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The Blood

By Wayne Cox

Memphis, Tennessee

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives” (Matt. 26:26-28).

The 28th verse of this 26th Chapter of Matthew will suffice for the subject: “For this is my BLOOD of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

The subject under consideration is



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one that is timely and important inasmuch as it deals with the only thing that can cleanse, redeem, and save—that is the BLOOD of Jesus.

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The Doctrine of Adoption

By Wayne Bowling

Monticello, Kentucky

Introduction

The subject on which the author has set forth to write is one that has interested him for a number of years even though he had not, until this time, given himself to the study of it. He has known that the Scriptures teach that saved sinners are adopted by God into His own family. Perhaps adoption, as other Bible doctrines such as election, predestination, justification, glorification, etc., is not fully appreciated by the Bible student until it has been studied and examined by him.

An adopted child will have a greater measure of appreciation for his adopted parents when time, experience, and love by these parents have touched his being so as to open his understanding to the truth of what really took place in times past. Maybe you, dear reader, have been



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adopted. If so, this subject might interest you even more. If saved, you certainly have been adopted into God’s family.

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Noteworthy Statements about God's Irresistible Grace

By Bruce Oyena

Miles City, Montana

One of the five points of Calvinism is “irresistible grace.” This term means that those whom God has sovereignly chosen to save through faith in Jesus Christ will not, in fact cannot, ultimately resist His plan to save them. All God’s elect will hear the Gospel message, and will eventually have their resistance to it overcome by it so that they willingly and gladly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

This point of the five points of Calvinism, all of which are Scriptural, is resisted by many Christians because they find it difficult to believe that who gets saved is ultimately in the hands of God. But we must accept what the Bible teaches, even if it means we must adjust our theology accordingly.

The following quotes are from Christians who believed that God’s grace toward the elect is ultimately irresistible. It is hoped that reading them will strengthen those who already believe

this doctrine, and challenge those who do not to reconsider their view.

**BAPTIST PREACHER,
CHARLES SPURGEON**

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A Missionary Looks at the Commission

By Curtis Pugh

(in travel)

“Then the eleven disciples went away unto Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is

The Furnace of Affliction

By Milburn Cockrell

Mantachie, Mississippi

“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction” (Isa. 48:10).

The Bible has much to say about the afflictions of God’s people. Psalm 34:19 declares: **“Many are the afflictions of the righteous.”** It is sometimes necessary for God to put His people in the furnace of affliction. This act flows from both the justice and compassion of God. He does this to try and to prove His people. This was true of Israel of old

(Deut. 4:20), and it is equally true of the New Testament believer.

In the time of the Old Testament a “furnace” was a fireplace for melting and refining silver and gold (Prov. 17:3; 27:21). The word is used figuratively in the Scriptures. It is an emblem of cruel bondage (Deut. 4:20; I Kings 8:51; Isa. 11:4), or severe and grievous afflictions (Ezek. 22:18-22; Isa. 32:9). In my text it would seem to have the latter mean-

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Curtis Pugh

given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all

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"THOU HAST GIVEN A BANNER TO THEM THAT FEAR THEE, THAT IT MAY BE DISPLAYED BECAUSE OF THE TRUTH" (PSALMS 60:4).

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The Blood

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You hear people speak about the cross. The cross holds a fascination for many people, but there is nothing of a meritorious nature about the wooden cross upon which Jesus died, with this exception, it held the Son of God. Therefore it is not the cross that is so important, but the BLOOD that was shed upon the cross. That is the thing that is important; that is the thing we should learn more about—the blood of Jesus.

People in this modern age, the age of so-called enlightenment, have gotten way ahead of the Lord. The Bible has become to many an outmoded, outdated, book of Psalms. Then people hear something about the blood of Jesus, and they are quick to retaliate with, "That's a butcher-shop gospel." Call it what you will, term it a "butcher-shop gospel" if you please, but if there is one thing the Bible teaches, it is that **"without shedding of BLOOD is no REMISSION"** (Heb. 9:22).

Attack the blood of Jesus all you please, denounce it, deny it; yet it still stands as the only thing that remits sin.

Fifty years ago professing Christians were quite different than they are today. Fifty years ago if a man preached a sermon without exalting the blood of Jesus, without mentioning the blood of Christ in the message, people said he wasn't

preaching. But today it is revised; it has changed altogether. Today if a man preaches on the blood of Jesus, he is preaching that which is offensive. The Apostle Paul wanted the offense of the cross to continue and every Bible-loving, Christ-honoring member of the Lord's church and every God-called preacher of the Gospel ought to be willing for the offense of the cross to continue. Certainly one way to offend, is to preach on the blood of Jesus—the "butcher-shop gospel."

A man stood in a leading university, less than five years ago, and spoke to six hundred ministers, or supposed-to-be ministers, and said, "Boys, when you go out to preach, one thing I don't want you to mention is the blood of Jesus. There is no meritorious power in the blood of Christ, no more than in a hog's blood, and when you get up and talk about it you are only preaching a butcher-shop gospel."

He was heralded as one of the greatest religious men of this age. They held him in the highest esteem. They said, "He is an eloquent speaker, a wonderful Christian gentleman."

He was a rank infidel, that's what he was. It's a sin to call anything by the wrong name. Why beat the Devil around the stump, so to speak; why not come right out and call him what he is, what anyone is who denies the blood of Christ?

There are a number of things I want to say about the blood of Jesus—

I. IT WAS THE PRICE THAT WAS PAID FOR OUR PURCHASE

I've said this from the pulpit many times and I say it now again. The believer is not a free moral agent in the Arminian sense. People get the idea that life is their own, to do with as they please, to order after their own discretion. Beloved, that isn't true. Here is a text I want you to notice. I'm sure it has been read and heard many times without striking pay-dirt, without hitting home. I Corinthians 6:19, 20, Paul is talking to the church at Corinth: **"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of GOD, AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE BOUGHT with a PRICE: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."**

Brethren, you are not your own, you have been bought with a price, and you belong to God.

I have been purchased by the blood of Jesus, and it is not for me to order my life as I please. God has the authority to command, and it is for me to obey. Remember that friends, if you are saved, you are not your own, you belong to God. Paul said, "You no longer belong to yourself. You have been purchased, bought with a price. Then use that which

you have to glorify God; that is, your body and spirit."

You may raise the question this evening: "What WAS the PRICE that was paid?"

The PRICE, beloved, was the BLOOD of Jesus. Paul makes it so plain, talking to the Ephesian elders, pointing out to them their responsibilities as pastors and preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Acts 20:28: **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath PURCHASED with his own BLOOD."**

Purchased how? With His own blood. That's the price.

I fear a lot of people who claim to be the children of God, have missed the boat; they have failed to take into consideration that it was the blood of Jesus that purchased, bought, and set free. It's the BLOOD, that's the PRICE.

My salvation didn't cost me one thing in the world, but it came at a tremendous price, for it cost Heaven, Christ; God, His Son; and Christ, His blood.

II. IT IS THE BLOOD THAT IS THE BASIS FOR OUR REDEMPTION

People who claim to be Christians sometimes hug their children to their bosoms and say, "I love you best in the world." Wives put their arms around their husbands, and husbands their wives, and say, "Honey, I love you better than anything."

Listen, beloved, that isn't right. Christ has bought us, and to Him and Him alone belongs the best love of our hearts, for He has redeemed us. **"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold. . .but with the precious BLOOD of CHRIST, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"** (I Pet. 1:18-19).

There are three words used in the New Testament for redemption; *Agorazo*, which means to buy in the forum, or market-place.

The second word is *Exagorazo*, which means to buy out of the market-place, and set free. We were being auctioned off in the market-place as slaves to sin, but Jesus, by His Blood, bought us and forever set us free.

The third word used is *Lutroo* which means to pay the price and set free. Jesus paid the price and set us free, therefore we are now bond servants of the Master. He has the right to command and demand of me the best love of my heart.

Here in I Peter 1:18, 19 the Apostle Peter was talking to saved Jews, and they understood that under the law, men who were sold into slavery, if they could, would save enough money to redeem themselves from their masters. So he raises the question, how they were redeemed from sin, and tells them it was not with such corruptible things as sil-

ver and gold, but with the precious BLOOD of Christ. It was the BLOOD, he said, that redeemed.

Preachers, if you ever get up to preach and you suddenly forget everything you ever knew, if you can remember just one thing, it is the BLOOD that makes everything right. It is the BLOOD that saves, it is the BLOOD that redeems. If you never preach but one sermon in your whole life, let it be the blood of Jesus. Exalt the blood of Christ.

III. THE BLOOD IS THE BASIS OF OUR PEACE

When I was a young preacher-boy I made many mistakes, many blundering mistakes, in trying to win lost souls to Christ. I would approach a lost man and ask him if he wanted to make peace with God. Beloved, don't ever ask a lost man if he wants to make peace with God, for CHRIST has already made the PEACE. Peace is God's gift. Colossians 1:20: **"And, having made PEACE through the BLOOD of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself."** Who made the peace? JESUS. How? Through the BLOOD of His cross. It's the BLOOD. . .It's the BLOOD. . .It's the BLOOD.

You may say, then, "Brother Cox, if Jesus has already made the peace, and I am lost, how can I become the recipient of this peace with God?"

Through faith in Jesus, that's how. It's not in the church, nor church ordinances, your friends, neighbors, or loved ones. Man without Christ is an enemy of God. There is enmity between the man and God, but through the blood of the cross, the enmity has been slain, and through the blood man can become reconciled to God, and enjoy peace with God. It is the BLOOD all the way. Romans 5:1: **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have PEACE With God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."** Therefore the BLOOD is the basis of our PEACE.

Not only that—

IV. THE BLOOD IS THE CHANNEL OF OUR FORGIVENESS

I'd like to point out here that the forgiveness of sins is one of the most misunderstood subjects in the Bible. You have heard people tell the lost to get down on their knees and beg God to forgive them of their sins, that if you pray long enough and hard enough, God will remit the penalty for sins. That's human forgiveness, beloved, not Divine. Divine forgiveness is the execution of the penalty, and that penalty is death. Jesus died under the penalty. Divine forgiveness means the bearing away of sins, and men RECEIVE the forgiveness of sins. Ephesians 1:7: **"In whom we HAVE REDEMPTION through his BLOOD, the FORGIVENESS of sins, accord-**

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ing to the riches of his grace.” We have REDEMPTION. What else? FORGIVENESS is sins. We have it, we didn’t get it, it’s a gift.

The translation of the word “forgiveness” comes from a Greek word *Aphesus*, and means to bear up and bear away, to separate the sins from the sinner. Fifteen times it is found in the New Testament. Six times it is rendered “forgiveness,” and nine times it is rendered “remission,” but it always means the same thing, to bear up and to bear away.

Paul talking to King Agrippa, told him how that God had called him to preach to the Gentiles to open their eyes and turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan, unto God, that they might RECEIVE the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ. In Christ, you see, you RECEIVE it. In Acts 10:43 the Apostle Peter says the same thing to the household of Cornelius: **“To him (Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall RECEIVE remission of sins.”**

You receive it, don’t you see? You don’t get it, for this expression carries with it an implication you have done something to earn forgiveness of sins.

The BLOOD of JESUS is the CHANNEL of our FORGIVENESS. . . The blood of Jesus was shed and Jesus paid for our sins. The old debt was settled on the cross, thus we who believe on Jesus, can sing as in that old song. “The Old Account Was Settled Long Ago.” IT’S the BLOOD, don’t you see? It’s the blood.

Beloved, may I say this as tenderly and as kindly as I know how: anything, ANYTHING, that detracts from the blood of Christ and its power is a dangerous thing. May you always have before you this one great cardinal fact: it is the BLOOD of JESUS CHRIST that saves, cleanses, sanctifies, purifies and redeems.

Here is another thing—

V. CHRIST’S BLOOD PROVIDES THE LIBERTY OF OUR ACCESS TO GOD

No man without the merits of Christ’s blood has the right to approach God. He is not God’s child. He has nothing wherewith to plead his own cause before God. He must have the blood of Christ. “Watch it now,” you say, “Brother Pastor, I can’t accept that.” Well, let’s see what God’s Word says. Hebrews 10:19-20: **“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the BLOOD of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”**

Paul said by the blood of Jesus we have access into the Holiest. Who dwells in the Holy Place? God. Who has access to the holy place? Only those who come by the blood of Jesus. Every saved person in the world can talk to God, can plead with God, can communicate with God, because he does it on the merits of the blood of Jesus, the blood of the Lamb of God. Therefore the BLOOD of Jesus provides the liberty of our ACCESS to God.

VI. THE BLOOD OF JESUS IS OUR CERTAINTY OF OVERCOMING

I talked to a man a long time ago on the campus of the Baptist Hospital. He was a retired minister. I had gone there to take a patient, and his wife was in the hospital. We were discussing the Bible, and he said, “Brother Cox, I’m afraid the Lord’s church will eventually lose her identity.”

I said, “That won’t do because the Lord Himself gives the marching orders, and has promised to be with her always, and the council of the unseen world shall not prevail against her. Therefore she will never lose her identity.”

He said he was afraid a lot of God’s people would not overcome, that they would succumb to temptation and be drowned out.

I said, “Every child of God will overcome, because the blood of Christ makes it so.”

You watch it now. I said a moment ago that the blood of Christ is our certainty of overcoming all things and we shall walk in the sunlight of the presence of Jesus Christ, having been made as pure as the blood of Jesus can make us, having overcome. Notice Revelation 3:21: **“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”**

Who is the man that overcomes? The Apostle John had this to say in I John 5:4, 5: **“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that OVERCOMETH the world, but he that BELIEVETH that Jesus is the Son of God?”**

You may say, “That’s fine, that’s good, but my faith may grow weak.”

But you know, beloved, *faithful is He who promised* (Hebrews 11:11).

But here is the one that climaxes and proves the certainty of our overcoming: Revelation 12:11, **“And they OVERCAME him by the BLOOD of the LAMB.”**

We are victorious through the blood of the Lamb of God. Don’t talk to me about a man who believes in Christ not overcoming. He shall walk victorious into the presence of God, because the BLOOD sustains him. Through the BLOOD we are victorious. We over-

come by the blood of the Lamb.

VII. THE BLOOD OF JESUS IS THE MEANS OF OUR CLEANSING EVERY DAY

I John 1:7: **“but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the BLOOD of JESUS CHRIST his Son CLEANSETH us from all sin.”**

You see, friends, it is a continuing, present tense, CLEANSING. The BLOOD is always there to cleanse from sin. It’s continuous. It’s there all the time.

Don’t you see what the blood does? It saves us, it purifies us, and cleanses us from daily sins. It’s the blood of Jesus, and not anything else.

And here is another thing—

VIII. THE BLOOD TAKES US ON TO HEAVEN AND IS THE THEME OF OUR PRAISE

I love to hear gospel hymns as well as anyone I know. I love to hear men sing, who know the One they are singing about. The blood will be the theme of our praise in the “by and by.”

Revelation 5:9-10: **“And they SANG 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.”**

They sing about the blood of Jesus; it is a victorious song. That’s why we love to sing the old hymn:

“There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.”

You want to know what you’ll be doing on the other side? You’ll be singing about the blood of Jesus, that’s what you will be doing. “And they SANG a new song, and said, Thou art worthy; Thou wast slain to redeem us: by thy blood, by thy blood, thou hast redeemed us.”

“Thy blood has made us become priests of God.

“Thy blood has made it possible to reign with thee on earth.

“Thy blood has saved us.

“Thy blood hast sanctified us. Thy BLOOD, thy blood, O Lord, thy blood!”

How many people realize, when they read the Word of God, that God is speaking to their hearts? How many people read about the blood of Jesus Christ and exult in the knowledge that they have been redeemed with that precious blood? How many people read the trial of Jesus, in Gethsemane, as we see Him there on His knees, as His pores open and He

sweats great drops of blood, and forever hallows the place where He kneels—how many people read that and cry out, “Oh, Lord Jesus of Calvary, all that suffering for me!” How many read and think about the Word of God as they ought? They think of church membership, rituals, ceremonies, thus and so, but it is the BLOOD. It has always been the BLOOD and throughout all eternity it will always be the BLOOD of JESUS CHRIST.

Oh, if I could only make you realize it’s the blood, beloved, that saves and you become the recipients of the power of the blood of Jesus, through faith in His blessed and holy name. Then you can say with the poet of old, “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling,” wash me and free me in the blood of Christ. Amen.

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“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies with Christ; according as he chose us in him before (the) foundation of (the) world, for us to be holy and blameless before him in love; having predestinated us for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to (the) praise of (the) glory of his grace, wherein he made us objects of grace in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of offenses, according to the riches of his grace which he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in himself for (the) administration of the fullness of times to head up all things in the Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him, in whom also we obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, for us to be to (the) praise of his glory; who have fore-trusted in the Christ.”¹

This writer agrees with Herbert Lockyer who recorded: “. . . little is said in theological books on such an important gospel truth. Much can be gathered on regeneration, but its twin truth ‘adoption’ is dispensed with. Should it be? Is it not a definite part of the whole counsel of God? Prime aspects of a divine revelation are connected with adoption.”²

THE ORIGIN OF ADOPTION

Under the origin of adoption this writer purposes to discuss it from three aspects: (1) the definition of it; (2) the person of it; and (3) the time of it.

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The definition of it - The term is from the Greek language and is *Huiiothesia*. According to W. E. Vine, *Huiiothesia* is "from *huios*, a son, and *thesis*, a placing, akin to *tithemi*, to place, signifies the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong. The word is used by the Apostle Paul only" (the New Testament).³

The person of it—According to the text from Ephesians Chapter One, it is God who has set those, who are called saints, into his family and made them sons. **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who . . . in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children"** (Eph. 1:3a, 4c, 5a). This one is the Creator of the universe and all therein; the one whom Paul the Apostle would eulogize. The word "blessed," the first word in verse three, is where we get the term eulogy or eulogize, which means to speak well of as might be done concerning a deceased one.

