other eleven-year-old trying to show her his love and admiration for her courage, resourcefulness and unremitting love of Christ. “Me?” she whispered.

Engedi wasn’t finished. “And who was the one that reached out to touch the other children? That saw the hunger in their eyes for the truth and helped me get through to them?”

Kari still had ‘me?’ etched upon

her face, and Engedi nodded. “You, Kari Kalatti! You’ve always had the most vivid missionary heart that I’ve ever known. You’ve been my inspiration and the one I go to for help and guidance.”

He paused and watched her face firm with resolve as she looked at her life through the eyes of the boy before her. As she looked anew at the impact that her family (and herself) had had upon the tribes they lived amongst. Reflected on how her day-to-day testimony of faithfulness and steadfastness must look to others watching on. He nodded as he watched the emotions flicker across her face. “They, and most particularly, I,” he emphasized, “see Christ in you.”

He hurried on to finish his thought before she spoke (as if she could have spoken). “Do you know which story I was telling the tribal children when I kissed your feet?”

Kari shook her head mutely.

“It was the story of Naaman. I told them how he came to be cleansed from his dreadful leprosy. I told them of the mighty prophet of God, who gave him a new God, the right God to worship. One that can heal even the most dreaded disease, or the most terrible condition of lostness. They were impressed. But then I told them that Naaman had lived in a far-away land that knew nothing of this mighty God, just like these children here knew nothing about Him. He would never have learned about Him. He would never have been healed by His power, except that a little missionary girl came and told him about Jesus. Just like you did, Kari Kalatti.

“No matter where I go in His service, Kari,” he couldn’t keep the tears from flowing down his cheeks to match the tears streaming down hers, their hands

still clasped tightly to each other, “no matter what life and God has in store for me, no matter how rich the blessings and fruits of this labor...” His pause and the sweep of his arm took in the entire village, the entire missionary field of Kari’s family and the church that sent them from America, “I will always be indebted to my Lord for sending me my precious Kari Kalatti, my missionary angel. You are the one that has continuously and unfailingly shown me the Gospel of my Lord Jesus Christ.”

“But...” Kari protested.

“Yes, I know,” Engedi interrupted, “I was saved before I met you. Your father and mother preached the Gospel to me and the Spirit of the Lord quickened me and saved me before I ever even knew you existed. BUT! But you made it come alive in my life. Before you came, my stories were about pigs and cows, chickens and trees. Now my stories are about Jesus. Now I can’t read, hear, or say anything, but that it has a new meaning for me. My service to God is the Gospel. I saw the gospel in your life and God has enabled me to be like you. To have the Gospel as the most important part of my life. Just like you. The missionary.”

THE END

(Author’s Note)

I hope the preceding story (based only on my imagination) causes some response in our lives. And perhaps might even cause us to consider some questions...

1) Are the more polished witnesses always the best? Perhaps to find an answer, we might ask the Publicans that scorned the posh Pharisees to flock to John the Baptist?

2) The more kindred and fluent witnesses are not always the best, either? Ask the sinners living in Nineveh when a strange Galilean named Jonah came to town.

3) What makes the best and most successful Missionary? Like Engedi, we might consider Naaman’s answer as to whether the Gospel witness of a young Jewish girl was important to him.

So, too, for you, beloved reader, you are the right witness at the right time, solely because God made you exactly the way He wanted to. He placed you right where He wanted you to be. And He brings the unknown special people into your life, precisely right on time. No, you can not do the saving. You can not use any tool you have from faith, hope, joy or love to save anyone. But you can use those gifts to give the Gospel. God will and does take care of the rest. Praise His blessed and Holy Name for using such unworthy vessels as you and I to effect the salvation of the lost souls around us.

The most valuable gift you have is the Gospel. Give it freely. “**And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand... freely ye have received, freely give**” (Matt. 10:7-8).



The Short Pews



Brief Articles
by Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

PREACHER, I KNOW THAT CANNOT BE TRUE

How often has someone listened to the Bible being faithfully taught and repeated the words of our title: “Preacher, I know that cannot be true”? Every person has their own ideas and beliefs about God. And a person’s belief system – their doctrine – is one of the most precious things to them. If you doubt

♦ (Continued on page 23)

The Short Pews

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that last statement perform a little experiment. Try to convince them that God is sovereign and that their salvation is in the hands of God. Try convincing them that salvation “... is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Rom. 9:16). Tell them that man’s will has nothing to do with being born again as John 1:13 says: “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

How many times has someone said in words or substance, “Preacher, I heard what you said, but I know what so-and-so says about that verse and what you say cannot be true”? The world is full of people whose business is not to teach the Bible, but rather their continual occupation seems to be to explain away the Bible. And they have explained away so much that the God of the Bible is no longer the God of most professing Christians. They have explained away so much that few know how God saves lost sinners. In short, the world – the world of religious people – is full of unbelievers. And that is what people are who go about explaining away the plain meaning of Scripture instead of believing what the Bible plainly says.

Jesus said, “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words” (John 5:46-47)? The principle here is a reciprocal one. Those who believe the writings of Moses – the Old Testament Scriptures – believed in Christ when He came. And those who truly believe in Christ also believe the Bible today. They do not say about it, “Preacher, I know that cannot be true.”

