

The Berea Baptist Banner

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matt. 21:22

Poor Lost Sinner

By Joseph M. Sidders
of Guntown, Mississippi

Julia H. Johnston of Salineville OH wrote a hymn entitle "He Ransomed Me," back in the 19th century, of which I will be referencing quite a bit in this article.

While traveling to fellowships and meetings I try to spend time speaking with our brethren about the Banner's outreach. We discuss what the Banner currently offers to its readers as well as what seems to be missing. Since being asked to be this paper's editor it seems that I have failed to provide its readership with articles that speak to the poor lost sinner who might be looking for ways to learn about Jesus, my Savior.

I do not intend for this entire article to have to defend itself to my well-educated colleagues and brethren who know the Doctrines of Grace incredibly well so let me first and foremost layout some criteria for you, the reader. I do believe that God has His elect for whom Christ died. Those will be the ones for which He will reveal Himself in time; they will be the



ones for which the gates of Heaven will be opened. There is no way to the Kingdom but by Jesus. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him" (John 14:3-7).

With that being said, this article is written with the intent of writing to the poor lost sinner of what Jesus can do. I will leave it to the other articles of this paper throughout the years to discuss in greater detail what He has done, specifically for whom it was done, and, to the best our ability at least, how it was that He accomplished

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The Spirit of Diotrepthes

By Eld. Roger Reed
of West Jefferson, Ohio

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrepthes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (III John 1:9-10).

The Apostle John wrote a letter detailing some concerns he had about the Church. Do you want to know those concerns?



Reading III
John 1:9-10 we see that John said in (v. 9), "I wrote unto the church (congregation): But Diotrepthes, who loveth to have

the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." (Loves to be in charge, will not accept us), (vv. 10-11) "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of twhe

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The Doctrine of Sex

By Nathaniel Hille
of Plant City, Florida

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon



Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had

taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the

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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.

Poor Lost Sinner

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this great work. Let us consider the chorus of this hymn ("He Ransomed Me") to get us started:

Hallelujah! what a Savior
Who can take a poor, lost

sinner,

Lift him from the miry
clay and set me free!

I will ever tell the story,
Shouting, "Glory, glory,
glory!"

Hallelujah! Jesus lifted
me.

Dear reader, you are a poor lost sinner unless you have been born again so take these words to heart. Jesus "can take a poor, lost sinner" and set him free. Jesus **"..is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"** (Eph. 3:20).

This writer's greatest reason for writing was that not only was Jesus able to lift them "from the miry clay" but that He saw fit to do so for them. "Glory, glory, glory! Hallelujah!" are their own sincere and most personal words! Though doctrine is most valuable in explaining the "how" of salvation, the writer of this hymn is most joyfully expounding about the freedom they have found in the final product. This, too, is my most grateful testimony! Beloved reader, Jesus was not only able but did indeed save me, a wretched sinner, praise Him!

In the verses of the hymn, she continues to expound upon the finer points of His mercy but not from a standpoint of educated bliss, but rather in the jubilant joy that the seemingly impossible was done for her. Let us consider the first verse:

There's a sweet and
blessed story

Of the Christ who came
from glory

Just to rescue me from sin
and misery;

He in loving-kindness
sought me

And from sin and shame
hath brought me -

Hallelujah! Jesus
ransomed me.

This "sweet and blessed story" was hers. This is not a labor to add to the Gospel. The Gospel is indeed the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ which made possible the salvation of the elect but part of this same story beloved is the application of that ability to those who had only inability. She confesses that she was "rescued"; not that she saved herself but that Someone Who could rescue someone who could-not. In that statement is the greatest of hopes because that means anyone singing this hymn, anyone reading this article can be "rescued."

There are no qualifications for me to expound upon that you must possess in order to be saved.

All that must be true is that you indeed are lost and in need of salvation ("rescue") and that He, the Rescuer - Jesus Christ, is able to save ("rescue"). That "sweet and blessed story" is of "Christ who came from glory" and "is" able to save.

This story is not about someone else, it is about that writer who needed to be rescued and was. It is a personal story. In that very first verse again we read that the hymn writer states that Jesus came from glory "Just to rescue me from sin and misery." For her, He came for no other reason but to rescue her. If you have been saved you feel the same way, and you are permitted to feel that in your rejoicing! He came for a multitude that only He can number, but for you it was most personal. In His own "loving-kindness" He sought you!

If you are reading this as a "poor lost sinner," where is your shame? You should not be

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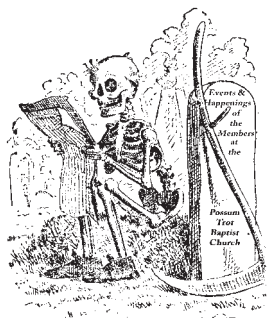
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Poor Lost Sinner

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offended that in His revelation to this hymn writer, nor even this article writer, He personally sought her nor me. What if He indeed is by this very writing seeking after you? What a sweet and blessed story that would be as well! Perhaps you might argue that this writing is indeed a shame to you for it has revealed thus far your inability to save yourself. "And from sin and shame hath brought me – Hallelujah! Jesus ransomed me" the writer has for us next because she had seen firsthand that same revelation. You absolutely cannot save yourself. You need for this verse to be as true for you as it is for me. Has the Lord broken your heart over that great gulf that lies between where you are currently and where this hymn writer is? Do you long for this sweet, personal story to be yours as well?

Let us now consider the second verse of this song:

From the depth of sin and sadness

To the heights of joy and gladness

Jesus lifted me in mercy full and free;

With His precious blood He bought me,

When I knew Him not He sought me,

And in love divine He ransomed me.

There is a "depth of sin and sadness" referenced here that the born-again are swiftly removed from. You will have to forgive us for not speaking to this as often as perhaps we should for we were quickly removed from said depths and taken to such "heights of joy and gladness" that we can no longer recall such hopelessness. This is not for a lack of compassion for the Lord exhorted unto us that, to be true neighbors, nay to show true love at all, we must have

that compassion. Consider what He taught that certain lawyer in Luke's account: **"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? -- He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise"** (Luke 10:25-37).

To the born-again readers then I must now ask, what keeps us from loving those who remain

in those same depths of "sin and sadness" that we were once so familiar? In my estimation it can only be that great contradiction of shame and pride. We have allowed ourselves to be puffed up by what we have been "given" and it has overtaken the gratitude that we should be showing through our service to the lost. Listen as the writer once again gives us her personal testimony:

Jesus lifted me in mercy full and free;

With His precious blood He bought me,

When I knew Him not He sought me,

And in love divine He ransomed me.

There is no achievement here for the born-again believer to be proud of. In fact, all that is said of the poor lost sinner here is that they are from some lowly depth lifted and "When [they] knew Him not He sought [them]." Through His own great compassion he paid that great ransom price that they would forever belong to them!

This might anger some, and if it does you perhaps have missed the great point of this free gift of grace. It is available to all who find themselves able to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is Savior. It is not limited by race and not obtainable by works. It is given.

The end of that verse states that He would literally know no substitutes and in that, I find great reason to rejoice! I personally have had many a day in which so many others would be found more worthy. Yet I see in Scripture that He sought me then bought me. Jesus wanted me so badly that He would not take my own ignorance, my own destitution, and my inability to pay as an excuse to pass me by. I was to be His. I pray that the poor, lost sinner who might be reading this finds hope in that. Perhaps you have only ever known a life of struggle. You have barely had

enough to survive, and the world has only ever taken more from you than you could afford to lose. You feel more than unworthy, perhaps even completely worthless. Dear friend if you can believe that Jesus is indeed the Son of God the Father, if you can trust in His worth rather than your own, then your value to Him exceeds all gems and rubies in this life! It is your own value to God the Father that led the Son to leave His place at the Father's right hand, come and suffer shame and humiliation at the hands of men, take your place on the cross of sin and sadness, and then proclaim **"it is finished"** (John 19:30).

What was finished that day was not the establishment of a foundation for men to boast and sneer but instead a place for us to come in humility and proclaim Jesus' own name as that of our Savior!

Now let us sing with the writer that final verse:

By and by with joy increasing

And with gratitude unceasing,

Lifted up to be with Christ eternally,

I will join the hosts there singing,

In the anthem ever ringing,

To the King of Love who ransomed me.

Is there a better title for the Lord of the saved than "King of Love"? He is the afflicted Gate of entry by which any who will come into the presence of God the Father must pass, and it is by His compassion that any are shown the way. Listen to what the process of time does for the writer. She says that "by and by" joy increases, gratitude never waivers, and she remains lifted up with Christ. There is a great sustaining being described there that is not to be compared with anything we have seen in this life.

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Poor Lost Sinner

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To you who might be reading this and lost, you have only known despair. A trinket of joy in this life was soon followed by a season of loss. A casual smile or passing glance from the “haves” causes a rippling shockwave reminder that you are of the “have-nots.” Please read the truth of this hymn, that she, and I, were once like you. It was only by the grace of God that we were made to know true and everlasting joy. This writer once looked to but now truly knows the joy that she proclaims here:

I will join the hosts there singing,

In the anthem ever ringing
To know Him ever is to know Him always. The hosts that were ever made to first sing continue to ever ring His praise!

Poor, lost sinner. What a sad but fitting title when compared with the estate of the born-again. I can only but confess that in my best efforts I was only ever poor and lost. I was bitten by an ancient venom that traces back to our human father Adam. I spent years in vanity and self-preservation that only ever enabled me to, on my best days, keep my head above water long enough to experience the cold chill upon my cheek of that ever-present breeze that blew across the water's surface. It was not until He revealed His purpose, His existence for me that I truly felt the warmth of that Son. It was not until He was lifted up in my understanding that I, too, was lifted from the miry clay and set free.