Paul identified the person of adoption as being "Father," the one in whose family the Ephesian saints had been placed as well as Paul himself. Paul's heart overflowed with praise to God. He had to eulogize the Father, the person who adopted him into the heavenly family.

The time of it—Paul said that the predestination to adoption of children took place **"before the foundation of the world."** He, in pinpointing the time our adoption took place, used three words, *pro katabolas kosmou*, i.e., before the casting down (as of a foundation) on which to lay something or build upon. Before speaking into existence the universe and world order, yes, even before the time ages began, God in His infinite counsel chose to predestinate unto Himself adoption of children.

One's finite mind cannot fathom eternity past, being bound to time as it is, but the regenerated heart can by faith embrace the glorious truth that God wanted some adopted children, and that He prepared the adoption papers before world order came about. Before the children were born, He set in order a plan which He is bringing to pass.

THE MEANS OF ADOPTION

By means of predestination - **" . . . In love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children. . ."** (Eph. 1:4c - 5a). In the letter that Paul penned to the Romans, he stated that something preceded the predestination unto adoption and that something is found in the word "foreknow." **"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son"** (Rom. 8:29a). There is much misunderstanding of this term. Many believe that it means that God looked at us in ad-

vance, saw those who would believe and trust Jesus, then God used this basis in His decision to predestinate us to adoption as children.

Charles Halff wrote the following concerning this term: ". . .the word foreknowledge doesn't just mean that God looked at us in advance, but it means that God looked on us with special favor. Let me give you some Scriptures. In Amos 3:2 God said to Israel, **'You only have I known of all the families of the earth.'** He meant that He looked upon Israel with a special favor. He looked upon Israel with a special love. He looked upon Israel as His special people. And the same is true of born again believers when the Scripture says, **'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate'**, it means that God looked upon us with special favor and with a special love."⁴

Seeing that God the Father wanted children to complete His family, and that the ones chosen were totally depraved, unholy and vile, one can understand that truly it was love that moved Him to predestinate, i.e., He decreed or determined beforehand these to the adoption of children.

The following is a lengthy quote from Kenneth Wuest; however, it well describes how God set forth a plan, then carried that plan out in adopting children unto Himself. God did use a means.

"The first step in the salvation of a believer is God's foreknowledge of him. The words 'counsel and foreknowledge' refer to the same act of God when as the result of the exercise of deliberate judgment, that judgment having been for the purpose of fixing a limit upon something, He designated the believer to the position of a saved person before the universe was created. The word 'chosen' in Ephesians 1:4 speaks of the same act. The word 'foreknow' in Romans 8:29, 11:2; I Peter 1:2, and Acts 2:23 means to designate to a certain position.

"The sculptor had a wonderful son. He had many statues in his art gallery which he had cut out of the rough granite in the course of his lifetime. But now he has come to the decision that He would like a group of statues all made in the very image of that son. So he goes to the stone quarry, and after some deliberation selects some large blocks of granite which the quarrymen have

blasted out of the mountainside. One might wonder at his selection, for they appear to be the least promising of all those from which he had to choose. There they were, scarred by the weather, discolored, cracked."

"In the eternity before this the universe was created, the Divine Sculptor had in his heart to make some images of His son, the Lord Jesus Christ, not carved out of granite, but molded from living personalities. He passed by fallen angels (Heb. 2:16: 'Not of angels doeth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham'), and chose inferior material, lost human beings, creatures full of sin, rebellious toward Him, scarred and seamed with the deadly result of evil-doing. He chose the most unlikely material He could find. He gets more glory to Himself by choosing red clay into which He had breathed the breath of lives (Gen. 2:7) and conforming that inferior material into the very image of His son than if He had taken hold of angels for salvation. In perfect justice and righteousness He passed by fallen angels and in infinite mercy chose fallen human beings."

"After the sculptor had selected the blocks of granite, he placed a tag upon each of them. On the tag was written, 'to be conformed to the image of my Son.' The sculptor had many blocks of granite coming from that quarry, some to be used for one purpose and others for another. But these which were labeled, 'To be conformed to the image of my Son,' were to be kept separate. They were labeled for this one destiny."

"After the sculptor had selected his blocks of granite at the quarry, and had put a label upon each, 'to be conformed to the image of my Son,' he returned to his home and sent his men with the large stone wagon and derrick to haul the granite to his studios. Just so, after He foreknew us, that is, after He had chosen us to a certain destiny, and after He had predestinated us 'to be conformed to the image of my dear son' which answered to the specifications of the foreknowledge, the Divine Sculptor called us. The Greek word was used in the first century as a technical word in legal practice and meant 'an official summons' as in the case of the summoning of a witness to court. The word means here more than a mere invitation. It is a divine sum-

mons. The one summoned is constituted willing to obey this summons, not against but with his free will and consent. It is an effectual call. The one called always responds."

"After the sculptor has his chosen blocks of granite in his studio, he starts work on them. There they are, scarred, irregular, rough, cracked, discolored. The sculptor goes on, day after day with his work of cutting the granite. Rough corners are hewn off, discolorations disappear. Jagged surfaces are made smooth. The block of granite begins to assume the shape and contour of the sculptor's son. He sees the image of his son as he looks right through the rough edges, the weather-scarred surfaces. A sinner, saved by grace, conformed to the image of the wonderful Son of God—that is the Divine Sculptor's Masterpiece."⁵

So one sees that God provided Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, as a means to put into His own family, to adopt unto Himself children. According to verse seven of the text, it was by the blood of His precious Son, **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. . ."** If one questions whether he has been adopted by God, let him inquire of himself concerning the redemption papers which certify that he has been forgiven of his sins.

Jesus Christ went into the slave market of sin, paid the purchase price to God whose righteous law demanded such, and took us out of the slave market of condemnation under God's holy law. He then set us free—free to call upon the Lord for eternal salvation, so that at the point of repentance and faith, a Hell-deserving sinner is welcomed into God's family. He then set us free—free to call upon the Lord for eternal salvation, so that at the point of repentance and faith, a Hell-deserving sinner is welcomed into God's family. Adoption is an act of pure grace and was purchased at a very dear price.

THE PRACTICE OF ADOPTION

As adoption is used in Scripture, it implies a change of nature and a change of relationship. Sonship precedes adoption. Regeneration has to do with son-making and giving a new nature, whereas adoption has to do with son-placing, i.e., placing him into a family wherein he has a new standing. Only those who have a change of nature and a change of relationship are adopted into God's family.

Herbert Lockyer is very helpful in his writings on adoption concerning the practice. Notice the following: "Behind the New Testament use of adoption lies the Roman law and the customs associated with such practice. A recognized authority on Roman law gives us the original significance of adoption. A

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Roman family, from the legal standpoint, consisted of a head or ruler, and of the persons subject to his absolute power, as also were persons unconnected with him by blood, if they had been brought into his power by the artificial tie of adoption. It might happen that a marriage was fruitless, or that the sons went to the grave before him, and that the head of the family had thus to face the extinction of his family and of his descent to the tomb without posterity to make him blessed. To obviate so dire a misfortune, two alternatives were open to him; either to give himself to adoption and pass into another family, or to adopt someone as a son who should perpetuate his own family. The latter was the course usually followed, and was called *adoptio* or adoption. As used by Paul, then, the term implied a ceremony of conveyance, or an order of a Roman court of justice whereby one was transferred to the family of the adopter. The adopting parent acquired the *protestas* (legal power) over the adopted child exactly as if it were the issue of his own body; while the later enjoyed, in his new family, the same rights as if he had been born into it.⁶

There is a marked distinction of man's practice of adoption and the Bible concept. Generally, parents who are wanting to adopt a child, look for various qualities such as beautiful features, sweet disposition, a certain sex; mainly, just an attractive child. Now there are others who will, solely out of pity, adopt a child disregarding all other factors such as facial characteristics, etc. This writer, in 1972, while living in Xenia, Ohio, prayed to God to put in his home a three year old orphaned girl who was being brought to the church he pastored. She was loved and wanted just as she was. About three days after the prayer, he received a phone call in answer to this prayer. This little girl, Shannon Marie, was placed in his home that same day. So this writer and his wife have one daughter by birth and one by adoption.

THE PRIVILEGES OF ADOPTION

The Westminster Catechism describes adoption as "an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God." Truly, it is the reception into a family of one who does not belong to it by birth.

For a number of weeks prior to the salvation experience of this writer, he lived in fear because of the bondage of sin and its awful consequences—condemnation and Hell, if forgiveness was not sought and found. Paul told the Romans, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of

God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father" (Romans 8:14-15).

The greatest privilege of adoption is to be able to walk through life with one's hand in the hand of his heavenly Father and go day by day without fear, that slavish fear that causes one to shrink away from God. He now cries, "Father, Father." The word for "cry" in verse 15 is a strong one: "it denotes the loud irrepressible cry with which the consciousness of sonship breaks from the Christian's heart in prayer."⁷ The spirit of adoption bears witness with the spirit of the believer and confirms that he is an adopted child so that he need not live in fear, but instead he can, in his heart, through the course of the day, cry loudly to his Father. What a great privilege this is! He can cry, "Father, Father" when he is hurting with much sorrow in his soul, or when his heart overflows with joy. This is his privilege.

Jesus said that fear is such a dreaded enemy that it can and does cause a heart attack. He said there would come such a time on this earth. "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26a). All of God's children have some fear and each one with various causes. The more one comes to know this adoptive love the more he cries in his heart "Abba, Father," and the more he cries "Abba, Father" the more his fears are conquered. Oh, that God's child would mediate concerning that which he has received that is now his—and that is the Spirit of adoption. How glorious is this great love. It is that which gives security to the child. It is that which also makes him significant. This love sets him free so that he does not feel threatened in any way. Dear reader, would you stop just now and thank your heavenly Father for the Spirit of Adoption?

Another privilege is heirship. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; . . ." (Romans 8:17a). "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). "God's adopted ones are referred to as children, sons, heirs," wrote Herbert Lockyer, and "Children expresses nearness to the Father; sons our position before Him; heirs, our future inheritance in Him. . ."⁸

Adoption is a serious matter under any system of law. The adopting parents obligate themselves to treat the adopted child in the same manner they would had he been born of their own flesh and blood. Most every adopted child is brought into a climate of intimate trust, love and fairness and paren-

tal attitude. However, from the legal standpoint, the adopted child is heir to his father even as the born child. Upon adoption of Shannon Marie, mentioned earlier in this paper, this writer and his wife immediately went to a lawyer and had a codicil made to their will whereby Shannon Marie became heir along with their only born child, Kathy. The inheritance of these two is of no immensity, however their inheritance from God is indescribably great.

God, our Father, has a new name waiting for all his children, and that name is written in a white stone. A new name is part of becoming a member of a new family. Jesus Himself said, "I . . . will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17c). Hear that reader! Jesus Christ, the One with whom we are joint-heirs, has a new name for us. The new name is that which qualifies one to heirship, and yet, greater than heirship is to be joint-heirs with the One who has a Name which is above every name.

". . . God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). One wonders why children of God choose to seek their significance in more money, better jobs with power and prestige, better clothes, and newer automobiles in an attempt to feel more significant when they are accepted by Jesus Christ and joint-heirs with Him, the One who has a Name above every name. My, my, that is enough and more to make a child of God feel significant! Isn't it easy for a child of God to be ignorant of his inheritance with Christ? Isn't it easy to have very little appreciation for our Heavenly Father, due to one's ignorance of such privileges, not knowing that His love makes us secure? Are you, dear reader, one of God's adoptive children? If so, you indeed are rich, being an heir to God your Father and joint-heir with His beloved Son Jesus Christ. You don't have to seek acceptance in other persons or other things because you now have it in the open arms of your heavenly Father.

The acceptance to adoption by the Father secures one to the joint heirship with Jesus Christ. "By Roman law," says Henry Alford, "the share of the firstborn was no greater than that of other children,—and the New Testament sets forth the view, making the redeemed equal to Christ. . . and Christ's possessions, theirs; . . . In the joint heirship we must not fail to bring out this point, that Christ is the *rightful Heir*, who shares His inheritance with the other children of God: it is as adoptive children that they get the inheritance, and Christ is so far only the means of it, as He gives them power to become sons of God (John 1:12)."⁹ Praise God for His lovely Son!

Now, in closing this paper, it should be pointed out, in a few words, the re-

sponsibility of God's adoptive children. "Our present responsibility, as adopted ones, is to extol and magnify God's mercy and to live for His pleasure. As His sons, we must bear His likeness. Those who belong to distinguished families do their utmost, by noble living, worthy actions, and dignified mien to uphold the honor and reputation of their forebearers, and not in any way disgrace the family's good name. Because of our glorious family connection through wondrous grace, **'What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and goldiness?'** (II Peter 3:11)."¹⁰

Dear Reader, would you take time to further search this subject? Would you take time to meditate on God's great love, the basis of our adoption? No doubt, there will be many more privileges and blessings discovered which have not been mentioned in this paper.

FOOTNOTES

1. George Ricker Berry, *Greek-English New Testament Lexicon*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), pp. 500-501.
2. Herbert Lockyer, *All the Doctrines of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), p. 109.
3. W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Co.), pp. 33-34.
4. Charles Halff, *God's Predestination or Five Golden Links in God's Plan of Redemption*, (Canton, Georgia: Word of Truth Publication), p. 5.
5. Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 99, 101-105.
6. Herbert Lockyer, *All the Doctrines of the Bible*, pp. 199, 200.
7. W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositors Greek Testament*, Vol. II, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979, p. 648.
8. Herbert Lockyer, *All the Doctrines of the Bible*, p. 202.
9. Henry Alford, *The New Testament for English Readers*, Vol. II, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), p. 909.
10. Herbert Lockyer, *All the Doctrines of the Bible*, p. 203.

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THE FURNACE IS AFFLICTIVE

Many agents are used by God in working out His sovereign purposes. He may use men, things, and circumstances. This is all hinted at in the action of fire in a furnace. A furnace with a fire in it causes suffering and separation. Fire finds out what is worthless; it cleanses. Now I want to list some of the forms these afflictions take.

First, God may send us a scantiness of earthly things: "And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD" (Amos 4:6). We may not have enough food to dirty our

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teeth. The Lord controls both nature and worldly circumstances. He has many ways of taking away our temporal goods. Though we may work hard every work day and make much money, God can cause it to not go very far. **“Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes”** (Hag. 1:6).

Second, there can be affliction in our body: **“My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh”** (Ps. 38:5-7). It is a small matter for the great Proprietor and Manager of the furnace of affliction to make the body burn with fever or waste it by disease.

Third, this affliction may take the form of beravements: **“And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her”** (Gen. 23:2). Our friends and relatives get sick and die. Many of us have been put in this furnace of affliction. Friends and relatives are removed by death, lest we trust too much in them instead of the Lord.

Fourth, the Lord sends domestic trials: **“And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah”** (Gen. 26:34-35). Sometimes our child will make a bad choice of a mate for life. Often times even small children in the home mock their father and despise their mother (Prov. 30:17). The actions of our children can break our hearts, put gray hairs in our heads, and hasten us to the grave.

Millions of God's elect have been in this furnace of affliction. Adam first experienced it when he sinned in Eden. Moses suffered afflictions with the people of God. David was persecuted by his blood-thirsty enemies. Job lost his possessions, children, and health. Jeremiah and Isaiah were cruelly treated. Daniel was put in the lions' den. Paul and Silas were put in prison. Even our Lord was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

THIS FURNACE IS DIVINELY APPOINTED

Afflictions are not the result of chance or blind fate. They arise not out of the dust. They are not to be traced to sec-

ondary causes. They are not merely the work of our enemies. Affliction comes from the moral government of God. They are the wise and gracious arrangement of His providence. **“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto”** (I Thess. 3:3). **“Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it”** (Micah 6:9).

The same God who sends the sunshine and the rain also sends His people into the furnace of affliction. **“The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up”** (I Sam. 2:6-7). In Isaiah 45:7 Jehovah declares: **“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”**

The wise man sees the hand of God in affliction as well as in affluency. Every event is either of His appointment, or it has His all-wise permission. God works all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11), and so all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28). **“He taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou? He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked”** (Job 9:12, 22).

God's afflictive providence is the working out of His sovereign will. Often we see God's hand in great things, but not in little things. We see His hand in good things, but not in evil things. **“Behold, this evil is of the LORD”** (II Kings 6:33). Job asked his wife: **“What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?”** (Job 2:10). **“Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?”** (Amos 3:6). **“For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem”** (Micah 1:12). These verses do not teach that God is the author of sin. Rather they teach that when God sends us afflictions they seem evil unto us.

When grace enables us to see the hand of God in all events, we can bear these without murmuring or complaining. Job lost his family, his wealth, and his good health, yet he consoled himself: **“For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him”** (Job 23:14). David suffered much from his enemies and his family, yet he was happy to say: **“My times are in thy hand”** (Ps. 31:15). Still again hear him: **“I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it”** (Ps. 39:9). When Eli was told his family tree would be cut off, he said to young Samuel: **“It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good”** (I Sam. 3:18). When Hezekiah was told by the Prophet Isaiah that his sons would be eunuchs in the palace of

the king of Babylon, he said: **“Good is the word of the LORD which thou has spoken”** (Isa. 39:8).

How wonderful to know that a God of infinite love and wisdom has arranged all things which come to pass in this world. When we find ourselves in a very dark chapter of the book of Divine Providence, we must fall upon the words of our Lord: **“What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shall know hereafter”** (John 13:7).

THIS FURNACE IS NOT VINDICTIVE, BUT GRACIOUS

The chastisement of God is always less than we deserve: **“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities”** (Ps. 103:10). If God dealt with us as our sins deserved, we would be consigned to the lowest Hell. But because of His mercy and grace we never suffer as we deserve to suffer. **“But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath”** (Ps. 78:38). **“And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this”** (Ezra 9:13).

