

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 Scriptural Qualifications For A Faithful Minister

By Willard Pyle
of Naples, Florida

One of the earmarks of the last days is the falling away among God's people; which results in a lukewarmness. With these conditions existing we certainly stand in need of faithful men of God who love the glory of God more than the praise of men. I wonder, as we take time to consider this proposition, if your church really wants this kind of minister, or if you have ever considered what the qualifications of a faithful minister are? Moreover, I wonder how many professing preachers have thought about this truth.

It is with a prayer in my heart that God will direct my mind and heart as I set before you some of the qualifications of a faithful minister. It is not my purpose to discuss who can be a minister, even though this certainly has much bearing on the subject, but of those that God calls, what are the qualifications for a



faithful minister?

I

I believe all will, or should, agree that a man must have a clear understanding of his salvation and call to preach in order to be a faithful minister

(II Tim. 1:9). Only one with this assurance will magnify his office (Rom. 11:13). Truly, it is a holy calling and should bring one to his knees in humility.

II

Moreover, "Ye are not your own," will ring in the heart of any faithful minister and he will seek to glorify God in body and in spirit (I Cor. 6:20). When one knows this truth he will cry out with Isaiah of old "Here am I, send me;" or with Paul, "What wilt thou have me

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Should Christians Be Diligent and On Time in the Lord's Work?

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

Let it be understood, at the outset, that when we speak disparagingly of lack of promptness in the Lord's work, we make no reference to those who are sick---those who are providentially hindered---or those who by virtue of their employment are unavoidably detained. We shall refer to people who unnecessarily drag in late to everything, and who lack pep and energy and enthusiasm when it comes to the things of God and religion. One should be on time---even at his own funeral.

Habitual, Lazy-Lateness Does The Following

1. IT PUTS THE LORD'S BUSINESS IN A POSITION INFERIOR TO THE WORLD'S BUSINESS.

Trains leave on time; stores open on time; schools open on time; factories open on time, and employees expect to be on



time, BUT POOR OLD CHURCH MEMBERS COME POKING IN about as fast as cold molasses comes out of a jug on a zero day in January. Unsaved people look on and they

see that professing Christians are not really in earnest. No wonder they are contemptuous. What does the Bible say? I Samuel 21:8 furnishes a good motto.

2. IT KNOCKS ALL THE SPIRIT OUT OF A RELIGIOUS SERVICE.

To come to church and find about a dozen sitting around listlessly, is to start the service off in a draggy fashion, and often the service never recovers from the poor start it gets. One reason why churches are so devoid of young people

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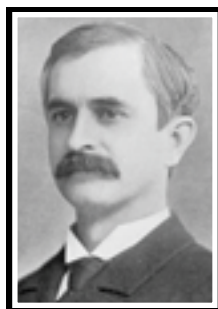
Preaching the Gospel by the Printed Page

By A. C. Dixon
(1854 - 1925)

The object of this article is to make a plea for the printed page, as a means of bringing Christ to the world and of building up the churches.

I. THE PRINTED PAGE GOES WHERE LIVING VOICE CANNOT GO.

A colporteur in central Missouri called at the house of a farmer noted for his violent opposition to churches and all things religious. The family was not at home, so he put under the door a four-page tract, such as he thought would do good to the man or any of his household, if they should read it. On entering the door, the farmer was the first to see the tract, and picking it up, crushed it in his hand and was about to throw it into the



fire; but suddenly a better impulse seized him, and he determined to sit down and read what these Christians were going around and putting under the doors of people's houses. The result was that he sent for

the colporteur to come and instruct him in the way of life; eventually, he baptized the whole household, and organized a church in the neighborhood. The little tract had prepared the way of the Lord. If the colporteur had gone at first in person, he would doubtless have been repulsed, perhaps insulted.

Bro. G. J. Johnson preached one

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When Should A Church Be Re-Organized In Order To Be A Scriptural Church?

By Gerald Price
(1921 - 2007)

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matt. 16:17-19).

"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" (Matt. 28:19,20).

This is a most controversial and important question. Everything that has already been preached, or will be preached, in this Conference on baptism, the Lord's Supper, women's place in the church, and every other subject, amounts to nothing if there is not a church to

◊ (Continued on page 155)

O for more faith; may my faith ripen to a full assurance, that I may go off the stage rejoicing, and that an abundant entrance may be ministered to me into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. John Willison (1680 - 1750)

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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.

Planning a move?
Please let us know your
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office charges us \$.50
for each returned wrong
address.

by the Printed Page

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evening in a church in Pennsylvania and in his sermon spoke of a little book, written about the blood. He noticed that a family near the pulpit showed interest at the mention of the book, and learned after the service from the pastor, that the little book had been used of God to bring that whole family to Christ. They were trusting in good works and penance for salvation, until a friend sent them the book to read from it they learned for the first time, that they could be completely saved by the blood of Jesus, and they were soon all rejoicing in His "finished" salvation. The little book had gone where no preacher would have been welcome, carrying with it light and life, and there are hundreds of homes that would drive from their doors one who came to preach the blood of Jesus. They may receive and read the truth; it is our duty to give it to them.

Addison, the great English preacher, is said to have been converted by a tract sent to his home under a cake by a Christian baker. We have heard of a dissolute cobbler who was converted by reading part of a tract which he found between the soles of a shoe he was mending. A carpenter, in tearing down an old house, read a torn tract which he found in a rat's nest, and declared that it was the means of the conviction which led to his conversion. An infidel man in North Carolina, who never went to church, was sauntering one beautiful Lord's Day along the shore of a pond and, for the lack of something else to do, picked up some torn pieces of paper which had been thrown from a fisherman's basket, and amused himself by putting them together and reading them. He saw written there his doom as a sinner, and hastened to seek the counsel of an earnest Christian.

Truly, these leaves for the healing of the nations can go where the voice cannot reach, and we need to scatter them far and wide, that they may be all the time doing their work of mercy.

II. THE PRINTED PAGE IS OFTEN MORE PERMANENT IN ITS INFLUENCE THAN THE LIVING VOICE.

If John Bunyan had not written, we should doubtless be ignorant of the fact that such a man ever lived. Luther took hold of the printing press and made the Reformation permanent. No wonder the monks said: "If we do not put down this printing press it will put us down."

John Wycliffe was a great tract writer and distributor. One of his tracts carried in the pocket of a nobleman into Bohemia was lent to John Huss and brought him to a knowledge of the Truth.

(Ever since the Reformation days, wise leaders in Gospel work have regarded tract ministry as belonging to

the forefront of evangelistic activities.)

Richard Baxter, converted by reading a book, wrote his "Call to the Unconverted," which Philip Doddridge read and was converted. Doddridge wrote, "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," which led William Wilberforce to Christ. Wilberforce wrote "Practical View of Christianity," by means of which Leigh Richmond became a Christian, and Leigh Richmond wrote a little tract called "The Dairyman's Daughter," which has been translated into more than a hundred languages, and millions of them have been circulated. More than 1,000 persons are known to have been led to Christ by reading "The Dairyman's Daughter." To it I owe my first act of consecration to Christ.

Reading Buchanan's "Star in the East" sent Adoniram Judson to preach the Gospel to the heathen, so that all the results of his work can be traced to that small book. It may be that eternity will reveal to Mr. Buchanan more permanent results from that book than from all the other forces of his life combined.

III. THE PRINTED PAGE IS MORE EASILY DIFFUSED THAN THE LIVING VOICE.

Busy men and women, who cannot leave their work, may distribute the printed Gospel.

In a busy railroad town a ticket agent was converted. He could spare little time from his office, so he decided to supply himself with Gospel tracts and give one with every ticket sold. In five years he distributed \$250 worth of tracts, and received letters from 22 persons, saying they had been led to Christ by reading them.

A druggist in Indiana testified that he has known of not a few conversions through tracts, which he sent into homes with his medicines. A devoted Christian, who is a member of a church in Baltimore, has served God in this way for many years, and he says he has seen most encouraging results.

A wealthy lady went one evening into her kitchen to see what the servants were doing. She found one of them absorbed in reading something and on looking to see what it was her eye fell upon the word "Eternity" at the head of a tract. It went like an arrow to her soul, and she had no rest until she found it in Him, Who through His death and resurrection gives hope for eternity.

A timid young woman was distributing tracts among the sailors of New York. She came upon a group of rough men, who were swearing savagely about something. Afraid to speak to them, she laid down among them a tract entitled: "The Swearer's Prayer." A young man picked it up and began to read it. Its first sentences brought to mind the home and parents he had left, and he made up his mind at once to quit the sea and become a Christian. He went up to Albany, N.Y.,

and entered the prayer meeting of the Pearl Street Baptist Church, of which Bro. Bartholomew T. Welch was pastor, and asked Christian people to pray for him. He was soon converted and licensed to preach. For years he has worked through the northwest, and one who knows him says that not less than 10,000 souls have been saved through his labors. What a result from a little tract given by a timid woman!

IV. THE PRINTED PAGE IS SOMETIMES MORE POWERFUL THAN THE LIVING VOICE.

The printed word comes with a quiet persuasive power. It has no repulsive manner. Attention is not attracted from the truth to the way in which it is delivered.

It persistently presents its claims.

A young man in a town of central New York, was distressed at the low state of religion in the place. He bought 1,000 tracts and gathered about him a small company of earnest Christians, who prayerfully distributed them. The result was a revival in which more than fifty were converted, thirty of whom traced their first impressions to the tracts.

At a religious reading club in a New Hampshire village, it was the turn of a worldly young woman to read on the evening when the tract already mentioned, was to be read. Before she was half through there came over her such a sense of guilt and danger that she had to request another to finish it. In the language of one who reported the incident: "The tract was read, but the end of time and the realities of eternity were brought into close connection with the scenes of that evening. The influence extended from heart to heart, from family to family, through the neighborhood, and in the short space of a few weeks most of those persons who first listened to the reading of the tract, and more than 60 others were led to place their hope of salvation on Jesus Christ." An earnest preacher had labored for years in this town with little results, and died without reaping any sheaves. "God used a little tract" continues our reporter, "to do what forty years of preaching had failed to accomplish, and now that town has a live church."

This is a reading age, and men often reach conclusions by reading rather than by listening. The great object of preaching is to move them to act. We must still depend, as in Apostolic times, on the pen for indoctrination. Rich men need to wake up to the importance of spending money in supporting the printed as well as the spoken Gospel. The objection that people do not read sermons or strictly religious articles is not well taken. It is a very moderate statement to say that any man whose sermons are published, multiplies his congregation by two, while in most cases he multiplies it by at least

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by the Printed Page

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ten, and in some cases by the thousand.

Evangelization is simply bringing the truths of the Gospel in contact with the people. That is our part, the rest is with God. We cannot convert men through the press any more than from the pulpit; in both cases we must simply proclaim the Truth, and trust God to cause it to germinate and bring forth fruit. Of course, there is waste. The parable of the sower would lead us to expect at least three-fourths of the seed to be lost. So there seems to be an immense waste of words and energy in the pulpit. But we must be willing to waste, or else we shall do nothing.

If I had the money, I would fill at least a column of every daily paper in this land with saving Gospel Truth. If the editors would not publish it as reading matter, then I would insert it as advertisements, and make the way to Heaven so plain that every reader would have no excuse for being lost. Those who are frightened from our churches by threats of penance and punishment may be thus reached, and it is the only way to reach home with a pure Gospel and for this purpose all who have money should be ready to contribute liberally to the treasury of the Lord for this important work.



Diligent and On Time

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as a rule, is the uninteresting, poky, draggy way services are conducted. The Lord's worship and work ought to have just as much life in it as anything else---and more.

3. IT DISTURBS THE SERVICE FOR LARGE NUMBERS TO STALK IN LATE.

Clump, Clump, Clump. When half the crowd is late, half don't know what has been going on, and they miss out on things, and folk get their minds off of what they have been doing as they stare at new arrivals.

4. IT INDICATES A POOR STATE SPIRITUALLY.

Interested, enthusiastic Christians don't make it a practice to be late most of the time. When people begin to decline spiritually they get late and begin to sit further back in the house as a rule. Next step is not to come at all.

Excuses

Baptists do not compare favorably with the Catholics in the matter of devotion to church services. Catholics get up early and go to mass, while Baptists can't get up in time to go to Sunday school three hours later. Too little is asked of Baptists and too excusing an attitude is shown. We just don't take the Lord's business very seriously, that's all.

Let us think of what the Bible has to say---

1. The prophet who arose EARLY. (II Kings 6:15)

2. The Saviour who got up early to pray. (Mark 1:35)

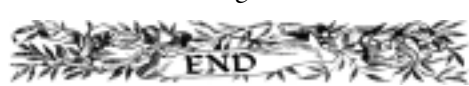
3. Awake early to praise. (Ps. 57:8)

4. The women who were early at the tomb. (Luke 24:22)

These arose early because they were interested. Lack of interest is what causes church members to drag out of bed too late for church.

We are counseled to do whatever we do "heartily as to the Lord." (See Col. 3:23). This is one of the greatest failures that can be charged to Christians---the failure to work and serve with interest, enthusiasm and spirit. People often show such in other things, but when it comes to the Lord's affairs they immediately slow down.

Likewise we are charged to be DILIGENT. (II Pet. 3:14). See also Hebrews 11:6; Hebrews 12:15). Often a man who is an excellent business man, when he becomes clerk of a church will neglect to mail out church letters for weeks at a time. Many a Sunday school teacher goes before classes without even studying the lesson. And so it goes. No diligence---no concern. Christianity is the most important thing in the world---else it means nothing.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Bible and The Baptists

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:15-17).

It is my firm contention that Baptists give the Bible a higher place than anyone else. Our great fundamental principle is that the Bible is the sufficient and authoritative rule of faith and practice. We do not put the Bible above Christ, but it is through the Bible that we learn of Him and come to know His teaching. We believe, as the Bible says, God has exalted His Word above His name (Ps. 138:2).

NOT WITHOUT ITS CRITICS

God's Word is eternal, infallible, and unchangeable. Its critics are legions. They are found in the centers of learning and at times in the pulpit of churches. Infidelity has dug for the Bible many a grave, skeptics have lighted for it many a fire, society has set for it many a snare, yet the Old Book remains indestructible. Many a Peter has denied it with an oath; many a Demas has forsaken it for the world. But all of these have returned to dust, but the Bible lives forever. Peter said: **"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever"** (I Pet. 1:24-25).

Skeptics and infidels ever seek to overthrow the inspired and inerrant Word of God. They attack the very foundation of the Christian religion when they attack the Bible. Christianity stands or falls with the validity of God's Word. Destroy the authority and accuracy of the Bible, and you will have destroyed the religion of Jesus Christ.

Religious infidels in the churches, Bible colleges, and seminaries of the world are agreed the Bible is a book of fairy tales and frauds. They arrogate to themselves the right to criticize and improve on the greatest Book in the world. They assume that they are wiser than God. While they cannot bring themselves to believe in the inspiration and the infallibility of the Bible, they have no trouble in believing in their own inspiration and infallibility!

Throughout all Christendom there is a widespread movement to exalt human wisdom above the Word of God. This movement parades itself under the high sounding title of "scholarship." Its authority is the textbooks of fallible men. It places the Bible in a secondary place and demands that it be interpreted or modified according to the thoughts of human genius. It boasts that it is advanced, up to date, sensible, and sane.

NO HALF BIBLE

Jesus Christ said: **"The scripture cannot be broken"** (John 10:35). You cannot have a half Bible. If the Bible needs modifying, clarifying, and editing so as to fit into the mold of "science falsely so called," then we have no revelation from God. If the Bible is not the inerrant Word of God, then tear it apart page by page and burn it as trash, for it claims to be infallible! It must be what it claims to be, or it is nothing. If it is anything, it is everything. It must be a whole Bible or no Bible!

ITS PERFECTIONS

The Old and New Testaments are the complete and perfect standard of faith and practice. They contain all God was pleased to reveal to man. They are the whole will of God for His people. The Bible is the perfect law (Jas. 1:25). The psalmist penned: **"The law of the LORD is perfect"** (Ps. 19:7). If the Scriptures are able to make the man of God perfect, then they must be perfect themselves. If they make a man **"thoroughly furnished unto all good works,"** then they must be all that is needed for life and godliness. The man of God has no need for oral tradition or the decree of some council.