It is not the intent of this paper to talk over the lost. We have no greater purpose in this life than to speak directly to the lost of that former, fallen estate that we all once knew. What hope can we bring than cry with this writer

“Glory, glory, glory! Hallelujah! Jesus lifted me.”



The Spirit of Diot..

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church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. (In other words, John is saying “When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing, And the evil accusations he is making against us. Not only does he refuse to welcome the traveling teachers, He also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church”).

So, who was Diotrephes? He was a leader and a self-seeking troublemaker in an unnamed local church in the first century. What were the issues Apostle John accused Diotrephes of: 1) He loved to be first, 2) He refused to welcome the apostles into the church, 3) He maliciously spread gossips about men of God, 4) He deliberately withheld help from other believers, 5) He expected others to follow his footsteps, 6) He excommunicated anyone that went against his stand.

Diotrephes was already an institution in that local church. The last point above (#6) proved that he was not just an ordinary member of the church. He was a leader with certain authority which he abused.

The Apostle John said, Diotrephes loves to be first. Other translations say, “*Diotrephes loves to be the leader, likes to put himself first, loves to be in charge, loves to have the preeminence among them, loves to be their number one.*”

Hmm...Does it mean one should not aspire to be the best or number one in whatever God puts in your care? No! Please be the best you can ever be! Mediocrity (the state or quality of

being mediocre) is not a synonym of Godliness. Hone your skills, talents, and gifts and be the best in your areas of calling. One thing is missing today in our churches and that is giving one hundred percent to God. After all, do not church members give a hundred percent for secular things?

The Apostle John in this letter was describing a personality disorder that, unfortunately, some people are cursed with, it is called a narcissistic personality disorder! There are some individuals out there who are all but impossible to get along with. Their arrogance causes them to see themselves as all but infallible while everyone else deserves to be criticized intensely. These individuals are known as narcissists, and it is very likely you know at least one (unfortunately I do). Narcissists are manipulative and can learn to cover up their nature when someone is first getting to know them, though over time, they will often reveal their true selves. Should you feel like someone is emotionally abusing you or is unable to take any criticism, you might be dealing with a narcissist. These are some signs of a narcissist. Diotrephes had it!

If you marry a narcissist, you are in for a troublesome marriage. If you have a narcissist as your boss, trouble. If you now have just one narcissist in your local church, you had better pray well, or else that church is sitting on a keg of gun powder! Oh, how true, dear reader, do not sluff this off, this is most serious and I want to really put some emphasis on this, once again, “narcissistic personality disorder” is a disorder in which a person has an inflated sense of self-importance and a personal egotistic need for power and admiration. Three things characterized this personality: 1) Dominance, 2) Arrogance, 3) Hostility.

All these were seen in Diotrephes. He did not just love

to be in charge (dominance); he disrespected Apostle John's directives (arrogance). Do not forget Apostle John was the oldest Apostle at that time, yet Diotrephes never obeyed him. Also, Diotrephes caused divisions within the church (hostility). Therefore, he was qualified to be called a narcissist!

How then do you know people with the spirit of Diotrephes? 1) Every discussion revolves around them, it starts with them, it ends with them... It is “me,” “me and I,” “I.” They will talk endlessly about themselves, and if at all they ask about you, they are not really interested! They only ask for “asking-sake,” 2) The spirit of Diotrephes will lay burdens and restrictions on others that he is not willing to take upon himself. Diotrephes forced people to respect his orders but was not willing to submit to Apostle John and other Apostles that visited the church, 3) The spirit of Diotrephes is an autonomous spirit that finds it difficult to function peacefully with other leaders. It cannot work peacefully with other fellow ministers. The spirit will always kick against anything called “constituted authority,” 4) It is a critical spirit. It will always be looking for faults in any decision taken by others. It is a spirit of destructive criticism. If you say ‘A,’ they will say ‘Z.’ Though he actually wanted to say ‘A,’ but just because you said ‘A,’ he must say ‘Z’ in order to fuel his ego. It is a spirit of antagonism! 5) It is a spirit of double standard that exercises different discipline towards different people based on his perception. It is a spirit of nepotism.

If you have this personality, you need help! Do not rationalize it. Do not say you are trying to help God's work to progress. Diotrephes actually thought he was doing that by preventing his church from external influence of

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The Spirit of Diot..

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the Apostles. Little did he know he was a clog in the wheel of progress. Meanwhile Diotrephes was not an ordinary member of the church! Research showed he was probably the Bishop or Pastor of that church! That was why he had the authority to even send people that did not tow his line out of the church. Leaders be careful!

In your local church, are you like Diotrephes? Are you a leader in whatever capacity and you notice you have these traits in you? Do you antagonize every decision made by constituted authority? Do you think all decisions are wrong except the ones you make? Do you spread malicious nonsense about people of God in order to cause divisions? Do you use your words to dissuade people from doing the good they want to do and yet you will not lift your finger to do anything?

Repent today! Seek help medically and spiritually. Medically, because it is a personality disorder! This personality does not affect your relationship with people in the church alone, it affects your marriage, career etc.

The problem now is that people who have this personality problem may never seek help because of their self-grandiosity! In fact, they will never admit they have this disorder. So, help may be elusive to them!

Spiritually, because it can be a spirit! Evil spirits can attach themselves to these personality disorders to cause troubles in the church, marriages etc. So, the evil spirit needs to be cast out of his/her life. The problem here, too, is the fact that these people are likely leaders (they love to be in charge), so they may not be able to humble themselves before God and other ministers!

Lastly, the spirit of Diotrephes is a destructive and divisive spirit. If you see its manifestations in your church, marriage, organization, bind it and send it out. If you have it, admit it and humble yourself by seeking help! God Bless!



The Doctrine of Sex

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man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2:18-24).

There is a giant elephant in the room of "Christianity"; especially amongst us—sound Baptists. SEX! Yes, you read that right S-E-X, SEX! It is in the Bible. It is a teaching of the Lord—hence the title, The Doctrine of Sex. Sex is something that happens in the sphere we live in. It is probably happening somewhere on this globe while you are reading this. I titled this the "Doctrine of sex" because "doctrine" means "teaching" and some of our Baptists are 'big' on "doctrine" being taught, but never would teach on this. Well, you better. One old brother in Christ said to me years ago, "When I was younger, we never talked about sex, especially from the pulpit." I replied, "well, that is probably how we got here." And where are we today? A quick reading of Romans 1:18-32 will show that sex is one the things that has been corrupted and God gave man up **"unto vile affections"**. Pornography sites receive more hits that anything on the world wide web. 40-50% of marriages are ending in divorce in the United States. While that is slightly lower than 20 years ago, we also find that in the last 20 years there are 700,000 less marriages! People are not getting married—they are simply living together or just "hooking up". So do not think there is some great revival happening

amongst us that the divorce rate is going down when 700,000 less marriages are taking place, but the population growth continues to climb.

The Great Sex Swindle

Just a few things that are misnomers about sex that have been popularly treated as if they were as true as the gospels but are nothing more than "false doctrine".

Misnomer #1—"Sex is sinful and worldly." I find this hard to believe since God is the One Who created sex. It was His idea! **"And God blessed them [man and woman], and God said, unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"** (Gen. 1:28). God is the One Who commanded man and woman to have it! And since it is His idea, and His command, and His invention, and His creation, He also is the One Who gets to govern it! Furthermore, since God is not the author of sin, and He invented sex, how then can it be sinful in and of itself?

Misnomer #2—"Good Christians Do Not Talk About Sex." This also is not true! It is also ironic since the Bible is "God breathed" and talks about sex quite a bit. The Bible is filled with accounts of sex taking place, instructions on sex, guidance and governance for sex. Why even the apostle Paul wrote about sex (of which we will note later). Some folks have difficulty saying the word "sex." In fact, some of you may have been shocked to see this article printed! Some of you may read this article and every time you come across S-E-X you may whisper it in your mind as you read it silently to yourself! That is okay! But you had better get use to it, because it is in the Bible and it is all around us! Furthermore, we have a generation of homeschoolers amongst the churches of the

Lord. When I was young, I went to public school (government run propaganda machine) and we had health or sex education. Let me assure you, that the Bible was not used, nothing Biblical was taught there. Now if you are a parent, whether your child is homeschooled, private schooled, or public schooled, you had best be the one who makes sure they know what the Bible says, and in particular, about the subject of sex. There is a great resource out there that you may not be aware of. I would encourage you to get the book: "The Talks," by Barrett and Jenifer Johnson. It is readily available on Amazon, and I do NOT get one cent for recommending it. I simply found it that helpful in my own need as a parent.

No doubt there are other misnomers, but we will leave it at this for the sake of this article.

Sex & The Bible

The Bible talks about sex. It talks about it in one of two ways: negatively or positively. Let us observe sex negatively in the Bible—By this we mean that the Bible does not sanction sexual activity, but calls it sin.

"Fornication" —simply put this is premarital sex. Sex before one is married. The Greek word is *pornea*, which is where we get our English word "pornography" from. Observe: **"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication"** (I Thess. 4:3); **"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body"** (I Cor. 6:18). And many other verses.

"Adultery" ---sex with one that you are not married to. Galatians 5:19 (this verse shows us that fornication and adultery are "not" the same thing, contrary to many well-intended Baptists) **"Now the works of the**

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The Doctrine of Sex

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flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27). Here we see that it is not necessarily the outward act, but the thought and intents of the heart where sin is committed!

We ought not to have degrading speech about sex! **“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks”** (Eph. 5:3-4). We ought not to laugh at jokes, tell jokes, make jesters that imply some sexual thing.