Our sins are many: **“For in many things we offend all”** (Jas. 3:2). Nevertheless, God's judgments are few: **“For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men”** (Lam. 3:33). The afflictions He sends because of our sins are **“light afflictions”** (II Cor. 4:17). They are of short duration: **“For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning”** (Ps. 30:5). The Lord told the Israelites: **“For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer”** (Isa. 54:7-8).

THE FURNACE IS FOR OUR EVERLASTING GOOD

There can be no caprice, nor unwise, or interperate anger in God toward His peculiar people. When He sends upon us afflictions they are designed for our spiritual and everlasting good. They are corrective, not destructive. When we are cold and indifferent to His cause He will permit persecutions and reproaches to befall us. But this is not the same way God punishes the wicked for their sins. The wicked are punished in wrath; the righteous are chastened in love. The wicked is punished for the good of society; the righteous for his individual good: **“When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold”** (Job 23:10; cf. Deut. 8:15-16).

Afflictions exhibit the faithfulness of

God: **“I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me”** (Ps. 119:75). God always justly and wisely chastens us. It is the faithfulness of God to His covenant which brings the elect under the rod. **“If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips”** (Ps. 89:30-34; cf. Ezek. 20:37). These chastisements are blessings in disguise; they are veiled mercies.

When sore afflictions come upon us we have the greatest evidence that we are loved with an everlasting love: **“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent”** (Rev. 3:19). **“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”** (Heb. 12:6-7). None but the sons and daughters of God in the family are corrected. To live without chastisement is a sad sign of alienation from God. Our heavenly Father chastens us to prevent our final condemnation: **“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”** (I Cor. 11:32).

THE FURNACE IS PROPOR-TIONATE

As a furnace is prepared for refining gold (Prov. 17:3), so afflictions are appointed for the saints, who are compared to fine gold (Lam. 4:2). Let us see here the high value that God places upon His people. Being chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, they are His precious gold. As His gold they get tarnished by the world and sin, and they must be subjected to the refining process. The power of His glory and grace must be seen in them. Hence Jehovah seeks their spiritual improvement: **“And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin”** (Isa. 1:25).

The Lord does not treat Israel in the severe manner in which gold or silver is treated by the refiner: **“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver. . .”** (Isa. 48:10). The Great Refiner knows His metal; He knows what each one can bear. He never suffers us to be tested above that we are able to bear. Sometimes He pours water on the fire if it gets too hot. He never goes beyond our strength. Neither does He turn the furnace up to the same temperature for all alike. He proportionates the temperature to the strength of the bearer, allotting a

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greater heat to the strongest, and a less to the weakest. **"I will correct thee in measure"** (Jer. 30:11). God will not over afflict.

The goldsmith keeps the furnace burning with the gold in it until all the dross has been removed, and he can see his face in the pure gold. Even so does our heavenly Father. Let us be cheerful and hopeful when we are in the furnace, knowing He seeks only to see His pure image clearly in us. We are in the furnace of affliction **"for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness"** (Heb. 12:10).

An all-wise God regulates the heat of the furnace according to the needs of His people. **"And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness"** (Mal. 3:3). Some of us need more heat than others, so He quickens the fire when needed. Micah said: **"I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him. . ."** (Micah 7:9). There are other times that He lowers the temperature, according to His Divine inspection. The prophet Jeremiah said: **"O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing"** (Jer. 10:24).

THE TENDENCY OF THE FURNACE IS BENEFICIAL

Matthew Henry gives this beautiful exposition of my text: "I have made thee a choice one by the good which the furnace has done thee." The design of God in choosing us to suffer in the furnace of affliction was for our everlasting good and His glory. Regenerating grace implants in us the seeds of immortality, which require cultivation in order to bring about maturity. The furnace is designed to develop these principles and to fit us for higher enjoyment.

First, the furnace of affliction is designed to prevent us from going astray: **"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. . . It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes"** (Ps. 119:67, 71). By our natural corruption we are ready to wander in the pathway of sin and go astray after worldly vanities. Hence the Lord makes affliction to serve us as an electric fence and a thorny hedge to keep us on the right course. Afflictions amend us and strengthen us to keep God's statutes.

Second, they wean us from the evil world: **"For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our**

heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Ps. 66:10-12). When Egypt became an iron furnace the Israelites became weary of it. The prodigal never thought of his father until he experienced famine. The Lord makes this world a grief so it may not become our god. It is to be our purgatory that may never make it our paradise.

Third, to test our religious profession: **"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"** (Job 23:10). We profess to be gold for God's treasury, yet there is dross in us. We claim to be grain fit for the garner of heavenly glory, yet there seems to be more chaff than wheat in us. Therefore the Lord cast us into the furnace of affliction that we may be tried and purified. The dross must be severed and separated from us. We must be winnowed with the strong wind of affliction that the chaff may be blown away and the pure grain remain.

We profess to be soldiers in the army of the King of kings. We claim to fight under the banner of the Lord of hosts. Therefore the Lord suffers us to be attacked by Satan and assaulted by the world with afflictions and persecutions to try us and to find out if we are traitors. Cowards will yield early in the fight. Real soldiers will stand and fight to the death, but a traitor will join with the enemy. **"But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended"** (Matt. 13:20-21). **"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"** (II Tim. 2:3).

Fourth, the furnace of affliction brings about growth in Christian graces: **"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope"** (Rom. 5:3-4). Our heavenly Father longs to see His children grow up spiritually. To bring this about He uses the instrumentality of afflictions. In these we learn patience and we are caused to hope in God. The Lord buffets and afflicts us with severe trials to give occasion to exercise these graces which otherwise would die dormant with us.

Fifth, the great Refiner aims to drive us to prayer: **"LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them"** (Isa. 26:16). **"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray"** (Jas. 5:13). The furnace is necessary to stir up prayer in us. In peace and prosperity we seldom recognize our need of Divine help. Af-

flictions bring us to God and show our need of dependence upon Him. In suffering those who formerly sought God slowly will seek Him early. **"In their affliction they will seek me early"** (Hos. 5:15).

Sixth, afflictions prepare us for greater usefulness and fruitfulness: **". . . and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit"** (John 15:2). The wise farmer prunes his fruit trees in the winter so that they may produce more fruit in the summer. Superfluous branches and suckers which steal the sap must be removed. Creature comforts are often to the soul what suckers are to the tree. Therefore the great Farmer takes these off that the tree of the Lord may produce much fruit. God will prune His people, but not hew them down. The right hand of His mercy knows what the left hand of His severity is doing.

CONCLUSION

1. Do not think the life of a Christian is easy. It is not a flowery bed of ease. During our life on earth we all must spend some time in the furnace of afflictions. But like the three Hebrews in the furnace in Babylon, God is always with us in all these sufferings. **"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"** (Isa. 43:2).

2. By placing His people in the furnace of affliction He is educating us for crowns and thrones in His coming kingdom. At present the Lord is fashioning the inward spiritual life for the world to come. The oppression, the piercings, the anguish, the disappointments, and all events are but the preparation for the position we shall occupy in the millennial age to come.

3. As Israel did not understand election till they were in Egypt, even so today we come to see ours in the furnace of afflictions. When convicted by the Holy Spirit the sorrows of death compass us and the pains of Hell get hold upon us, then we come to see distinguishing grace and everlasting love. In soul trouble we come to understand the text: **"I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction."**

4. There is in this world a furnace of afflictions for God's elect. Then in the world to come there is another furnace of literal, physical fire that is heated for the ungodly after the judgment. **"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"** (Matt. 13:41-42). Oh, sinner, flee the wrath to come!

Noteworthy Statements

Continued from page 1

Free-willers generally admire Spurgeon. but he was an outspoken five-point Calvinist. His sermon on John 6:44, titled, "Human Inability," has good statements about irresistible grace. Consider one: "I remember meeting once with a man who said to me, 'Sir, you preach that Christ takes people by the hair of their heads, and drags them to Himself.' I asked him whether he could refer to the date of the sermon wherein I preached that extraordinary doctrine, for if he could, I should be very much obliged. However, he could not. But, said I, while Christ does not drag people to Himself by the hair of their heads, I believe that He draws them by the heart quite as powerfully as your caricature would suggest. Mark that in the Father's drawings there is no compulsion whatever; Christ never compelled any man to come to Him against his will. If a man be unwilling to be saved, Christ does not save him against his will. How then does the Holy Spirit draw him? Why, by making him willing. It is true he does not use 'moral suasion;' He knows a nearer method of reaching the heart. He goes to the secret fountain of the heart, and He knows how, by some mysterious operation, to turn the will in an opposite direction, so that, as Ralph Erskine paradoxically puts it, 'the man is saved with full consent against his will;' that is, against his old will he is saved."

THE LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH OF 1689

What I have called "irresistible grace," the London Baptist Confession of Faith calls "effectual calling." The terms are synonymous. The Confession says, "Those whom God has predestined unto life, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh: renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace."

BAPTIST PREACHER AND AUTHOR, JOHN GILL

Gill lived in the 18th century, and was a very influential man of his day in theological matters. his book, *A Body of Doctrinal And Practical Divinity*, has a seven page article on the present subject, and is named, "Of Effectual Calling." Part of the article says, "It is an act

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Noteworthy Statements

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of efficacious and irresistible grace. The external call may be, and often is, resisted and rejected; but when God calls internally by his Spirit and grace, it is always effectual, and can never be resisted, so as to be ineffectual; for when God works, none can let or hinder; men dead in trespasses and sins, rise out of their graves of sin, and live, at his all-commanding voice; even as Lazarus came forth out of his grave at the call of Christ; nor could that call be resisted; and even the same power that was exerted in raising Christ himself from the dead, is displayed in the effectual vocation of a sinner, Ephesians 1:18, 19, 20."

J. M. PENDLETON'S BAPTIST CHURCH MANUAL

This Baptist church manual contains a Declaration of Faith that "was framed many years ago by J. Newton Brown, D. D." Its article, "Of Grace In Regeneration" has a statement that applies to our subject. The article says, "We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, **SO AS TO SECURE OUR VOLUNTARY OBEEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL**; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life." (Bold print added by the editor.)

ANGLICAN PREACHER & AUTHOR, J. C. RYLE

Ryle said this about John 6:37, "We learn from these words the irresistible power of God's electing grace. All who are given to Christ shall come to Him. NO obstacle, no difficulty, no power of the world, the flesh, and the devil, can prevent them. Sooner or later they will break through all, and surmount all. If 'given,' they will 'come.'"

On John 6:44 Ryle said, "It is a drawing which the Father effects through the man's own will, by creating a new principle within him. By the unseen agency of the Holy Ghost he works on the man's heart, without the man himself knowing it at the time, inclines him to think, induces him to feel, shows him his sinfulness, and so leads at length to Christ. Everyone that comes to Christ is so drawn."

BAPTIST PREACHER AND AUTHOR, W. J. SEATON

Seaton wrote a short, but good book called, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, in which he ably defends and expounds those points. On "Irresistible Grace" Seaton wrote, "For a work of salvation to be wrought the outward call must be accompanied by the inward call of God's

Holy Spirit, for he it is who 'convinces of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.' And when the Holy Spirit calls man, or a woman, or a young person by his grace, that call is irresistible: it cannot be frustrated; it is the manifestation of God's irresistible grace."

Seaton also wrote, "Arminians believe that men and women can and do resist the call of God's Gospel, and, therefore, they contend, there can be no such doctrine as irresistible grace. We believe that not only can men and women resist God's Gospel, but that they do, and must by their very natures resist it. Therefore there must be such a doctrine as the doctrine of irresistible grace. In other words, some influence greater than our natures—greater than our resistance—must be brought to bear upon our souls, or else we are forever doomed, for 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.'"

BAPTIST PREACHER AND AUTHOR, DAVID NETTLETON

Nettleton wrote a book called, *Chosen To Salvation*, which defends the Biblical teaching of God's sovereignty in salvation. What he said about the blessings of believing in God's sovereignty applies directly to the theme of this article. He wrote, "In evangelism, the Christian is greatly encouraged by this truth: God has guaranteed results because he has determined some to eternal life, and he will surely bring it to pass. The result is sure. The means are just as much chosen as the ends. We have every right to expect conversions. The seed will bring forth fruit." Do not Nettleton's words imply God's irresistible grace?

BAPTIST PREACHER AND AUTHOR, JOHN L. DAGG

Dagg, born in 1794, was an influential Baptist preacher & theologian. He wrote at least two books, *Manual Of Theology*, and *Manual Of Church Order*. In *Manual Of Theology* he wrote about the subject under consideration in the chapter, Sovereignty Of Grace, Section 3. Consider some of Dagg's statements: "Besides the call which is external, and often ineffectual, there is another, which is internal and effectual. This always produces repentance and faith, and therefore secures salvation." "We have before distinguished between the direct and the indirect influence of the Holy Spirit. The external call being means of the written or preached Word, belongs to the indirect influence of the Spirit. To render this call effectual, the direct influence is superadded; and the gospel is then said to come, not in word only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. the external call is disobeyed, because men will not come to Christ that they may have life: the inter-

nal call operates on the will itself, working in men to will and to do, and rendering God's people willing in the day of his power. As distinguished from the external call, the internal is always unresisted. In the process of conversion, the Holy Spirit is violently resisted; but this resistance is directed against the outward means. The internal grace softens and subdues the heart, and brings it into peaceful subjection to the gospel of Christ."

BAPTIST PREACHER AND AUTHOR, A. W. PINK

One of my favorite books was written by A. W. Pink. It is called, *The Sovereignty Of God*. In the chapter, "The

Sovereignty Of God In Salvation," Pink wrote, "Had God done nothing more than give Christ to die for sinners and then sent forth His servants to proclaim salvation through Christ, leaving sinners entirely to themselves to accept or reject as they pleased, then every sinner would have rejected, because at heart every man hates God and is at enmity with Him. Therefore the work of the Holy Spirit was needed to bring the sinner to Christ, to overcome his innate opposition, and compel him to accept the provision God has made. We say 'compel' the sinner, for this is precisely what the Holy Spirit does, has to do. . ."

COCKRELL'S CORNER

I Used to Enjoy Bible Conferences

By Milburn Cockrell

Mantachie, Mississippi

"The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Tim. 4:1).

I am old enough to remember the great Bible conferences at Calvary Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky., when Elder John Gilpin was pastor. There were good crowds and an excellent spirit among the preachers who came. As time passed, Elder Gilpin died and I became pastor of this church. We had some great Bible conferences while I was there. Fellowship was good and most all the preachers believed about the same thing on most subjects of any importance. These were good days for our people, but now they are for ever passed.

Here in the South the Pinehaven Baptist Church, Columbus, Miss., and Pastor Elvis Gregory had some truly great Bible conferences for many years. Theological controversies over prophecy, the priesthood of the church, and racism caused these to decline.

In my lifetime I never expect to see any more conferences of the size and spirit that these two once enjoyed. Nowadays it is almost impossible to have a Bible conference because of the controversies which rage among our people. We have split until we are splinters, and every year adds a new controversy. If things seem to quiet down a bit, some brother will raise a new issue so we can have a big debate. It is not wrong to contend for the faith (Jude 3), but we should never have controversy merely for the sake of controversy. We greatly need to contend with the many foes outside our group who constantly attack us.

There are a lot of uncertainties about going to Bible conferences. Some old controversies linger such as wine or grape juice in the Lord's Supper, hats for women in public worship or no hats,

tithing for the New Testament or no tithing in the New Testament, divorced preachers or no divorced preachers, mission boards or no mission boards, etc. While these issues will never go completely away, they seem to have died down a bit in my opinion.

Now we are besieged with many new controversies. There is a controversy over the Bible. Some believe the King James Version is a faithful translation and should be used in our churches. Others believe the King James Version has been purified seven times and that now we have the final authority. There is need to study the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, for in the King James we now have the superior English version from infallible translators of the Church of England and a king who burned Baptists. If you dare to appeal to the words in the Hebrew and Greek to translate them better, you are "a King James basher" and "a liberal," according to one group. If you take this position, the other group will call you "a Ruckmanite" on the Bible. So you can't say anything much about the Bible at a conference any more.

Then there are problems in eschatology. At the conference you will probably have pre-trib, mid-trib, and post-trib premillennialists. Then there will be amillennialists, or as they sometimes now call themselves "gospel millennialists." There could even be some postmillennialists, and for certain there will be some panmillennialists (people who don't know what they believe about prophecy, but believe everything will "pan out" like God intended). So if you dare to say anything about prophecy, you can be certain that you will have to cross swords with some people. Hence you can't preach on prophecy at a conference any more.

There is also a problem on the church.

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I Used to Enjoy Bible

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Some believe that one church should organize another church, and that there have been a succession of true churches. Others believe that a church is formed by the direct authority of God which comes down from Heaven with no connection to any other church. As they see it, members may dismiss themselves at their will to form a new church. If you hold the first view, you are "a pedigree-pusher." If the latter, you are "an ecclesiastical antinomian." So you can't preach much about the church any more.

There is a problem on missions. Some believe in boards and others do not. Some believe in sending out missionaries who start churches. Others believe that churches start by spontaneous generation without a missionary, and they practice what they preach (they organize no new churches and send no missionaries). At least some hold that once a preacher is ordained he can baptize (like John the Baptist) and organize churches by the direct authority of God. Hence you can hardly preach on any thing about the church without getting into trouble.

You are not even safe on sovereign grace any more at what is supposed to be "a sovereign grace conference." If you call upon lost sinners to repent and believe the gospel (as Jesus Christ did in His first message in Mark 1:15), you are an "Arminian heretic." Then those who preach the gospel only to the elect (I don't know how they are able to pick them out not being omniscient like God) are dubbed "Hardshell heretics." So you can't say much about sovereign grace any more at a conference, or you will have a fight on your hands.