THE ONLY SOURCE OF DOCTRINE

Every doctrine is to be confirmed and established by the Holy Scriptures. When a doctrinal matter would come up Christ would ask: **"What is written in the law? how readest thou?"** (Luke 10:26). In His preaching He **"expounded unto them in all the scriptures"** (Luke 24:27). In rebuking men of religious errors He would say: **"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God"** (Matt. 22:29). In defeating Satan, Christ would say: **"It is written."**

The apostles of Christ appealed to the Bible to confirm what they preached and taught. Acts 17:2 reads: **"And Paul, as his**

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Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	95.9	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680	5,000 AM
WFAM, Augusta, GA	Sunday 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.....	1050	5,000 AM
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
WIJD, Mobile, AL.....	Sunday 8:00 - 8:30 p.m.....	1270.....	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.....	550	5,000 AM
KXKS, Albuquerque, NM ..	Saturday 2:15 - 2:45 p.m.....	1190	10,000 AM
DXUM, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 2:30 - 3:00 p.m.....	819 Khz.....	10,000 AM
DXDS, Digos City, Philippines...	Sunday 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.....	1161 Khz	1,000 AM

Bible and Baptists

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manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures. Paul told Agrippa that he had preached **“none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come”** (Acts 26:22).

Our text says that **“all scripture”** is profitable for doctrine. The Bible imparts doctrinal knowledge in Divine things. It is God’s compendium of truth. Some books contain some truth, but the Bible is the only book which contains nothing but the truth. It is the **“scripture of truth”** (Dan. 10:21).

Baptists have no human creed. We go directly to the Bible for our doctrine. The Bible is the creed of the Baptists. It is the Baptist church directory, and our churches derive their authority from the teaching of the Scriptures. The Bible is the final court of appeal. It is the only source of faith and practice. It, and nothing else, is the Divine constitution and charter of the churches of Christ.

Although some Baptists have formulated confessions of faith, these are not binding on the churches. A Baptist church cannot be bound by an ecumenical council, a papal power, or a board of elders, a convention, an association, or a Bible fellowship. The only thing which can bind a Baptist church is the inerrant Word from Heaven. If a church is not bound by the Bible, it is not a Scriptural church, even if it professes to be one!

THE BIBLE FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE

The historic position of Baptists is that the Bible is a book for all the people, and that the right of individual interpretation is an inalienable right. Each man is under obligation to study the Scripture for himself as guided by the Spirit, and he has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. The Bible was written on a seventh grace level to be read and understood by the common people.

The believer has the best Bible teacher in all the world inside his mortal body. He has the Holy Spirit who came to teach us all things. I John 2:27 says: **“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”** Who is better qualified to explain a book than its author?

Some Baptists contend you cannot understand the Bible without Baptist Sunday school literature. They say you can’t have Sunday school unless you have Baptist literature. Such thinking borders on the Romanish dogma which contends that a layman cannot understand the

Bible, unless guided by church authorities. The apostolic churches did not use any such materials. If they could have Bible study without the use of Sunday school literature, then the Baptist churches of today can do likewise. The vast majority of such literature is largely denominational propaganda to induce people to support some denominational program. I do not oppose the use of sound Baptist Sunday school literature, but all must agree it is not as good as the Bible.

At Berea Baptist Church we use the Bible in our study groups. To that source we look in all matters relating to doctrine, to polity, to the ordinances, to worship, and to Christian living. The Bible is the only book free from error as it was originally written. It contains more truth than all the writings of men. We maintain that the Bible is the best Sunday school literature in all the world. Can you honestly say that you know of anything better?

Jesus Christ commissioned His church: **“Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you”** (Matt. 28:19-20 ASV). Christ did not tell His church to teach what the confession of faith said, or some book on systematic theology, or some Sunday school quarterly. He charged her to teach what He commanded. What He commanded is to be found in the Bible. The Bible is the only textbook for a Baptist church.

The church has no authority to teach anything contrary to His commandments. We are told in Matthew 5:19: **“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.”**

It is dangerous to break one of the least commandments of Christ, but it is exceedingly sinful to teach men cunningly devised fables. We must not set aside the least jot or tittle of God’s Word. All His commandments were for some purpose. To set aside the commandments of Christ as non-essentials is to question the wisdom of Christ. When we set aside the commandments of Christ for the sake of expediency, or with the expectation that the cause of Christ will be advanced, we virtually say that the lord unwisely commanded this thing. This is the seed in which heresy and modernism flourishes.

STAY WITH THE BOOK

The Bible forbids us to think above what is written. In I Corinthians 4:6 we are told **“not to think...above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”** You will notice the words **“of men”** are italicized which means there is nothing in the original that answers to those particular words. This passage could be translated: **“That you might learn in us nothing above that which is written,”** or **“That ye might learn in us not to think above that**

which is written.” The meaning is clear: we are not to put men in such a place of authority that we look to them and their instructions instead of the Word of God. It is when men leave what is written and invent their own heresy that there is discord among the brethren. This is why we must heed the injunction not to think above that which is written in the Bible.

God has given us His inspired Word, and outside of that the thoughts of even the greatest men are mere speculation. To take any human source of authority is to follow the creature instead of the Creator. It is to accept the thoughts of men as superior to the wisdom of God. It is to trade God’s truth for **“the tradition of men”** (Col. 2:8). It is to turn our backs upon the only light of the world and go out to outer darkness which knows no morrow forever.

THE BIBLE REPROVES HERESY

Some hotheads and heresy-hunters believe the way to rid the world of false teachers is to call them dirty names. Such un-Christian tactics have generated more heat than light. The best way to expose heresy is to preach the truth. The Bible is designed to detect and reprove all that is false or wrong as to truth, whether in ourselves, or in others. Where the truth is faithfully taught it tends to convict the erring of his way. God has promised to bless the preaching of His Word in opening the eyes of the blind. II Timothy 4:2 discloses that preaching of the Word rebukes. There is no heresy in the world but what the sword of the Spirit can cut it down. The Bible is sufficient to refute all religious errors. Christ confuted the errors of the Sadducees by the Scriptures (Matt. 22:29-30).

When God told Israel how to recognize false prophets, He said: **“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isa. 8:20). God’s servants **“speak according to this word.”** They make the Bible their standard. They conform to it, take its advice, make their appeals to it, and consent to its wholesome words. Those who speak contrary to this Word are in darkness and despair. They are blind men trying to lead the blind.

When you hear a sermon, see if the speaker is speaking according to the Bible. Be like those of Berea who **“sought the scriptures daily, whether those things”** which they heard were so (Acts 17:11). The only way we can discern between truth and error is by searching the Scripture (John 5:39). Don’t believe everything you hear; believe only what the Bible says.

ITS GREAT IMPORTANCE

The Bible has outlived the men who denied it. It continues to fling the sunlight of hope through the tears of despair. It glows with a radiant beauty which turns the night into joy. It sings its glad songs when all the world is out of tune. It is unique in its power and its authority. All

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other books are nothing in comparison with it. In it we have a revelation of God, and Heaven is opening to our vision. It alone tells of the remedy for sin. Here we find **“the words of eternal life.”** Outside of the Bible we can learn of God’s power and wisdom, but only in its inspired pages can we learn **“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”**

TAKE IT AS IT IS

The Bible contains everything God would have us believe, do or be, religiously, and we have no right to add to or take from it. Truth does not change, and it cannot be changed and remain truth. If 2 plus 2 equaled 4 in Abraham’s day, then it still does today. No change of circumstance, or development of mind, can have the slightest effect on the truth. The Bible is God’s truth to the world. It was delivered once for all. It is not subject to addition, or development, or modification of any kind. It is the absolute and final authority in all questions of faith and morals.

We will not be judged by God at some future day according to our taste, nor pleasure, nor conscience, but according to His Word. We are not going to be judged by what Buddha, or Mohomet, or Shakespeare, or Karl Barth, or Harry Fosdick wrote or said. Jesus Christ declared: **“The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”** (John 12:48).

“Thus saith the Lord” should be the end to all religious controversy. If all Christendom would return to the Bible for all religious instructions, there would be unanimity in doctrine and practice among all Christians. To seek unity by affiliation and association is wrong, as is being done by the leaders of the ecumenical movement. They seek a unity based on expediency or compromise of vital Bible truths. They would in effect overthrow and supplant the finality of the Bible.

At times leaders in the ecumenical movement charge Baptists with being schismatics and isolationists. I fear they do not understand our position. We want a **“unity of the faith”** (Eph. 4:13) found in the Old and New Testaments. We are as ready and willing to have unity as any of them. They ask us to give up what we believe and accept their doctrines: we ask them to give up what they believe and accept what we understand the Scriptures to teach.

WHAT MAKES ONE A BAPTIST

The same Bible that will make Christians

♦ (Continued on page 145)

Bible and Baptists

(Continued from page 144) ♦

will make Baptists, if faithfully taught. The Bible has made many people Baptists. Judson and Rice on different ships, going as Congregationalists missionaries to meet Marshman and Ward, two English Baptist missionaries already on the field, were made Baptists by studying their Greek Testaments.

That great Baptist preacher of England was made a Baptist by reading the Bible. Charles Spurgeon was saved at the age of 15 while listening to an uneducated Primitive Methodist layman, speaking to a small group from Isaiah 45:22. Being born of non-Baptist parents, it took him a brief period to see his way clear as to the ordinance of baptism. But when he did, he went to a Baptist church for baptism.

Bro. Spurgeon said, "According to my reading of the Holy Scriptures the believer in Christ should be buried with Him in baptism, and so enter upon his open Christian life." He again said, "I became a Baptist through reading the New Testament---especially in the Greek---and was strengthened in my resolve by a personal perusal of the Church of England Catechism."

Spurgeon's mother later said to him, "Ah, Charles! I often prayed the Lord to make you a Christian, but I never asked that you become a Baptist."

Spurgeon could not resist the temptation to reply, "Ah, mother! The Lord has answered your prayers with His usual bounty, and given you exceeding abundantly above what you asked or thought."

WHY I AM A BAPTIST

I am not a Baptist because my parents were Baptists. I am not a Baptist because they believe in immersion, or refuse infant sprinkling. I am a Baptist because I can see clearly Baptist principles and practices in the New Testament. The Bible makes me a Baptist.

The fundamental principle of the Baptists is their belief in the supreme authority and absolute sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. Our separation from other denominations is the practical and logical result of our attempt to apply this principle in all matters of religion. We are sorry that this makes us a peculiar people. If our honest adherence to the Bible brings odium upon us, we have the manliness to bear it.

I am bound by the Bible in all matters of faith and practice. If there were not a Baptist church on earth, and I had no evidence that there had ever been one since New Testament times, finding Baptist principles in the Bible, I would leave all Christendom, leap over the ages, contented to be found in the path of simple obedience to the Word of God.



Qualifications

(Continued from page 141) ♦

to do?" Yes, a minister should have first of all **"given himself unto the Lord,"** and have **"presented his body a living sacrifice,"** before he gives himself to the ministry of the Word.

III

Then one will have to "deny himself and take up his cross and follow the Lord Jesus," if he is to be a fisher of men or an ambassador of the Lord (Matt. 16:24; Matt. 4:19). Many a preacher has made shipwreck of his ministry because he was not willing "to forsake his nets and follow Jesus," thus becoming entangled with the affairs of this life (II Tim. 2:3-4).

IV

The words of the Lord Jesus on His first advent into this world certainly apply and are appropriate to consider in the qualifications of a faithful minister. Listen to them, **"I am come to do thy will, O God."** Again he said, **"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me,"** and again He said, **"I must be about my Father's business."** This eliminates any self-will in the minister. It is not my will or the church's will, as such, that matters, but God's will. Too many times preachers are guilty of carrying out the will of the church in order to insure their salaries, instead of doing God's will.

V

Furthermore a faithful minister is called upon to set forth before the people the inspired Word of God. Human tradition and human ordinances should have no place in his spiritual wardrobe. **"Thus saith the Lord,"** should be his battle cry.

Therefore he should be a man of the Book, one that "studies to shew himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). "One that gives himself wholly unto it" (II Tim. 4:15). Certainly, if a preacher is to be faithful, he must have as his constant companion, the Word of God. Nothing takes the place of this. He might have a degree in psychology, philosophy, human relations, etc., etc., but if he doesn't have a B. K. (Biblical Knowledge) degree, he has failed the course.

VI

Added to these things, a faithful minister needs to be a man of compassion (Heb. 5:2). One that looks with pity on the ignorant, and those out of the way. One who **"endures all things for the elect's sake"** (II Tim. 2:10). One who spends much time in prayer (Col. 1:3). One who "travails in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). One who is willing to spend and be spent. One whose **"heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved"** (Rom. 10:1). One whose heart is broken because of the falling away among God's

people (Ps. 119:136).

CONCLUSION

There is much more that could be said, and possibly should be said, but I close with these words; a faithful minister is one who takes heed to himself and the doctrine, and to the flock over the which the Holy Spirit has made him the overseer (Acts 20:28).

God give us faithful ministers!
(The Baptist Examiner, 1961)



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

By J. O. Tidwell

What's wrong with men the world over? What's wrong with governments, with world rulers, with nations that they can't live in peace? **"Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?"** (Jer. 8:22). Jeremiah, about 2000 years ago, foresaw great trouble for his nation, Israel. They were soon taken into captivity. They had the same trouble that we are having today, and one little one-syllable word explains it all and answers the above questions. That little word is "Sin."

Sin has caused all the bloodshed that wars have ever wrought.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).

When a nation forgets God and goes after idols, then it pays a high price for evil doing.

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

When a so-called Christian nation such as ours spends large sums of money for liquor, wine, and beer to entertain foreigners at great banquets to buy friendship, there is distress at hand, and trouble ahead. How much time and money is spent in Washington on drinking parties? It would be revealed if all the facts of the executive forces in Washington were made plain.

It is said that history repeats itself. **"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand"** (Dan. 5:1).

As they drank, Belshazzar ordered the golden and silver vessels to be brought in that had been taken from the temple at Jerusalem.

"They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of

iron, of wood, and of stone" (Dan. 5:4). In that great hour came the handwriting on the wall. It was God's time to speak. One cannot insult God and get by forever. There is a pay day someday.

There are dark clouds rising on the horizon of world affairs. War is imminent. It may be said by the President any day that a state of war exists. "It is time to seek the Lord."

(Random Thinking by J. O. Tidwell).

MINISTER'S ADVICE TO YOUNG PREACHER

A young man just starting out upon his work in the ministry was one day talking to an aged minister in London who had spent a lifetime in the service. The young man said, "You have had a great deal of experience; you know many things that I ought to learn. Can't you give me some advice to carry with me in my new duties?"

"Yes, I can," was the response. "I will give you a piece of advice. You know that in every town in England, no matter how small, in every village or hamlet, though it be hidden in the folds of the mountains or wrapped round by the far-off sea, in every clump of farmhouses, you can find a road which, if you follow it, will take you to London.

"Just so, every text which you choose to preach from in the Bible will have a road that leads to Jesus. Be sure you find that road, and follow it, be careful not to miss it once. This is my advice to you."

The old minister's advice should be followed by everyone who, in any capacity, presumes to be a teacher or a preacher of the Word. Jesus said, **"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"** (John 12:32).

TRACTS

Tracts go everywhere. Tracts show no fear. Tracts never tire. Tracts can be multiplied without end by the press. Tracts can travel at little expense. They run up and down like the angels of God, blessing all, giving to all, and asking no gift in return. They can talk to one as well as to a multitude; and to a multitude as well as to one. They require no public room to give their message in; they can tell it in the kitchen or in the store, parlor or the workshop, in the railway car or in the bus, on the broad highway, or in the footpath through the fields. They take no notice of scoffs, or jeers, or taunts. Though they will not always answer questions, they will tell their story twice, thrice, or four times even if you wish them. And they can be made to speak on every subject, and on every subject they may be made to speak wisely and well. They can, in short be made vehicles of all truth, the teachers of all classes, the benefactors of all lands. ---English



CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried" (Rev. 2:10).



The "Lace Up" III

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. I hope this finds you in the highest of spirits and doing as well as can be expected within the razor wire. I pray my free-world readers are doing well also.

Nothing has changed since last I wrote. I'm still working in the garment factory; in fact, I'm three months into an On-The-Job Training Program for Commercial Sewing Machine Repairer. It's not my ideal job, but I guess it's something to do while I'm marking days off my calendar---waiting on parole.

Although the factory is air conditioned I'd still rather be laboring in the heat of the kitchen. Quitting was a mistake I made in the heat of a moment. Although I had good reason for doing so I now wish I hadn't.

However, I'm hoping by this time next year I'll be able to walk into a kitchen and cook whatever I want without having to put up with prejudices and biases and a kitchen captain who practices and allows both.

Please pray for me, dear reader, as I continue stumbling, and sometimes crawling, down this rocky, pothole filled trail they call prison.

THE CHRISTIAN PRISONER AND DOING TIME

After serving twelve years flat this time, nine of those as a believer, and four years the last time, the single most important piece of advice I can give you about doing time is to mind your own business. Don't put your business in the streets and don't put anyone else's business in the streets either. And, by all means, do not be a 'snitch.'

Your duty as a Christian is to follow the rules, not report on those who don't.