Now, while this is all sinful, I want to be clear: sexual sins are not the **“Unpardonable sin.”** We are told in Matthew 12:31-32 that the unpardonable sin has to do with **“blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.”** That is the sin which shall not be forgiven so says the Word of God. Sexual sins are forgivable and there are many who have committed them and been forgiven! Observe: **“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor**

abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:9-11). The church of God at Corinth had some folks in it who were once fornicators, once adulterers, once homosexuals (sodomites), but now they had been saved! Praise God! They had been washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. You see, they were new creations in Christ Jesus! Also, there are those who commit these sins after that they are saved. Did not King David? Sure he did! He saw Bathsheba and he committed adultery with her. Then when she was found with child, he tried to cover it up in different ways, and ultimately, he murdered Uriah the Hittite—the husband of Bathsheba (II Samuel 11 & 12). And when God convicted him at the preaching of Nathan the prophet, David repented (Psalm 51). God restored David. Now there were consequences. Beloved, we cannot unring a bell! These things can disqualify a man from the ministry; they can ruin his call to the ministry, they can cause him to be removed from church membership; they will cause you to lose the joy of your salvation, even as it did with David! But David never lost his salvation, and neither will you! And if anyone of us commits these sins, we like David ought to repent! **“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world”** (I John 2:1-2). It is a terrible sin,

but it is not the unpardonable sin. If you have committed this sin, you do “not” need to carry that load and weight and guilt around! Come to Christ and be free from it: **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”** (Matt. 11:28)!

We also find that God will use folks once they have repented of these sins. Rahab the harlot was used of God in the lineage of Jesus Christ! So, too, David and Bathsheba were used of God in the same way! Jesus saved a woman at a well who had five husbands and was with a man who was not even her husband (John 4:16-18). She went on to tell others **“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”** (John 4:29), **“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did”** (John 4:39). While in these things, God does not use them. But when they are delivered from such, the Lord will use them!

Sex Positively in the Bible—Sex is also talked about positively in the Bible. By this we mean that sex is spoken of in a good and positive sense.

God is the Author of sex—**“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to**

every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” (Gen. 1:27-31). There is the command to **“Be fruitful, and multiply...”**. You see that God is the Author of Sex!

There are manifold purposes for sex—

1. Procreation/Reproduction—Genesis 1:28—impossible without the male seed and the woman’s seed, and the creation of sex by God is how the seed of the man (sperm) and the seed of the woman (egg) come into contact.

2. Companionship---**“And Adam knew Eve his wife”** (Gen. 4:1) (emph. MS). Note---Adam did not **“knew”** Eve apart from her being his wife. The word **“knew”** is indicating that they had sex. This was more than a casual meeting. It expresses and communicates a very deep companionship. No wonder those who commit fornication and/or adultery have such guilt and scars upon them—they have had a companionship with another person!

3. For Pleasure—*Note: This is only true in the confines of marriage between a husband (male) and his wife (female). **“Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also”** (Gen. 18:12)? Here we have Sarah speaking of sex and having a child, and she states: **“...shall I have pleasure...”**. Genesis 1:31---after that God created woman, and instituted marriage and told them to be fruitful and multiply He said everything that He had created was **“very good.”** He never says that about any other day of creation! Husbands and wives ought to have pleasure in sex! There is pleasure in sex when it is had in

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the confines of marriage that God placed it in. A lot of “Christians” have trouble with this because they were taught contrary and have negative feelings of guilt because such a “taboo” was placed on the word as well as the act of sex. NOTE: **“How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince’s daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins. Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes, like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim; thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus. Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes. I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof; now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples; And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those who are asleep to speak. I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me”** (S. of S. 7:1-10). Here beloved is a sweet refrain between the bridegroom and his bride. Beloved, it is very sensual and it is clear that there is some pleasure between the two of them. In the Old Testament, God commanded that when the men took a wife, they were not to go out for one year, but to **“... be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife whom**

he hath taken” (Deut. 24:5). A one-year honeymoon! Boy, that sounds nice! God created sex to be pleasurable in the confines of marriage!

4. For Meeting Physical and Emotional Needs---One writer stated that this is the most candid passage on sex in the New Testament. **“Now concerning the things whereof which ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also, the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency”** (I Cor. 7:1-5). I want to give you the Amplified Bible reading of this passage because I believe it is beneficial in giving the sense of these verses: “Now as to the matters of which you wrote: It is good (beneficial, advantageous) for a man not to touch a woman [outside marriage]. But because of [the temptation to participate in] sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. The husband must fulfill his [marital] duty to his wife [with good will and kindness], and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have [exclusive] authority over her own body, but the husband *shares with her*; and likewise the husband does not have [exclusive] authority over his body, but the wife *shares with him*. Do not deprive each other [of marital rights], except perhaps by mutual consent for a time, so that you may devote

yourselves [unhindered] to prayer, but come together again so that Satan will not tempt you [to sin] because of your lack of self-control.” (Amplified Bible I Corinthians 7:1-5). Observe these rules of our Savior as given by God to the apostle Paul. He states that a husband or wife is not to defraud or deprive one another unless it is by mutual consent for a set time period that both parties agree on, and during that time, they are to give themselves to fasting and prayer! Important work, championship SEC football (or any conference for that matter) games on late, headaches, tiredness, etc...none of these are Biblical excuses! Now we know that men are very physically oriented and women are very emotionally oriented. And these needs are met in sex. That is not to be the only place they are met, but they are met in sex.

Sexual intercourse in marriage is designed by God to be beautiful. **“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers [fornicators] and adulterers God will judge”** (Heb. 13:4). Marriage is honorable in all! Amen! Then, after marriage, the bed is undefiled! I know that because of the times we live in (and a president back in the 1990s) that there are certain things that are not considered sex by people. Well, let me propose a few things to you: 1) would we be upset if our spouse had sex with another person? 2) would you be upset if the other person only had fellatio or cunnilingus performed on them? 3) would we be upset if our spouse kissed another? 4) would we be upset if our spouse gave a caressing, holding, intimate hug to another person, 5) would we be upset if our spouse held hands with another person? I am certain and without doubt that the answer to all of these questions is a resounding “Yes”! Would it be considered adulterous behavior?

I believe the answer would again be a resounding “Yes”! Well, if it is considered “adulterous behavior” when one is married, should we not consider it “fornication” if they are not married? Maybe that is why God said, **“It is good for a man not to touch a woman”** (I Cor. 7:1). These are just meant to be contemplative questions, not doctrinal statements or tests of fellowship. I am just asking them that we as parents might consider some things before we set our children up to fail. Speaking of which, parents, one of our “jobs” to do is to one day present our children unto their spouse (our sons to their wives and our daughters to their husbands) on their wedding day as a chaste virgin. Observe what Paul wrote of the relationship he had with the church at Corinth: **“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”** (II Cor. 11:2). Well, that is one aspect of our job as parents to present our children as chaste virgins on their wedding day. We will not do it if we are following the norms of society instead of the scriptures! I would caution every young person to not be alone in a room with a person of the opposite sex. Many pastors make it a policy not to be alone with women other than their wives. I for one only allow two females in my office/study, my wife and my daughter.

I remember when I was a young man it was made very plainly to me the case of Joseph. Joseph was falsely accused of Potiphar’s wife as trying to rape her (Gen. 39:13-23). Yet it was Potiphar’s wife who was playing the part of the harlot and Joseph was honorable. Have there not been many men in high school and universities who have been accused of things by women that they did not do? Why did not one

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of our own supreme court justices have to deal with accusations that were completely unfounded? Never put yourself in a situation where accusations can be made! You know most people do not have sex if there are other people in the room or in the vicinity! If our young people are not allowed to be alone with the opposite sex, in the confines of a bedroom, then they probably will not have sex right in front of us or in a common area of the home! I think we ought to consider some of the places and things we allow our young people to go and things they are allowed to do!

I once asked a group of parents if they would ever allow their son (or daughter) to bring his girlfriend home (or her boyfriend) and say, "we are going to strip down to our underwear (boxers and bra and panties) and go take a bath! The parents all said "Absolutely not!" or something to that effect. Yet, they will let those same kids go to the beach, or the pool and wear their bathing suits which are nothing more than boxers and bras and panties! I have never understood that. I have never understood why at, so-called Bible camps, they let the young people go and wear immodest apparel and mix bathe (swim together) and add temptation! Why they even allow it and at the same camp where they preach on David and Bathsheba! The nakedness of our sons does not belong to everyone, it belongs to their future wives. And the nakedness of our daughters does not belong to everyone, it belongs to their future husbands! (Read Leviticus 18:6-18 for this principle teaching). Why one of the first things that God did when sin entered the world through the disobedience of one man was get rid of man's worthless attempt to

cover up himself and cover up man and woman with a garment that was long, robe-like, coat-like (Strong's concordance). I have never understood such behavior! And I have never understood the push back from Baptist people against the teaching and preaching of covering up our bodies! I would also like to say that we ought to have the same standards for men as we do women. It is not something to be proud of if our boys have sex and something to be ashamed of if our girls are having sex outside of their marriages! There is no double standard in the Bible for men or for women. It just does not exist.

Closing—The Bible, the Word of God, sure has a lot to say about sex! I would encourage you, preacher brethren, to preach on the doctrine of sex (make sure you whisper it when you say it too). I would encourage you parents to carefully consider the subject and that you are responsible for teaching your children on this subject. You cannot leave this up to the pastor, the preacher, the Sunday school teacher, the government, the public or private school system. You and you alone are responsible for this. It is part of the **"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"** (Prov. 22:6). This is not meant to be an end all be all article on the "Doctrine of Sex," along with some thoughts to ponder, but I hope it will spur and facilitate some proper and God honoring discussion and thoughts. I once again encourage you to look at the Scriptures and purchase the book: "The Talks" by Barrett and Jenifer Johnson. To God Be the glory! AMEN!