Then there is always the mystery of who will be there. Some refuse to send out a program, fearing some may stay home because of certain parties on the program. When you get there you may see Arminians, antinomians, Reformed Baptists, Hardshell Baptists, Protestants, liars, adulterers, and thieves on the program. You may hear anything from Calvinism to Arminianism and just about any other heresy in the world.

Presently we are embarking on the greatest controversy of all—the person and work of Jesus Christ. This will be our worst controversy, as errors on this are soul destructive. It would seem we are about to revive some ancient heresies which plagued the churches in the past. What is now a spark will probably become a forest fire. Then you will not be able to preach on the person and work of Christ without a fight.

Like me, some are already saying to themselves: "If you can't preach on the Bible, or prophecy, or the church, or sovereign grace, or even Christ, then why go and preach at all?" This is a very

good question, and we all must face it and answer it for ourselves.

I dare not speak for others, but I will speak for myself. There are some Bible conferences which are ecumenical in nature. These I intend to stay away from. As an independent Baptist you don't have to attend such conferences, if you don't want to do so. There still remains some conferences which invite godly men who generally believe the same truths and who are tolerant of those who may disagree with them. I will attend these when I am able to do so. There are some very small conferences where good men preach the whole counsel. These I will most surely attend when

possible. When asked to preach at a Bible conference I will preach on my assigned topic as I believe it. If no topic is assigned, I will preach on what I believe the Lord would have me preach. The host pastor may set me down, if he thinks I am a heretic, or he may never invite me back again.

I expect some day to have a Bible conference at my own church. But my conference will be small and restricted. I want there to be friendship and fellowship around the truth. I would like to enjoy one more good Bible conference at my own church before I leave this world.

Was John Glenn's Trip a *Quid Quo Pro*?

By G. Russell Evans

Norfolk, Virginia

Last Saturday, as we watched Senator John Glenn, D-Ohio, wobble off the space shuttle *Discovery* and continue his waddle in the walk-around post flight inspection, we had to wonder what NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin could get from this expensive extravaganza that he couldn't learn from most any old-timer after an extended and cramped auto ride—where the fare was more affordable and the risks more acceptable. And equally important, was this trip necessary?

In both cases, Goldin could expect spraddle-legged walking and shuffling feet. But for Glenn, the trip was something special—an apparent *quid pro quo* for the senator's vigorous defense of Clinton-Gore against charges of illegal 1996 campaign donations by the Red Chinese government at hearings of the Governmental Affairs Committee.

'CLINTON CLASSIC MOMENT'

That's what *The Wall Street Journal* said in its October 27th editorial about Clinton's trip to Cape Canaveral to bask in the glory of Glenn's second space flight, calling it a "blatant political payoff being spun into a major media event."

Of course, *quid pro quos* are the coin of the realm in Washington, but this one—deliberate obstruction of Chairman Fred Thompson's, R-Tenn., inquiry into illegal donations to the 1996 Clinton-Gore campaign—has been called "one of the most cynical political transactions of the Clinton years." Thus, John Glenn, astronaut hero of 1962, contributed to the cover-up of Clinton-Gore misdeeds that even now go unpunished.

ASTRONAUT GLENN, HERO

36 years ago, John Glenn stepped forward and led the way in space for America—three orbits of the earth to become a real national hero with parades, White house welcome and worshipped by every school child for his courage and patriotism, exemplifying

honor and pride.

Just last year, as ranking Democrat on one of the Senate's most important committees, the hero had another chance to defend national honor and pride. His duty was to investigate charges of fraudulent campaign practices and to insist on fair hearings to discover the truth.

He failed and instead, became a bitter and vociferous partisan to protect President Clinton and Vice President Gore by obstructing the inquiry at every turn and, with parliamentary nit-picking, managed to run out the clock and swamp the hearings.

SENATOR GLENN, POLITICIAN

Glenn, almost single-handedly, prevented inquiry into charges that Red China had funneled \$2 million into the Clinton-Gore coffers and that Clinton's *quid pro quo* was his waiver to American firms to sell missile-guidance technology to Red China so they could perfect their ICBM aim at American cities—now largely accepted as a *fait accompli* while Messrs. Clinton and Gore relish the joys of reelection.

While Glenn was obstructing the Thompson inquiry, he was, at the same time, lobbying Clinton and NASA for a ride on *Discovery*—which Clinton admitted but denied approving. A fishy story. NASA boss Goldin, a Clinton appointee, could hardly deny a Clinton favor.

Rationalization for Glenn's flight was "to study the effects of space flight on the elderly." If so, wrote Air Force Colonel Mike Mullane in *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, "Use astronauts grounded for age, such as Stan Musgrave and John Young, trained and experienced."

DISCOVERY CREW JEOPARDIZED

Mullane wrote that both the mission and crew were jeopardized by Glenn's presence: In an emergency, such as bail-

out or crash landing, the time element and body strength are critical, with 83 pounds of gear and the 7 foot climb to the cockpit to escape. Mullane speculated as have others, that the Glenn ride "was a payback for helping Clinton-Gore cover-up a Communist regime's attempt to influence a U.S. election."

Moreover, it was hypocritical to see our media, led by Walter Cronkite, hype day after day on "Glenn's Return to Space" with not one word on the apparent betrayal of our country with *quid pro quos* that should shame the greediest of us.

What will Congress do about this? Nothing! Why? Because the polls show how popular Clinton, bribery and *quid pro quos* have become and seem to say to those who put country and honor first, "Forget it!"

So, what else is new in the Washington wonderland? Perhaps only one thing is left to cap off this "heroic event"—if his handlers think he can get away with it: Have President Clinton award Senator Glenn the Medal of Freedom in the Rose Garden—indubitably!

(Captain Evans is a retired Coast Guard aviator with 24 years experience in search and rescue operations, now living in Norfolk, VA).

A Missionary Looks

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things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen:" Matt. 28:16-20)

The matter at hand is NOT merely theoretical to this writer as he prepares to move to eastern Europe after more than nine years on another field. Indeed, it ought not to be merely theoretical to any "regular" or "missionary" Baptist. All of us ought to be concerned with being in step with God and His program as revealed in His Word, the Holy Bible. If we are concerned with pleasing Him, surely we shall have as our primary concern obedience to the Word of God!

Let it be noted that some things are necessary! Some things are essential in proper service to our Sovereign! King David found this truth out when he tried to move the Ark of God according to his own tastes and in compliance with the fashion of the neighborhood. He finally came to see that he had to be out of step with contemporary religious thinking to please God. If you are not willing to be out of step with contemporary religious thought and practice, then it is probably pointless that you read any further in this article. This writer does not like to be "different" any more than any man, but if, in order to please God, I must be "different," then I will be dif-

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner

PO Box 39

Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

What if two young people (man and woman) had sexual relations before marriage and then had a sudden marriage? Should they repent of such conduct, or be disciplined by the church?

--- Philippines



Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor
**Mount Pleasant
Baptist Church**
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH 45619



Garner Smith
113 Keith Drive
Clarksville, TN 37043

Pastor
Faith Baptist Church
2590 Madison Ext.
Clarksville, TN 37043

I Corinthians 5:11-13 gives the following list of offences that are worthy of discipline: **“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”**

From the nature of the question it appears that the sexual relationship between the man and woman prior to their marriage was publically known and admitted too. If the man and woman confessed their sin and expressed genuine repentance, then it would be the responsibility of the church to forgive them of their unholy actions. If, however, the couple never confessed and repented of the known sin, then it is the responsibility of the church to take disciplinary action. I Timothy 5:20 declares: **“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”** To allow public sin to go undisciplined is to set a dangerous and immoral precedent that will bring shame and reproach upon the name of Christ and His church.

I would advise the pastor of the church to teach upon the subject of church discipline, if the church is uninformed concerning this responsibility. Those church members who are taught that sexual immorality before and after marriage is an offence worthy of discipline will carry out their responsibility if they are truly concerned about being obedient to God and His holy Word. II Thessalonians 3:6 declares: **“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”**

TOM ROSS

All sin is against God and must be confessed to Him to receive forgiveness from Him (I John 1:9). If one sins against the church, then they must confess to the church for their forgiveness. Fornication is a sin against the body and the body is a member of the Lord's church; therefore, it is a sin against the church (I Cor. 6:12-20). A fornicator must confess to the church they are a member of to receive forgiveness from that church. I do not believe marriage after fornication does away with the sin, and, therefore, should be repented of, or disciplined by the church for this sin of immorality and their refusal to recognize their contempt for their church in not repenting and asking the church to forgive them.

I believe one of the reasons fornication (all sexual sins) are so prevalent among churches today is because churches have failed to take a stand against them and practice Biblical discipline concerning these sins (I Cor. 5:1-13). When a church fails to deal with sin in the church they gradually destroy their church and fail to do what is necessary to save the life and testimony of the church and the sinning member (I Cor. 5:1-8).

GARNER SMITH



David O'Neal
2750 South 53rd
West Ave
Tulsa, OK 74107

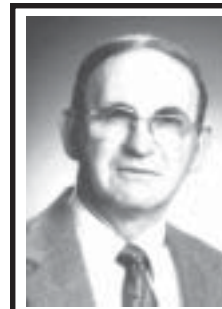
Pastor
**Grace Missionary
Baptist Church**
2750 South 53rd
West Ave
Tulsa, OK 74107

If a church member is guilty of the sin of adultery and has not repented, he should be disciplined by the church. Adultery is very common among young people of our day, for many are living together without getting married. Some have been living together for several years and have children. God has given us clear guidelines in the Bible as to how

this sin is to be viewed (I Cor. 5:2, 7, 9; 6:9, 15-16). In Exodus 22:16, God gave instructions to the nation of Israel that if a man and woman had sexual relations without being married they were to get married.

If a man and woman had this relationship and went ahead and married, it would appear to me that they have repented of their sin. In II Corinthians 12:21, one of the sins that Paul said some of the members of the church were guilty of was fornication, and they had not repented. The word “repent” means “to change one's mind” (Strong). It is from a Greek word *metanoeo*, (*meta*, after, implying change, *noeo*, to perceive). It signifies to change one's mind or purpose (W. E. Vine). To repent of a sin is to cease in committing that sin. By getting married, this couple would no longer be committing this sin. They should confess their sin to God and seek to be faithful to Him (I John 1:9), but I can not see that the church has a need to discipline them. **“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted”** (Gal. 6:1). It is when a church member is persistent in a course of sin, that it becomes necessary for the church to withdraw from that member (I Cor. 5:1-7).

DAVID O'NEAL



Jimmie B. Davis
309 Carroll Road
Fulton, MS 38843

Pastor
**Sovereign Grace
Baptist Church**
100 James Street
Fulton, MS 38843

Fornication is a very serious and prevalent sin in our day. There can be little doubt that movies and television have made a major contribution to the lax attitude held by multitudes in society today in regard to this particular sin. More and more young people are being led to believe that sex outside of marriage is an acceptable practice, and I can see how easy it can be for young people to adopt this idea when they are constantly confronted with explicit examples. I can understand how young believers can give over to carnal desires, but we should never permit our understanding to be taken as a sign of con-

doning fornication.

From the information given in the question we can assume that the young people (man and woman) are professing believers, and members of a church. First, let me say that I appreciate the fact that they had the desire to marry, even though it is viewed as a sudden marriage. There can be no question that such conduct (sexual relations before marriage) must be a matter requiring repentance. When repentance is evidenced in such a case the church should stand ready to forgive. If no evidence of repentance is given, when the couple is aware of the need for repentance, then it would be proper and right for the church to discipline them.

JIMMIE B. DAVIS

CORRECTION

Elder Garner Smith would like to make a correction regarding one of his forum answers for the December 1998 issue.

“In my answer in the first paragraph I stated that, ‘I did not believe that infants, imbeciles, etc., were in God's plan of the elect for whom Christ died.’ I meant to say that, ‘I did believe that all of the aforementioned were in the elect and that Christ did die for all infants that died in infancy and all others that were born in such a state they could not think normally for themselves. I hope no one thinks that I believe that infants, etc., go to Hell.’

In our Sovereign Saviour's Name,
Garner Smith

FUNNYBONE

Deacon Jones asked Bill Tightwad, “What do you think about the impeachment hearings concerning President Bill Clinton?”

The deacon answered, “Well, I have learned some new meanings of some words. I have learned that ‘alone’ does not mean ‘alone,’ and that ‘lying’ is not perjury.”

Bill then added, “I guess we have been wrong about these words all these years. Our English teachers must have been in error when they taught us the meanings of these words years ago.”

The deacon continued, “I have also learned that ‘oral sex’ is not ‘sex.’ If ‘oral sex’ ain't sex, I wonder why it is called ‘oral sex.’ Should the word ‘sex’ not be omitted?”

Deacon Jones told Pastor Brown that Bill Tightwad was sick.

The Pastor inquired as to what disease he had.

The deacon said, “He has car sickness—the feeling you get when the monthly car payment is due.”

Deacon Jones told his wife that old age was a terrible thing. He said, “Sometimes my mind not only wanders, sometimes it leaves completely.”

Bill Tightwad then said, “Why, deacon, you are not over the hill yet.”

The deacon replied, “I may not be, but I see the top.”

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum


Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner

PO Box 39

Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

How will the Y2K crisis (computer bug of the year 2000) affect us?



Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor
Mount Pleasant Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH 45619

I must confess that I am not as informed as I ought to be upon the Y2K crisis. From what little I have read on the subject it appears that many fear a complete shutdown of everything that is related to computer technology. If that is the case it would probably be in the best interest of people to learn how to become a little more self-sufficient. It may be that God will use the Y2K crisis to prove to man that it is wrong to place his trust in his own wisdom and technological advances. Isaiah 30:1-3 and 31:1 issue the following warnings that may be applied to the anticipated crisis: **“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. . . Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!”**

TOM ROSS



Garner Smith
113 Keith Drive
Clarksville, TN 37043

Pastor
Faith Baptist Church
2590 Madison Ext.
Clarksville, TN 37043

I must admit that I am not up to par concerning computers and all their functions. My life is not tied up in computers. No doubt there will be, according to the news media, some complications in our life style in the beginning of the next century because of computer chips and technology, but I know it will not

be a crisis with our sovereign God, and it is He that is in control of all things including everyone and everything. He has promised that He would be faithful and see to it that we would not be tried above that which we could overcome. His saints are not the whole world (I Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:28). The Y2K crisis maybe a problem for man but not God, and it is God that I trust in for my survival.

I do not mean to minimize, or make fun of those who have computers, but I do not let them control my life. It seems to me that if we have the intelligence to create and produce computers and all the software involved in operating them, we should have the ability to handle the dating crisis on computers. I do not personally believe there will be a great crisis unless it is a means God has purposed to come upon mankind for His honor and glory to show us how dependent we are upon Him regardless of all our modern technology and ingenuity.

GARNER SMITH



David O'Neal
2750 South 53rd
West Ave
Tulsa, OK 74107

Pastor
Grace Missionary Baptist Church
2750 South 53rd
West Ave
Tulsa, OK 74107

I am not sure if anyone really knows the answer to this question. Some believe that there will be problems with utilities, telecommunications, transportation (airlines, railroads, and trucking), banking, and general government services. If this is true, then the Lord's people will be affected in the same way as everyone. Studies have been done to estimate the costs of addressing this problem. Some have estimated the cost to be about \$600 billion world-wide, and if the problem is not corrected in time, the consequences will be catastrophic.


Every system that relies on computers that will not recognize dates on January 1, 2000 will experience problems. Just how great these problems will be, we can not really know. On some computers the date will just revert back to January 1, 1900. Some older personal computers will just revert back to January 1, 1900. Some older personal computers will revert back to the year 1980. It is only the programs that are date sensitive that this will become a real prob-

lem. There is no way of knowing just how many systems will be corrected before the year 2000 or how many systems that are not corrected that will continue to operate.

There are many alarmists. The federal government's chief scientist at the General Accounting Office said, "Our entire way of life, in essence, is at risk." This may be true, but I do not believe that anyone can know whether this problem will have this kind of results. There was a time when people were able to survive without computers. Some are speaking of the fulfillment of Bible Prophecy. There have been many things that have happened in the world that men have had to endure. In the past, when unusual events have taken place, many have predicted the end of the world, the coming of Christ, the great tribulation; or the fulfillment of some other Bible prophecy. These events took place and the world changed very little.

I do not know the results of the Y2K crisis, but I believe that the greater number of systems will continue to operate. What ever the results will be, we must put our trust in the Lord. Jesus said: **“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”** (John 14:27).

DAVID O'NEAL



Jimmie B. Davis
309 Carroll Road
Fulton, MS 38843

Pastor
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
100 James Street
Fulton, MS 38843

Since I do not own a computer, and have little knowledge of the operational skills required in using one, I feel much like the farmer who was free in offering advice to a neighboring farmer on how to raise corn, yet had to buy corn from the neighboring farmer each year to carry his livestock through the winter months.

I do know that computers are used in thousands of ways, and that just about all business transactions in our day are controlled by computers. It does not require a lot of thought to imagine the devastating effect a Y2K crisis would create in many areas, especially in financial matters.

The idea that a computer bug could cause such an effect in the year 2000 should be a warning to us not to put undue trust in human technology. I would hope that such a crisis can be averted, and many assure us that it can, but if it does I'm sure that all things purposed and ordered by our sovereign God will continue without interruption!