The next best piece of advice I can give you is stay away from gangs. I've been there and can tell you from personal experience that the only place gangs can lead you is into trouble. You have only one Leader, Jesus Christ, follow Him and you can never go wrong. You don't need a gang to do your time, stay well clear of them.

Another thing you don't need is to get involved in homosexual activities. Not only is it forbidden in Scripture: **"...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 meet"** (Rom. 1:27). but it only takes one act for you to wind up in a switch. And don't

forget, whether you're pitching or catching, you're still playing ball---and that's a game Christians should avoid like the plague.

Something else you should avoid is trouble. You should run, not stroll or walk, but run like your hair is on fire away from it. We are commanded by God **"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"** (Rom. 12:18). We are not to be trouble makers nor cheerers on of trouble makers. If you have a problem with the administration deal with it yourself and let others do the same. Never sign a petition or do anything that would single you out as a trouble maker.

The above is by no means all the advice I could give a new Christian prisoner, it's just a few things to think about and avoid. But before I finish up I would like to leave you with a few things you can do to strengthen your Christian walk behind the razor wire.

Find yourself a strong Christian mentor, either a pastor or Bible teacher on the outside, a chaplain or fellow Christian prisoner whom you can talk to about your deepest, darkest secrets and correspond with or talk to them often. Tell them your fears, share with them your goals, and study Scripture with them.

Speaking of studying Scripture, read and study your Bible often. This is something I need to do more of. Since I got out of segregation my Bible study time has dwindled, not dried up, but dwindled more than I'd like.

I'm not a fan of most correspondence Bible studies I've seen inside the razor wire because they are all Arminian. But that is no excuse not to study. My two most favorite Bible tools are the Thompson Chain-Reference Study Bible (lots of study aids, but no commentary) and The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 21st Century Edition. But even these are not necessary to studying the Word. All you really need is a basic King James Version (KJV) Bible and a place to sit and read, search the Word. Much can be learned by simply reading with an open and prayerful heart and mind. For **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Until next time, dear reader, may the grace of God be with you---



Overcoming In Hard Times

By Christopher W. Burke Sr.
of Catlettsburg, KY

"Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest" (II Kings 4:1-7).

We want to discuss four thoughts from this text.

1. First we want to notice: The providential dilemma (verse 1). We see that the woman in our text was the wife of a prophet.

I just want to say that I think few people realize what a prophet's (or today, a pastor's) wife goes through. She has the cares of raising the children, keeping house, managing the business of the home, plus the added cares and burdens of the ministry. They get far too little appreciation.

Next, we see that her husband was a poor prophet. He was a faithful servant that feared God. He was one of the seven thousand that God reserved, who did not bow the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). He did not compromise with the idolatry that was notorious in Israel in his day. He refused to comply with the king of Israel, and condone and tolerate idol worship in the land. He was known as a man who feared God. She said to Elisha **"thou knowest that he feared God."** He had a reputation of being a God fearing man. That is, he lived as one who feared the Lord.

As a result of his faithfulness and his stand for the truth, he lost all worldly advantages that might otherwise have been afforded him, and he was barely able to provide for his family. He then died and left his family in poverty and



in debt. Finally, the creditor was going to take the children for bond slaves. In those days, children might be taken as payment of one's debts. Don't get any ideas now parents!!! The

bank won't take your children to pay off your mortgage!!! But in all seriousness beloved, this world is merciless to God's people and prophets. Can you imagine doing such a wicked thing to the family of one of God's true and faithful prophets? Beloved, this world is no friend of God's people.

Now I would like to pose a question to us. Was this prophet a wise man, or was he a fool? What would the world call this man for denying himself and his family the benefits of the world? What would most of Christendom call him, who for the love of money compromises the truth? But what does God's Word call him? Well, he was a servant that feared God. We learn in Proverbs 9:10 that **"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."** Therefore we conclude that this prophet was a wise man in God's eyes. And beloved, that is what really matters.

To conclude this thought, we want to notice a few other implications from this verse. First of all, God's most faithful saints and servants experience hard and dark times in their lives. Sometimes we are called upon to suffer and to grieve, and like this woman, we are compelled to cry out to God and His people for help. God's faithful people experience tragedy, and death, and even poverty, just like other people do; and even more so!

Next, not all hard and dark times are a punishment for our sins. This is evident from this passage. Many times beloved, these are the mysterious works of God's providence in our lives. We didn't cause them, and we could not have prevented them! God is sovereign in the affairs of men, especially in the lives of His children. He has a purpose in our dark times, which are known only to God Himself. We must simply believe and trust that they are for His glory, and for our good.

The third implication is, this old world does not love and honor God's people or His prophets. They don't respect and appreciate our work of faith and labor of love. They would most gladly place our children, and us, into bondage. This world is not our friend, and it is not our home.

And so, this good family of the Lord
♦ (Continued on page 147)

Overcoming In Hard

(Continued from page 146) ♦

found themselves in a providential dilemma. The widow woman then cried unto Elisha, God's great prophet of Israel, to find help from the Lord--and as we will see, she found it! Today, beloved, we cry to our Great Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ, to **"obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"** (Heb. 4:16). And beloved, when we cry unto Him for help, we will find it!

2. Secondly we want to consider the question: What do you have in your house? (verse 2).

We notice here that Elisha asked the woman what he could do for her. It was Elisha's place and purpose to help this faithful, godly family in any way he could. It is also the pastor's place and desire to help the members of his flock in any way that he can, especially those who are faithful, and that fear God. Now, pastors can't help the incorrigible, and those who will not be helped. Also in this verse, Elisha asked the woman what she had in her house. Her answer was a pretty common answer that people give. "Nothing!" was her answer, except for a **"pot of oil."** That is a typical answer from the saints of God in hard times. When we are down and out, we typically see ourselves as bankrupt and destitute of any good and profitable commodity. Beloved, I believe that God has given all of His children both physical and spiritual resources for our provision, even if we don't see them. The question is, what do we have? I'll give us a hint, it's not the big things, but most often God uses those little things to bless us and to provide for us.

Consider the rod of Moses, which I suppose was just a plain and simple walking stick. But God used that rod to pour out His plagues upon the nation of Egypt, and to part the Red Sea and deliver the nation of Israel on dry shod, and to smite the Rock from which gushed out a river of water in the wilderness, which was a precious type of Christ.

Consider David's sling and five small stones. There was nothing so special about these. But David used these to slay ol' Goliath, that great giant of the Philistines, who defied the armies of Israel, and the God of Israel. Yes, God uses small things to do great things!

And of course, there was the widow woman in our text and her pot of oil. It wasn't much, and she certainly didn't think it was much. But the Lord used this pot of oil to pay her debt, and to redeem her sons from bondage, and to provide for her family in days to come.

Next there was the young lad in John 6, who had five loaves and two small fishes. This wasn't much food for a multitude of hungry people. But the Lord used these to feed five thousand.

And finally, there was the widow who cast her two mites into the treasury in the temple. Two mites were only worth about fifty cents in today's money. But Jesus said that her two mites were more valuable than all the money that the rich men cast in of their abundance. We could give many other examples, but these will have to do for now.

So we see the Lord often times uses the little things that we already have, to bless us and provide for our needs. These might be our material belongings, or our mental or spiritual faculties, or the talents, and gifts that He has given to each of us. What do you have this morning? Please beloved, don't say "nothing!" God has given us all some things, may He then reveal them to us.

3. Thirdly we want to notice: Elisha's advise to the widow woman (verses 3-4).

First, I believe this passage teaches us that when we ask God for His help in a matter, we should expect great blessings, and be prepared to receive them. Elisha said **"borrow empty vessels, not a few."** "Be prepared for God to pour you out a gracious and bountiful blessing!" Beloved, we have seen that God often uses little things to bless His people, but He often uses little things in a big sort of way. Our God given faith ought to expect and prepare for great blessings from the Lord. How often are we guilty of expecting meager blessings from our great God? Beloved, this is an insult to the Almighty! Therefore, come expecting great blessings!

Next, Elisha told the widow woman to shut the door upon her and her children. In other words, she and her children were to be shut up with the Lord in private, and there experience God's blessings in secret, just between them and the Lord. I believe that most of God's blessings and miracles to His people are done in secret, in the regions of the heart and soul, and in the private, secluded places of our lives. He works where others can't see, but we alone know that it was the Lord that performed a mighty work for us. This is so contrary to the charismatic movement, which attempts to make a public spectacle of the works of God, most of which, if not all, are nothing more than fakes and frauds. No beloved, let us seek the Lord's help and blessings in the private places of life. Now I don't mean that we shouldn't ask prayer of the church, or ask help from the pastor or other members of the church; that is what we are here for! Nor do I mean that we shouldn't tell others about the miracles and works of the Lord in our lives. But we need to be careful in this, not to boast or exalt ourselves in any way whatsoever, but humbly exalt and glorify God alone.

4. Fourthly: The woman obeyed the instructions of the prophet (verses 5-6).

How many times have people come to the pastor and asked for advice or

instruction, and then they turn away and ignore our advice and instructions to them. Beloved there are no blessings or benefits if the needy saints will not hearken, and follow through what they are instructed to do. This woman in our text, however, did just as Elisha instructed her. She followed through in every detail. And do you know what; God blessed her in her deed! What do you suppose would have happened if the woman would have ignored Elisha, and not followed His instructions? I believe that her two sons would have been taken as bond slaves, and perhaps even the woman herself would have become a bond slave to her creditor, as she was not exempt.

Beloved, week after week we give Biblical advice and instructions to the saints of God. We study and prepare, and pray that God will give us the words that you need. But it is up to His people, what we do with that instruction. If we believe that the preacher is only preaching his own thoughts and words, then we might just as well ignore most of what he says. But if we believe that the Lord speaks to us through His minister, then I recommend that you listen intently, and put to use the instruction from the Word of God. No, we are not the pope. But we are called of God to instruct, to teach, to admonish and exhort the saints of God in the way.

In conclusion, in verse 7 Elisha told the woman to sell the oil and pay her debt, and then to live off the rest. Beloved, when God hears our cries, and answers our prayers favorably, and blesses us with those things we have need of, we are then responsible and accountable to God to follow through with what we have committed to do. In this case the widow woman was to pay off her debts. What if she decided to buy a new camel or a new living room suit for her tent, instead? Oh yes, she would have been in big trouble with the Lord, and with the creditor! How important it is for God's children to behave responsibly in this world, and not misuse and abuse the blessings that God gives us. I've told this story before, but once a friend of mine told me that his wife told him, that if she knew the Lord was coming tomorrow, she would go out and run up every charge account she had! Now, that is a humorous story, but it certainly isn't a godly or responsible attitude for a Christian to have. Well, she might have been kidding, I don't know.

Beloved, God's people can and will overcome those hard and dark times in our lives. Spiritually, He has already given us all that we need. He has given us the oil of His Holy Spirit in our earthen vessels. He bids us gather together all the empty vessels of our spiritual needs. And as we bring them unto Him in the quiet solitude of our heart, with the door shut behind us, He fills them up with the oil of His manifold graces, so that we have all the grace we need to pay all our debt of

sin, and to live on until He comes again for us. May we bring our empty vessels not a few. May we come expecting, and prepared to receive the manifold grace of God that we need as God's people. What is your spiritual need? Bring that vessel of need to the Lord and He will fill it.

If you are unsaved, your vessel is wanting of the oil of the Spirit. You don't have within you those things you need to free you of your sins, and give you eternal life. You must look outside of yourself. You must see that you are destitute and found wanting before God. You must then look to Jesus Christ for forgiveness and eternal life. You must believe that He died for your sins, was buried, and rose again for you, and He will forgive you your sins and give you life eternal. It is only by His Holy Spirit that you can believe in Jesus, but if you believe, then you have the blessed assurance that the Spirit dwells in you. And if the Spirit dwells in you, then you can also have the assurance that He will provide for your needs as well, and you too may take all of your troubles and cares to Jesus, and He **"shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"** (Phil. 4:19).

Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Providence Baptist Church of Louisville, KY and Pastor Kenneth Long would like to announce a Bible Conference September 26th -27th.

Service time begins Saturday at 10:00 a.m. with Elders Lonnie Bennett, Tom Ross, Randy Titus and Mark Minney speaking. Sunday services begin at 10:00 a.m. with Elders Nathan Long, Billy Holbrook, Dan Gordon and Garner Smith scheduled to speak.

All are invited to attend the services.

For more information contact Pastor Long at (812) 967-1321.

The Big Creek Baptist Church would like to announce that they have authorized a home mission work in West Jefferson, Ohio. They have received Elder Roger Reed into their membership and have sent him and nine other members separated unto the new mission work.

Bro. Roger will be doing deputation over the next few months to present the work to interested churches of like faith and order.

Please contact Elder Roger Reed at (419) 589-2398 or email at pstr_reed@neo.rr.com. Also you can contact Pastor Matthew Stepp at (304) 522-1261 or email at sovgrace@citynet.net.

Please pray for this work.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE BIBLE NEWS PAPER

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

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

JUDGE ORDERS END TO MUZZLING OF ST. LOUIS CHRISTIANS

(EP News)--A federal judge has issued an order permanently prohibiting the city of St. Louis from banning a Christian ministry from distributing literature at an annual gay-pride event. In 2006, Apple of His Eye ministry was threatened with arrest by St. Louis officials for handing out tracts and talking about their Christian faith at PrideFest. With the help of the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), though, the ministry was able to get the ban lifted. "Christian groups shouldn't be prohibited from expressing their beliefs at public locations," ADF-allied attorney Rick Nelson of the American Liberties Institute said. "We are pleased with the court's decision to lift an unconstitutional ban on expression in these areas throughout the city, allowing members of Apple of His Eye to peacefully exercise their First Amendment right to free speech." The ruling comes in time for Apple of His Eye members to share their faith at PrideFest in June.

SOTOMAYOR 'NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT' RIGHTS OF THE PREBORN

(EP News)--Pro-family lawmakers continue to be concerned about Judge Sonia Sotomayor, who has been nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court. During a meeting with Sotomayor, Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., asked her if the preborn have any rights. "I was surprised that she said she had never thought about it," DeMint said in a statement. "This is not just a question about abortion, but about the respect due to human life at all stages, and I hope this is cleared up in her hearings." Jordan Lorence, senior counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, said he's concerned by the fact that Sotomayor has never ruled in an abortion case. "We don't have any decisions from her that really lay out her views in a systematic manner," he said. "So what we have to do is try to determine this by implication." Democratic leaders want the confirmation hearings completed before the August recess, but Republicans leaders want more time to look at Sotomayor's record.

VERMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT FUNDS GENDER PROGRAM

(EP News)--A school district in Vermont has partnered with a radical gay-activist group and is using tax dollars to encourage students to attend an after-school program called "Gendertopia." Instead of learning about the two biological sexes, about a dozen students from Burlington School District are learning about "a whole world full of different

genders" at Vermont's Queer Youth Center, The Associated Press reported. The program is among the first of its kind to use tax dollars, according to Outright Vermont, which runs the program. Steve Cable, the founder of the pro-family Vermont Renewal, said, "It just makes me really nervous that sexuality and these very complicated social behaviors are being normalized and talked about with kids who haven't figured out even their life yet," Cable told The AP. "I know Outright Vermont promotes all gender identities and expression of gender identities, no matter how weird that might be."

SAN DIEGO COUNTY APOLOGIZES FOR TARGETING BIBLE STUDY

(EP News)--San Diego County officials agreed June 10 to rescind a cease-and-desist order issued to a pastor holding a Bible study in his home. They originally told the Rev. Dave Jones to stop hosting his study — which draws about 15 people — because it was an "unlawful use of land." He was told to "stop religious assembly or apply for a major use permit." Later, Walter Ekard, chief administrative officer for the county, wrote: "I want to offer my apology to you, your wife and your congregation for the unfortunate events of the past several weeks. My review of the situation shows ... a major use permit is not required for the Bible Study you have in your home."

IS MARRIAGE ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK IN WASHINGTON, D.C.?

(EP News)--In May, the Washington, D.C., City Council voted to recognize same-sex "marriages" performed outside the District. For a time, it looked as if the residents of the District might get to weigh in on the issue. The D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics held a hearing on whether the new law can be put to a public vote. "The issue before us is not whether same-sex 'marriage' is good or bad policy, but who gets to decide this critical moral and social issue," argued Brian Raum, senior counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund. "The people should decide." A group of D.C. pastors and others is behind the referendum, which would allow the public to vote on the issue. However, elections officials have blocked the proposal that would let voters decide on whether the nation's capital will recognize same-sex marriages performed outside the District. The Board of Elections and Ethics has suggested only Congress and the courts should have input on the issue. The two-member board said that allowing a referendum that lets the people decide is

akin to authorizing "discrimination." Bishop Harry Jackson, chairman of the High Impact Leadership Coalition, and the Alliance Defense Fund plan to file an appeal of the decision in Superior Court. "We believe we have strong legal precedence with which to block this first step toward D.C. having same-sex marriage," Jackson said.