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Joseph M. Sidders
of Guntown, Mississippi



Total Depravity

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it" (Jer. 17:9)? **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** **"For the wages of sin is death..."** (Rom. 3:23). **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all**

men, for that all have sinned ["All" as in none are excluded]: **(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)** Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ

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Total Depravity

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our Lord” (Rom. 5:1-21).

As we begin to study our own depravity we must first understand that we are no longer how God had first made us. “**And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...**” (Gen. 1:31). We are now fallen creatures.

First, let us note that the word “creature” implies a creation “and” a creator. Thus supported: “**In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth**” (Gen. 1:1). “**And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth**” (Gen. 1:26-28).

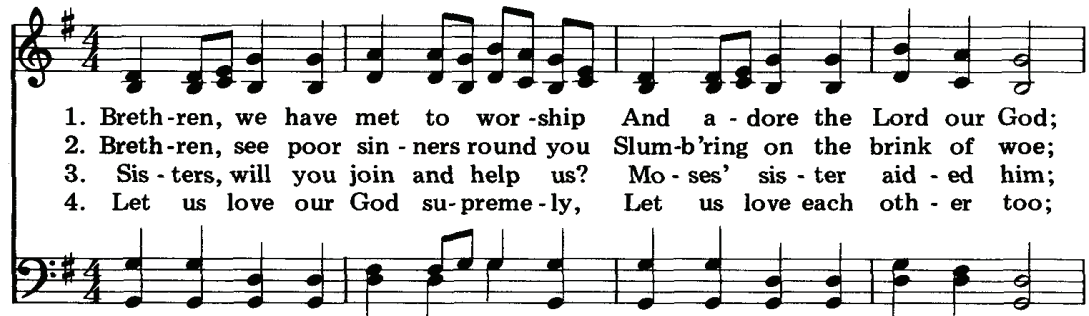
Second, let us note that with God as the Creator, He set boundaries for which man was not to cross. He set man (Adam), in loving care, in the most fruitful and most pleasant place in all of creation and instructed him to worship there. “**And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went**

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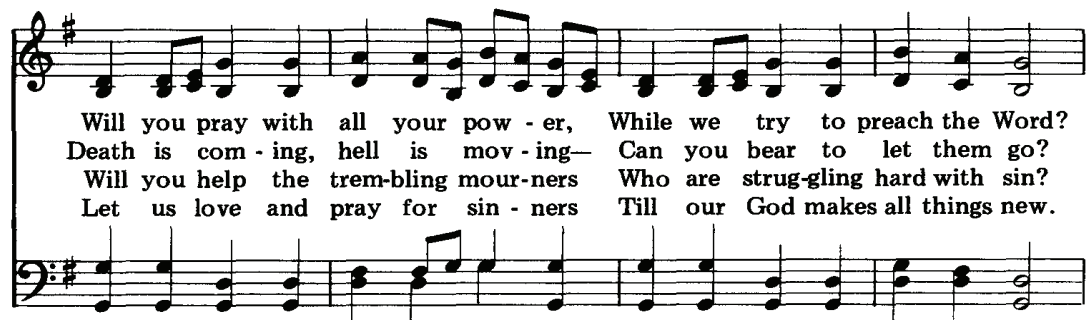
Heavenly Hymns

“...Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:18-20). [This hymn was printed with permission from the Olmstead Baptist Church and written by Mary A. Lathbury in 1877. You may access their free-domain hymnal by going to www.olmsteadbaptistchurch.org/hymnal.pdf]

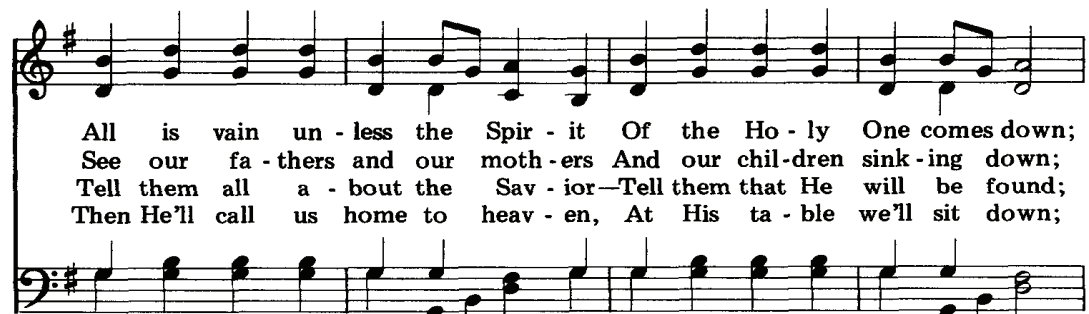
BRETHREN, WE HAVE MET TO WORSHIP 23



1. Breth-ren, we have met to wor-ship And a - dore the Lord our God;
 2. Breth-ren, see poor sin - ners round you Slum-b'ring on the brink of woe;
 3. Sis - ters, will you join and help us? Mo - ses' sis - ter aid - ed him;
 4. Let us love our God su-preme - ly, Let us love each oth - er too;



Will you pray with all your pow - er, While we try to preach the Word?
 Death is com - ing, hell is mov - ing— Can you bear to let them go?
 Will you help the trem-bling mour-ners Who are strug-gling hard with sin?
 Let us love and pray for sin - ners Till our God makes all things new.



All is vain un - less the Spir - it Of the Ho - ly One comes down;
 See our fa - thers and our moth - ers And our chil-dren sink - ing down;
 Tell them all a - bout the Sav - ior—Tell them that He will be found;
 Then He'll call us home to heav - en, At His ta - ble we'll sit down;



Breth-ren, pray, and ho - ly man - na Will be show-ered all a-round.
 Breth-ren, pray, and ho - ly man - na Will be show-ered all a-round.
 Sis - ters, pray, and ho - ly man - na Will be show-ered all a-round.
 Christ will gird Him-self and serve us With sweet man - na all a-round.

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1) Is a preacher/teacher obligated to write? What are some of the benefits of them doing so?

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Pastor
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At various times in my early life as a preacher/pastor, I have run into some other pastors that have rejoiced unto me about preaching without a written outline. The obvious joy of such a feat was understandable, even as I cringed inside with fear. What would I do without an outline, I thought?! How would I ever be able to do that? However, in time I have grown (more mature) and found that so many of my written outlines were not always what I was supposed to preach that particular day. In fact, so many times I had never even gotten through my first point because the Lord was giving so much instruction in that wondrous passage that I never made it to my second and third points. Not being constrained by “the points” and letting the Holy Spirit control the whole message, I began to understand (to a degree) what those joyful, note-less preachers had been glowing about. Selah! Think about it!

But pastor’s notes and outlines, and eventually even devotionals and articles (perhaps in such a paper as this) are as varied as the pastors are themselves. I have seen plenty of my dad’s sermons (Eld. Dan Stepp) outlined on a filing card, or the back of an envelope, where he had scratched down the verses

and thoughts that the Lord was using to give him a sermon to one of His precious flocks! How marvelous! Other preachers, you can watch as they turn over page after page of typed up notes, until they get to the last page and fold it carefully back up into their Bible and finish delivering the Word of God given to them by the Holy Ghost! Some will have all their points alliterated and have catchy titles so that the sermons will be more easily remembered and make more of an impact in the lives of the congregants. That is awesome, too!

Many of these written sermons have been passed down through the years in book form, such as Charles Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards, and have been a blessing to not only their own generation but many yet to be born! How amazing is that? The writings of the early church fathers have been used to validate the King James Version’s root textus receptus because they universally quoted scriptures that were Byzantine text sources and not the corrupted texts from later perversions, from which so many of the heretical polyglot English translations have had their sources. How wonderful that the written sermons of God’s pastors have such a varied and manifold value!

But not every pastor or teacher is meant to write. I imagine that there are many humble pastors of bygone days that had little enough education to do much more than read and proclaim God’s holy manuscripts! But the grace was sufficient for the work at hand, praise God! As I review my own education,

I am amazed that the Lord has led me to write as much as I personally have. Certainly, it is a burden that I must answer, and it is with joy that I take up the proverbial pen (and start typing!). **“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work”** (I Tim. 3:1). Certainly, there are others “much” more qualified to write. And when I read after some of the more educated men of God in our ranks, I quail sometimes and feel unworthy enough to consider quitting. But then the Lord has not called me to scholarly research writing, if I can call it that. Certainly, there is a need for scholarly writing, and God has called His appropriate men for that task. It is with great joy that I read and grow and learn after them. But, I have to be honest, some of it goes over my head. That is where I have to write down some questions and passages to go back and pray and study over. It is a worthy task, these marvelous scriptures of God, that have such depth and glorious truths!

So, there is also a need for scriptural writing that does not “go over our heads.” The plain truth? Perhaps but really the whole picture cannot be expressed in one gospel. So God had four different saints write four different accounts, so that we would have a fuller picture. And that gets us back to our original premise that God has different pastors for different works. However, the Lord leads your ministry, be faithful in it! If it is preaching, then preach! Writing, then write! Leading, then lead! Following, then follow! **“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified**

through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (I Pet. 4:10-11). Selah! Think about it!

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I do not believe that a preacher/teacher is obligated to write: they must be led or moved to do so by the Spirit of God. **“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”** (II Pet. 1:21).

I surely do not write because I feel obligated to do so; if that were the case, I never would. When the Spirit of God leads me to write on a certain subject, I must do it or I will go absolutely nuts until I get it down on paper.

When I was newly ordained, I remember having a conversation with Elder Tom Ross: I stated to him I would like to write, and he asked me what I wanted to write about, and I had no idea, just that I had the desire to do so; of course, I did not want to be a preacher either, but I had the desire to do so. **“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work”** (I Tim. 3:1).