JIMMIE B. DAVIS

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 10-31-98 to 11-30-98

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$ 2,822.15 |
| RECEIPTS | |
| TOTAL | 2,822.15 |
| EXPENDITURES: | |
| Radio Time | 935.00 |
| Total Expenditures | 935.00 |
| Sub Total | 1,887.15 |
| Bank Charge | 2.91 |
| ENDING BALANCE | \$1,884.24 |

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$1,883.32 |
| RECEIPTS | |
| Total | 1,883.32 |
| EXPENDITURES: | |
| WYWY | 175.00 |
| Total Expenditures | 175.00 |
| ENDING BALANCE | \$1,708.32 |

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 10-31-98 to 11-30-98

| | |
|--|------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$-291.72 |
| RECEIPTS: | |
| Grace B. C., Corbin, KY | 60.00 |
| Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV | 300.00 |
| Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL | 25.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX | 30.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Fulton, MS | 50.00 |
| Berea B. C., Westpoint, TN | 50.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC | 100.00 |
| New Testament B.C., Goshen, IN | 50.00 |
| B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL | 33.00 |
| Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY | 125.00 |
| Grace B. Mis., Marion, IL | 25.00 |
| Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR | 50.00 |
| Berea B.C., Mansfield, OH | 50.00 |
| Hillcrest B.C., Winston-Salem, NC | 25.00 |
| The Lord's C. at Bev. Hills, Goose Creek, SC | 50.00 |
| Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS | 200.00 |
| Berea B. C., Stonington, IL | 60.00 |
| Victory B. C., Courtland, VA | 100.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS | 50.00 |
| Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL | 50.00 |
| Morris St B. C., Hobbs, NM | 50.00 |
| Ocoonita B. C., Keekee, VA | 20.00 |
| Mt Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH | 100.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C. Warren, OH | 50.00 |
| Temple B. C., Bristol, TN | 30.00 |
| Indore B. C., Indore, WV | 100.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL | 100.00 |
| Grace B. C., Georgetown, KY | 42.00 |
| Grace B. C., Tulsa, OK | 25.00 |
| Faith B. C., Seffner, FL | 100.00 |
| South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA | 25.00 |
| Wayne Huffman, McNeil, AR | 150.00 |
| New Testament, Bristol, TN | 10.00 |
| Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM | 100.00 |
| Jack Farmer, Mobile, AL | 50.00 |
| Meadow Branch B. C., Millport, AL | 200.00 |
| Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM | 50.00 |
| Northland M. B. C., Delaware, OH | 100.00 |
| Heritage B. C., Vine Grove, KY | 75.00 |
| Helen Strum, Ashland, KY | 50.00 |
| Donald Jenkins, Tupelo, MS | 7.00 |
| Anonymous | 715.80 |
| Subscriptions | 414.00 |
| Dividing Checks | \$170.00 |
| Sub Total | \$4,216.80 |
| TOTAL | \$3,925.08 |

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| EXPENDITURES: | |
| Wages | 1,875.00 |
| Postage | 638.41 |
| Printing | 537.14 |
| FICA taxes | 143.44 |
| Dividing checks | 170.00 |
| Supplies | 45.00 |
| Total Expenditure | 3,408.99 |
| | 516.09 |
| Bank charge | -12.07 |
| ENDING DEFICIT | \$504.02 |

The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures

By Robert Haldane

Part 2

(1764 - 1842)

Another passage in the Second Epistle of Peter, 1:19, is frequently quoted, so as to invalidate the Apostolic testimony. Peter had just before affirmed, that on the mount of transfiguration, he and the other Apostles had been eye-witnesses of the majesty of Jesus Christ, and had heard the voice from heaven, which attested that he was the beloved Son of God. Yet, after this, he is supposed to refer Christians to the word of prophecy, as "more sure" than this testimony. Instead of this, which affixes a meaning to the passage degrading to the testimony of the Apostles, (than which there is nothing in heaven, or on earth, more absolutely certain,) he refers to the prophecies, now made "confirmed" by what they had witnessed.

Two passages are quoted from Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, 5:23, "**Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.**" And II Tim. 4:13, "**The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.**" These passages, it is supposed, are of so unimportant a nature, that they cannot be the dictates of inspiration. Such a conclusion, even if we could not discover their use, would be altogether unwarrantable. On the same principle we might reject many other parts of Scripture, the import of which we do not understand; but in doing so, we should act both as absurdly and irreverently as the daring infidel, who might assert that a worm or a mushroom was not the workmanship of God, because it appeared to him insignificant; or that the whole world was not created by God, because it contained deserts and barren wastes, the use of which he could not comprehend.

"The different truths of revelation," says Mr. Carew, "have a different degree of importance; but it requires as much inspiration to tell what hour it is by inspiration, as to reveal the Gospel itself. If all Scripture is given by inspiration, the reference to Paul's cloak requires as much inspiration, as those passages that declare the way of salvation. The question is not, whether many things in Scripture might have been known without inspiration, as there are unquestionably others that could not at all have been otherwise known: But the question is, whether the most trivial thing said to be inspired, can be inspired in any other sense than things of the utmost moment. As long as it stands recorded, '**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,**' so long the honour of revelation is as much concerned in the inspiration of an

incidental allusion, as in that of the most fundamental truth."

In reference to the above passages, Dr. Doddridge makes the following remarks: "There are *other objections* of a quite different class, with which I have no concern; because they affect only *such a degree of inspiration* as I think it *not prudent*, and I am sure it is *not necessary*, to assert. I leave them, therefore, to be *answered by those*, if any such there be, who imagine that Paul would need *an immediate Revelation* from Heaven, and a miraculous dictate of the *Holy Ghost*, to remind *Timothy of the cloak and writings which he left at Troas*, or to advise him to *minge a little wine with his water.*" Modern writers on inspiration have likewise singled out these two passages, together with the shipwreck of Paul on the island of Melita, as uninspired, because they conceive that "these were not things of a religious nature."

Respecting the account of the Apostle's shipwreck, there are few things to be found in the historical part of the Bible that are more truly valuable, whether we consider the encouraging view it affords of the providential dealings of the Lord in every circumstance of the life of his people, or attend to the unparalleled illustration it furnishes of the manner by which the purposes of God are, in the use of means, carried into effect. Nothing could be more worthy of inspiration than the recording of this portion of Scripture; and so far from not being of a religious nature, the account it contains is fraught with the most important religious instruction. The objection founded on the two passages in the Epistles to Timothy, being commonly resorted to as one of the *strongholds* of those who oppose the verbal inspiration of the whole of Scripture, requires to be examined at some length. Instead of being so trifling as to render them unworthy to be a part of Divine Revelation, they present considerations of very high interest.

In the first of these passages, it is said, "**Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.**" A due consideration of the nature of the office of Paul, who gave this injunction to Timothy, and of the Epistle in which it is contained, as a part of the oracles of God, as well as of the service in which Timothy was engaged, ought to have deterred any one from rashly concluding that this verse forms no part of the words of inspiration. The connection, too, in which it is found, embodied in one of the most solemn addresses to be met with in the

Scriptures, assures us that it must contain something of importance. "**I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.**" Can it be imagined that, —in the midst of an address, in which, if the language of inspiration is to be found in the Bible, the Apostle is speaking by it, — before the charge is completed, which contains a permanent law in the kingdom of Christ, the course of that inspiration is suddenly interrupted, and broken in upon, by a remark merely human, "not of a religious nature," — by an advice, which, originating with the Apostle, might not be judicious? On the contrary, being fully assured that the verse in question is, like the other parts of the charge that precede and follow it, dictated by the Divine Spirit, we are prepared to regard it as containing what is worthy of its author, and deserving of our attention. Proceeding, then, to examine it, under the settled conviction that it is given by inspiration of God, and that it is profitable for instruction in righteousness, I observe,

1. That while enjoining upon Timothy many arduous and laborious duties, the Apostle was inspired to admonish him to attend to his health, in order to fit him for their right discharge; and hence Timothy was taught, and we learn, that it is the duty of every man to have a regard for his health, even amidst the most important labors, in order that he may be more fitted for the service of God, and that his life may be prolonged in that service.

2. We learn the abstemiousness of Timothy, notwithstanding his bodily weakness, and abundant labors.

3. That his abstemiousness was even carried the length of an unnecessary austerities, and that although he had a good end in view, this over-abstemiousness was wrong, and was therefore corrected by the Apostle. Hence, we learn how apt we are to err, even when our intentions are good, and how necessary it is to receive direction from the Lord.

4. If Timothy was in an error respecting the lawfulness of using wine, that error is here corrected: but whether this was the case or not, it was a matter of importance to instruct believers on this point, on which, as it appears from Romans 14:21, a diversity of opinion existed in the churches. The lawfulness of

the use of wine was denied by the Essenes, a sect among the Jews, as was afterwards the case with different Christian sects. This error may have been imbibed by them, or confirmed by the law of the Nazarites, or from a partial attention to the manner in which the Rechabites, who abstained from wine, were held up as an example of obedience to the people of Israel. In this view of the passage, it contains a most salutary and necessary corrective of what might otherwise have become extensively prejudicial in the kingdom of Christ; and it proves a useful comment, in the way of warning, on what the Apostle had said a little before, concerning a defection that was to take place in the latter times, in which false teachers were to command men to abstain from meats which God had created, to be received with thanksgiving, chap. 4:3.

5. Use "**a little wine.**" Here we are instructed in the duty of temperance. We are taught to use the counties of Providence with moderation, and in subordination to our sustenance and bodily health.

6. If the error of those who live too abstemiously, so as to injure their health, be here corrected; how much more does this passage condemn those who exceed in a contrary extreme, and who impair their constitution by intemperance!

7. From this passage, as from some others, e.g. Phil. 2:27, we learn that the Apostles had it not in their power on every occasion, even when they might be desirous of it, to work miraculous cures, and that the gift of healing, at that time vouchsafed, did not preclude the use of means for the preservation of health.

8. This passage sanctions the medical profession. This is very important, as some Christians have been inclined to think, that to have recourse to a physician is to supersede the interposition of God. Now, the prescription of Paul to Timothy was a medical prescription, founded on the fitness of the medicinal qualities of wine. Christians ought, indeed, to look to God for their cure, so ought they for the nourishment of their bodies, for man does not live by bread alone; but both food and *medicine* are to be taken as the means appointed by God, as we here learn.

The other passage referred to, occurs in Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, ch. 4:13, "**The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.**" This passage, like the former, is introduced in the midst of very solemn considerations, in connection with an annunciation of the Apostle Paul's trial for his life, and in the immediate prospect of his martyrdom. In his desire to have his cloak brought to him from a distance, a proof

Inspiration of the

Continued from page 12

is recorded at the close of his ministry, of Paul's disinterestedness in his labors among the churches. We are here reminded of his resolution, and are taught how faithfully he adhered to it, to make the Gospel of God without charge; and in the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, not to abuse his power of receiving support in preaching the Gospel, or to allow his glorying on the ground of his disinterestedness to be made void; I Cor. 9:13-18. On the approach of winter, in a cold prison, and at the termination of his course, the Apostle Paul appears here to be a follower indeed of him who had not where to lay his head. He is presented to our view as actually enduring those hardships, which elsewhere he describes in a manner so affecting—"in prisons,—in cold,—in nakedness." He had abandoned, as he elsewhere informs us, all the fair prospects that once opened to him of worldly advantages, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and had suffered the loss of all things: and in this Epistle we see all that he has said on the subject, embodied and verified. He is about to suffer death for the testimony of Jesus; and now he requests one of the few friends that still adhered to him (all the others, as he tells us, having forsaken him) to do his diligence to come before winter, and to bring to him his cloak. Here, in his solemn farewell address, of which the verse before us forms a part,—the last of his writings, and which contains a passage of unrivaled grandeur,—the Apostle of the Gentiles is exhibited in a situation deeply calculated to affect us. We behold him standing upon the confines of the two worlds,—in this world about to be beheaded, as guilty, by the Emperor of Rome,—in the other world to be crowned, as righteous, by the King of kings,—here deserted by men, there to be welcomed by angels,—here in want of a cloak to cover him, there to be clothed upon with his house from heaven.

Dr. Doddridge, in his commentary on the passage before us, has the following note. "*Bring with thee that cloak.* If *phailones* here signifies *cloak*, or *mantle*, it is, as *Grotius* justly observes, a proof of *Paul's* poverty, that he had occasion to send so far for such a garment, which probably was not quite a new one." Since, as we here learn, this observation of *Grotius* appeared *just* to Dr. Doddridge, it might have prevented him from rashly treating the subject with the levity which appears in his remark, formerly quoted, and from *thinking* it not "prudent" to assert, that the text was dictated by the Holy Spirit. The observation of *Grotius*, to which he refers, is as

follows: "See the poverty of so great an Apostle, who considered so small a matter, left at such a distance, to be a loss to him!" On the same place, *Erasmus* remarks: "Behold the Apostle's household furniture, a cloak to defend him from rain, and a few books!" Here, then, we are reminded incidentally (a manner of instruction common in the Word of God) of Paul's poverty. In the low, distressed circumstances of the Apostles, we see the Lord's warnings, as to the reception they were to meet with from the world, and the hardships and privations they were to experience, fully verified. The evidence of the truth of the Gospel, which arises from the suffering condition of those who were first employed to propagate it, is calculated to produce on our minds the strongest conviction of its Divine origin. In the wisdom of God it appears to have been appointed for this end; and it is all along kept in view, in the accounts transmitted in the Scriptures concerning them. **"I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. . . Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place"** (I Cor. 4:9-11).

Paul also desires Timothy to bring with him the **"books, but especially the parchments."** Whatever these parchments were, the use that Paul intended to make of them would be well known to Timothy, and in it he might have a further example of the Apostle's zeal, and unwearied exertion in the service of God. By this passage we may be taught, that even those who were so highly favored with the most distinguished gifts, were not raised above the necessity of using means for their own improvement, and for the stirring up of those gifts that were in them; and if this was the case respecting them, how forcibly is the duty here inculcated upon us, to give diligence to retain the knowledge of Divine things which we may already possess, and to seek to add to our present attainments, whatever we may suppose them to be! We are certain that they were not useless books, which the Apostle required to be brought to him at such a time, and from so great a distance. They must have been intended to be profitable to himself, or in some way to be turned to the advancement of that cause, to promote which was his only desire, and for which he was now about to suffer. In any, or all of these views, the contents of this verse may convey instruction, and afford an example to us; and at any rate we can no more conceive that the course of inspiration is here interrupted, without the smallest intimation to this effect, (of which an example in the whole Bible

cannot be produced,) than we can believe it was the case concerning the verse which we formerly considered.

In the former of the above passages, we observe Paul evincing his kindness and sympathy, and attending to the wants of a fellow laborer; in the latter, to his own wants. Is there any thing in either of them beneath the dignity of Divine Revelation? In prescribing, by his Apostle, the use of wine, which he would bless for the re-establishment of the health of Timothy, the Lord acted in the same manner as when he directed his Prophet to order the application of **"a lump of figs,"** for the cure of King Hezekiah. Was it beneath the dignity of Him who turned water into wine at a marriage feast, to order the use of wine for the preservation of Timothy's health, instead of the use of water? Was this unworthy of that Lord who had condescended so far to the indulgence of the feelings of His people, as to cause it to be engrossed in His law, that the man who had planted a vineyard, and not eaten of it should not go out to war, lest he should die in the battle? (Deut. 20:6).

So far from there being any thing in these passages beneath the dignity of a revelation from God, or unworthy of His character, they are entirely consistent with the one, and strikingly illustrative of the other. And it is only when we consider them, not as the word of man, but as **"the Word of God,"** that we discover their beauty and their use. It is God himself who there speaks. He who is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, condescends to the weakness and to the wants of His servants. Nothing that interests them escapes His notice. The hairs of their head are all numbered, and the smallest circumstance of their lot is ordered by the providence of God. What a striking illustration to do these two passages afford, of those affecting considerations which Jesus presented to His disciples, Luke 12:22-30, in order to withdraw their minds from the cares and anxieties to which they are so prone to yield during their earthly pilgrimage! Viewing these verses in this light, *as the words of God himself*, can any thing be more adapted to foster the spirit of adoption, or to lead us to cry, *Abba, Father?* And are they to be expunged from the Sacred Record, as incompatible with the idea we ought to form of inspiration, and unworthy of proceeding from God? But it is at such passages as these that the blind infidel scoffs, while the injudicious or ill-instructed Christian considers them as useless, and converts them into an argument against the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

On the same principle that the admonition to Timothy, to drink no longer water, but to use a little wine for the benefit of his health, is rejected as unworthy of verbal inspiration, ought not the truth of the miracle wrought at the mar-

riage at Cana in Galilee, of turning water into wine, to be denied, and the occasion deemed unworthy of miraculous interposition; and especially of its being exhibited as the first of the miracles of Jesus? Shall we be told that *it* also was a "thing not of a religious nature," that it was not worthy to be recorded by the pen of inspiration, that it is not "*prudent*" to speak of such a passage as inspired; or to admit with those, "*if any such there be, who imagine*" that Jesus first manifested forth His glory, by turning a little water into wine?

The levity, not to say the profaneness, of this manner of treating the Holy Scriptures, ought to be held in abhorrence. Their paramount authority, and their unity as the Word of God, are thus set aside. The Bible is converted into another book; and a new revelation, were such licentious principles of interpretation admitted, would become indispensable to teach the humble Christian, who takes it for "a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path,"—what portion of it he is to consider as from God, and what portion as from man,—what parts of it are of "a religious nature," from which he may derive edification, and in which he may converse with God,—and what parts relate only to "common or civil affairs," with which he has no concern, and respecting which it would not be *prudent* to speak of them as inspired. If, in this manner, inspiration is first denied to the words, and next to such things as are supposed not to be "of a religious nature," the progress to the non-inspiration of whole books of Scripture, is perfectly easy and natural; and, if whole books are rejected, then both the authenticity and the inspiration of the whole of the Scriptures are subverted. For, if the canon has admitted one uninspired book, there is no security that it has not admitted more; and if that canon has been recognized by Jesus Christ with one uninspired book, every book in the collection may be uninspired, notwithstanding that recognition. If the Apostle Paul has asserted the inspiration of the whole volume, while one book is uninspired, no book in the volume can be received on his authority. The discovery, in like manner, of one single passage in the Scriptures not dictated by the Holy Ghost, would make void the declaration, that **"all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,"** and would render inspiration necessary to tell us what part of it is inspired, and what is not. According to those writers who deny the doctrine of plenary inspiration, we have not the pure Word of God; for much that we have under that designation, is solely the word of man.