TEXAS SUPREME COURT SUPPORTS HOME MINISTRY FOR EX-PRISONERS

(EP News)--The Texas Supreme Court has unanimously ruled in favor of a church ministry that serves ex-prisoners. The case, Pastor Rick Barr & Philemon Homes, Inc. v. City of Sinton, was the first to come before the high court asking for interpretation of the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act (TRFRA). In 1999, Pastor Barr offered men recently released from prison free housing and free religious instruction in two homes he owned. As a result, the city passed a zoning ordinance precluding the use of homes for that purpose and effectively banned his ministry from the city. Courts have repeatedly ruled against Barr — until the Supreme Court got the case. "The Texas RFRA is a reflection of the strong belief in religious freedom shared by almost all Texans," said Kelly Shackelford, chief counsel of the Liberty Legal Institute. "The Texas Supreme Court has upheld and respected the will of the people of Texas and rejected the City's attempt to circumvent the law." This case drew national and international attention because TRFRA was signed into law by then-Gov. George Bush and because interpretations of the Texas law will have implications on a national level.

ACLU BULLIES SCHOOLS TEACHING ABSTINENCE

(EP News)--The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Chapter of Northern California has written a letter to each of the 40 schools in the Sonoma County School District asking for confirmation that they will stop teaching Free to Be, an abstinence-based sex-ed curriculum. The ACLU claims the curriculum violates the California Education Code by emphasizing abstinence instead of condoms. Valerie Huber, president of the National Abstinence Education Association, said, "This is an example of a tactic that the ACLU typically uses — trying to win their suits by out-of-court intimidation rather than actual legal standing. There's nothing, to our understanding, of California law that prohibits abstinence education as a supplement to the health curricula."

PRO-LIFE BILLS CLOSE TO LAW IN ARIZONA

(EP News)--Two important pro-life bills are one step closer to becoming law in Arizona. The Abortion Consent Act passed the Legislature and now is on to Gov. Jan Brewer for a signature. If she signs, parental consent will be required for any minor girl to abort her baby. The legislation also includes an informed-consent provision offering women

information on abortion before they decide. In addition, the act would require women to wait 24 hours after meeting with an abortion clinic worker before having an abortion. It also protects the conscience rights of health care workers who do not want to participate in abortions. Another piece of legislation, House Bill 2400, which would ban partial-birth abortions, also passed the Legislature and is headed to the governor's desk.

OBAMA SIGNS MEMO GIVING SAME-SEX BENEFITS TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

(EP News)--President Barack Obama signed a presidential memorandum in June that extends many benefits now received by spouses of federal employees to same-sex partners of federal employees. Family advocates say Obama's action is a direct violation of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and a big step toward redefining marriage. "The president thumbed his nose at the rule of law and continues to undermine marriage as society's most pro-child institution," said Tom Minnery, senior vice president of government and public policy for Focus on the Family Action. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, agreed. "This order raises the question of whether the president has the authority to ignore DOMA and bypass the legislative process," he explained. "We will review the order and confer with our legal counsel to determine an appropriate response."

VIRGINIA BAN ON PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION RULED CONSTITUTIONAL

(EP News)--The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled June 24 to uphold the constitutionality of Virginia's partial-birth abortion ban, passed by the General Assembly in 2003. The full court reversed a previous decision by a three-judge panel of the 4th Circuit that determined the ban was unconstitutional. "No one should be allowed to decide that an innocent life is worthless," said Jordan Lorence, senior counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund. "Virginia has legitimately chosen to protect innocent life from a terrible procedure, and the court was right to uphold Virginia's law." Thirty-one states have passed bans on partial-birth abortion, with 15 state laws in effect.

U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS OPPOSE HATE-CRIMES BILL

(EP News)--The Hate Crimes Prevention Act has gotten a thumbs-down from members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, in the form of a letter to Senate leaders saying the proposed legislation "will do little good and a great deal of harm." The commissioners wrote: "We regard the broad federalization of crime as a menace to civil liberties. There is no better place to draw the line on that process than with a bill that purports to protect civil rights." The letter is significant because the commission is not known for

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being on the side of social conservatives on policy issues.

HATE-CRIMES VOTE PROMISED BY AUGUST

(EP News)--Majority Leader Harry Reid has reaffirmed his plans to have the Senate take up a so-called hate-crimes bill before Congress' August recess. In a news conference in mid-June, Reid, D-Nev., called hate crimes "a unique brand of evil." He said, "A violent act may physically hurt just a single victim and cause grief for loved ones. But hate crimes do more. They distress entire communities." Ashley Horne, federal policy analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said Reid has it backwards. A hate-crimes law, she said, could distress entire communities -- particularly Christian churches.

SUPPORT FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE PLUMMETS

(EP News)--The number of Americans who support same-sex marriage has plunged over the last few months, according to a new poll. The CBS News/New York Times study found that 33 percent of respondents favor same-sex marriage. That represents a 9 percent drop since April. Gary Schneeberger, vice president of media and public relations for Focus on the Family Action, said the new poll numbers could very well represent a backlash from Americans who have seen several New England states legalize gay marriage through their legislatures, not the vote of the people. The poll results also seem to indicate people are not relying solely on the mainstream news media to get their information on the issue of same-sex marriage. "In reporting the results of its own poll, CBS used the word 'dip' to describe the 9 percent plunge in support for gay marriage," Schneeberger said. "In elections, it's considered a landslide when a candidate wins by 10 points. So to describe this as a 'dip' pretty clearly illustrates where CBS, at least, stands on this issue."

CONSERVATIVES SIGNIFICANTLY OUTNUMBER LIBERALS IN U.S.

(EP News)--A new Gallup poll shows that the number of Americans who identify themselves as conservatives is nearly double the number that calls themselves liberal. The survey found that 40 percent of Americans self-identify as conservative, 35 percent as moderate and 21 percent as liberal. The research shows that when compared with 1992-1994, the percentage of moderates declined from 42 percent to 35 percent while there was a slight increase in the number of conservatives and liberals -- from 38 to 40 percent for conservatives and 17 to 21 percent for liberals. Brent Bozell, president of the Media Research Center, said the findings should be a wake-up call to Republicans. "If the GOP doesn't learn from everything around it, I don't know if the GOP can ever learn," he explained. "The evidence is there that there is

a huge plurality waiting for leadership from the GOP. And it's going to go elsewhere if the GOP continues to moderate its message."

GAY-ACTIVIST MOVEMENT HONORED AT WHITE HOUSE

(EP News)--The Obama administration hosted a White House celebration of what most gay activists regard as the birth of their movement. President Barack Obama has invited key leaders in the gay community to the East Room on June 29, to commemorate the Stonewall Riots of June 28, 1969, during which hundreds of homosexuals threw bottles and garbage at police and set a gay bar, the Stonewall Inn, on fire. Tim Goeglein, a former special assistant to President George W. Bush, said the White House event is a boon to the gay lobby, which has been becoming impatient with Obama. "The president of the United States has the largest bully pulpit in the country and clearly gets to pick and choose among the issues that he would want to highlight. There's an enormous amount of pressure (to advocate for pro-gay policies). The president has partially extended health benefits to homosexual partners. The president is of course now doing a commemoration, a very important commemoration."

TENNESSEE ENDS PLANNED PARENTHOOD FUNDING

(EP News)--Tennessee lawmakers have decided about \$1.1 million normally allocated for Planned Parenthood will now go to local health organizations. Both houses of the Legislature overwhelmingly approved House Bill 1756, proposed by Senate Speaker Ron Ramsey and Sen. Jack Johnson, R-Brentwood, which removes a clause in existing law naming Planned Parenthood as the primary provider of family-planning services in the state. The bill also adds language giving priority for funding to local community health centers. Planned Parenthood would be eligible for some of the money, but only after local organizations' needs are filled. Passage of the bill caps a successful session for pro-life legislation in Tennessee. Lawmakers also passed SJR 127, a constitutional amendment restoring informed consent, a 48-hour waiting period and regulation of abortion clinics in the state.

PRO-LIFE AMENDMENT DEFEATED IN HOUSE COMMITTEE

(EP News)--A 13-year-old ban on federal funding for Washington D.C., abortions, called the Dornan Amendment, has failed to pass the full House Appropriations Committee, by a vote of 26-33. "We now see taxpayer dollars going to fund abortions in the District of Columbia if this becomes law," said U.S. Rep. Todd Tiahrt, R-Kan., who led in the effort to restore the amendment. "And it's very likely it will become law." And perhaps not the only anti-life law. Life advocates expect pro-abortion Democrat members of the House to target other existing amendments such as the Hyde Amendment and the Dickey-Wicker Amendment. The

Hyde Amendment prohibits taxpayer funding of abortion except in cases of rape, incest or life of the mother; and the Dickey-Wicker amendment prohibits taxpayer funding of the destruction of human embryos for research. "This is just another example of the relentless pushing of the pro-abortion agenda by the Obama White House," said Doug Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee.

N.H. GOVERNOR'S POPULARITY SINKS AFTER GAY MARRIAGE LEGALIZED

(EP News)--After signing gay marriage into law in June, New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch is watching his approval ratings fall. Historically, Lynch, a Democrat, has enjoyed high public approval, but for the first time since October 2005, his favorability has fallen below 70 percent. Only 63 percent of New Hampshire adults now approve of his performance. Among Republicans, his numbers have dropped dramatically from 62 percent to only 48 percent since April. In June, New Hampshire became the sixth state in the nation to allow same-sex marriage. Kevin Smith, executive director of Cornerstone Policy Research, said the drop in approval for Lynch can be traced directly to his stand on the issue.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS URGED TO OPPOSE HATE-CRIMES BILL

(EP News)--Senate Republicans held a hearing June 25 to discuss proposed hate-crimes legislation. The contentious bill would elevate some victims of violent crimes over others. So-called hate crimes constitute a very small minority of all violent crime, and only a few of those are based on a victim's sexual orientation. But Democrats in Congress are intent on placating growing discontent in the gay community by pushing through the legislation. Some are calling the legislation unconstitutional. "It basically gives the federal government a second bite at the apple," said Brian Walsh of the Heritage Foundation, who testified at the hearing. "If a prosecution fails or if federal officials feel that a state prosecution did not charge a tough enough crime or impose a long enough sentence, they can charge it again at the federal level as a federal crime."

ANOTHER GAY ACTIVIST IN LINE FOR WHITE HOUSE POST

(EP News)--It appears the Obama administration is poised to name a gay activist to the position of chief deputy to the assistant secretary of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). David Hansell is expected to be appointed to the post at ACF, a division of the Department of Health and Human Services responsible for federal programs that "promote the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities." Hansell served in leadership positions at Gay Men's Health Crisis, which actively lobbies for special rights for homosexuals. The Obama administration has at least 35 openly

gay political appointees -- and gay activists are yelling for more.

70 PERCENT SAY CAPITALISM GOOD FOR AMERICA

(EP News)--Seven in 10 Americans think capitalism is the economic system that's best for America, according to a recent poll.

The survey, conducted by Zogby International in conjunction with The O'Leary Report and World Net Daily, comes at a time when some conservative critics have said President Barack Obama is trying to institute a form of socialism through his policies.

The poll did not actually use the terms "capitalism" or "socialism," but definitions encapsulating the philosophies. "Socialism" was described as "A system in which the public or the state has ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods." "Capitalism" was defined as "A system in which wealth, and the means of producing wealth, are privately owned and controlled, rather than state-owned or controlled with the state regulating them."

One other significant finding of the poll was that 49 percent of people who voted for Obama supported the definition of capitalism.

CALIFORNIA CONSIDERS ANTI-FAMILY BILLS IN THE MIDST OF BUDGET CRISIS

(EP News)--The California Legislature is busy considering bills that threaten California families at a time when the state faces a mounting \$26 billion budget deficit.

In early July, California began issuing IOU notes for only the second time since the Great Depression. Rather than concentrating on the state budget, however, legislators are moving on bills that undermine marriage and parental authority. Three bills authored by Sen. Mark Leno, D-San Francisco/San Rafael, have already passed the Senate and will be considered by the Assembly this month.

One bill (SB 54) requires California to validate out-of-state same-sex marriages performed before the passage of Proposition 8, which defined marriage in the state Constitution as solely the union of one man and one woman. Another (SB 543) would permit children as young as 12 to receive mental-health treatment without the knowledge or consent of their parents. And the third bill (SB 572) designates May 22 as Harvey Milk Day and encourages schools to include "commemorative exercises" honoring Milk, the first openly homosexual politician.

Ron Prentice, CEO of the California Family Council, said all three bills are a direct assault on California families. "SB 54 is another attempt by members of the Legislature and pro-homosexual activist to undermine the will of the voters and marriage itself," he noted. "SB 543 and SB 572 undermine parents' authority over their children's medical treatment and education."

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Please explain what took place between Christ and His brethren in John 7:3-10, and also who were these brethren?

Mike DeWitt Sr.
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Did Christ have brothers? I know he did not have any older brothers than He. I have faith that Jesus was not an only child as I have evidence from these Scriptures that He did have siblings. These siblings were not believers in the only begotten of God and thus were very irreverent in conversation.

Jesus only moved and operated to the preordained time that had been determined in eternity past. Only God knows what He has determined, we find out what has been only in time. Christ waited to go into Judea only until the appointed time and then He left. God is not mocked nor is He goaded into action by sinful flesh.

MKE DEWITT

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CHRIST'S UNBELIEVING BRETHREN (John 7:3-5)

1. The brethren mentioned in verse 3 distinguish themselves from the disciples of Christ. The brethren referred to in this verse were the half-brothers of Jesus born of Joseph and Mary. Their names were James, Joses, Juda, and Simon (Mark 6:3). They were only half brothers because they did not share the same father, but did have the same mother. This is another verse that disproves the Catholic heresy that Mary was a perpetual virgin. Jesus was her first born son who had been conceived in her womb by the Holy Spirit while she was a virgin. However, after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary had normal sexual relations that produced other children. Thus, Mary did not remain a virgin after the birth of Christ, contrary to Catholic dogma.

2. It is obvious that the brethren of Christ did not recognize His glory and Deity from the way they addressed Him. They irreverently told Him what to do. They were blind to His Divine glory,

otherwise they would have addressed Him with respect and reverence. These unbelieving half brothers told Jesus to go to the feast so that His disciples, His followers, could see the works that He did. It is interesting that the half brothers of Christ did not include themselves among Christ's followers.

3. Christ's brethren wanted Him to go to the feast in order to show Himself and His works openly so that He would be known and recognized. They knew that the region of Judea would be packed with people coming to observe the feast. If their brother was really who He said He was then He would be able to attract a huge audience. The fact that the half brothers of Jesus used the word "if" in the latter part of verse 4 proves that they really did not believe His claims as Messiah. The way they spoke to the Lord sounds as if they were deriding and taunting Him. The essence of what they were saying was "If you are really who you say you are, show yourself to the world." How the treatment of Christ's brethren must have grieved His heart. The very brothers who had grown up under the same roof rejected His claims and were blind to His glory.

4. The unbelief of Christ's brethren after the flesh is clearly revealed in verse 5. It is interesting to note that their unbelief was prophesied in the Messianic content of Psalms 69:8 where Christ declares: "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children." It is interesting that Jesus called His brethren after the flesh His mother's children, once again serving to disprove the Catholic heresy of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

5. The unbelief of Christ's brethren illustrates the hardness and depravity of the human heart. These men had grown up in the same house with Jesus. They had witnessed His perfect obedience and flawless character, yet they were unmoved and remained in stubborn unbelief. This proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that apart from the regenerating grace and power of the Holy Spirit no one is capable of exercising saving faith, not even Christ's nearest relations and family members. The purest and most consistent testimony is not sufficient to regenerate a loved one, it takes the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to impart life and the gift of faith.

CHRIST'S RESPONSE TO HIS UNBELIEVING BRETHREN (John 7:6-10)

1. In verse 6 Jesus makes it clear that it was not yet His time to go up to the feast. His times had been fixed and appointed

by the sovereign decree of His Father. He knew precisely when and where He should be at all times. The humility and longsuffering of Christ shines forth in this verse. He did not reprove His brethren in a harsh tone, but rather dealt gently with them. Jesus merely informed His brethren that it was not the right or precise time for Him to go to the feast. On the other hand, they were free to go to the feast any time they pleased.