I do not consider myself to be some great writer either: Brother Ross is a far superior writer than myself, so it comes down to if a person has a desire to do so or not, and I just feel led at times to do so. I never intended to write a book, but I was led to do so as well.

Not to be cruel here, but some writers I have read after should have kept their pens in their pockets. Maybe they think

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2) Should every Christian truly sing? Please offer Scriptural proof as needed.

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The members of Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church where I have pastored for thirty years probably are hoping that I will answer "No, not all Christians should sing, especially Brother Tom Ross!" I am not much of a singer, but I love to lift up my voice and make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

I know that when the Lord saved my soul from the dregs of sin and depravity He put a new song in my mouth as set forth in Psalm 40:2-3: "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD." From these verses it appears that God makes singing saints out of those whom He has saved and uses their joyful song and testimony to recommend His grace to others.

The Psalms are full of admonitions for the saints of God to sing praises to the Lord for who He is and for what He has done as an act of worship. "O Sing unto the LORD, a new song: sing unto the LORD all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day" (Psa. 96:1-2). "O sing unto the LORD a new song; for

he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen... Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise" (Psa. 98:1-2, 4). "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing" (Psa. 100:1-2; cf. 101:1; 105:1-3; 108:1-3; 146:1-2; 147:1; 149:1-4).

It appears that God uses psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in the believer's sanctification process. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:16-17).

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as He met with His church just before His betrayal and crucifixion, He led them in song according to Mark 14:26 and Hebrews 2:12: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives... Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." It is significant that Jesus and His first church sang

an hymn to conclude the first observance of the Lord's Supper and just before He was betrayed and crucified which was the most significant event in human history. Jesus led them in song, which leads me to believe that He emphasized the importance of singing!

After Paul and Silas had been beaten and imprisoned for Gospel preaching we find them in a dank, dark prison cell lifting up their hearts in prayer and song: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25).

Those who are saved by sovereign grace, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit will be found singing in the glorified state as they look forward to reigning with Christ on the earth during the Millennium according to Revelation 5:9-10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

From all of the above I would have to answer the question in the affirmative. God's people have much to sing about and praise God for! We all may not be able to do it skillfully, but we can all do it joyfully!

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Yes, I believe every Christian truly should sing "Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God

of Jacob" (Psa. 81:1). "O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (Psa. 95:1-2). "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise" (Psa. 98:4).

The word "sing" is in the Bible 119 times. If you do not have a computer, then get you a Strong's or Young's Concordance (every Baptist should have a Concordance) and look up the word "sing"!

Allow me to tell you a little story. When I was in organized religion as a youth, I was in the choir (I love to sing). One Sunday, the youth choir was to sing with the adult choir; as we came together to practice, I was by my dad who was a beautiful singer, and he turned to me and said, "You can not sing." Well that was it; I had such a fear for people to hear me sing I quit and left the choir and could hardly sing around anyone.

When the Lord saved me and put me in a Baptist Church, I loved those old hymns, but I barely would sing because of what my dad said. Some folks like my wife and my mother over the years told me I had a beautiful voice, I would laugh and say, sure I do. Then I read in Hebrews 2:12, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

So, now I sing out; if you do not like to hear it, then I can not help you. I am not singing to you. I am singing to my Lord! I remember my first pastor: he could not carry a tune in a basket, but he would throw back his head and sing out, I would just smile and praise God, and you should do the same. I think of him singing

Forum Question #1

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they can write, but cannot; and if you are not led to write, do not! I am convinced here lately some are writing for popularity, which to me is the wrong reason to do so. The nice thing about it though is if you do not like the writer, no one is twisting your arm to read after them.

I love to read certain Poetry and I would love to write more, but if the Lord does not give it to me, I can not write a poem, no matter how much I love to. I love the poems the late Kathryn Parrish wrote: now I believe she wrote from the heart and was led to do so. God Bless!

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No, I do not believe that preachers/teachers are obligated to write. Not everybody is cut out for the writing ministry. Most preachers have a written outline that they refer and preach from. However, that is not the same as writing a manuscript, an exposition, or an article about a subject. This question puts me in mind of a dear preacher friend and faithful pastor for many years, the late Elder Harry Balmer. One time as I was getting ready to preach at a Bible Conference we both were at, I was carrying three ring bound notebooks containing some of my handwritten sermons, Bro. Harry shouted out "Here comes the noted preacher!" I chuckled and was a little bit embarrassed. 90% of the time I use detailed notes, and on rare occasions I preach extemporaneously. However,

I remember Brother Balmer oftentimes going to the pulpit with a few scriptures scribbled on what looked like a grocery receipt! He would preach for 45 minutes in full command of his subject matter, quoting Scripture from memory, and preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit. He was raised on Buffalo Creek and grew up in the church I pastor. I doubt if he ever wrote an article in his life, yet he was a powerful preacher and a faithful pastor. Written notes just did not fit Brother Balmer. God molds men in different ways for use in the ministry. We all just do not fit in one single mold or style.

Certainly there are many benefits of preachers writing. When a preacher writes an article, an exposition, or a book it benefits him spiritually. There is a lot of study, work, editing, and proofreading that goes into writing and putting out the finished product. Writing helps me in my preparation to preach the Word. It helps me to memorize Scripture. I have found that I often times do my best thinking and meditating when I am engaged in the process of writing. It gives me greater liberty in preaching due to the fact that I have prayed over, read, and reread my printed manuscript several times before entering the pulpit. By the time I preach the sermon I am thoroughly immersed in the text and the subject matter.

Another benefit of preachers writing is it a way to put down in words what they believe and teach. One of the reasons why I started writing was because I wanted my wife and children to know exactly what I believe. When you put something in print there is something definitive about it. When I am long gone my family and friends will be able to access what I believed about God, the Gospel, the way of salvation, the doctrines of grace, the church, the Second Coming,

various books of the Bible, and the practical experience of Christian living.

The writings of godly men can have great influence for good and can be a blessing to many folks long after they are gone to be with the Lord. Elder Milburn Cockrell, long time editor of the Berea Baptist Banner, and pastor of several churches during his ministry has gone on to be with the Lord, but his writings are still blessing the hearts and minds of Baptists all over the world! Brother Cockrell was a tireless writer who persevered in the writing ministry right up to the time the Lord took him home. He was used of God to print articles and books about a variety of Biblical subjects. Several other writers have blessed my heart through the years: John Gill, Matthew Henry, A.W. Pink, J.R. Graves, C.H. Spurgeon, John Flavel, Thomas Brooks, Thomas Manton, John Owen, John Bunyan, John T. Christian, William Cathcart, W.A. Jarrell, Thomas Armitage, Abraham Booth, J.M. Pendleton, Norvelle Robertson, John MacArthur, J.C. Rye, Henry Morris, Ken Ham, John Walvoord, H.A. Ironside and many more too numerous to list.

Though preachers are not obligated to write, it is a blessing when they do. In so doing they open up their heart, mind, and soul about precious truths found in the Holy Scriptures. They can be used of the Lord to bless many souls through the distribution of the printed page. May God be pleased to raise up more sound Baptists to preach and write about the truth as it is in Jesus!



Forum Question #2

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out many times, and I still just smile.

Should every Christian truly sing? Absolutely! In closing, so we are clear, it does not mean you have to stand in front of the congregation and sing a solo (I did that a couple of times, I have sung Psalms 47 twice, not sure it was in tune, but I was led to do it), but you should definitely sing with the congregation. God Bless!

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"Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel. ...Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted" (Isa. 44:23/49:13).

There are many Hebrew/Greek words that mean singing/shouting/praising. Often used in context with rejoicing, praising, worshiping and hallelujahs, they are also used in context with harps, psalteries, trumpets, and all manner of musical instruments. In those contexts, it is surely a documentary of singing saints and a singing creation of God! As I look past our fleshly trials upon this earth, there are three primary characteristics that God has prepared for us. The first is love. That God would prepare a relationship of tenderness, compassion, and marriage for us is truly glorious and something to sing about! The second and probably the hardest to grasp, but when properly understood,

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Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 12) ♦

the very foundation for all other gifts of God, is holiness. This righteous characteristic is the underlying nature of God, wherein all promises and our very future is based, unchanging and immutable! Certainly, something to sing about! The third is joy. And I believe that the laughter and rejoicing of God's people will be the primary evidence and predominant trait of the perfection of glorious Heaven. Singing? Whistling, while we work? Humming a joyful tune? Just bellowing out a wondrous song of glory? It will happen all the time in eternity's halls of glorious joy, love, and holiness! Selah! Think about it!

Singing and dancing? Singing and dancing! Our properly (and formerly?) prudish society in Baptist America has had to mostly refrain from public and open dancing, because of the perverting and Satanic influences that has transformed it into a sinful, lustful, and carnal stumbling-block. But I long for the day when the music will be godly, the lyrics will be godly, and we can dance with the unfettered joy of David! **"And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting (singing!), and with the sound (music) of the trumpet"** (II Sam. 6:14-15). Kind of brings to memory the pictures of "V-E Day" (Victory in Europe Day) at the conclusion of the last great war and how when the "boys came home!" the streets were filled with love, peace, and rejoicing! Dancing in the streets! Hallelujah! When the Lord calls us home, how the streets of Heaven will be filled with glorious singing and dancing on golden

streets!