(To be continued)



A Missionary Looks

Continued from page 9

ferent in both my doctrine and practice.

Further, let it be noted that we Baptists have no such thing as infallible "Church history" other than the New Testament. Even there the Holy Ghost has not been pleased to give us a history of all the Churches nor even all the history of one Church! It is wicked folly to base our doctrines and practices on "Church history" whether written by well-meaning Baptists or others. To bend and convolute the doctrines and patterns of practice found in the New Testament in order to fit with the human record of Baptist history is to supplant the authority of the Word of God with some man's estimation of history. Men write history from their own perspective, according to their limited knowledge and ability, and sometimes to suit their own purposes. Let us freely admit that among those people called "Baptists" and among those groups of other names which preceded them, much folly and error existed. In some instances so much error that some of them were most certainly not true Churches and some of them not even regenerate! Those who follow the practices and doctrines of some "Baptists" shall be in the same boat—not true Churches and perhaps not even born again. Look at "Baptists" today! The vast majority of those sailing under the name "Baptist" are as divergent from New Testament Baptists as water is from oil—as day from night! This writer is not willing to admit that everyone who calls themselves "Baptist Churches" are true Churches of Christ nor are all such truly saved! Surely we do ourselves, our true Biblical forebears, and Bible truth an injustice to think that the majority of "Baptists" whom we read about in history were Christ's Churches. God's people and Christ's Churches have always been a hidden remnant within those who profess to be saved and within those who claim to be obedient to the New Testament. While there have most certainly been times of real revival among the Lord's Churches, we will only learn of these in Glory for little if anything has been left us in writing about the true works of God other than the New Testament. Do not romanticize Baptist history by thinking that because it happened a long time ago it was right! The test of what is right is the Bible, not "Baptist history"! We may use Baptist history profitably to illustrate both obedience and disobedience to Bible doctrine and practice, but we cannot go further than that.

The Scripture passage quoted above is called by many "The Great Commission" and it is almost universally agreed that it records the "marching orders" which Christ left for the continuance of

His work upon earth. It is the last commission which Christ left, for the former one was to the Seventy and contained His instructions to them as they were sent out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is this last "Great Commission" that requires our attention.

Notice, first of all, the SPECIFICS of these instructions. 1. These words of instruction, yea, command, were given by a specific individual: Jesus Christ. It is not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost who speaks here, but the Great Evangelist, Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The directions issued by the Son of God here are most specific. We shall look at them later in detail, but note here and now that there are three and only three things specified as to be the duty of those whom He was sending forth. They were to go and "**teach all nations**" or as Mark has it, "**preach the gospel to every creature.**" Specifically, then, the first duty enjoined is the preaching of the Gospel to all and sundry. The second duty specified is that they are to be involved in "**baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.**" That is, those to whom are granted repentance and faith are to be immersed in the name of the Trinity and by their authority. Doing something "in the name of" another person requires acting with their authority and on their behalf. It means doing what the other person wants done, in the way and at the time they want it done. All sound Baptists are in agreement that for an immersion to be valid, there must be a Scriptural subject (a regenerated sinner); a Scriptural mode (immersion in water); a Scriptural motive (to show forth salvation, not to procure it); and a Scriptural administrator (a New Testament Church). Anything more than this is superfluous. Anything less than this is fatally flawed, being contrary to the Scriptural pattern.

3. Then, those thus converted through Gospel preaching and baptized aright are to be taught "**to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.**" Where is such teaching to take place and where are the observances of the ordinances of Christ to be observed? While Gospel preaching may take place anywhere, and indeed ought to, there is another thing introduced here. Indeed, there are pearls which are not to be cast before swine (Matt. 7:6). It is the "sheep" which are to be fed—not the "goats"! This feeding or teaching is for the "them" who have heard the Gospel and been baptized and is to take place in the gathered Church as are the observances of the Lord's supper and baptism.

Having remarked on who specifically gave these instructions and assurances, and having noted the specific three-fold nature of them, let us conclude this preview by noticing to whom these orders were given. We are told that Jesus' au-

dience was "**the eleven disciples.**" This was not a mere coincidence. These men were present in obedience to His command to meet Him there.

The unique unity of this "commission" should also be noted. These three things are not separate duties among which an individual or Church can pick and choose. They go together. There are progressiv—that is—one follows logically and progressively behind the other in a connected fashion. First comes conversion, then baptism, then the realities, responsibilities and privileges of Church relation. It is not consistent with the words of the Lord Jesus to think our only duty is to preach the Gospel and omit either baptism or the organizing of Churches in which to carry out the final directive He gave. Being of such a connected and singular nature as this commission is, it cannot be said that one part of obedience to this commission can be the duty of one person or group and another part left rightly to someone else. For instance, it cannot be said that the preaching of the Gospel and the baptism of converts is the responsibility of Churches, but the establishment of Churches is left up to the converts themselves. To do so destroys the cohesive, inseparable and unified nature of the Lord's "marching orders". To teach that such a thing is the intent of the Savior is to deny the plain meaning of words and language. The directive requires that whoever is rightly charged with this work is necessarily charged with doing the whole work! To leave one part of this work undone is to fail to do what the Lord instructed! To try and relegate one part of the work to one person or group and to relegate another part to some other entity or to leave it to the converts themselves is to misconstrue the duties enjoined and to be disobedient. This must be emphasized in our day for there is much Protestantism afoot which would allow anyone to preach, baptize and organize Churches, regardless of baptism or lack of it, Church relation or lack of it. Some "Baptists" in the past have contended that a convert can "baptize" himself. This is called, I believe, "se-baptism". Some contend that baptized individuals can organize themselves together and thus be constituted a true Church. I suppose these could be called "se-churches", but the New Testament knows nothing of such things!

Some seem to have a problem with the fact that we do not know exactly how the first Churches scattered over Judea and surrounding parts were organized and by whom they were organized. Perhaps it should be pointed out that we have every reason to believe that the seventy men ordained by Jesus were members of the Jerusalem Church. They were doubtless a part of the one hundred and twenty or so mentioned in the

first of Acts. That being the case, and all except the apostles being scattered by persecution, there were seventy or so Christ-ordained, John baptized men who were members in good standing of a previously existing Church among those scattered. These men were it seems referred to as "elders" and met the New Testament qualifications and conditions to organize Churches in various places. There is absolutely no reason at all to think that these Churches were constituted in any fashion other than according to the Biblical pattern.

These last instructions—this "Great Commission"—of the Lord Jesus can surely only be understood in one of three ways. If Jesus spoke to these eleven men as mere individuals, this commission was personal and temporary for with the passing away of the eleven, so ended the duty, obligation, and responsibility of going forth to preach the Gospel, baptize and teach. If Jesus spoke to them somehow as "apostles" then we are faced with the same situation for with the passing of the apostolate the commission was terminated. Of course the Romish church teaches that her popes are the successors of Peter and thus succeed to the apostolic office. Some "apostolic churches" among the Pentecostals teach similarly. They all conclude that the commission is to them because they are the modern apostles. Since both the apostolic Pentecostals and the Church of Rome lack "*the signs of an apostle*" and teach the damnable doctrine of salvation-by-works. Baptists, and even many Protestants, have identified this perfidious "*Mystery Babylon*" and her daughters for what they are and have rejected their claims to apostolical authority. Baptists have historically "*tried them which say they are apostles*" and rejected them wholesale. We have not yet in our day seen preachers among us claiming to be apostles—though nothing would surprise me! However, it seems to me that the basic idea behind Catholicism—the idea of some kind of "direct authority" supposedly from Christ—is not unknown among some calling themselves "Baptists". Such "direct authority" to either preachers, individual converts, or a gathering of individual converts is unknown in the Scriptures other than in this instance before us and it was to these men as Christ's Church! Christ, then, delegated this three-fold work to His Church! To say that other than His Church can rightly do all of part of it is error.

I am convinced that the correct view is that Christ did not speak to these eleven as individuals, nor as apostles, but rather as His Church. It had been their privilege to "*be with him*" and to be taught by Him. They had been converted under the ministry of John and had been immersed by the Baptist him-

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self. They were the nucleus of His Church! It was they who were first set in the Church. Only this view is consistent with the understanding evidenced by the apostles in the Acts and the subsequent events in which the Church did carry out this commission in their day. Remember, it was not the apostles who were scattered, but rather the Church! Surely, it was at His Church that Christ addressed the words of Matthew 28:16-19.

My topic is "A Missionary Looks at the Commission". Having touched upon the specific nature of the commission, let us go on to practical matters of consequence in the missionary work set before us. Let it be noted that while there is a trinity in this command, there is also unity, for while conversion preceded baptism and both precede being taught in a Church connection, we dare not pursue one of these stated duties to the exclusion or detriment of the others. Although Paul stated that God did not send him to baptize, his converts were baptized—sometimes at his own hands, but most often at the hands of those associated with him. (I do not here refer to authority, but to the actual physical administration of the ordinance of baptism.)

My first duty, then, as a Church-sent missionary is to be involved in preaching the gospel. I fear that today there are many about who are preaching with great fervor, but with little light and less authority. Some think the Gospel is "Jesus loves you," although we have no record or any apostle or New Testament preacher ever saying such a thing to lost individuals! Others think the Gospel is "make a decision for Christ," but a search of the Scriptures cannot produce a single instance of such a thing in any of the sermons or words of those first preachers of the Gospel. The Gospel is Good News—not what man must do, but what Christ has done! It is the news of the finished work of Christ. Paul sums it up in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, but the ramifications he points to are far greater than the mere facts of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is "**how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.**" Search the Old Testament Scriptures for they are the Scriptures to which he refers! There you find substitution, suretyship, sacrifice, atonement, satisfaction, election, predestination, foreknowledge, the sinlessness of Christ, His Deity, etc. All the things involved in the tabernacle and later the temple—all the mediatorial work which was done on behalf of a specific people—God's elect nation. The reality of the effectiveness of all the tabernacle/temple

work should be noted in opposition to the supposedly mere "potential" effect of Christ's work as taught by the modern Arminian. The New Testament parallels are obvious and agreed to by all except the most obstinate of freewillers! As our Surety, Christ by His substitutionary death, His sacrificial atonement, made satisfaction for the sins of His people. The prophecy was fulfilled: "**He shall save his people from their sins**" (Matt. 1:21). His love for His people is seen in His death, the power of Deity is demonstrated in the resurrection, and all which is involved in God saving sinners is wrapped up in the phrase, "**how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.**" The finished work of Christ for those whom the Father foreknew (set His love upon) is the Gospel—not the "almost-finished" work of the Arminian gospel!

And so we come to the second directive left to His Church by the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism! More blood has been shed, literally and figuratively over this subject than any other, I suppose. Mr. Spurgeon, I am told, caused a greater furor and lost more of his following because of his sermon against baptismal regeneration than as a result of any other - perhaps more than all his other sermons altogether! Baptists, as far as I know, are agreed that the mode must be immersion in water, though we may well have among our ranks some so liberal as to accept sprinkling or pouring! Who can tell where the present liberal trend will lead? Once started down the track of compromise, there is often no stopping those thus engaged! However, at present Baptists are agreed, as far as I know, that the proper candidate must be a repentant sinner who professes to have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Surely there are no secret Campbellites among Baptist ranks who would maintain that water washes away sins. We may, I hope, conclude that Baptists are agreed that the motive for baptism must be to proclaim a finished work - not to purchase or earn salvation through the Romish/Campbellite/Protestant idea of salvation by water.

Many sailing under the Baptist "banner" today, however, see little wrong with freelance "baptisms". They require no Church action, viz. Church authority, in connection with baptism. The fact that every New Testament baptism about which the facts are known was administered by: (1) a man, (2) a baptized man, (3) an ordained man, (4) a man in good standing with a previously existing Church: means little to them. As a missionary seeking to act in agreement with God's revealed program, however, I contend that for a baptism to be valid and regular the four previously mentioned things must be true. I do not con-

tend that ordination in the New Testament sense is necessarily the ritual some have developed and which some require, but the public appointment by the Holy Ghost through Christ's Church to the office of teaching elder and the public recognition of the same is essential! Furthermore, the pattern in Acts 13:1-4 requires Church action in the sending forth of "missionaries" and these verses make it clear that the way the Holy Ghost sent forth these men was in connection with Church action. (It is generally agreed that each Church expresses her will by a vote of her members!) It was the Church which was led to act in recognition and direction of the evident will of God!

Baptism cannot exist without Church connection! Baptism is a Church ordinance, given by Christ to His Church to continue it according to His directions. The one doing the baptizing must have been baptized. Furthermore, according to 1 Corinthians 12:13 candidates are baptized into a body or Church! "**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...**" are the pertinent words of this passage. Believing only in "**one baptism**" (Eph. 4:5) I conclude Paul here refers to water baptism—the baptism of John which was initiated by him at God's direction and which was administered to Christ and all the apostles and which is continued by sound Baptists unto this day. By this baptism the candidate is made a member of a "**body**". I raise this very practical question: When a missionary goes into a new place and baptizes the first convert there, into what body (Church) does he baptize him? There is as yet no Church (body) in that place. It is quite possible that the missionary and the convert are the only two Christians in that place! God forbid that any Baptist would insist that the candidate was made a member of some universal, invisible, mystical, Protestant "church body"! No such thing exists! Neither is there here even any remote hint about some possible "prospective" body! The Scripture knows nothing of a "body in prospect" and in reality there may never be a Church body organized in that place where a missionary baptizes a convert. The candidate may live out his years and never see a Church organized where he is. Such a "Church body" in "prospect" is as unreal and uneffective as any universal, invisible, mystical "body" popularized by the Protestant reformers. The very idea of such a "Church in prospect" itself smells of Protestant influence! (It is this writer's opinion that too many Baptists have been reading too many Protestant commentaries!) How could a convert be said to be a member of such a body? He cannot! Such a "body in prospect" or "church in prospect" is no Church at all. It is a figment of someone's imagination and smacks of a theological idea

developed not from the Scriptures but from necessity—the necessity brought about by denying that when one is baptized they are baptized into a real body - the body which sent out the missionary! I can see no other logical and Scriptural conclusion other than that the body into which the convert is baptized is a real, already existing body as the language of Scripture demands.

When I baptized the first professing believer in the Yukon Territory, I baptized him into membership in the only body with which I have connection—my home Church! That is the only body from which I have authority and in which I have membership! When I go to eastern Europe I expect to baptize converts there. I shall baptize them into and they shall be members of my home Church until a Church be organized in the place. I cannot baptize them into your Church unless I have authority from your Church to do so. I can only baptize them into a real body - one which has a real existence and which has authorized me to do the work delegated to His Church by Jesus Christ Himself! Anything else is sheer nonsense—just as nonsensical as the "universal, invisible, body of Christ" so extolled by the Protestants! It seems to be "logical foolishness" to say you can baptize someone into or add them to something which does not yet exist and which may never come to exist! Let us deal with realities, Brethren! If you must have an imaginary "body in prospect", then at least be consistent and "baptize" people into it by "spiritual baptism" as the Protestants do! Or perhaps someone will come up with a "baptism in prospect"! Think of the ludicrousness of it! There is no Church in such-and-such a place yet, but I am to baptize a person with a view to such a Church perhaps being organized in the future! Such unreal Churches are not to be found anywhere in the Bible. They are only a necessity to those who would deny Christ's authority and His decree that Churches be involved in evangelism, baptism, and the organization of Churches!

Subtle and subversive doctrines and practices such as free lance evangelism, free lance baptism, and the free lance organization of "churches" by individuals rather than by the Lord's Churches not only breeds confusion, but would result in the death of Christ's Churches. Of course that will not, cannot happen because of the promise of Christ who said, "**lo, am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.**" This great promise of Christ does not mitigate in any way, however, the need for our alertness to potential error and attentiveness to the teaching of the Scriptures with regard to our practice. Let us be Missionary Baptists of the New Testament sort! Had I wanted to follow my own

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THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read. Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL FIGHTS AGAINST SLAVE TRADE IN SUDAN

BAHR EL GHAZAI, Sudan (EP)—A global Christian ministry just finished buying hundreds of slaves in Sudan. But this is no scandal; Christian Solidarity International (CSI) is working to counter the devastating slave trade in Sudan by buying freedom for Christians who have been seized in slave raids.

The reemergence of the slave trade is one of many ugly results of Sudan's ongoing civil war. Islamic raiders from the north descend on Christian and animist villages in the South, killing the men and seizing the women and children. Most are sold to families in the North, though many boys are taken to facilities that are a cross between a school and a concentration camp, where they are taught the Koran and trained to be soldiers for Sudan's Islamic government.

Christian Solidarity International works to free those who have been taken captive. "We have contacts with Arab traders who go to households in northern Sudan where these slaves are living," explains Hans Stuckelberger, Swiss founder of the ministry. "They pose as if they want to buy the slaves for themselves or resell them, then they head south to meet up with us so we can redeem them."

"Redeeming" the slaves means paying for them—an average of \$50 per head. "It is a financial transaction," says Stuckelberger, who acknowledges that some have suggested that buying slaves to free them only feeds the market. "But if you have a relative—your son or daughter or mother enslaved—you will do anything to set that person free, even if that means dealing with the market. We've not seen any increase of slave raids since we began doing this."

During the September visit, CSI redeemed 640 slaves through two networks of Arab traders. Since 1995, CSI has traveled to Sudan 15 times and redeemed 3,000 slaves. They have also interviewed many slave traders and grieving relatives of those still in bondage. The ministry's work is dangerous. Because the Sudanese government denies that slavery is still being practiced, CSI is unable to get official permission for its work. "We fly into the country with small airplanes, and do not announce our trips so that our planes are not shot down," says Stuckelberger. "Those who go there do so at considerable risk."