2. In verse 7 Jesus makes a startling and insightful statement. Since His brethren were unbelievers they were part of the world system that is opposed to God and His laws. Since they had cast in their lot with those who despised and rejected the Saviour, the world could not hate them. They possessed the same spirit and operated by the same sinful principles of the world that lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19). In stark contrast, the world hated the Lord Jesus because His righteous testimony and holy words exposed the darkness, depravity, and hypocrisy of the unbelieving world. The world that is opposed to God literally hates the Lord Jesus Christ because He testifies of man's wickedness and the evils of sin. Those who faithfully preach the Gospel and consistently strive to live holy lives should not expect to be popular or accepted by the world at large. This is a searching test for every professing Christian. Are you popular with the world because you conform to its standards and operate according to worldly principles? Or does your life expose and reprove the workers of darkness (Eph. 5:10-13)? The world of depraved men has not changed, it still hates those who love the Lord. John 15:19 illustrates this truth: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

3. In verse 8 Jesus tells His brethren to go to the feast without Him. It was not yet His appointed time to go. There was still some work and instruction to be done in Galilee before He could go to the feast. Jesus did not say that He wouldn't go to the feast, He merely tells His brethren to go on ahead without Him. He would arrive approximately four days later in the middle of the feast (v. 14), thus fulfilling His obligation to fulfill the law.

4. Christ's brethren went publically to the feast, meaning they probably went with a caravan of their relatives and entered into Judea. When such a caravan would arrive in Jerusalem it was generally known. Christ, on the other hand, wanted to go secretly, without any fanfare. When the caravan that included Christ's brethren after the flesh arrived in Jerusalem the Jewish religious leaders immediately asked where He was. Their design in inquiring about Jesus was hostile in nature. They wanted to see Jesus executed and His influence among the Jewish people destroyed. They hated

Jesus with a passion that would soon lead to His bloody crucifixion.

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John 7:3-10: "His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret."

Mark 6:4: "But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

The incident of Mark 6:4 is not the same incident of John 7:3-10 but the Mark reference provides the best explanation. The "brethren" of John 7:3-10 would be those listed in Matthew 13:55: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?" Given the attitude expressed in Matthew 13:55, the term "brethren" could be expanded to include most of those whom Jesus grew up among. Take it from this writer's experience. No one doubts the value or integrity of your ministry sooner or more than those who watched you grow up. Of course Jesus was never a "mean little kid" like most of us were at one time or another, but there was surely sibling rivalry, especially as the brothers, like all human children, needed discipline but observed the "Son of God," who was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," not needing and therefore not getting that discipline. Their doubt was no doubt tempered with childhood resentment.

They were probably aware of the attempts on Jesus' life which had been made in Jerusalem. Were they mocking Him? Were they implying that He was afraid? Or were they just being sarcastic? Probably all three. They, like most of the Jews, had seen the many signs and

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What is necessary for a true (heart changing, souls saved) revival, and when was the last time or have you ever attended such a revival?

Tom Ross
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II Chronicles 7:14 declares: **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."**

Isaiah 57:15 states: **"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."**

James 4:7-10 reveals: **"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."**

All true revival must begin with God moving upon the hearts of His people in great power by manifesting His holy presence among them. The fires of revival within the heart must be kindled by the bright and powerful presence of the Holy One, thus energizing His people with a yearning to dwell in the secret place of the Most High. I believe that when God brings true revival there will be a greater sense of our own depravity and sin along with a desire to walk in the light as He is in the light. When revival breaks out there is true humility on the part of God's people who recognize their own faults, failures, and frailty. There will be genuine repentance over sin, worldliness, covetousness, selfishness, apathy, and coldness. There will be a drawing near to God in communion and fellowship marked by a genuine delight in His presence, a thirst for His Word, a strong desire to be obedient to His commands, and a renewed interest in seeing souls saved. When revival comes there will be a greater dependence upon the promises of God and a sense of urgency in serving the Lord on a day by day, hour by hour basis. Pleasing God in all things, being governed solely by

His glory and honor, and a willingness to serve the Lord regardless of the cost are all marks of genuine revival. When hearts are revived they are filled with a renewed sense of love for God, His people, and lost sinners.

I know that I have enjoyed personal seasons of revival off and on in my 29 years of living for the Lord. I have also been present in the Lord's churches when revival fire broke out. As far as a state wide or nation wide revival, I have never in my life time witnessed such an event. As I read the history of past revivals, it seems as though my experiences with revival pale in comparison with those of olden times. As I write these words my heart is convicted of how little I really know about genuine revival. May God be pleased to do a work in our hearts and cause us to ache for genuine revival to break out in our midst. Isaiah 64:1-2: **"Oh, that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence."**

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"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Ps. 85:6). You hit the nail right on the head, "Heart change" that only comes from our God.

Notice the verse says **"Wilt thou not revive us again"**, this revival does not originate from you or I but from God. **"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God"** (Jer. 31:18).

I am probably going to receive some raised eyebrows over this statement but that has not really stopped me all that much. A revival meeting is not for the lost of this world but for the Church members that are having the revival. Listen to what Christ says to Peter **"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith**

fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). Look at what the last part of the 6th verse 85th chapter of Psalms says... **"that thy people may rejoice in thee!"**

The answer to the rest of the question is that I have attended a meeting such like a revival and was very much blessed by it. Remember, no matter what we do, such as a meeting of revival or preaching the gospel does not mean souls will be saved, although God does use these means to convince sinners of their need of Christ.

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"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Psalm 85:6).

"Revival comes at the sovereignty of God but man is not passive." (Dr. Robert H. Lescelius, Dean of Georgia Baptist College, Senoia, GA)

You have touched a tender spot in this writer's heart with this question. Those close to this writer have observed and often commented about his passion and burden for revival. Although we, ourselves, have written a booklet on the subject, we have thought it best to answer this question with quotes and excerpts from Leonard Ravenhill's book "Why Revival Tarries" because he says it better than I can say it.

The forward A. W. Towzer comments: "Such a man as this is not an easy companion. The professional evangelist who leaves the wrought-up meeting as soon as it is over to hie him to the most expensive restaurant to feast and crack jokes with his retainers will find this man something of an embarrassment, for he cannot turn off the burden of the Holy Ghost as one would turn off a faucet. He insists upon being a Christian all the time, everywhere; and again, that marks him out as different."

This writer has, sadly enough, sat under some good preaching by good evangelists only to be disappointed by the speed at which they "turned off the fire" and became social conversationalist in the special clique of associates, virtually unreachable by the very ones their message was directed towards. Neither Ravenhill nor this writer has much room for the "professional" evangelists or "revivalists" who preach a fiery message but seem to be able to simply turn off the switch after the last "Amen."

"The tragedy of this late hour is that we have too many dead men in the pulpits giving out too many dead sermons to too many dead people.

"Why does revival tarry? The answer is simple enough—because evangelism is so highly commercialized. The tithes of widows and of the poor are spent in luxury-living by many evangelists."

Ravenhill well wrote: "We need more Pentecost, not Pentecostalism." When Peter preached at Pentecost, filled with the Holy Ghost, his hearers were **"pricked in their heart."** Our preaching must be more fearless and poignant. We need to preach with less fear of what the people - or our colleagues - will think, but a lot more fear of what our Lord will think. We need to be less concerned about our pet denominational doctrines and more concerned about effective evangelism through the preaching of the free and sovereign grace of God - for **"whosoever will."** The former will take its proper place when the later becomes the priority. Remember, the "Great Commission" is three-fold, but the first phase of that commission is **"make disciples"** not teach doctrine.

To refer back to the quote from Dr. Lescelius, we fully understand and agree that revival comes at the sovereignty of God, but as Dr. Lescelius so well put it, "Man is not passive." What is necessary for a true (heart changing, souls saved) revival? I suggest three things, but it is difficult to separate the prerequisites of revival from the results of revival. It is important to understand that evangelism is not revival, but when revival comes, evangelism happens.

First, a heartfelt burden and desire for revival in our churches! That is a burden for God's glory and souls - not a burden for church growth and prestige. Second, that burden must be enforced by hours of fervent and sincere prayer. A casual, dry-eyed mention in the Wednesday night prayer meeting or in the pastoral prayer quickly becomes "vain repetition." Third, and perhaps the most difficult to separate from the results of revival, is the personal repentance and purity of God's people - a purity and worship that far transcends merely sitting in the pews for 2 hours Sunday morning. I borrow from William Fetter in a message entitled *"The Fundamentals of Revival"*: "They would fain have it (revival), but a little cheaper. They are not prepared to meet all the conditions....They might try to produce in their laboratories water from oxygen alone, omitting hydrogen."

Revival must be preceded by a burden that leads to passionate and persistent prayer, Ravenhill writes, "Spiritual adolescents say, 'I'll not go tonight. It's only the prayer meeting.' It may be that Satan has little cause to fear most preaching."

That "preaching" must be Holy Spirit anointed and doctrinally correct. Gilbert Tennent, one of the effective preachers in a 1744 revival in New London, PA writes: "I did then preach much upon original sin, repentance, the nature and

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Forum #1

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wonders (see our Lord's response to John the Baptist's question in Matthew 11:4-5: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.") Yet they, also like most of the Jews, would not believe from those signs but clamored for more proof. "They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?" (John 6:30).

Jesus answered them saying, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matt. 12:39). Praise the magnificent free and sovereign grace of God that when they saw that sign at the resurrection at least James and Judas did believe. Do you?

RAY BENNETT



Forum #2

(Continued from page 151) ♦

necessity of conversion," points that I fear our generation of preachers have neglected, in favor of systematic theology or issue oriented messages.

Have I ever attended such a revival? Sadly, no! I have attended (but not been a speaker) "revivals" where there was much excitement (loud "Amen's", etc.) from the pews but no "tears or prayers" in the pews; there was much attrahent activity, mimicking the activities most people associate with revival (running across the front of the church, screaming incoherently) but no evidence of mourning sinners.

RAY BENNETT



Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 149) ♦

D.C. AFFIRMS OUT-OF-STATE SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

(EP News)--Same-sex marriages performed in other states will now be recognized in the District of Columbia.

In May, City Council members voted 12-1 to approve a new ordinance allowing recognition of same-sex marriages performed outside the District, saying their eventual goal was the legalization of gay marriage in D.C.

NEA VOTES TO UNDERMINE MARRIAGE

(EP News)--The National Education

Association (NEA) has passed an action item that amounts to an endorsement of same-sex marriage — as well as a call to oppose national laws protecting one man, one woman marriage.

Jeralee Smith, founder of the NEA Conservative Educators Caucus, explained that the resolution will not stop at just endorsing gay unions. "It advances the cause of the homosexual agenda to a pretty strong degree in that they are now committed to put their political muscle in gear to go after the legislation that defines marriage as between a man and a woman," Smith said.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS PARENTAL RIGHTS AT STAKE IN CONSIDERATION OF U.N. TREATY

(EP News)--The Obama administration is trying to revive efforts to have the U.S. ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). CRC treats children like adults by giving them the same rights as adults. Thomas Jacobson, United Nations analyst for Focus on the Family, says CRC undermines the responsibility of parents. It could prevent parents from disciplining their kids, and from giving them moral and spiritual guidance. "Essentially, the Convention and Rights of the Child removes the ability of parents to protect their own children," Jacobson said. The CRC also requires governments to help raise children. The U.S. signed on to the treaty back in 1995, but never ratified it.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

A new Baptist Church was organized on June 21st in Romania. The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, LA voted to organize the new church. The new church chose the name "Adunarea Baptista Harul Suveran" which means "The Sovereign Grace Baptist Assembly." They elected Bro. Aurel Miclea to serve as their church clerk and elected Bro. Raul Enyedi to serve them as pastor. Elder Curtis Pugh was asked to assist them in Bro. Raul's ordination.

We praise God for this and pray for His blessings upon a new sister church standing for the truths of His Word.

The Bethel Bible Baptist Church, PO Box 85, Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.

We have now completed three additional discs of the piano accompaniment for the Berea Hymnal. They are disc 6 (hymns 123-148), disc 7 (hymns 149-175), and disc 8 (hymns (176-200).

The Scope of Christ's Prophetical Mission - Part Two

By Charles R. Sumner
(1790 - 1874)



1. Considering Christ as a messenger sent from God, we may be said, in the person of the messenger, to see in some measure the very lineaments and moral representation of the almighty power from Whom He came. By His incarnation the nature of divinity itself stands revealed to our view; and though no man hath seen the Father at any time, yet, through the medium of the Son, as just an idea is formed of the unapproachable Godhead as the understanding of man can receive. We have Christ's own word for this truth; "**he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.**" And the apostle calls Him "**the express image of the person**" of God. And again; we have "**the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**" (John 14:9; Heb. 1:3; II Cor. 4:6).

We must collect then from the messenger, and from the tone of His message, the intentions of the Creator toward His creature. Is the messenger the "**Prince of peace?**" Then may we learn that "**we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;**" "**For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition. . . Having abolished in his flesh the enmity**" (Isa. 9:6; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14-15). Is the message "**on earth peace, good will toward men?**" Then may we know of a certainty "**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;**" and that "**it pleased the Father. . . having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself?**" (Luke 2:14; II Cor. 5:19; Col. 1:19-20). The analogy is the same here, as in the conduct of human affairs. An ambassador, invested with authority to transact the business of his principal, carries with him in his whole behaviour a deportment agreeable to the instructions of his superior; he speaks in the language, and adopts the general character of the power, whom he is commissioned to represent. We collect without difficulty from the pacific or warlike tone of his demeanour, whether the intentions of the party for whom he appears are conceived in a friendly or a hostile spirit.

Just such an ambassador is Christ between heaven and earth. God gives an earnest of the manner in which He regards mankind, from the character of Him Whom He sent from His bosom to propose terms of reconciliation to them. It is as the bow in the cloud; a gracious token of the mercy and love of a forgiving

Father towards His erring children. Under the old dispensation He appeared to the world as a jealous God, --- unapproachable by mortal presence, ---shrouded in the semblance of

a burning fire, and encompassed with the terrors of the storm and whirlwind, ---Whom none could see or hear, and live. But seen through the medium of Jesus, God is contemplated under a new character. He is no longer an avenging judge, exacting from man the penalties of the law, and demanding satisfaction for His offended justice; but a Saviour (Luke 1:47; Tit. 3:4), reconciled by an expiatory sacrifice of His own appointment, looking complacently on the renewed nature of His once lost children, and sending them through His Son a message of pardon and love. Former revelations had unfolded much of the majesty and grandeur and awfulness of God; but the declaration made of Him by Christ is one, which, while it detracts nothing from His sublimity and power, invests Him at the same time with the gentler attributes of tenderness and mercy. Through the apostle, who has now again "**passed into the heavens. . . touched with the feeling of our infirmities**" (Heb. 4:14-15), after discharging His appointed ministry, the characteristics of divinity assume a new aspect; we see expressed in every trait of our Lord's human nature compassion, and long-suffering, and love unspeakable; and we transfer in our reflections all these endearing qualities to God, of Whom Christ is pronounced to be "**the image**" (II Cor. 4:4). Instead of the rod and sword of His wrath, the cross is lifted up in token of redemption and salvation. Instead of a sentence of universal punishment, (inasmuch as "**all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**" (Rom. 3:23), instead of that terrible reckoning for sin which awaited every inmate of a fallen world, we hear the Almighty speaking once again in accents of mercy to His creatures--- we receive from His lips an assurance of grace and favor and remission of sins, ---and we look forward with confidence to the gracious pledge, that "**He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,**" will "**with him also freely give us all things**" (Rom. 8:32).

It was the custom of Jesus frequently to remind His hearers that He came to this character of an ambassador, and that His speech was but the message of

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Scope of Christ

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Him from Whom He came. **“He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God”** (John 3:34). **“As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.”** **“My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.”** **“He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him”** (John 7:16; 8:26, 28; 6:38; 14:10, 24; 17:8, 14). As Christ refers to His Father, so must the preacher refer to Christ, as his authority. He must glory in the privilege of being His ambassador in bonds. He must speak to his people nothing but what he has learned in his Master’s Word. He must not add a supplement of his own to the Lord’s volume; or suppress, out of pride, or dislike, or fear, any of the chapters of the book of life. He must not dare to “go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of his own mind; but what the LORD saith, that shall he speak” (Num. 24:13). In the exercise of the ministry of reconciliation which has been committed to him, he must approach his people in the spirit, and with the language, of the apostle to his Corinthian brethren---**“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”** (II Cor. 5:20).

2. We are especially called upon to attend to the contrast between the ministerial character of our Saviour, and that of all other teachers. This is one of the most profitable views in which we may **“look unto Jesus”** for a pattern, as well as for saving life; and become **“followers”** of His example, as well as dependent on Him as **“the author and finisher of our faith”** (I Cor. 11:1; Heb. 12:2).