In Bethlehem, at the birth of Christ, we find the sky filled with singing angels: **"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"** (Luke 2:13-14). If the English word "singing" is not used, in the Greek, the word for "saying" is "lego" and is used also in Revelation 5:9 where the English word "sung" is indeed used in context, much as the word "praising" is, in our Luke-referenced angelic choir... **"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy...!" "Speaking (singing!) to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing (speaking!) and making melody in your heart to the Lord"** (Eph. 5:19). The saints are not just "humming," and neither are we to be...! They are singing "words"...! How long has there been singing in God's creation? Well, in Job 38:7, at the creation of the foundations of the Earth (surely before the sixth day of man's creation!) is recorded (the first?) singing: **"When the morning stars (chief angels) sang together, and all the sons of God (the entire chorus of angels) shouted for joy."** **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"** (Gen. 1:1). The angels were likely created/translated in the first verse of the Bible and it is chronicled (by God) that they sang with fervent joy!

Simply put, the heavens sing (Isa. 44:23), the trees sing (I Chron. 16:33), the dawn/dusk sings (Ps. 65:8), men sing (Ps. 149), waste places sing (Isa. 52:9), pastures/valleys sing (Ps. 65:13), all that is in heaven and earth sing (angels, too!) (Jer. 51:48), and even God sings (Zeph. 3:17). Why in the world would anyone logically conclude that God would create any aspect of His creation that would be incapable or non-

desirous of singing? Praise ye the Lord! Selah! Sing about it!



Total Depravity

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out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:8-17).

It was in the garden that Adam was to lead his family in worshipping God. What does it mean to worship? Today we hear folks throw this word around without caution. "Song worship," "praise worship" and so on... The actual word worship is referencing a posture, not necessarily a practice. It means to bow down to the will of. If we are bowing down to the will of God, we are then abstaining from all appearances of evil (I Thess. 5:22). If Adam were leading properly in worship in his home, then we would not read the following in Genesis 3:6, **"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit**

thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Eve failed to put His will first and rather...found the tree to be "good" that was commanded for us to abstain from. Adam hearkened and ate as well. Where was the will of the Father? Where was their reverence of the Lord? **"..unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"** (Gen. 3:17-19). We, thus, are found to be fallen from our original estate as we were found to be rebellious against God's will for us. **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"** (Rom. 5:12).

Let us now look at where this leaves us. We are now dependent upon that great "lest" of Genesis chapter three: **"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life"** (Gen. 3:22-24). Do you remember when you were a

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Total Depravity

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kid and you were looking to some great event or reward, but being depraved, you just could not obey long enough to get there? Mom or dad would say "No, you have disobeyed, and you have lost this great pleasure. Unless you do [such and such] you will not see that great pleasure again." This was a great mercy of your mother and father to still allow for there to be a way, was it not? Jesus, that Bread of life (John 6) said in Luke 11:9-13 "...Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

At the conclusion of the sentencing there in Genesis 3, God's holy council comes together right away to discuss God's mercy. Oh, how we should rejoice that there was a strait gate left open. Past the Cherubims...past the flaming sword...granting access to the pleasures of God through that "Tree of life". "...Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great

and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory

and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse [Direct reference to the curse of Genesis 3 due to the fall of man in Adam]: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 21:9 - 22:5).

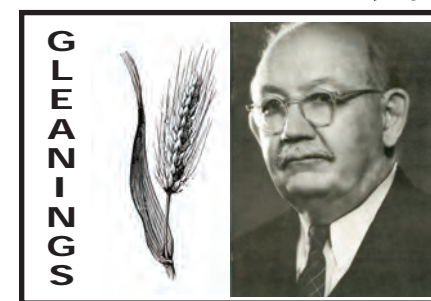
Eden had an earthly river (Gen. 2:10-14 which we made reference to early in this writing); but here we have a wonderful heavenly river. The tree of life in Eden was guarded after man sinned (Gen. 3:24); but here the heavenly tree of life is available to God's people.

Through the fall of the first Adam, we were forced to leave the original paradise and labor for our daily bread; but through the death and resurrection of the second (Jesus Christ), men are seen here serving God and see His face in perfect fellowship. When the first Adam sinned, we became slaves and lost our kingship; but Revelation 22:5 indicates that this

kingship will be regained, and we shall reign with Christ, Who was sinless but died for the sins of all the elect, forever!

The present creation is not God's final product. It is groaning and travailling under the bondage of sin. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:18-23).

If you are born again, you have been spiritually regenerated; we now look to the regeneration of these vile bodies!



God's Sovereignty
By Eld Ben M. Bogard
"...The Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:6).

I. This text is a prophecy of the final glorious triumph of the Lord. The final success of our cause, and the final triumph of

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Gleanings

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God over evil is the optimistic note in the Bible. Appearances are discouraging. The devil is supreme in the affections of the people now, but the devil will one day be bound and the Lord's reign will be undisputed.

The Lord is coming to take the world for Himself. **"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats"** (Matt. 25:31).

II. *There is a sense in which the Lord is sovereign now.* All the powers of evil operate by His permission, and all earthly rulers rule by His permission. When He has wrought His purpose with them they shall cease. Just why God permits evil and evil doers is beyond our comprehension, but He has set the limit for all evil forces. Thus far they can go and no further. **"There met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time"** (Matt. 8:28-29)?

Earthly kings rule by God's permission. **"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth"** (Prov. 8:15-16). God has decreed civil government, and this means that some must be in authority. Those who hold positions of power should recognize God and if they fail to do so, their downfall is certain. When Herod forgot God and arrogated to himself divine power he was stricken by

the angel of God and was eaten of worms (Acts 12:21-23). The greater the height the worse the fall. So with Nebuchadnezzar and Belteshazzar (Dan. 4th and 5th chapters).

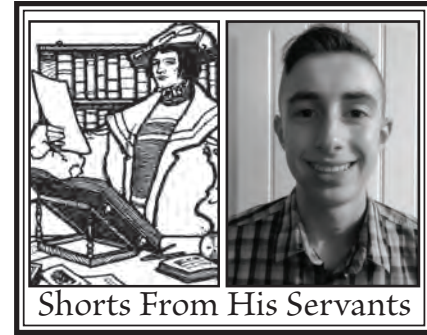
These devils recognized the Lord and His power over them and they realized that their time was short, and that they must be cast into torment. Even the devils were subject to the Lord. Why does not God kill the devils? Such a question is prying into the hidden mysteries of the Lord. When they shall have served God's providential purpose they will be cast down into Hell. Those who serve the devil are serving only a temporary ruler whose reign must cease and his kingdom come to ruin. The pleasures of sin are but for a season, and the season will be wonderfully short. Those who serve God may suffer some inconvenience for a time, but their prosperity will be eternal.

III. *The Lord is the Sovereign of His people.* He is our "Bishop." We acknowledge no other ruler in spiritual affairs. We owe allegiance to God first. **"We ought to obey God rather than man"** (Acts 5:29). These words of Peter clearly declare our attitude. Some people obey their wives or their husbands or their parents or their children, in order to have united families. A true child of God would rather die than to betray his Lord in any such manner. It is related in *Menzel's History of Germany*, that a priest came to the king (Theodorich) and in order to please him proposed to adopt the religion of the king. The king ordered the priest to be beheaded, because if "he was a traitor to the King of kings, he would be a traitor to Theodorich." If all such traitors were put to death now we should need more undertakers to bury the dead. The man who shapes his creed to suit the company he is in is a traitor to God.

IV. *We are taught to pray for*

the triumph of the Lord's Kingdom. In the Lord's model prayer we are taught to say, **"Thy Kingdom come..."** (Matt. 6:10). This does not mean for us to ask that the kingdom come into existence, but it means that we want the kingdom to come in triumph. It is already in existence, but will triumph when the Lord descends from Heaven with a shout. "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

(*Baptist and Commoner*, September 20, 1922).



With God All Things Are Possible

By Brother Colton Hornsby

"But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

In the verses before, Jesus is talking to the rich young ruler about eternal life. Jesus said in verse 21 **"...If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."** When the young ruler hears this, he walks away sorrowful, Jesus turns to the disciples, and in the following verses, we read: **"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God"** (Matt. 19:23-24).

When the disciples of Jesus heard this, they said in verses 25 and 26: **"When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."** This is a very true verse!

"Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:38-44). This passage is very good for our subject. For Lazarus to walk or do anything again would have been impossible! **"...but with God all things are possible."**

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much

♦ (Continued on page 16)

Shorts From His ...

(Continued from page 15) ♦

perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words" (Luke 24:1-8). This is the most impossible task ever. Nobody can do this, but again, like Jesus said, "...with God all things are possible."



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Points to Ponder

Points to Ponder: Two World Views

By Elder Perry Ames

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

It is important to recognize that there are two world views. At the core of every person's belief it will be discovered that their beliefs will fit into one or the other of these two world views. I will admit that many times it is difficult to recognize which world view a person subscribes to, but knowing who the author is of each of the two world views will help one to recognize which world view an individual subscribes to.

God is the author of the first world view. God moved and inspired holy men of old to pen His inerrant, infallible Holy Word. **"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation"** (II Pet. 1:20). Remember the Bible, God's Word, has never been proven wrong. Why is that? Because God knows everything and cannot lie.

Satan is the author of the second world view. Satan is a liar and the father of lies and liars. Jesus said, **"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"** (John 8:44). He lied to our first parents Adam and Eve. Satan told Eve that they would be as gods. That was the first lie. That lie is the underlying basis of the second world view and the purpose behind the lie is to steal God's glory.

God created all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible. But the "Big Bang" theory says everything created itself. Darwin's book *"The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection for the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life and The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex"* has as its theme **"...ye shall be as gods..."** (Gen. 3:5), for according to Darwin's lie man created himself. Darwin's evolution is a soul-damning religion straight from Satan himself.

Point to Ponder: Have you ever seen anything create itself or an explosion that put anything in order? That is what evolutionists and their "Big Bang" theory claim happened. Can this be believed by a true Christian?