Why is the slave trade flourishing in Sudan? "Taking slaves has been done in past centuries," Stuckelberger explains. "In the Arab North and the black African South it's a tradition. Now it is being used as part of the war to destabilize the population of the

South, as part of the North's effort to Islamize the whole country."

Stuckelberger says tens of thousands of Sudanese are still held as slaves in the North, plus thousands of boys held in schools.

"This will end only if there is a public outcry against this practice, and the Sudanese government puts a stop to it," says Stuckelberger. "In the end it will require the United Nations, and more importantly the United States, to put pressure on the Islamic government in Sudan to end the practice, or for the government to fall through revolution or warfare. Unfortunately, there is no great political interest to what's happening in Sudan. Most governments just look the other way." Surprisingly, Stuckelberger has received little support for his campaign from African-American or Islamic groups in the U.S. "Mr. Farrakhan just pretends there are no slaves," Stuckelberger says.

Redeeming the slaves is only part of SCI's work in Sudan. The ministry also provides food and medicine for the returning slaves, and for communities devastated by slave raids. "The people are so poor that they can't afford anything," Stuckelberger notes. "We leave them with their families and move on to the next redemption. At present, we are unable to do more."

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they" (Eccl. 5:8).

SUPREME COURT LETS VOUCHER PROGRAM STAND

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—A voucher program in Milwaukee that helps poor parents send their children to religious schools can continue. The U.S. Supreme Court refused Nov. 9, 8-1, to hear a challenge to the program.

By refusing to hear the appeal, the Court let stand a June decision by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which ruled 4-2 that the program is constitutional because it aids religious and non-religious schools alike.

The U.S. Supreme Court did not give a reason for its decision, and its refusal to hear the challenge does not create a national precedent.

Milwaukee's program let thousands of lower-income parents send their children to the private schools of their choice, many of which are church-affiliated schools.

Under the Milwaukee plan, the state will provide up to \$70 million this year to pay for as many as 15,000 low-income students to attend private schools. Most of the 80 participating private schools are church-affiliated. The value of the voucher cannot exceed the amount Wisconsin spends per

pupil on public schools—about \$4,900.

Cleveland is the only other U.S. city which provides tax-supported vouchers to parents who want to send their children to religious schools, but the Court's decision to let Milwaukee's program stand may open the door to similar programs in other states.

Both Congress and at least 20 states have considered vouchers as a way to expand school choice and give poor children an alternative to failing public schools.

Critics of vouchers say they drain funds from public schools and violate the constitutional principle of separation of church and state. Voucher advocates say that because parents—not the state—choose the school their children will attend there is no government establishment of religion, and argue that without increased competition public schools will continue to decline.

"Behold, God is mine helper" (Ps. 54:4).

RELIGIOUS LEADERS CALL FOR CLINTON TO RESIGN; QUESTION SINCERITY OF HIS REPENTANCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. (EP)—Religious leaders in America released two significant statements in mid-November, one questioning the validity of President Clinton's repentance from sexual sin, and the other calling for his resignation.

About 75 religion scholars signed a strongly worded statement protesting "the manipulation of religion and the debasing of moral language" in the ongoing Clinton sex scandal. They warned that religious leaders should not "provide authentication for a politically motivated and incomplete repentance that seeks to avert serious consequences for wrongful acts."

The statement harkens back to the Sept. 11 prayer breakfast at which Clinton asked religious leaders for forgiveness for his "sins." While several religious leaders in attendance at that meeting said they believed Clinton's repentance was genuine, signers of the new statement question his sincerity.

The statement contends that "certain moral qualifications are central to the survival of our political system, among which are truthfulness, integrity, respect for the law, respect for the dignity of others, adherence to the constitutional process and a willingness to avoid the abuse of power."

The statement was organized by Robert Jewett, emeritus professor of religion at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. He said more than 300 scholars were asked to sign the document, and about 25 percent agreed to.

Another statement organized by the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD) called for Clinton's resignation from the presidency. Among the 32 signatories were four Episcopal bishops, *First Things* editor Richard John Neuhaus, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson, *Crisis* magazine publisher Dean Hudson, the Catholic Campaign for America's Mary Ellen Bork, and IRD President Diane Knippers. Signatories included leaders of evangelical reform groups in the American Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ.

"A godly man will strive to avoid sin," said the letter to Clinton. "But equally important, when he does fall he will prove his character by the completeness of his repentance from sin, the humility with which he bears its consequences, and the fullness of his restitution to those he has wronged."

The religious leaders said Clinton has demeaned the presidency and undermined the rule of law, and urged him to "redeem his legacy" by resigning. They also commended him for seeking spiritual counsel, and assured him of their own continued prayers for his spiritual healing.

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn" (Prov. 29:2).

ANALYSIS: HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION—THE WRONG SOLUTION TO THE WRONG PROBLEM

By Doug Trouten

LARAMIE, Wyoming (EP)—The savage and fatal beating of a homosexual Wyoming student has led to renewed calls for hate crimes laws that would impose special penalties for crimes motivated by bias—including bias against homosexuals. It's the wrong solution for the wrong problem.

Matthew Shepard, 22, was reportedly lured from a popular college bar Oct. 6 in Laramie, Wyoming, tied to a fence, beaten with a blunt object and left for dead. When he was found he was airlifted to a Colorado hospital, but never regained consciousness and died Oct. 12.

Those who advocate cultural acceptance of homosexuality were quick to latch onto Shepard's death, shamelessly exploiting it to advance their political agenda. Across the nation there were new calls for hate crimes laws, which by definition punish perpetrators for their motivations, rather than for their actions.

National media figures were quick to suggest that the real problem was "hate speech"—a term that seems to include any suggestion that there might be something wrong with the homosexual lifestyle. On NBC's "Today Show," Katie Couric suggested that conservative Christian organizations—including Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council and the Christian Coalition—were responsible for the attack

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whims and the so-called "Church history" which I and thousands of others had been taught, I would have remained among the interdenominational Protestants! However, I have been brought to see that the Lord's Churches alone are the agents which He authorized to do His work of evangelism, baptism, and Church organization. Let others be guilty of bootlegging the Gospel, bootlegging baptism, and bootlegging "church" organizing, but let each Church obey her Bridegroom until He comes for us!

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on Shepard. In the *New York Times*, columnist Frank Rich blamed those who teach that homosexuality is "sinful," saying, "Once any group is successfully scapegoated as a sub-human threat to 'normal' values by a propaganda machine, emboldened thugs take over."

In the rush to blame conservative Christians for Shepard's death and "fix" the problem with hate crime laws, several important aspects of this tragedy have been overlooked:

* There is no evidence that connects Shepard's attackers with the "religious right." Police have arrested four suspects: Russell Henderson, 21, and Aaron McKinney, 22, will face charges of first degree murder; their girlfriends Chastity Pasley, 20, and Kristen Price, 18, will be charged as accessories after the fact. None have been tied to conservative Christianity.

* It is not clear that the attack on Shepard was motivated by his homosexuality. Police have suggested that robbery may have been the motive, and that Shepard's homosexuality merely provided a way for his killers to lure him from the bar.

* A short while before his death, Shepard claimed he was assaulted and raped by three men. Authorities say the real story is that Shepard had joined a group of people heading to a lake after a bar closed, had made sexual advances to an uninterested bartender, and had gotten his jaw broken when the bartender punched him out. Shepard declined to press charges, saying he was too drunk to remember what happened. While Shepard's homosexuality may or may not have been a factor in his death, a lifestyle that includes getting drunk and wandering off with strangers certainly played a role.

* There's no evidence to suggest that a hate crimes law would have protected Shepard—or anyone else. Murder is a capital offense in Wyoming. If Shepard's attackers are found guilty, they may be executed. It's hard to see just what more would be accomplished by tacking on a hate crime charge. No sadistic murderer is going to say, "I was going to kill this person, until I realized it was a hate crime."

The whole concept of hate crimes legislation is deeply flawed. Because hate crimes laws apply only to certain "protected classes" of people, they suggest that murdering people of certain groups is worse than murdering other people—that murdering somebody because they're black or Jewish or gay is worse than murdering them because they're left-handed or near-sighted or fat. Hate crimes laws also imply that choosing a victim based on race or creed or sexual preference is more heinous than completely random acts of violence, though this is certainly a debatable point. And hate crimes legislation punishes attitudes and beliefs rather than actions, an Orwellian twist that is contrary to the spirit of the U. S. Constitution.

But passing a hate crimes law is just a means to an end. That end has nothing to do with protecting victims—Matthew Shepard is just as dead as he would have been if he had been attacked in a state that had enacted hate crimes legislation. The real motivation

is power—the power that comes from statutory recognition. The subtext of the whole debate is the ceaseless demand for societal acceptance of sexual perversion.

The next step after hate crimes legislation is a hate speech law. After all, if it's a special crime to assault somebody because they're gay, shouldn't it also be a crime to suggest that there's something wrong with being gay? The "climate of hate" argument advanced against conservative Christian organizations in the wake of Shepard's death is a sign of things to come.

Hate crimes legislation is a step toward a world where it will be a crime simply to share biblical teaching about homosexuality. When that day comes, we'll find that Shepard didn't die alone on that fence outside Laramie. Dying with him were freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

[Doug Trouten is director of the Evangelical Press News Service.]

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (Matt. 10:22).

CHINESE BELIEVERS ARRESTED AFTER PROTESTING PERSECUTION

BEIJING, China (EP)—The Chinese government is cracking down on the independent house church movement in apparent response to a letter of protest by Chinese house church leaders which called for better treatment of Christians by the Communist Chinese government, and for government recognition of the underground church.

According to Voice of the Martyrs, 40 people were arrested Oct. 26 in Henan province while holding a church meeting. Those arrested are leaders of different house churches from various areas. Many were released after paying a fine of \$2,000, but 11 remain in custody. The 11 are Han Yungvin, Chung Mei-ving, Soong Jian-sun, Wang Kai-Jue, Chuen Ai-ling, Chang Ching-yuen, Liu Siang, Li Ping, Liu Yuanpor, Ma Yuen-hai and Li Shao-nar. They remain in prison in Fangching, Henan province.

On November 5 government forces raided a Christian meeting of about 100 people, some of whom remain in police custody. A letter released by the New York-based Human Rights in China group said that police beat at least 13 Christian leaders.

Chinese house church leaders issued a seven-point appeal Aug. 22 in Henan province, a stronghold of house church movement revival. The appeal calls on the government to change repressive religious regulations, to release unconditionally all house church Christians presently in labor camps, to accept the reality that the house churches are the mainstream of Christianity in China with a membership far out-numbering the government-controlled Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) churches, to clarify what constitutes a "cult," and to begin a dialogue with representatives of the house churches to seek reconciliation and to decrease confrontation.

The appeal states that house churches in China contains as many as 80 million Christians, far outnumbering the 10 million associated with TSPM churches.

Voice of the Martyrs urges American

Christians to pray on behalf of the imprisoned Chinese believers. "Pray that they won't be tortured," said one Chinese believer. Christians can also contact Chinese authorities at the United Nations to request the release of these and other Christians being held in China.

China has shown a willingness to engage in human rights dialogue with President Clinton and the United Nations, but religious persecution continues.

"The bloodthirsty hate the upright" (Prov. 29:10).

CHRISTIAN COALITION LEADER RANDY TATE SAYS LACK OF MESSAGE HURT REPUBLICANS

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Christian Coalition Executive Director Randy Tate says exit polling done for his organization shows that the Republican Party's lack of a clear conservative message hurt it at the polls Nov. 4.

"The numbers are clear. The message coming out of this election is that issues do matter. There was no clear conservative agenda articulated by national conservative leaders in Washington. Republicans tried to win a campaign based solely on anti-Clinton sentiment. Democrats had an agenda, albeit a liberal agenda. They talked about liberal approaches to social security, education and health care, and some agenda will beat no agenda very time," Tate said.

Tate contrasted the fortunes of the two parties in 1998 with the 1994 elections and noted the differences a pro-family message can make. "In 1994 there was the same anti-Clinton sentiment among conservatives as there was this year, but there was also a clear conservative agenda in 1994 which did not exist in 1998," Tate said.

Tate added, "Our poll shows that in 1994, 67 percent—a full two-thirds—of religious conservatives voted Republican as opposed to 24 percent who voted Democratic. In 1998, only 54 percent of religious conservatives voted Republican while 31 percent voted Democratic, a devastating swing of 20 points against the Republican Party. The bottom line for both parties is that religious conservatives are a vital voting bloc that can never be taken for granted in any election."

"Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge" (Prov. 14:7).

CHRISTIAN PASTOR ARRESTED IN CHINA

HUA DU, China (EP)—Chinese pastor Li Di Xian was arrested Dec. 1 in the Hua Du area of China, according to a report from Voice of the Martyrs.

During a house church service where Pastor Li was speaking, numerous Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers came, arriving in more than 10 vans, and took him away. The officers also confiscated all Bibles, pews and electrical fittings being used in the service.

Li's wife Chau Ha was not arrested, and is awaiting word on her husband.

For Li, arrest and imprisonment for the gospel are nothing new. He was arrested twice in 1995, and he suffered severe beatings during his time in custody. Last May, when police raided a house church meeting

where Li was speaking and warned him, Li stood at the microphone and said loudly: "I will preach until I die."

Last summer, Voice of the Martyrs couriers were in China and worshipped with more than 600 believers at Pastor Li's house church. They reported people sitting quietly in the streets surrounding Pastor Li's house, in order to hear the gospel message.

Also last summer, Chinese believers smuggled out a Communist party document expressing the officials' consternation at Li's effectiveness. Part of the document said: "Li De Xian is Guangzhou's illegal religion organization's leader. . . he has preached illegally in our town for nearly ten years. He has been arrested and educated many times, and yet his heart has not died and his nature has not changed."

Chinese authorities are engaged in a wide-scale crackdown on house churches that has included torture, at least one shooting, and ransom-like fines, according to the group Human Rights in China. "While imprisoned, these church leaders have suffered a range of torture and abuse," the New York-based group said in a statement.

Cheng Meiyong, an underground church leader in northeastern China, was arrested Oct. 26, whipped with a wet rope, and beaten in the head with a police baton before losing consciousness for three days. She has been released, but according to Human Rights in China, "At present, Ms. Cheng suffers complete memory loss. She has no control over her mental state and exhibits the appearance of insanity."

On Oct. 5 China signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, raising hopes that the world's most populous nation would begin to respect the political and religious rights of its people. But in the weeks since the signing, violent moves against human rights monitors, political dissidents and house church leaders have increased.

China's constitution guarantees freedom of religion, but in practice China permits Christian worship only in state-approved churches controlled by the Communist Party.

"If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked" (Prov. 29:12).

CHURCH-STATE GROUP CHALLENGES CLINTON'S PRE-ELECTION CHURCH VISIT

BALTIMORE, Md. (EP)—A pre-election presidential visit to New Psalmist Baptist Church was a Democratic rally, not a church service, and thus violated the tax-exempt status of the church, according to Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The group filed a complaint with the Internal Revenue Service.

"What we have a problem with is candidates of one party appearing at the pulpit for what is essentially a rally," Americans United spokesman Rob Boston told the Baltimore Sun. "That's the problem we have with New Psalmist."

Church attorney Edward Smith Jr. said that even though Clinton was joined at the Sunday morning service by Gov. Parris Glendening, who was re-elected two days later, the church did not technically endorse

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anyone.

After the 1992 election, Americans United sued The Church at Pierce Creek, a small church in Vestal, New York, which purchased newspaper advertisements urging voters to reject Bill Clinton for "promoting policies that are in rebellion to God's Laws" including "abortion on demand" and "the homosexual lifestyle." The IRS revoked the church's tax-exempt status in 1995. That decision led to a lawsuit against the IRS for violating the church's free speech and equal protection rights. That lawsuit is still pending.

On Oct. 29, attorneys for the church argued that removing its tax-free status was a political attack designed to silence anti-Clinton conservatives. The church argued that politically active liberal churches are ignored by the IRS—an argument that may have contributed to the Baltimore lawsuit.

The IRS "overstepped its authority in this case and reacted in a way that can only be seen as a flagrant display of bigotry and bias," said attorney Jay Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice. The Pierce Creek case was the first in which a bona fide religious group has lost its tax-exempt status for political activity.

"Wrath is cruel" (Prov. 27:4).

GLEANINGS HERE AND THERE

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (EP)—An Arkansas man was convicted Nov. 2 of violating the federal Access to Clinic Entrances Act. His crime? He parked yellow Ryder rental trucks near two abortion clinics. Prosecutors said J. Fred Hart Jr. knew that parking the trucks near the federal building in Oklahoma City. The trucks contained no bombs, but their presence led to evacuations of the abortion clinics and nearby businesses. Hart could face six months in jail and a \$10,000 fine on each of two counts.

VANCOUVER, B.C., Canada (EP)—The British Columbia Transit Authority has refused to permit the *B.C. Christian News*, a monthly Christian newspaper, to be distributed on transit properties. Transit authorities said people would find the paper "derogatory and offensive...with respect to abortion and sexual orientation issues." More than two dozen other publications—including publications with liberal and sex-oriented content, are distributed on transit property.

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP)—An AIDS awareness concert which would have featured a Christmas tree decorated with condoms on World AIDS Day (Dec. 1) was canceled Nov. 23 after city officials objected to the plan. "I think it is one of the most idiotic ideas I have ever heard of," New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani told reporters. The event, sponsored by the San Francisco-based clothing firm Levi Strauss and Co., would have involved an artificial 35-foot "Tree of Life" at Central Park's Wollman skating rink. William Donohue of the Catholic League said, "The have every legal right to insult Christians. But...coming this time of year shows that they're not just bigots, they're plain stupid."