If we consider the Jewish teachers, we shall find them represented in the holy Scriptures either as dumb dogs, or blind guides---either as slumbering on their posts, and betraying their charge through indolence, or corrupting the Word of God committed to them, and making it void through their traditions---either as teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, or occupied in a vain and laborious trifling, which tended to withdraw the mind from any spiritual religion (Isa. 29:10; 56:10; Matt. 15:6,9; 23:16; Mark 7:4). The remarkable contrast between the teaching of the scribes and that of our Lord, is very forcibly intimated by the frequency with which the evangelists bring them into comparison (Matt. 7:28-29; Mark 1:22; John 7:46). Or if we look into the heathen nations, we shall find, as might be expected, among the best of the philosophers of the pagan world, the temper and spirit of their religion but too faithfully portrayed in the character of its teachers. And even when we turn

away from these corrupt sources of knowledge, and revert to the disciples of Christianity for examples of good and faithful servants in the office of teacher, there will be too often reason to lament their sad departure from the perfect model exhibited by Him from Whom they derive their authority. There was something reprehensible found in five out of the seven ministers addressed by the Spirit in the apocalypse (Rev. 2:3). There was in Peter himself something to be blamed, even in the judgment of Paul (Gal. 2:11); ---and so sharp a contention arose between Paul and Barnabas, that they were obliged to renounce the comfort of mutual co-operation, and departed to labour separately in different parts of the same vineyard (Acts 15:39). Cecil has well said, “That God, by leaving His greatest servants to the natural operation of human frailty in some part or other of their character, has written on the face of the Christian church, ‘Cease ye from man.’ He does by perfection in character, as He did by the body of Moses, ---He hides it, that it may not be idolized.”

At the same time the providence of God has so ordered it, that since the original appointment of an order of men set apart for the work of the ministry, there have never been wanting among them bright examples of zeal and diligence, which have shone like lights in the visible church. An examination of the characters of the several apostles, would show in a very instructive manner how divine grace can call into action the different tempers and abilities of men of every cast. The indolence of Mark, the violence of Peter, and the fiery zeal of Paul, were all overruled by the penetrating influence of that renewing Spirit, which, when received into the heart, is able to leaven the whole lump. The history of every age since the first promulgation of Christianity will afford similar examples. Justin, in the second century, exhibits an instance of the consecration of learning to the service of God; Valentinian, in the fourth, of a violent temper, in a great degree subdued by religious principle; and the change in the character of Jerome strikingly displays the effect of divine grace on a disposition naturally intractable and rugged.

But these are instances of Christian teachers who have been remarkable for the successful cultivation of some single virtue. If we advance a step further, and look for such an assemblage of heavenly dispositions combined in one individual, as Chrysostom, for instance, has enumerated in his requisites for a pastor, it will be seen how rarely any measure of such a display occurs in one, who is not exempt from human infirmities.

I cannot refrain from placing here part of the beautiful portrait of “The Christian Pastor,” drawn by the master hand of Bishop Ken.

Give me the priest these graces shall possess---

*Of an ambassador the just address:
A father’s tenderness, a shepherd’s care,
A leader’s courage, which the cross can bear;
A ruler’s awe, a watchman’s wakeful eye,
A pilot’s skill, the helm in storms to ply;
A fisher’s patience, and a labourer’s toil,
A guide’s dexterity to disembroil;
A prophet’s inspiration from above,
A teacher’s knowledge, and a Saviour’s love.
Give me the priest, a light upon a hill,
Whose rays his whole circumference can fill;
In God’s own word and sacred learning vers’d,
Deep in the study of the heart immers’d;
Who in sick souls can the disease descry,
And wisely for restoratives apply;
To beatific pastures leads his sheep,
Watchful from hellish wolves his fold to keep;
Who seeks not a convenience, but a cure,
Would rather souls than his own gain ensure.
Distrustful of himself in God confides,
Daily himself among his flock divides;
Of virtue uniform, and cheerful air,
Fix’d meditation, and incessant prayer;
Affections mortified, well-guided zeal,
Of saving truth the relish wont to feel.
From willful sin, though not from frailty, free;
Who still keeps Jesus in his heart and head,
Who strives in steps of our arch-priest to tread;
Who can himself and all the world deny,
Lives pilgrim here, but denizen on high.*

The union of many virtues in one heart is a sight so lovely, that angels might desire to look upon it; but the union of contradictory excellencies, wherever found, and in whatever degree, cannot fail to form an extraordinary character. It has too often happened that, as Hooker said, “Zeal hath drowned charity, and skill meekness.” Milner remarks of Cyprian, that to unite such seemingly opposite things as discretion and fortitude, each in a very high degree, is a sure characteristic of greatness in a Christian. He calls it grace in its highest exercise. For as Mr. Dowdler has beautifully, as well as truly observed, “A principle of compensation runs through the works of God. In the physical and intellectual world this is observable; and so also in morals: the stronger virtues are seldom found without an alloy of austerity, and the softer are nearly allied to weakness. It is plain that compensation implies defeat, and we therefore reasonably might suppose that in the character of Christ the rule should be no longer verified. And thus we find it. His force was without harshness, His tenderness free from imbecility. Nor is this all. Not only were His virtues unaccompanied with their kindred failings, but the most opposite excellencies were found in Him in equal perfection.” He alone could at once instruct with meekness, and teach with such authority as to inspire even His bitterest opponents with reverential awe” (Compare Matt. 7:20 with 11:29). He could unite humility with greatness, dignity with self-abasement. In Him no inconsistency of practice neutralized the consistency of His doctrine (John 7:46 compared with 8:46). The one was

as perfect as the other was pure. It was this harmonious combination of features which formed the glory of His character---a combination of which we shall in vain search for parallels among other teachers.

3. If Christ condescended to teach, that He might give His own sanction and authority to the dispensation, how humbly should it be received, ---how implicitly venerated, ---how dutifully obeyed! **“We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord?”** (Heb. 2:1-3). **“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden unto foot the Son of God?”** (Heb. 10:28-29).

On the part of the Jews, ignorance of their natural blindness and unconsciousness of their want of a spiritual teacher, were the principal causes, which led to their rejection of our Lord’s prophetic office. It is our duty to watch against the prevalence of a similar spirit. The avenues of the heart must be kept open to conviction, that the entrance of the good seed, as it falls from the hand of the sower, be not obstructed, or its effect neutralized, by a mixture of earthly passions which corrupt, or of cares which choke it. Above all, there must be much prayer for the Holy Spirit to enlighten and invigorate the understanding, and to overcome that dullness which cleaves inseparably to man, when left to the poverty and weakness of his own unassisted nature. And it has been always mercifully provided, that wherever there exists that fervent desire to learn in Christ’s school, which wrought so powerfully in the heart of the Ethiopian eunuch, some Philip has never been wanting to guide the inquiring spirit, and to improve the day of small things into a season of abundant light and grace. Much, of course, will depend on the choice of our objects of study, and on our manner of studying them. Some are satisfied with any thing which exercises the intellectual powers; and some allow the empty and undigested ideas to pass over the mind, like objects over a mirror, without leaving on its surface any trace or permanent impression. This is to spend time, but not to improve it. The mind must be exercised in thinking, as well as in receiving notions. “Wisdom towards God,” said Matthew Henry, “is to be gotten out of God’s book; and that by digging. Most people do but walk

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Too Much Government

A person's understanding of the purpose, role and scope of government is crucial. A proper understanding of the government envisioned and established by our founding fathers is just as important. America is not a pure democracy, but a republic under democratic rule by representation. The founding fathers envisioned government as a protector of the people, whether in battle or in protecting the liberty and rights of people, and specifically their inalienable rights. The role of government is not to provide healthcare, jobs, education and the plethora of what it is providing today and has been providing for decades. For the government to provide anything to anyone, it must first take from someone else. Government is an empty entity that does not produce or generate anything in and of itself independently.

A survey on the street will reveal that the average high school graduate will probably struggle to name the three branches of government, their responsibilities, and how they relate to the Constitution. The Constitution is the rule of law that is supposed to guide elected officials (Legislative Branch-Congress) as they make laws. The Constitution is supposed to be the rule of law for the Executive Branch or President as he governs. The Judicial Branch, the Supreme Court exists for the purpose of reaching decisions in court cases to determine whether or not a matter is Constitutional. The Judicial branch is not supposed to make law (that's for the Legislative Branch); it is supposed to rule on whether or not the Constitution has been upheld or violated.

It has been reported that at the close of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, upon leaving the building, Benjamin Franklin was asked by a woman on the street, "Well what do we have Mr. Franklin, a republic or a monarchy?" Benjamin Franklin replied, "A republic, Madam, if you can keep it." Are we still the same republic today in 2009 that Benjamin Franklin had in mind? As government expands and continues in an unprecedented takeover of private business and corporations, we are quickly becoming a monarchy of tyranny. Elected officials no longer care about the desire of their constituents. They vote their own agenda with an arrogant "We know better than you little people" and "This is for your own good" attitude. It is time to clean house....and the senate and replace every official who goes against the will of the people who elected them. When a

rule "of the people, by the people and for the people" ceases, then rule by an elite few is inevitable and that day has come. It has been in the making for many years as both Democrats and Republicans in power have facilitated its progress.

When taxes are extracted (like a tooth, but more painful) from the people and they have no control on how the revenue is spent, this is equivalent to taxation without representation. Frederic Bastiat, French economist of the 1800's, right before the French Revolution, called taxation legalized plunder. President Calvin Coolidge called excessive taxation legalized larceny. The nature of government, left unchecked is to grow, consume and engulf, characterized by massive fraud, thievery and corruption. An all powerful government has historically been the tool of fascists, tyrants and dictators who enrich themselves and their cronies at the expense of the common people. While promising liberty, fairness and equality for all, liberty and fairness disappear, but equality shines as all suffer equally in misery. Socialism does not work. It denies the existence of human individuality and human depravity. When government takes from those who have, to give to those who have not, the cycle has to continue. If wealth could be distributed equally among all tomorrow, the next day some would be broke.....and need more again from those who have. The have-nots have not because they keep not. Once again, the Bible rings true: the poor we will have always.

As we look to government to provide our all, such as medicine, food, shelter, etc. we need to be reminded that in order for government to provide for all, it must be big enough to do so. What most do not seem to realize is that a government big enough to give everything to everyone is also big enough to take it all away. That includes liberty as well as material goods and services. In order for government to provide anything at all, we the people must first give, as already stated. The more that government provides, the more we give.... and give up. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society will pale in comparison when measured up against this Frankenstein built by our law makers and the current president and administration. It won't be obvious now, but the years will reveal the truth when pay day arrives.

Thomas Jefferson said, "My reading of history convinces me that most bad government results from too much government."

We can blame Obama 'til the cows come home, but congress is supporting the current massive growth of government. It's time to clean house. IS ANYBODY LISTENING?



Are We Redeemed by Character?

By T. T. Martin
of Catlettsburg, KY

*The Most Popular Heresy In The World
Demolished By The Truth Of God's Word*
"The God of Jacob is our refuge" (Ps. 46:7).

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help" (Ps. 146:5).

"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4).

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

"The God of Jacob!" Not the God of Israel. Wonderful God! Blessed assurance, that "the God of Jacob is our refuge," ---the God who saves the man without character, irrespective of character, ---makes of him, ---Israel, Jacob, the supplanter, the trickster, the weak character, the warped character, the sinner, God takes, and through trials, tests, develops him and makes of him Israel, ---a prince of God. That is God's plan with men. Consider it.

There are two theories, and miles apart. The one is, salvation by character; that by acquiring a suitable character, by developing the right kind of a character, man can be saved, can go to Heaven; that one's character, if of the proper kind, entitles him to Heaven; that if one has lived right, he will go to Heaven.

The other theory is, that God by grace, pure unmerited favor, saves irrespective of character. It is a tremendous issue. It is vital; one or the other is fatal. If those who hold one theory go to Heaven, all who hold to the other will be lost, will go to Hell. We would as well face the issue. They are two widely different ways of salvation, and God has but one.

Jesus said "I am the way" (John 14:6), not one way, "The Way." And he leaves no possible ground for misunderstanding the meaning, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Either, then, He "is the only way," or He was the vilest deceiver the world ever knew, or He was a simple-minded, ignorant fanatic, who honestly thought Himself "The Way," when He was not.

AGAINST THIS THEORY OF SALVATION BY CHARACTER THERE ARE FOUR SERIOUS, FATAL CHARGES:---

First, it is utterly cruel, heartless and selfish.

It is cruel, because to the weakest, most needy, most helpless class, the vast body of men, born of vicious, debased parents, reared amidst vice and sin, weakened by appetite and tied by habit, it does not give one-millionth the chance to be saved, to go to Heaven, that men have who were

born of noble, godly parents, reared amidst moral, uplifting surroundings, and strengthened by noble aspirations and splendid training. Stand before you two young men representing these two classes, and tell them of life beyond this life, and of Heaven; and then tell them of salvation by character. To the one it would mean a bright, hopeful anticipation; to the other, it would mean but taunting him with his hopeless condition and prodding him with despair.

The theory of salvation by character is heartless, because, wrapped in the robe of its own self-righteousness, it coolly condemns to hopeless despair a vast body of the human race. Go stand by the helpless, hopeless drunkard, and the drunken, sinful woman, and tell them of salvation by character, and hear the sob of despair or see the jeering look on their faces at the thought of salvation by character for such as they!

Before a pastors' conference, the polished, brilliant, highly educated pastor of a wealthy, refined, intellectual congregation read a seemingly learned paper on "Salvation by Character." When he had finished reading the paper, some of his fellow-pastors endorsed the paper and gave it high praise. Finally, the pastor of a people who had been unfortunate in life, many of whom had gone far down in sin, and were fettered by habit, arose and said, "Brother Moderator, the brother has given us his wonderful paper on salvation by character. I would like to ask him, what would he preach if he were the pastor of a people who have no character?"

The author of the paper arose and made the heartless reply, "Brother Moderator, my brother and I have been raised in such different intellectual atmospheres, that I don't suppose I could make it plain to my brother."

The other replied, "That is doubtless true, Brother Moderator; but the trouble is, that he can never make it plain to any one else."

It is selfish, because those who teach this theory are generally men of intelligence, refinement, and are considered, and they consider themselves, men of moral character. They thus provide for themselves by their theory, but leave a vast body of the race with a very slight hope or with no hope whatever. The second charge against those who hold this theory is that by their own theory none will be saved.

If salvation is by character, by what kind of character, a perfect character, or an imperfect character? If by a perfect character, no one has it; no one even claims it. If by an imperfect character, how imperfect may it be and the man yet be saved? Where is the standard? If

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Are We Redeemed by

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a man's character, in order to be saved by it, must be the best he can make it, no one has even that character, ---no one's character is the best he could have made it. Hence, salvation by character is a chimera.

The third charge against salvation by character is that even if a man's character were perfect from man's standpoint, in the sight of God his character would still be corrupt.

"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Is. 64:6). Why? Because motive is the measure of the character. **"They that are in the flesh cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:8). Why? Because they have not, and cannot have, the right motive.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Cor. 13:1-3).

And no man has this love, no man can have this love, until he is saved by Christ dying for his sins (I Cor. 15:3). **"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again"** (II Cor. 5:14-15).

The fourth serious, fatal charge against the theory of salvation by character is that it is contrary to the teaching of the Saviour.

"Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21:31).

Certain it is that the publicans and the harlots had worse characters than those to whom the Saviour was speaking; the fact is therefore evident that Jesus taught salvation without character, irrespective of character.

Let the reader consider two cases that will show conclusively that the teaching of salvation by character is absolutely contrary to the teaching of the Saviour.

"The chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (Matt.

27:41-44).

Let the reader notice that both the thieves **"that were with him, cast the same in his teeth."** Then **"one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"** (Luke 23:39-43).

From the time that both thieves **"cast the same in his teeth,"** to the time the one made his earnest plea, **"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,"** there had been no time in which this thief could have formed, developed a character that merited salvation. Hence, when Jesus said, **"Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise,"** to this thief, He branded the teaching of salvation by character as not from Heaven. The one who does not see from this case that the cruel, heartless, selfish teaching of salvation by character contradicts the Lord Jesus, will never see anything contrary to his own preference and preconceived opinions.

The second case is just as conclusive. As the Saviour was reclining at meat in the house of Simon the Pharisee, a woman noted as a sinner, came in and stood behind Him weeping. **"And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace"** (Luke 7:50). The Saviour said the woman was saved, yet she was of notorious character ---she had no character.