Baptist History



Taken from *This Day in Baptist History*
Written by E. Wayne Thompson and David L Cummins

A SNOWSTORM THAT CHANGED A LIFE

By David L. Cummins

II Timothy 3:10-17

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born in 1834, the second of ten children born to Pastor John Spurgeon and his wife. For a number of years in his childhood, young Charles lives with his grandparents in Stambourne, England, where his grandfather, Elder James Spurgeon, was the minister of the Congregational (Independent) Church. Up to the age of sixteen, the young man had no real assurance of salvation, though he had thought deeply of Christian doctrine. Then, on the first Sunday in January, 1850, a snowstorm kept him from visiting a certain church toward which he had started, and he entered a little Primitive Methodist building with about twelve other worshippers. The scheduled speaker could not keep his appointment, and one of the men attempted to preach. The text was Isaiah 45:22, **"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."** Soon the preacher exhausted his thoughts but looking straight at young Spurgeon, he cried: "Young man, you look very miserable! You always will be miserable---miserable in life and miserable in death, if you don't obey my text: but if you obey now, this moment you will be saved. Young man, look to Jesus! Look! Look! Look! You have nothing to do but to

look and live."¹

Young Spurgeon heard, not the voice of the inept preacher, but the voice of the Spirit of God and was gloriously saved. He wrote out a covenant with the Lord and signed it. In it he declared his intention of serving the Lord the rest of his life. His service began immediately. The young man remembered the time when as an unsaved youth he had determined "that if ever Divine grace should work a change in [him], [he] would be baptized."² But the closest Baptist pastor was eight miles away! He began to correspond with Elder W. W. Cantlow, and in time, a date was set for a baptismal service. In writing a sweet letter to his parents for permission to be immersed, young Spurgeon said, "As Mr. Cantlow's baptizing season will come round this month, I have humbly to get your consent, as I will not act against your will, and should very much like to commune next month. I have no doubt of your permission. We are all one in Christ Jesus; forms and ceremonies, I trust, will not make us divided."³ "He walked from New Market to Isleham, seven miles, on May 3rd, 1850, where Elder Mr. Cantlow buried him with Christ in baptism."⁴

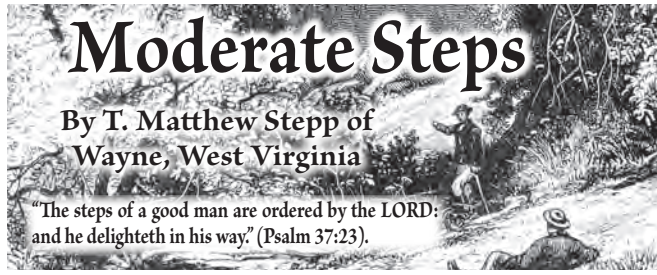
Some time later his mother said to him, "Ah, Charles! I often prayed the Lord to make you a Christian, but I never asked that you might become a Baptist." With his typical humor, Spurgeon replied, "Ah mother! The Lord

♦ (Continued on page 20)

Moderate Steps

By T. Matthew Stepp of
Wayne, West Virginia

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD:
and he delighteth in his way." (Psalm 37:23).



Selah! Think about it!
by Eld. T. Matthew Stepp
"And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked" (Acts 14:8-10).

Someone asked: "Was everyone that Christ (and the Apostles) healed saved?" 1) Obviously, not everyone that "witnessed" a miracle was saved: **"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done"** (John 11:45-46). Running in unbelief to the Pharisees, saying, "You are not going to believe what He did now! He is raising the dead...!" 2) Not everyone that participates in a miracle is saved. Christ repudiates any saving faith (grace) in the majority of the fed 5,000 in John 6:26-27, **"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you..."** 3) Saving faith is not always required at the performance of a personal act of healing. In John 9, the blind man was not saved until "after" the physical healing

and a time of separation between himself and the Lord. While being questioned by the leaders, parents and onlookers, he had no real answers of who healed him, except that **"...He is a prophet"** (vs.17), **"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see"** (25) and **He must be "of God"** (vs.33). But when Christ came to him personally in a soul-winning capacity, it had nothing to do with the previous miracle! **"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him"** (John 9:35-38).

4) But, will "all" those healed physically by the power of God be ultimately saved, even as the blind man? Would the Holy Ghost continue to convict Malchus every time he touched his healed ear and remembered the gracious words that emanated from our Saviour? I do not know, beloved reader! Sometimes I want to take that road and see the successful completion of every healing, with a duplicate interior spiritual healing by our Inimitable God. But honestly, the Bible does not say that. We can not go beyond Scripture and put God in any boxes not of His Own making. Does God answer our prayers and heal family members and friends in our midst still yet today? Are they all saved that are healed?

Are the miracles of healing in these days, any less miraculous? Any more power of God required to display them openly? A more personal touch? I think we must leave this same Immutable God as unchanging in His Sovereignty! If He chooses to save Malchus' ear but leave him to his natural state and destination of Hell, who on earth could deny that

Sovereign Authority? Likewise, if He chooses to ultimately save every soul that He has touched personally, then more Hallelujah's to His Sovereign Grace! Selah! Think about it!

Typically, there is a purpose in the healing. Many times it is truly the time of salvation, and it is to amplify the glory of God by
◊ (Continued on page 18)

Jesus Is Always There

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5).

When I was born into the world, Jesus was there.
When I was in peril, Jesus was there.
When I married my wife, Jesus was there.
When I was born again, Jesus was there.
When I was baptized into His Church, Jesus was there.
When I fought with God about my calling, Jesus was there.
When our daughter was born, Jesus was there.
When I was sick unto death, Jesus was there.
When I was at work, Jesus was there.
When I forsook my dear friend, Jesus was there.
When I was ordained, Jesus was there.
When I was in pain, Jesus was there.
When our parents died, Jesus was there.
When I cried on my pillow, Jesus was there.
When I said harsh words to my wife, Jesus was there.
When I was a missionary, Jesus was there.
When our granddaughter was born, Jesus was there.
When the church building was built, Jesus was there.
When my brethren forsook me, Jesus was there.
When church members forsook me, Jesus was there.
When church members loved me, Jesus was there.
When I prayed, Jesus was there.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

Through thick or thin, up, or down, Jesus Is Always There!!

-by Roger D. Reed



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER
Financial Report
5-1-2023 to 5-31-2023

Beginning Balance.....\$11,212.91

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 750.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI 50.00
The Lord's B. C., Goose Creek, SC 100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
S. G. B. C., Wellington, KS 200.00
Beauty Mtn. B. C., Edmond WV 50.00
Indore B.C., Indore, WV 300.00
Berea B.C., Stonington, IL..... 60.00
Big Creek B.C., Wayne, WV 200.00
Victory B. C., Courtland VA 25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin KY 100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen IN 100.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX 50.00
West Jefferson B. C., West Jefferson OH... 200.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY 45.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS..... 50.00
Briar Creek, Williamsburg, KY 150.00
S.G.M.B.C., Texarkana, TX 50.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME 100.00

Subscriptions 84.00
Anonymous 225.00
Div. Cks. 150.00
Sub Total..... \$3,264.00
TOTAL..... \$14,476.91

EXPENDITURES:

Postage: 843.24
Printing 459.10
Supplies 251.45
Wages 2,000.00
FICA 153.00
Total Expenditures \$3,856.79

ENDING BALANCE \$10,620.12



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST
Financial Report
5-1-2023 to 5-31-2023

Beginning Balance.....\$5,692.00

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 150.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg 100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA 100.00
..... 450.00
TOTAL.....6,142.00

EXPENDITURES:

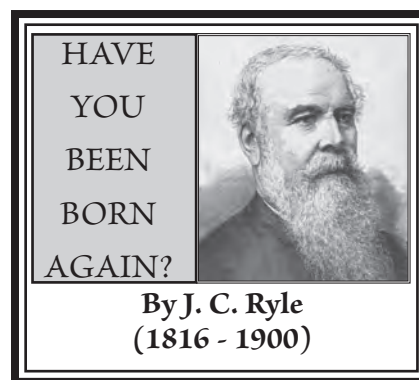
Radio time..... 363.98
Adobe 32.09
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 396.07
Interest +0.48
ENDING BALANCE \$5,746.41

Moderate Steps

(Continued from page 17) ♦

showing His power over physical disabilities as well as spiritual disability! **“Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed...”** (Mark 2:9-11).

“And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matt. 13:58). Speaking of Nazareth, the Lord indicates that the lack of faith is what predicates His miracles. But again, and conversely, we must realize that where the Lord intends to perform “many” miracles of healing, salvation or otherwise (Capernaum and the USA), “grace” will be the Sovereign prelude that prepares the scene for faith and healings! **“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John”** (John 1:6). Where He chooses to bring a revival, none will “ever” be able to resist and preclude His Sovereign Will! Selah! Think about it!



By J. C. Ryle
(1816 - 1900)

This is one of the most important questions in religion. Jesus Christ says: **“...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”** (John 3:3).

Are you born again? It is not enough to reply: “I belong to the church; and I suppose I am.” Thousands of nominal Christians have none of the marks and signs of being born again which the Scripture has given us.

Would you like to know the marks and signs of being born again? Give me your attention, and I will show them to you out of the first epistle of John.

First of all, John says: **“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...”**; and again, **“...whosoever is born of God sinneth not”** (I John 3:9; 5:18).

A man born again, or regenerated, does not commit sin as a habit. He no longer sins with his heart and will and whole inclination, as an unregenerate man does. There was probably a time when he did not think whether his actions were sinful or not, and never felt grieved after doing evil. There was no quarrel between him and sin; they were friends. Now sin no longer pleases him, nor is even a matter of indifference; it has become the abominable thing which he hates.