Paul warned of those who give the appearance of being followers

of Christ: they “walk,” he said. “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18). And to the congregation at Corinth he wrote, “...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (II Cor. 11:14-15). Those who twist the Scriptures do so to their own destruction, for Peter said they “are unlearned and unstable,” and they “wrest, [Paul’s writings] as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (II Peter 3:16). Warning: do not say that the Bible cannot be true when it says something you do not like!

WHY SOME PEOPLE REJECT THE BIBLE

The Word of God is clear about the minds and hearts of people as they are naturally born. First of all, lost individuals think contrary to what God thinks. Proof: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8). Those persons not born of the Spirit may believe their thoughts and what they have figured out with all their hearts, but the heart of sinners is not a safe guide for anything. God says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it” (Jer. 17:9)? Mankind, then, is in a fix. He is bad off. He cannot think correctly and he cannot trust his heart to love the right things and be a guide in what he believes or does.

In dealing with the matter of God’s revelation, which we now call the Bible, Paul wrote that

there are two reasons lost men and women cannot believe that Book nor understand it. He wrote, “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). First of all he said lost sinners do not receive the Bible because it is foolishness to them. They do not see themselves as hopelessly and helplessly lost unless God be pleased to birth them spiritually. They do not know they are spiritually dead since they have never experienced spiritual life. The second reason lost men and women do not welcome the truth of the Bible is because they lack the proper equipment. The Word of God is a spiritual book – it is as Paul wrote “of the Spirit of God.” Men and women who are lost do not possess the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the Author of the Bible and it is He who alone enables those in whom He dwells to understand that Holy Book.

John wrote, “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (I John 5:20). The understanding given us by the Son of God comes with the Spirit which He sends to make spiritually dead sinners alive spiritually. Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:6,7). So it was that John wrote, “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (I John 5:12). The question is, do you have the Son?



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 2-1-2018 to 2-28-2018

Beginning Balance	\$1,916.10
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Briar Creek, B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Davenport B. C., Davenport, WA	160.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Landmark B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	100.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
J. Pruitt, Channelview, TX (In memory of James A. Pruitt)	100.00
The Lord’s Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	126.00
Anonymous	1,210.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,713.50
TOTAL	\$5,629.60

EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	574.14
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Supplies	122.25
Dividing checks	150.00
Bank Charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,825.35
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,804.25



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 2-1-2018 to 2-28-2018

Beginning Balance	\$1,102.03
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	425.00
TOTAL	1,527.03
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	603.98
Bank charge	10.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	613.98
Interest	+0.01
ENDING BALANCE	\$913.06

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will have their Spring Fellowship meeting Saturday, April 21st.

Lord willing, Elders Matthew Stepp and Doyal Thomas will be speaking.

Service time is 10:00 a.m. All are invited to attend. The church will provide a noon meal after the service.

The Big Creek Baptist Church of Wayne, WV will be having revival services Sunday April 22nd thru Friday April 27th.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Brandon Vansickle, Benjamin

Stepp, Tom Ross, John Fry, Leroy Pack, John Lybrook and Rex Smith.

Service times are Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday at 7:30 p.m.

For more information contact Pastor Matthew Stepp at (304) 807-5063 (M) or (304) 522-1261 (H) or email bigcreek@frontier.com.

ATTENTION SISTER CHURCHES: If your church has a radio broadcast please send us the program name, station info, and time for inclusion in a future listing in the *Banner*.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Wake Forest, NC is in need of a pastor. For more information, please contact Titus Dickerson at (919) 570-6178 or email info@sgbc-wakeforest.org.

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, LA is in search of a pastor.

For a statement of faith you can visit the church website at <http://GraceBibleBaptist.webhop.org> or <http://gracebbc.dyndns.org:81/>.

You may contact any of the following for more information: Keith Laurence (225) 664-3557, Lucien LeSage (225) 803-9710, Charlie Andrews (225) 200-1171, or Joey Newell (225) 772-9158.

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is seeking a pastor. Please contact Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228 for more information.

The Lord's Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact the church in writing at SGBC, 400 N. Main St., Caldwell, KS 67022, or by phone Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.



**Quotes
from
Brother
Ritechus
N.
Dignation**
by Joseph Harris

I have a love/hate relationship with modern progress and technology. I love the convenience and time saving(?) devices of today, but also realize the fast pace at which most folks live. Since we can do more with modern inventions, we usually do, and therefore get too many irons in the fire. Most folks now days are going through life faster than a greased pig in a loadin' chute. Old Brother Vance Havner used to say that we would have to live twice as long and three times as deep as our forefathers to have the quality of life they had.

The older you get, the more you think about the "good old days," at least that's true with me. We have forgotten to "**Be still and know that**" He is God (Psalm 46:10). We just need to be still and remember that there is a God....Period.

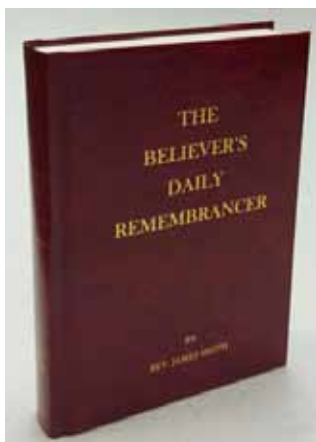
Now don't get me wrong. I like the modern conveniences and refuse to give up my refrigerated air machine (that's air conditioner to you city folks), automated leaf organizer (blower), and other fine gadgets. It's just that we use things that save us time, but then never have all that extra time in the end.

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