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Scope of Christ

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over the surface of it, and pick up, here and there, a flower. Few dig into it; they are too lazy." It was thus that the eunuch was reading the Scriptures, when Philip was directed to join himself to his chariot (Acts 8:28-29). It was for **"searching"** the same Scriptures **"daily,"** and comparing them with the preaching of the apostles, that the Bereans were distinguished by the title of **"noble"** (Acts 17:11). The heart of Lydia was opened while hearing the words of eternal life, so that she **"attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul"** (Acts 16:14). We are thus indirectly guided to the proper end of study, and to the mode by which that study may be rendered profitable to us. And God, assuredly, will not withhold His blessing from those who are searching for the truth in the book of Christ, and

are pondering in their hearts all the knowledge they acquire, with a view to a progressive growth in heavenly wisdom.

On the other hand the apostle cautions in the most solemn terms against the danger of neglecting the words of the prophet of our dispensation. **"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven"** (Heb. 12:25).

If this be true, when addressed to the general community of Christians, with what awful force does the admonition apply to those who watch over the souls of their fellow-men as they who must give account! The Scriptures contain two classes of directions, which may be considered as referring more particularly to those who are entrusted with ministerial functions. The first class includes all that relate to the discharge of the fundamental duty of their office, the message they have to deliver, and the faithful and right division of the Word; while all such as are of secondary importance---the manner of communicating instruction and reproof, prudential admonitions calculated to rectify the judgment, the discretion requisite for the due management of a delicate mission---may be properly referred to the second class. With these passages of Scripture for a daily manual, with our Lord's own example as a commentary upon them, and with His blessing upon their study and application, it may be reasonably expected that the members of the priesthood "may wax riper and stronger in their ministry; and that they may so endeavour themselves, from time to time, to sanctify the lives of them and theirs and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that they may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow."



Re-Organized

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carry the truth. The church is the pillar and the ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15). Therefore, this subject is the very foundation of the doctrines of grace and the church ordinances and everything that we hold dear as Baptists. Has our church been scripturally organized? Do we really have a New Testament church?

What I believe about this subject involves three other questions: First, *what is a church?* Of course, if you believe in the Catholic (universal) church, visible or invisible, it wouldn't make much difference what I have to say.

The second question is, *what is church authority?* If you don't truly believe in church authority everything being done in, and through the church, it doesn't

make much difference what I have to say.

What do you believe about church continuity, perpetuity, or church succession? If you don't believe in the perpetuity of the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, what I say will not mean anything to you.

Some people say, "Well, the church is just saved people," and they say one thing and another about that. I believe it is a called-out assembly of baptized believers, scripturally gathered or organized, and if you leave off "scripturally organized," you still don't have a scriptural church. I believe the church must not only be baptized believers, but must be scripturally baptized believers in a scripturally organized capacity.

I also believe in church authority will all my heart. I believe that the church has authority to do Christ's commission, to baptize, start churches and to carry out all of His work.

And I believe in perpetuity. One man in Florida said to me "I can prove by mathematical calculation that there is not one chance in a hundred that the church has come from the Lord Jesus Christ."

I said, "Brother, when you put your mathematical calculation against the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, I'll take His promise any day."

So I say that the church has come down through the ages. The church has existed in and through all of the centuries. I believe it with all of my heart.

Now when should a church be re-organized?

I

If it has just been organized "by the Spirit," it should be re-organized.

A preacher in Tennessee said, "The Spirit of God organized our church. A group of us got together and got to believing along the same line, and we organized a church."

I said, "Where did you get your authority?"

He said, "We just got it from the Spirit of God."

Now if you have a church like that, I say that you need to re-organize. That is a Hardshell theory. That is like a lot of folk who do most anything and just blame it on the Lord. The Spirit of God has not done everything He has been accused of! When that preacher said that the Spirit organized them, I said, "The Spirit works according to the Word of God, and uses the Word of God. You ought to re-organize."

II

The next church that ought to be re-organized is one of merely saved people.

Thank God for born-again believers! About three years ago one man got mad at my church over the local Baptist church and he quit coming. He doesn't belong there now. He said, "I am going

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Re-Organized

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out and organize a church and call it: "The Church of the Born-Again."

Well, brother, you have to have born-again people to start a church. There's no doubt about that. The Spirit of God has to be in everything, but just being born-again doesn't make a church. Just being saved by the grace of God doesn't make a church; so you need to be re-organized if that is the kind of a church that you have.

III

I should be re-organized when started by a minister without church authority.

You may say, "I had one of the best ministers you ever saw. He got us together and started our church."

Well, if that were the church of England, the Roman Catholics, or the Episcopalians, it would be all consistent, because they believe in apostolic succession; but we Baptists never have believed in apostolic succession. We believe in succession of apostolic doctrine and church, but we don't believe that a preacher can start a church without church authority.

We have so many free-lance organizations today. A preacher will get people together and supposedly start a church. By what authority? I tell you, God is a God of order. He is not a god of confusion and disorder. That is the reason I believe in baptism, in the Lord's Supper, in organizing a church, and in doing everything as the Bible teaches. God is a God of order. I don't like these haphazard, free-lance, accidental churches that just happened by accident. Of course, it was the work of the Devil. The Devil planted these churches.

So if some minister started your church without authority, your church needs to be re-organized.

IV

If just started by baptized believers or people of like faith without church authority it should be re-organized.

A young preacher in Virginia and I worked together for awhile. He was supposed to believe every thing I did, but he wouldn't re-organize his church. After we re-organized and he had backed down on what he had previously promised, he said, "You are just following John R, Gilpin too far. You can't follow him all the way. That doctrine just won't work." He said, "When a group of people come together with the same faith and of the same mind, you have a Baptist church. Brother, that is not true. You may come of the same order and the same faith and believe a lot of truth, but if you have not had church authority, you still do not have a Baptist church.

He said, "There have been people in all ages that have had the same kind of faith, but there is no such thing as a

church succession. The only thing that has succeeded is the faith."

I said, "Isn't church authority part of that faith that is taught in the Bible?"

While I was at Appalachia, Virginia, I took over an Arminian church and tried by the grace of God to straighten it out. I did get a lot of people straightened out on the grace of God at least, they didn't throw me out, and we managed to have a church. While we were there, on the radio broadcast, a Free-Will preacher told his people not to listen to me, that I was preaching predestination, election, and some of the worst things he ever heard. He told his people not to listen to me, but he kept his own radio on. He listened about four months, and do you know what? He had me preach for him and he came to believe very strongly in the grace of God. He went outside and tore down the Free-Will sign and just put up "Baptist Church." Brother, he still didn't have a Baptist church, and he hasn't one yet because he didn't have scriptural authority from a Baptist church.

Later, he called me on the phone and invited me to dinner, and said, "I want to talk to you." He said, "It looks like they may throw me out down there. If they do, I wonder if you will take us into your church. If you will let my group come in there'll be about forty or fifty of us without being baptized, we'll all come."

I said, "No, brother, every one of you will have to be baptized if you come into our church."

I don't know whether any other preacher ever had the opportunity to turn down a church's membership or not, but I turned down this one. I turned down a Free-Will Baptist church because they wouldn't be baptized scripturally.

I say to you, if that is all you have, you don't have a church. You can't have a Baptist church out of just baptized believers. They must be organized with church authority from a true church

V

A church that has just been reformed needs to be re-organized.

The next thing is this reformation theory. I asked one brother concerning his church. "Did you have church authority?"

He said, "No, we got straight on salvation, and we got straight on baptism, and we got straight on the Lord's Supper, and we got straight on the woman's place in the church, and we just came to be a church."

A lot of Baptists don't believe in salvation by reformation, but a lot of them seem to think that is the theory when it comes to the church. They don't believe in reformation for salvation, but they think that if you just get straight on a few things, then all of a sudden you just turn into a church. Brother, you don't have a church by merely reforming. You may look like a New Testament church,

but that doesn't make one.

I'll use Brother McCrum's illustration that he used in Chicago at the Bible Conference. If I should tell you about my wife that she has pretty long black hair, brown eyes, and always wears a covering on her head when she comes into the assembly, and if I should describe her as one who dresses modestly, etc., and then some woman would come up here with short hair, all painted up, and then you would say that that was my wife, you would insult me.

Brother, you can tell the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ by the marks, too, and the very first mark of a New Testament church is that it has authority from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me say that I am not talking about the ORDER of the church. There is a difference between the ORDER of the church and the ORGANIZATION of the church. Now my church is probably not perfectly in order. There are a lot of things I preach that my people don't all practice yet. I don't force it upon them. I preach the Word and leave it with them and say, "You ought to love the Lord and follow this." That is all I can do. My church is not in complete order and as far as I know of the churches represented here, I can find some of them out of order in some places. I want to say this, you baptism, ordaining preachers, laying hands upon them, and everything else is no good without church authority.

But I believe a church ought to be in perfect order. Even if you had a strict order you would still have plenty of sin in you life. You could have it in Bible order in everything and you still wouldn't be angels. You would still be sinners saved by grace.

Paul said, "Set the church in order." There is a difference between the order of a church and having a church set in order. What is wrong with a lot of brethren is that they are trying to set something in order that they don't have. They are trying to set a church in order when they never have had a church to set in order.

VI

It should be re-organized if started with the wrong purpose and motive.

Then I want to say another thing, if your church was organized out of a group of fussing, fighting people, even if you had authority, you don't have a church. The church that would give such authority is an abomination.

In Bristol, I found some churches that came out of a fight. Now don't get me wrong. I believe there are a lot of churches that ought to have a fuss and a fight. There are some of them that don't stand for anything, and if I were in one of them I'd have a fight, too. I'd come out. But if I started a church, I'd want to do it right. Brother, you can't take people who are sowing discord and are out of fellowship with the church over a lot

of things that are right and they try to go out and start a church, for the Lord is not in it. It is not scriptural. It is not right. It is not right for another church to even give authority and to recognize any such thing. You can't have a church that way.

I have been asked, "How far can you trace your church authority?" After searching for several months, before re-organizing our church, I found out all kinds of things that made my heart rejoice. One of my great, great, great grandfathers founded the church that I was saved in, and baptized in, and which ordained me to preach. He came from "the old country" and my church can be traced back to the Ana-Baptists. If you think the Ana-Baptists were sound, that is as far as I can trace it. Historians connect them back to the apostles.

I tell you one thing, I believe in the promises of God. I accept them by faith and not by sight. I accept the promises of God that His church has continued, and I believe with all of my heart that it takes scriptural authority to have a church.

Our preaching about women's place in the church, close communion, baptism, and everything else all falls to the ground if we don't have a church to start with. Somebody may say, "Oh we are out making disciples, and we are having a wonderful time." Well, who did the Lord command to do that? The Lord gave the commission to the church. It is the church that is to make disciples. It is the church that is to teach people to observe all things, You may be having a wonderful time, but you're out of God's will. God's will is that the church is to make disciples, baptize, and teach everything.

Talk about the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, if we are it the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ we'll certainly have to have church authority, Christ being the church's head.

VII

A church that has had the candlestick removed should be re-organized.

I am afraid that in this day of great falling away and departing from the faith, the candlestick has been removed from many churches (Rev. 2:5). I believe if a church departs from the way of salvation, which is all of Grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and departs from New Testament baptism the Lord will remove the candlestick. I believe that if it holds true on these two things, though it may be out of order in many ways, it will still be a church.

Brethren let us continue standing for the faith that was once delivered to the Saints.

May God bless you!

(The Baptist Examiner, Feb. 24, 1962)



Preaching of the Cross

By Arthur Stone

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (I Cor. 1:18).

It is a remarkable fact, that many today make the tragic mistake of quoting this chapter as proof that the Apostle Paul was not wholehearted in favor of Believers' Baptism. If we view the context, we soon realize that here was an alarming position; divisions and contention reigning in the midst of the professing Church. Paul had heard how that there were such contentions between them that they were openly saying, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas.” Paul correctly asks them, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? Little wonder with such a spirit existing and running riot, that the apostle continues and says, “I think God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.” Such obviously had not a correct view of the Gospel and its doctrines; hence Paul disassociates himself from any form of division which so clearly comes from the Devil. Rather would he stress the importance of his call to the ministry, and emphasize the full weight of responsibility that accompanied such a call, “To preach the Gospel.” This must ever be the task of the true servant of God, to announce the glad tidings, that Jesus saves! Nothing must deter him from this all important work, the story must be told. The message must be clear and simple, not so delivered that it goes over the heads of the majority of a congregation, not so preached with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

The preaching of the Cross! This is the only preaching that can do helpless sinners good, the only preaching that will save precious souls and the only preaching designed to ingather the election of Grace. Friends, as you have assembled within God's House tonight, is it with a burning desire to hear the preaching of the Cross? Such preaching encourages the seeking sinner and is meat and drink to the saint.

The cross must ever be the symbol of suffering and shame, yet it will ever remain the symbol of victory to those who are taught by the Holy Spirit. It is the preaching of the Cross that boldly declares victory over sin, victory over death and also victory over Hell. This without doubt was uppermost in the heart and mind of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was the cross that presented itself vividly to the herald in the wilderness,

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.”

Likewise it was the cross that Jesus beheld at the first miracle in Cana of Galilee, **“Woman what have I to do with thee, Mine hour is not yet come.”** Surely we see more than the wine of Cana; it must therefore speak of the wine of Calvary, because it is written **“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.”**

Our Lord in the early part of His ministry viewed the cross in reality. **“To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”** The very fact of God's co-eternal, co-equal Son laying aside His robes of glory, and coming to such a sin-blighted scene proves His willingness to face the cross with all its ignominy and suffering, for Jesus said, **“And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”** This truth reveals in stark reality the pathway of suffering that the Lord Jesus Christ must walk. What sufferings! This is one theme that no preacher will ever exhaust, nor eloquence ever describe, **“Behold and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow.”**

We rightly try and view the physical sufferings our Lord was subjected to, revealing the malicious slander of the High Priest, and the wicked insinuations of the chief priests. We think also of the cruel treatment meted out to Him by the Roman soldiers, who, dicing and gaming with Him bow down in mock array, chanting, **“Hail, King of the Jews, Hail, King of the Jews!”** The piercing yells of a frenzied, howling mob still ring in our ears today, **“Away with him, away with him, we will not have this man to reign over us!”**

With such sorry scenes being brought before our eyes, we cannot fail to be melted in heart, as we remember the humility and obedience of our Jesus. **“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”** Think of this, dear reader, “He humbled Himself.” Pilate might boast of all his supposed power, but Jesus reminds him, **“Thou couldst have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.”**

Calvary comes into view as the place of sacrifice, and there it is faith sees the cruel spikes that pierced His hands and His feet. Childhood's teaching comes back to our hearts with power, teaching which is none other than “The Preaching of the Cross.”

*But such a cruel death He died,
He was hung up and crucified,
And those kind hands that did such good,
They nailed them to a cross of wood.*

That ugly cross is jerked into its position, its gaping socket waiting to fulfill the prophetic word, lifting the Saviour up from the earth. There it is we see the shadows flee away clearly revealing the substance; the Just dying for the unjust, the Saviour in the sinner's place. Oh, who can ever describe the sufferings of Jesus? **“All thy waves and billows are gone over me.”** Heaven veiling itself in blackness as Heaven's justice rests upon Him. Can we possibly enter into the full meaning of such an agonizing cry as this, **“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”** Only as taught by the Holy Spirit does the interpretation in measure come, forsaken, that we should be embraced.

The preaching of the Cross underlines the matter that was being dealt with. It was SIN. Do not underestimate this, for here is the root cause of all man's troubles, collective and individual. None are exempt from its power, **“For all have sinned.”** What a mercy it is when convinced by the power of the Holy Spirit, when we actually feel and know the burden of sin, that we are brought to seek a refuge from the loud thunderings of the law. Oh the unspeakable joy of having our eyes opened to view One hanging on a cross, in our room and in our stead! This is blessing indeed, to see by faith the wounds of Jesus for our sins.

The preaching of the Cross! Such preaching boldly declares the victory of the cross. Yes, all have sinned, being at great distances from Him a just and a Holy God. Undoubtedly we were at peace with Hell, with God at war, **“Having no hope, and without God in the world!”** How the Gospel of Grace reverses this position **“Having made peace through the blood of the cross.”** Now we see the law satisfied, for our Jesus has magnified it and made it honourable. All God's wrath is appeased, our peace obtained, and we are reconciled unto God. Can we possibly understand those who wish to remove any mention of the blood from hymn books? We have been singing a lovely hymn:

*What sacred fountain yonder springs
Up from the throne of God
And all new covenant blessings brings?
Tis Jesus' precious blood.*

Precious indeed, because it speaks peace to the quickened guilty sinner, pointing such to the “Finished Work” of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I love the only answer that can be given to the line of question, “What can wash away my sin?” Dear reader, do you know the answer ravingly and experimentally? “Nothing but the blood of Jesus!” The old Word holds good “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” If you are there, dear friend, sheltering by faith under the precious blood of Jesus, you will never be confounded or put to shame.