I place this mark before you. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Secondly, John says: **“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”** John 5:1. A man born again, then, believes that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour by whom his soul can be pardoned; that He is the divine person appointed by God the Father for this very purpose, and that beside Him there is no Saviour at all. In himself he sees nothing but unworthiness, but in Christ he sees ground for the fullest confidence, and trusting in Him he believes that his sins are all forgiven. He believes that his sins are all forgiven. He believes

that for the sake of Christ's finished work and death upon the Cross, he is reckoned righteous in God's sight, and may look forward to death and judgment without alarm. Depend upon it, though he may feel weak, he would not give up Christ for all the world.

I place this mark before you. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Thirdly, John says: **“...every one**

that doeth righteousness is born of him” (I John 2:29).

The man born again, or truly converted to Christ, then, is a holy man in his habits. He endeavors to live according to God's will, to do the things that please God, to avoid the things that God hates. His aim and desire are to love God with heart and soul and mind and strength and to love his neighbor as himself. No doubt he is not perfect. None will tell you that sooner than himself. And though he may sometimes feel discouraged, yet he will generally be able to say with old John Newton: “I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I trust to be, but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.”

I place this mark also before you. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Fourthly, John says: **“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren...”** (I John 3:14).

A man born again, then, has a special love for all true disciples of Christ. Like his Father in Heaven, he loves all men with a great general love, but he has a special love for those who are of one mind with himself. Like his Lord and Saviour, he loves the worst of sinners, and could weep over them; but he has a peculiar love

♦ (Continued on page 19)



Have you been ...

(Continued from page 18) ♦

for those who are believers. Those who have most grace, and are most like Christ, are those he most loves. He feels that they are his fellow - soldiers, warring against the same enemy. He understands them, and they understand him. He and they may be very different in many ways in rank, in station, and in wealth. What matters? They are Jesus Christ's people. They are his Father's sons and daughters. Then, he cannot help loving them.

I place this mark also before you. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Fifthly, John says: **"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world"** (I John 5:4).

A man who is born again does not make the world's opinion his rule of right and wrong. "What will men say?" is no longer a turning point with him. He overcomes the love of the world. He finds no pleasure in things which most around him call happiness. He cannot enjoy their pleasures: they weary him; they appear to him vain, unprofitable, and unworthy. He overcomes the fear of the world. They blame him: it does not move him. They ridicule him: he does not give way. He loves the praise of God more than the praise of men. He fears offending Him more than giving offence to man. He has counted the cost. It is a small thing with him now whether he is blamed or praised. He is no longer the servant of fashion and custom. His first aim is to please God.

I place this mark also before you. What would the apostle say about you. Are you born again?

Sixthly, John says: **"...he that is begotten of God keepeth himself..."** (I John 5:18).

A man born again is very careful of his own soul. He

endeavors not only to keep clear of everything which may lead to it. He feels that evil communications corrupt the heart, and that evil is far more catching than good, just as disease is more infectious than health. He is careful about the employment of his time: his chief desire about it is to spend it profitably. He is careful about the friendships he forms: it is not enough for him that people are kind and amiable and good-natured; all this is very well; but will they do good to his soul?

He finds by experience that his soul is ever among enemies, and he studies to be a watchful, humble, prayerful man.

I place this mark also before you. What would the apostle say about you. Are you born of God?

Such are the six great marks of being born again. Let everyone who has gone so far with me, read them over with attention, and lay them to heart. I know there is a vast difference in the depth and distinction of these marks in different people. In some they are dim, feeble, and hardly to be discerned. In others they are bold, sharp, clear, plain, and unmistakable, so that anyone may read them. All this I am quite ready to allow.

But still, after every allowance, here we find boldly painted, six marks of being born of God. Here is an inspired apostle writing one of the last general epistles to the Church of Christ, telling us that a man born of God does not commit sin, believes that Jesus is the Christ, does righteousness, loves the brethren, overcomes the world, and keeps himself. I ask the reader to observe all this.

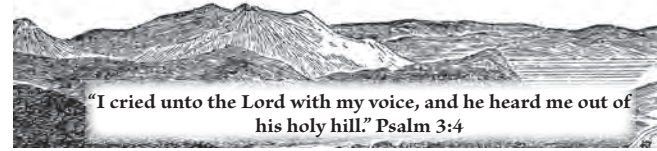
Dear friend, have you these marks? Are you born again?

(This article was originally published by The Baptist Examiner on July 4th 1981. Vol. 52, No. 27, Whole Number 2332)



Selahs

By Tomas Julius G. Salacup
Christological Baptist Mission
Vallejo, CA



Prove All Things
Elder Julius Salacup
"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21).

In our text, Paul instructs us to **"prove (test) all things,"** which would include our old ideas, and **"hold fast"** to the good ones that do. Many people make the mistake of stubbornly following the advice in Revelation 3:11 to "hold fast to what we have" and ignoring the advice in I Thessalonians 5:21 to test first.

Even if we have been sure of something for forty years, experience shows that not everything we think is true. We must always and carefully compare our views to the Bible, which is the only standard that matters (Acts 5:29).

People are lazy and always choose the easiest option. It will depend on human reasoning, the word of others, or tradition instead of doing the hard work of studying the Bible and believing what

it actually says. Also, it is not in people's nature to do the humble work of letting the Bible and its straightforward words prove things instead of following their own ideas. The past of the church over the last few decades shows what happens when we take doctrine for granted instead of letting the Bible explain

the truth.

Why do people have so many different views about what the Bible says? Most of the time, people go to the Bible with ideas already in mind and latch on to any verse that seems to back up what they believe. At the same time, they will ignore or downplay a clear text that clearly goes against what they believe.

God can use this as a test to see what people really want. Where does a person's true loyalty lie? Will a person follow God's clear directions and let them help him or her build a solid spiritual foundation (Deut. 8:2-3;

Psa. 149:4)? Or, will they choose to cling to their own ideas or those of other people, which the Bible calls "idols" (Rev. 21:8), while desperately grabbing at straws of unclear Bible verses to build a weak foundation?

When there are disagreements about doctrine, a red flag should go up if someone cannot or will not prove their views using clear,

unambiguous scriptures. Clear Bible verses are like a rock-solid base. Scriptures that can be interpreted in different ways by different people build on sand. When storms hit, only one of these bases will hold (Matt. 7:24-27). God have mercy upon us!



ILLUSTRATIONS & SCRIPTURES (BA04)



THE BEATITUDES

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."
(Matthew 5:6)

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Baptist History

(Continued from page 16) ♦

has answered your prayer with His usual bounty, and given you exceeding abundantly above what you asked or thought.⁷⁵

Spurgeon testified continually of the spiritual impact that his baptism had in his life, and soon afterwards he was preaching. Volumes have been written concerning his accomplishments, but perhaps the most important contribution he made to Baptists was the restoration of evangelism to its true place, as he made it the very center of his whole life's ministry!

(*This Day in Baptist History* By E. Wayne Thompson & David L. Cummins pp 180-181).

¹ Arnold A. Dallimore, *Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Company, n.d.), 1:122.

⁴ Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists* (1890; reprint ed., Watertown, Wis: Maranatha Baptist Press, 1976), p. 596.

⁵ Spurgeon, p. 69.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Grace Baptist Church of Gladwin, MI is seeking to start a mission work in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We are also seeking a sound preacher to go there. If you are interested and feel led of the Lord please contact Pastor Sam Wilson at 989-701-5564. You may also contact Brother Tom Coffee, who is currently working in the area at 843-254-3018.

This ministry currently has a blog written by Bro. Coffee that can be read online at <https://thefaithfulofgod.com/blog/>

The Maranatha Missionary Baptist Church located at 14460 Ravenna Avenue, Alliance, OH, 44601, is seeking a pastor. The church was organized in 1981 and currently has seven members that are grounded in sound Baptist doctrine. Any interested elder can contact Brother Denny Morgan at dennymatco@gmail.com or call (330) 324-3038.

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is

Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

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

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

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

Bethel Baptist Church, which is located at 2603 Penfield, Pasadena, TX 77506, is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders should call Brother Risinger at 832-564-6350 which is his cell phone or you can call him at home at 281-476-5099.

Bethel Baptist Church of Lawton, OK is looking for a pastor. They have been an independent, sovereign grace Baptist Church since the late 1950's and they are seeking to call a man of God to guide, lead, teach, and rebuild their modest congregation. If you are interested please contact Bennie Burnsed at 580-695-4473.

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, AL by God's grace is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Independent, Missionary, KJV Bible in faith and practice. If you desire a

copy of our Articles of Faith please let us know. Any interested Elder of like faith may contact: Glenn Gilbreath (256) 476-1033 or Mike Gibson (256) 303-7747.

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS is in search of a Pastor. Any interested Elder, of like faith and order, my contact us at 662-282-7794, or office@bereabaptistchurch.org for a pastoral questionnaire.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Brownsburg, Indiana is in need of a pastor. The church firmly believes in the Sovereignty of God, the doctrines of Grace and the perpetuity of the New Testament Church. Interested brethren should contact Chris Rainey at 317-727-4755.

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, AL will be hosting a Bible Conference September 22-24. Services begin Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 10 a.m., Noon meal, and 2:30 p.m.; Sunday at 10 a.m., Noon meal. Speakers will be: Elders Tony Vance, Timothy Hille, Jonathan Bailess, and Wilbert Ellis. If you are interested in worshipping with us and would like more information, please contact Bro. Glenn Gilbreath (256-476-1033) or Bro. Mike Gibson (256-303-7747). We meet at 202 Mill Rd., Decatur, AL. All are invited to attend for a joyous time of fellowship and preaching of the Word of God.

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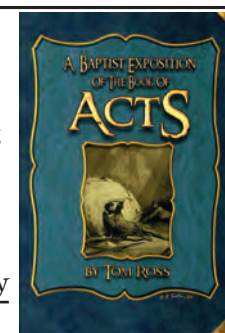
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