♦ (Continued on page 158)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 6-1-2009 to 6-30-2009

Beginning Balance \$5,402.78

RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX...50.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL31.26
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN 150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX 100.00
Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY... 300.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV50.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL 300.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME20.00
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Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL.....50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....35.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL50.00
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New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN50.00
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Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC. 100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA25.00
Subscriptions 210.00
Anon..... 150.00
Dividing checks 300.00
Sub Total \$3,541.26
TOTAL \$8,944.04

EXPENDITURES:

Printing..... 581.71
Postage 799.10
Supplies39.00
Wages2,300.00
FICA 153.01
Dividing Checks 300.00
Total Expenditures4,172.82
ENDING BALANCE \$4,771.22

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 6-1-2009 to 6-30-2009

Beginning Balance\$11,944.36

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY... 200.00
..... 575.00
TOTAL 12,055.22

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 640.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 640.00
.....\$11,415.22
Less Corbin, KY des.-808.52
ENDING BALANCE\$10,606.70

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance \$1,008.52

RECEIPTS:

..... 1,008.52

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 200.00
ENDING BALANCE\$808.52

Preaching of the

(Continued from page 157) ♦

The preaching of the Cross! This is glorious because it is complete. Paul writes in Colossians 2:13-14, "**You, being dead in your sins. . .hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.**" There can be nothing laid to the charge of God's elect. The text speaks of complete victory. Our past is there---dead. The work of grace is clear---quickened. Mercy is there, "Having forgiven all our trespasses." Surely with such a work performed by the God of all grace, we can look to the cross and rejoice in the fact that salvation is all of grace.

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought,

*My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,*

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh my soul.

The subject of grace is sweetly led by the power of the Holy Spirit to view the cross with wonder and with love, to join with the redeemed and say, "**Surely, he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows!**"

The preaching of the Cross! Paul rightly delights in this all important message. Paul knew that this message faithfully delivered placed the crown upon the right Head. It was Paul who said, Galatians 6:14, "**But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" Such a message displays the abounding love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit! It glorifies the work of Jesus, pointing to the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to the only deliverance from it. Dear reader, do you know this deliverance? Paul had a heart experience of these things and not some scanty head knowledge. He could look back to Damascus Road, when as a proud blasphemer he continued to storm the Church of Christ, when in his arrogance and pride he continued to persecute the true soldiers of the Cross. Small wonder that he now desired to glory in the cross, when his past was brought into view. I'm convinced there had been no greater manifestation of power on the Damascus Road than when the arrogant Saul was brought to his knees, to hear the voice of One Who was crucified, "**I am Jesus!**" He lives, and Paul freely testifies to the power of such a life. What a tremendous difference this cross had made to Paul. No doubt Paul had seen many crosses, but this one was different, this one was "The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul's life had been transformed by the One Who hung there upon that cross, his guilt removed by the sacrifice offered by Himself, a

perfect sacrifice; and his every step in life was now directed by the One Who is alive for evermore.

The preaching of the Cross! How strange that with all the importance and solemnity of this message it has to be said, "**The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness!**" In looking at such a definite statement of Scripture we must ever keep in mind the truth, "The Lord knoweth them that are His!" Such a thought of perishing sinners should cause us to spend and be spent for the furtherance of the gospel. Have we not been commissioned to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature? The apostle writing in the second epistle to Corinth writes, "**We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are a savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life.**" We can clearly see that as the gospel message is proclaimed it has a mixed reception; to some, the Word preached does not profit them, not being mixed with faith. How amazing such a truth seems to be. The preaching of the cross, with its only message of salvation to the sinner, its tremendous manifestation of the love of God, its message of the reality of eternity, and the certainty of God's judgments stamped upon it; and yet so many regard it as mere foolishness. Alas, in so called Christian England (and America) such a message has become the butt of the ungodly, the ridicule of the modernist, and the sarcasm of many broadcasters and journalists. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. They have time for business, time for pleasure, their hearts crowded out with the dead things of this life, but having no thought or time for eternity. How sad it is if such is the case with anywhere tonight. Of course business must be attended to, and my advice would be, to attend to their business matters diligently. Yes our homes make their demands upon our time, and they deserve due consideration. True, our children, if spared, have a future to consider, and this should cause us deep concern. Important as all these matters are, the emptiness of life becomes more real when there is the marked absence of the teaching and preaching of the cross.

Dear reader, what of your life? What does the preaching of the Cross mean to you? Has it any place in your thoughts, or in your time? If it has not, this must obviously point to the signs of your perishing. This is very solemn. The Word of God is complete and illustrates the emptiness of such a life without the preaching of the Cross. Our Lord in parable told of such a man who was perishing, and yet was insensible to his true state and condition. He would pass today as a good business man,

a person with good business ability. His ground gave forth plentifully, his business expanded and yet the one broken link in his chain was this, he left God out of his reckoning; he had no thought for eternity. "**This day thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall these things be?**" Many in this village would openly view things in the same light, and I am persuaded that we should too, were it not for free and sovereign grace. "**Such were some of you**" ever keeps us in our true position. The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness.

But,---the story is not finished. "**Unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.**" "**Unto us,**" Paul includes all true believers, all to whom the preaching of the Cross is precious. "**Unto us which are saved.**" Here is assurance, a message which thrills and comforts the subject of grace. Saved now---"**which are saved,**" being justified by faith, freely justified by His grace. Dear reader, do you come in here? I love that old chorus which says, "When the Lord said whosoever, He included me!" Amazing grace.

"**Unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.**" Note this, it doesn't say that it was the power of God, but rather emphasizes the present power, **IT IS THE POWER OF GOD.** I would to God we realized this more and more, that here is the only message for the twentieth century, the only message revealing such power as to raise sinners from the gutter of sin and ruin, and to bring them to the only One Who can bless them with a sense of pardoning love and mercy. Nor does such power diminish. The power that saves is the power that keeps for such are "**kept by the power of God!**" The victory obtained on the cross, has become their through faith.

Men may object to these solid truths, but they stand unmovable, because they are founded upon the Rock of Ages. "**The preaching of the cross**" is to all who are saved the power of God. We see so clearly a power that has preserved them, a power that has delivered them, a power that keeps them and a power that will present them faultless before His Father's throne.

My dear reader, what a privilege to be identified with the preaching of the Cross. I trust that we have seen the cross, and have understood the message of the cross, its suffering and shame, yet its victory and glory. The Word reminds us of a fundamental truth, "**If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.**" In other words, no cross--no crown! May many be brought to hear the words of the Saviour, "**If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.**" The Lord bless you.



GLEANINGS



THE CURE FOR A SICK CHURCH

What is the best thing a minister can do for his people---the very best? Without any reservation I would say: "Let him get absorbed with Christian missions.. Let him charge them with the missionary dynamic." There is nothing like it. It is the panacea for all ecclesiastical ills. It will work a transformation in any congregation. Try it; and you will see the sleepy wake up, and the stingy loosen up, and the sour sweeten up. The cure for a sick church is to get it on a missionary diet.

The minister today who is satisfied with the spiritual condition of his church is likely to be a minister who is satisfied with little. His appetite is small. I am not speaking of all the churches, but I am speaking of some, and the number is too large that are a dead weight on the soul of the man who tries to minister to them. The trouble is not that these churches are bad; that there are no devout people there; that the members do not love Christ; and do not want to go to Heaven when they die; the trouble is they have been side-tracked on some minor issue; shunted in some blind alley, and the pity is that frequently it is the pastor himself who has dug his own grave.

Let the minister get his church interested in missions. The church may not like the charge. It may prefer to remain undisturbed. But what of that? Did you ever know a man who was sound asleep who liked to be awakened?

It may regard you as fanatical, but that is not necessarily fatal. Better to be a fanatic than a corpse. The enterprise of missions is God's plan for the church. It is the most entrancing vision that ever dazzled the brain of man, and the Christian who can come under its spell and not be thrilled, not have some spark of heroism flaring into flame within him, is only dead freight. ---Vance

(News and Truths Mar. 15, 1916)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are still sending out many copies of the booklet "History of Premillennialism" by Milburn Cockrell. We give praise to God for the many that have called and are enjoying this little booklet. As the Lord provides we trust to do more booklets in the future.

For Whom Did Christ Die?

By Floyd Williamson

Ephesians 2:1: **“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”**

What is death? Death is separation. In physical death, the soul and spirit are separated from the body. In spiritual death, the soul and spirit are separated from God.

Did the Lord tell Adam the truth when He made this command? After all, when Adam disobeyed and ate of the fruit, he DID NOT physically die that day. He lived to be 930 years old. Therefore, the Lord must have been speaking of SPIRITUAL death. Adam was cast out of the Garden of Eden. He lost his special relationship with God. He died “spiritually.”

How are we to re-gain a spiritual relationship with God?

As it is said in Ephesians 2:4-5: **“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.”**

Now the word quicken means to “make alive.” So, God in His mercy makes us alive.

For what purpose does He make us “alive?”

“To repent.”

There are four passages in the Scriptures where repentance and faith are found in the same verse (Matt. 21:32; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21 and Heb. 6:1). In all these passages, repentance comes “before” faith. Acts 20:21: **“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Repentance precedes faith.

What is the purpose?

Ephesians 2:7: **“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”**

It is through Jesus that God has chosen to show His mercy toward us. By His grace, He first quickens us (makes us alive) so that we can see what we are in truth, and are then able to repent toward Him.

Then comes FAITH. Ephesians 2:8-10: **“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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”**

Now the word “that” in “that not of yourselves. . .” refers to the word “faith.” Faith is the gift of God. It is not of our works rather it is the means by which God shows us His mercy. Jesus Himself,

tells us in John 6:37: **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”**

Who are they who come to Christ? All that the Father giveth Him. How are they able to come to Christ? Through faith, and that faith is the gift of God. John 6:38-39: **“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”**

Who are they who will be raised with Christ at the last day?

All they whom the Father gave Christ. And those who the Father gave Christ are those who will come to Christ.

How are they able to come? By faith.

Whence came that faith? God gave it to them.

Jesus has said in John 10:9: **“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”** And again in John 10:11: **“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”** John 10:14: **“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”**

Furthermore, John 10:22-29: **“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”**

What a beautiful picture showing God’s mercy. He first “quickens” us so that we can comprehend our sinful state and show repentance for our sins. He gives us “faith” to believe in Christ, Who paid the ultimate sacrifice to redeem us from our sins. By this means He gives us to Christ Jesus Who Himself said that He will not lose any that the Father giveth Him, nor shall any man take us from His hands. Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: repentance toward God is a change of attitude toward God. You see the Lord as being perfect and holy; you see yourself as being guilty of sin and deserving of punishment. Isaiah

64:6: **“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”** Repentance means you are willing to set yourself on God’s side and agree with Him against yourself.

That is when Faith comes into place; When God, the Holy Spirit gives you the faith to see the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross to save His people from their sins. This is a wonderful illustration of that: Luke 23:32: **“And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.”** Luke 23:39-42: **“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”**

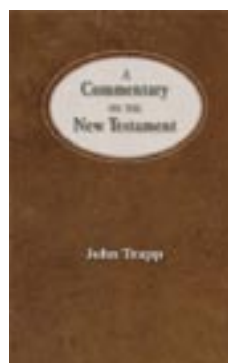
The first malefactor showed no repentance. The other showed repentance, agreeing that he had done wrong and deserved his punishment. He asked for forgiveness. Luke 23:43: **“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”**

Editor’s Note: This short dissertation was prepared by Bro. Floyd Williamson to be read at his funeral. He departed this life on November 3, 2008.



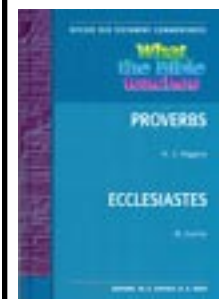
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THE BAPTIST CLASSROOM Standing Against Evil

By John Pruitt
of Maysel, West Virginia

Nehemiah 4:1-9
Zerubbable had been commissioned to return to the homeland and Jerusalem to rebuild the city after Judah having been in captivity for 70 years. This took



place in 538 B.C. Now, God sent a messenger to Nehemiah some 100 years later concerning the walls which had been broken down and the gates burned. This probably had taken place since the days of Governor Zerubbable. The message broke Nehemiah's heart and stirred him to return and rebuild the wall, and by the sovereign providence of God he was able to acquire grants from the king to support the work. Immediately opposition arose from some of the so-called governors of that region, but Nehemiah was brave and having the authority of the king and most importantly, the authority of God, he stood fast and did not relent to the intimidation of the devil's men.

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall" (Neh. 4:1-3). Sanballat and Tobiah, as agents of Satan, came to discourage the workers of God. They stood and made fun of them and chided them to make them think that their efforts were futile and foolish. They tried to convince the people that they were out of touch with reality and were not with or part of the crowd. You see, if you do not act like the world and talk like the world and do like the worldly crowd, you are not with it. You're not cool; you just don't fit in. But John 3:20 says, **"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."**

Let's face it; everyone wants to fit in where they are. The problem is, the only way that you can fit in and be accepted with the world is to compromise with the world. So, you and I have to make a decision as to where we want to fit in. Some folks want to have it both ways, but just as you cannot be in two places at once, you can't be two

people at once. The thing that bugged Sanballat and Tobiah was the fact that the Jews weren't willing to compromise and let them rule over them. Matthew 10:32-38, **"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."**

Now, notice Nehemiah 4:4-5, **"Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders."** In these verses, Nehemiah makes his first call upon his God: it is to judge their enemies. The Lord Jesus taught us to be meek, but not weak. This Nehemiah knew; that it was not up to him to deal with those who opposed them. He would not even let the prospect of battle sidetrack them for the great work. The devil hates the prayers of God's children more than anything: for he knows that **"the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."** What do you do when your car breaks down? You call a wrecker to take it to someone who can fix it. What do you do when your enemy the devil attacks you? It should be a no-brainer and I mean that in a most respectful way.

"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Neh. 4:6). In other words they refused to allow these characters to divert their attention away from the task at hand. They weren't just building a wall, but they were building a great work for God. Nehemiah records that they proceeded to build the wall because the people had

a mind to work. This tells us a great deal about their attitude toward the work of the Lord. Attitude goes a long way in carrying out your determination. Another word for it is resolve. There is a song which says, "I am resolved, no longer to linger, charmed by the world's delights..." If you have no resolve you will never accomplish anything or amount to anything. If you have no resolve for the work of the Lord, you will never amount to anything in His service. Oh may we be determined not to let anything stand in our way of serving the Lord as we should. Sometimes it is a great thing that stands in our way as it was with the people of God then. They had every reason to be discouraged and did become so from time to time; but their resolve overcame their discouragement.

We can see here that the Jews had resolve and determination and accomplished their task in unbelievable time. Chapter six says that the entire wall was finished in 52 days. The circumference of the wall was between four and one half and five miles. Nehemiah himself would not be turned from his task, for we read in Nehemiah 6:3 how Sanballat and Tobiah tried to negotiate a phony peace deal with him. **"And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I [am] doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh. 6:3).** The real reason for the so-called peace initiative was no doubt to do harm to this man of God. You can believe that if the devil wants to make peace with you, it will be to your harm. We must have the wisdom of Nehemiah to see through his devices. Nehemiah and the people could see their enemy, but many times we cannot see the enemy because he is so subtle and underhanded. Paul warns in Ephesians 6:12, **"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]."**

Nehemiah 4:7-8 says, **"But it came to pass, [that] when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, [and] that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together to come [and] to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder**

it." Some say that Sanballat and Tobiah were self-appointed rulers of this area, but most likely they were appointed by the Persian King Artaxerxes as governors and tax collectors who made their healthy living by over taxing and skimming off the top. Sanballat had the army of Samaria at his disposal. They were very concerned that the Jews were going to take over the land and they would lose their source of income. So, as we see in verse eight, they got as many as they could together to make a military threat against them, but they did not realize that they were not fighting a bunch of refugees who had no heart, but they were going against the people of God. Dear saint, we are not just pilgrims in a strange land, we are the people of the Almighty God.

Nehemiah and the rest did the most logical thing for any child of God and that is to turn to the Lord, and the God of their strength, and trust His strength to see them through the valley of the shadow of death. David said, **"though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."** So, they cried out to Him and He saved them, **"Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them" (Neh. 4:9).** Psalms 120:1, **"In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me."**

Please notice that the Jews did the second most logical thing in their crises and that is, they set a watch. You must understand that Satan has not overlooked you and me, and he has not overlooked your church; sooner or later he will attack. We must arm ourselves with the whole armor of God so that we can withstand in the evil day. **"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:13-18).**

We do our work by the authority of our God and need not fear the threats of Satan. Don't expect God to make it too easy for you in time of trouble. Nehemiah and the people took up arms and set a watch, believing that God would give them strength and wisdom to defend themselves. It is true that God does many of His mighty works in spite of us, but His mighty victories are also won through us.

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