JERUSALEM, Israel (EP)—On Nov. 19,

supporters of an effort to rebuild Israel's temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem gathered to declare the new moon, a ceremony practiced during Old Testament times. Organizers of the event said, "For the first time since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem 2000 years ago, a Rabbinical Court today declared the new month at the gates of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. In the presence of a contingent of Jews who profess the rebuilding of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount, the month of Kislev was declared by the Court." Yehuda Etzion, leader of the temple advocacy group Chai Vekaiyam, declared the ceremony "a major step towards the reclamation of the Temple Mount into Jewish hands, a step which will lead into the rebuilding of the Third Temple."

ATLANTA, Ga. (EP)—Representatives of Georgia's Baptists failed to pass a ban on charismatic activities during a recent state meeting. Most of the 2,400 delegates present at the meeting voted to ban such practices as speaking on tongues and being "slain in the spirit," but the vote fell short of the two-thirds majority required for such an action.

* After insisting that the U.S. must pay its dues to the United Nations to retain its credibility, President Bill Clinton vetoed a bill to pay the dues Oct. 21 because it contained an anti-abortion initiative to which he objected. The bill included an amendment sponsored by Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) which would have barred federal funding of international family-planning organizations that lobby foreign governments to change their abortion policies.

BUCHAREST, Romania (EP)—Six Christian radio stations operated in Romania by the evangelical "Voice of the Gospel" will not have their licenses renewed, according to the Romanian government. The decision reportedly comes at the request of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which dominates religious broadcasting in Romania and objects to any competition from the evangelical minority.

LAGOS, Nigeria (EP)—Some 70 Nigerian churches have been vandalized and burned during the last 12 months by the Muslim Igbirras, and conflict between Christian and Muslim ethnic groups continues to escalate, reports the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA). The conflict between the Muslim Igbirras and the Christian Bassas allegedly began as a result of government political policies that favored Muslims over Christians. Muslim political leaders were appointed over predominately Christian areas, public funds were used to build mosques on government property, Christian religious instruction was prevented in schools but Islamic religious teaching was allowed, and Muslims dominated the media. Violent clashes that began in November 1997 have resulted in thousands of deaths.

HOUSTON, Tex. (EP)—During his historic return to space, John Glenn said that seeing the earth from space has strengthened his faith in God. "I don't think we can look at Earth every day, look down upon this kind of creation...and not to believe in God is impossible." Asked whether he prayed in space, the 77-year-old senator from Ohio said, "I pray every day, and I think everybody should."

Glenn made his remarks during a 35-minute news conference conducted while in orbit.

HOUSTON, Tex. (EP)—Conservative Baptists in Texas have left the Baptist General Convention to form their own convention. The larger Baptist convention has been increasingly tolerant of homosexuality and abortion, said organizers of the new Southern Baptists of Texas. "I think we've got to get away from this thing of getting away from God's Word," said Miles Seaborn, president of the group. Tension between the groups had been building, but the final straw was when the moderate-controlled group adopted new rules basing representation at the state convention on financial contribution to the state association. Many conservative churches have been withholding money from the state organization to protest its more liberal views.

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (EP)—A North Carolina Baptist church is risking expulsion from the Baptist State Convention by permitting same-sex "union" ceremonies. Wake Forest Baptist Church is the third Baptist church in the state to take a pro-homosexual position. Church deacon Richard Barnett said the church does not technically endorse same-sex unions, but it "does accept individual members' acceptance of same-sex unions." That distinction is likely to be lost on the State Baptist Convention, which has already expelled two other churches for taking a pro-homosexual stand.

VATICAN CITY, (EP)—The church must take responsibility for the evils of the Inquisition, the Vatican said Oct. 29. Cardinal Roger Etcheagaray, head of the Vatican's main committee for the year 2000, suggested that the church has wrongly laid the blame for the Inquisition on civil prosecutors. He said the church needs to reexamine the special court set up by the church in 1233 to curb heresy. Catholic scholars have noted that the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisitions were aided by civil authorities, while only the Roman Inquisition answered directly to the Pope. But Etcheagaray said, "The fact that the Spanish and Portuguese crowns...had powers of intervention...on inquisitory tribunals does not change the ecclesiastical character of the institution." The Inquisition fined, imprisoned and tortured alleged heretics, including astronomer Galileo, who was condemned for discovering that the earth revolves around the sun. The Inquisition reached its peak in the 16th century while attempting to counter the Reformation. It is the predecessor of the present Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which monitors Catholic orthodoxy.

JERUSALEM, Israel (EP)—Members of a Denver-based doomsday cult are in Israel, according to Jerusalem Police Chief Yair Yitzhaki. Members of the group Concerned Christians left the U.S. after their leader, Monte Kim Miller, predicted that Denver would be destroyed in a terrible earthquake Oct. 10. The disappearance of cult members sparked concerns of mass suicide, but at least 10 are in Israel with as many as 62 others on the way. Miller has predicted that he will die in Jerusalem in December of 1999, and be resurrected three days later.

EMELLE, Ala. (EP)—At least four chil-

dren are dead in a fire at Holyland, headquarters of an Alabama-based religious cult whose founder is believed to have fathered dozens of children with various women in his church. The children died when a dormitory was destroyed by fire Nov. 17; 46 others in the dormitory escaped safely. The religious commune was founded by 71-year-old Luke Edwards, who has also been accused of violating child labor laws.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—The Salvation Army was the biggest recipient of charitable donations in 1997 with total receipts of \$1.2 billion, according to the Chronicle of Philanthropy. Campus Crusade for Christ international was 16th on the list with \$236.2 million. Trinity Christian Center came in at 48 with \$132.4 million, and the Christian Broadcasting Network was close behind in 59th place with \$115 million. Other Christian ministries in the top 100 included Focus on the Family (76th with \$97.6 million), Wycliffe Bible Translators (84th with \$92.9 million), and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (94th with \$87.9 million).

PETALUMA, Calif. (EP)—A Boy Scout troop leader who objected to the group's ban on homosexuals resigned as an assistant scoutmaster after learning that his appointment would not be renewed. Scott Cozza's son is still an active member of the troop, and both are still gathering signatures on a petition urging the Boy Scouts of America to include homosexuals as members and as adult leaders. Cozza said he resigned "out of respect for the parents who don't want me to be around their kids." In March, the California Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts have the right to exclude homosexuals and atheists.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Attorney General Janet Reno posted a \$500,000 reward Nov. 9 for the capture of the sniper who killed abortionist Dr. Barnett Slepian. Reno also established a national task force on abortion clinic violence.

MINDOULI, Republic of Congo (EP)—Six clergymen on a peace mediation mission to a rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo were killed, Radio France Internationale reported Nov. 14.

The six were members of a church committee established to try to end armed conflict. They were killed "in cold blood," according to witnesses quoted in the radio report.

The clergymen, all from the Pool region of Congo, had gone to speak to the rebel leaders without any armed escort to avoid any appearance of threat.

The Congolese government is blaming the attack on followers of exiled opposition leader Bernard Kolelas.

New Jersey's first-in-the-nation policy of not increasing welfare benefits for women who have more children has succeeded in driving down birth rates for welfare recipients in that state. And though the policy did increase the abortion rate for a time, a many pro-lifers feared, that effect seems to have been only temporary, according to a four-year Rutgers University study. By the end of the study period in 1996, abortion rates for those on welfare had returned to their pre-"family cap" levels,

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but birth rates remained down. The Rutgers researchers estimated that the new policy has led to 14,000 fewer births so far. Another thing is clear from the study: Government policies do affect social behavior, and can encourage or discourage socially destructive trends (*Human Events*, 11-20-98).

On January 1, eleven European nations take a step toward economic and political convergence by adopting a common currency called the *euro*. This is the latest step in the march toward European unification, giving greater clout and economic growth (*Calvary Con-tender*, 12-15-98).

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)—Democratic governments are built on a twin foundation of religious values and a commitment to the rule of law, Margaret Thatcher said during a recent address at a Baptist University. "The moral foundation of this system is the Judeo-Christian outlook—the message of the Old and New Testament, that each and every person matter," Britain's former prime minister said (*Western Recorder*, 11-3-98).

Republican leaders of the 105th Congress' second session again abandoned their pro-family and pro-moral base. The Senate failed to override another Clinton veto of legislation that would have outlawed the late-term procedure opponents refer to as "partial-birth abortion." The anti-euthanasia bill was never fully considered, and a measure was defeated in the Senate that would have made it illegal to transport a minor across state lines for an abortion. Congress failed to approve measures allowing school voucher programs. The House defeated the Religious Freedom Constitutional Amendment. The amendment, sponsored by Rep. Earnest Istook, R-Okla., would have put the word "God" into the Constitution for the first time and allowed organized prayer in public schools. It is clear to all concerned that the Republicans have in the main listened to the media (which is 90 percent Democrats and 100% liberals and leftists) to "reach out" to the left and bring the country together. In the main the Republican Party has lost its message and Christian principles, and it has become a party of timid, office-clinging incumbents who are governed by the polls (MRC).

Did you catch the Situation Ethics of Joseph Fletcher, the *Playboy* theologian, in the impeachment hearings? Fletcher taught that morality must be compromise or set aside in a given situation if love seems better served by doing so. When asked if he would vote to impeach if it were proved that Clinton lied under oath, Rep. Asa Hutchinson (R.-Ark.) replied: "It certainly would be an impeachable offense," but "you'd have to look at the circumstances" before deciding to vote for an impeachment resolution."

More than a third of auto crash deaths are caused by drunken driving. Last year: 16,189 alcohol-related traffic deaths. That's 38.6 percent of the total (*Straight Talk*, 11-12-98).

By 1999, the Navy will have only 336 ships, the lowest number since 1938 and down

dramatically from 600 in 1991. For the first time in 70 years, the Navy does not have a single new design aircraft in the development or production stage. . . . Under One-Worlder Clinton, the U.S. now spends \$100 billion per year less in real dollars on the military than it did in the 1980s (*Straight Talk*, 11-5-98).

The D. C. Republican Committee on Sept. 22 elected three open Gays to its ranks, bringing the total number of openly Gay committee members to nine (*Straight Talk*, 11-29-98).

USA Today reports that "Tax returns released earlier this week show that Al and Tipper Gore, whose income was \$197,729 last year, gave \$353 to charity. That's a third of the average donated by all households that give to charity (*ibid.*).

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that a new study of Baltimore-area women "who are sexually active" showed one out of three testing positive for chlamydia, a sexually transmitted bacteria that can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and tubal pregnancies. The highest infection rate was reported among sexually active 14-year-olds.

California public officials recently gave a slightly better report, estimating that *only* one in five sexually active women under age 25 are infected with chlamydia. And chlamydia is but one of a host of sexually transmitted diseases that are ravaging our promiscuous society.

What to do? Hand out more condoms, of course, say the self-anointed oracles of public wisdom. The same guardians of virtue who recently banished Joe Camel from the public square for corrupting the health of minors can't muster the moral outrage to denounce the ever-increasing onslaught of sexually provocative "entertainment" and advertising aimed at our vulnerable youth. Our sex-drenched culture is proving to be increasingly dangerous and deadly to "sexually active" young people. Where are the political and cultural elites when they should be fighting this very real menace? Cheering Howard Stern and delivering apologies for Lothario-in-Chief Bill Clinton. (*The New American*, 9-28-98).

Acceptable Hate Speech. San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown recently denounced Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas as a "shill" for racism, compared him to a member of the Ku Klux Klan, and called on all African Americans to shun him. "He must not be allowed any comfort from any of us," Brown said in an August 19th speech to the Association of Black Sociologists. Brown, the former Speaker of the California State Assembly and a top power broker in the Democratic Party and the black community, called Thomas "a shill and cover for the most insidious form of racism" (*ibid.*).

"BILL THE BAPTIST"

The November 2 *Newsweek* magazine presented an analysis of the President as "Bill the Baptist." "To understand Clinton the president, you have to meet Bill the Baptist, a believer whose faith leaves plenty of license," said a subheading to the article titled "Sex, Sin and Salvation." Reporter Kenneth Woodward went on to say: "Bill Clinton—both the public and the private man—cannot be fully understood

without grasping the nuances of his Baptist upbringing." The reporter also credited Clinton's Baptist upbringing with his belief that "what he does in private is nobody's business but the Lord's."

Finally, Woodward contended, "Bill was also schooled in the Baptist tradition of freedom of conscience—including matters of sex." Woodward is a Roman Catholic which seems only to be acquainted with the liberal wing of the Southern Baptist Convention.

This Baptist critic quotes three liberal SBC leaders: James Dunn, Glenn Hinson and Foy Valentine. Dunn is best known leading his agency (BJCPA) in radical positions on church-state separation in line with the ACLU. Dunn refuses to oppose abortion on demand. In 1991 the SBC had enough, and it defunded Dunn's agency.

Glenn Hinson, professor at the liberal Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Va., is cited as a defender of Bill Clinton who said that the President's sin is none of our business. "When the President told the nation that his problems were between himself, his family and 'our God,' that was a very Baptist statement," Hinson said.

During the 20 years that Hinson was professor of church history for over 20 years at Southern Seminary (Louisville, Ky.) he taught that Jesus had no consciousness of "divinity," and that "the risen Christ had not a physical but a spiritual body."

The last in this list was Foy Valentine who said: "What he did is disgusting, but not what I would consider adultery," adding that he was sure "most Baptists would agree." Bill Clinton is a product of the liberal leaders who have for many years controlled the SBC.

Conservative SBC leaders have called upon President Clinton to resign for the good of the country (MRC).

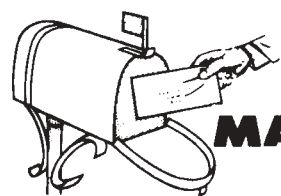
"So there was a division among the people. . ." (John 7:43).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Beverly Manor Baptist Church, 209 Vohland Street, Washington, IL 61571 and Pastor Mike McCoskey are seeking a Youth Director to lead the youth. Any interested person should contact Bro. Dan Hillard, Minister of Education, at (309) 745-9229.

Bro. Larry Robbins departed this life on Dec. 6, 1998. He pastored several churches and was a teacher at Lexington Baptist College.

The Beauty Mountain Baptist Church, Edmond, W. Va., has extended a unanimous call for Elder Leroy Pack to continue as pastor, and has accepted the call.



FROM THE MAILBOX

I am a Christian in need of encouragement. Please send me *The Berea Baptist Banner* regularly. I will be glad to pay and be a subscriber.

—State lost

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

Please find enclosed a check for the amount of \$15.00. I wish to purchase a subscription to your periodical *The Berea Baptist Banner* for the three brethren listed on the left side of this letter. In addition I would like to purchase a subscription for myself. The subscriptions to these brethren are to be holiday gifts or gift subscriptions for the coming year. I enjoy your publication very much. The articles are timely and offer doctrinal food for thought. May God bless you all.

—Missouri

Dear Sirs,

Please find enclosed a check for the amount of \$5. Please add me to your mailing list. I enjoy reading the *Banner* paper very much and is such a great blessing. Thank you for your prompt attention in this matter.

—Mississippi

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to ask that if it is at all possible could you send me some literature written by Milburn Cockrell, for from what I have read by him out of his book *The Gospel in Isaiah*, I found to be very very sound teaching. I enjoyed it. So if I may be able to receive other material by him I would greatly appreciate it, and could I also have a catalog of you all have one.

—Tennessee

Bro. Cockrell,

If you continue to write articles like: "Can A Church Member Dismiss Himself From His Church?" it is likely that we will continue to help in your support!

—Kentucky

Brother Cockrell,

Greetings in the precious name of our dear Lord Jesus Christ.

Philadelphia Baptist Church now has a presence on the web <http://www2.tnweb.com/pbc>.

If you get time please stop by and look at it. I would like to get your permission to add some of your booklets to the site.

First would be 'In Search Of The Universal, Invisible Church' and "The Veiled Woman."

If you would have no objections please let me know. If you have any electronic copy of these texts I will make arrangements to get them, otherwise I will just scan them in.

Thank you and God bless.

—Alabama

Dear Bro. Cockrell,

Just a note to say hello and tell you how much I enjoy getting BBB. I am a member at Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Georgia.

I really enjoyed your articles on scriptural church organization. You helped me to better understand this truth of God's Word.

—Georgia

Dear Brother,

I am just home from the hospital, recuperating from kidney surgery so will drop you a line concerning your paper which you have been kind enough to send me for sometime now. I am a pastor. I am 72 years old and was saved in 1950 and was ordained to preach in 1963 after having served as a deacon, Sunday school teacher, and superintendent, church treasurer and clerk.

Now I am a little older and where I once read almost every thing in print, I now have to choose what I read and I am very happy to read your paper, as it is food for my soul. I agree with your doctrinal stand, and 95 % of everything that I have read in your paper, though I may not emphasize some points as much as some do.

I appreciate my good friend Roy Mitchell of

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World Scene

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

Whatever Happened to the Other Scandals?



Ken Starr did a fine job with Monicagate before the House Judiciary Committee—irrefutable evidence, suave demeanor and skillful repartee—but is that all we get for \$40 million and four years of work?

OTHER SCANDALS

Whatever happened to the other scandals? *Chinagate* where national defense technology was sold to Communist China so the nation that calls the United States “China’s main enemy” could perfect its ICBMs. *Filegate* where FBI files were illegally used against perceived Clinton-Gore enemies. *Travelgate* where loyal Travel Office employees were smeared and fired so the Clintons could hire their own friends. *Canalgate* where Communist Chinese ally Hutchison Whampoa was accepted as “gatekeeper” of the Panama Canal in violation of the Canal Treaties. *IRSgate* where tax returns were used to intimidate Clinton-Gore opponents. *Laundering* of money through legal defense funds. *Illegal campaign fund-raising* galore from public buildings and from the Buddhist Hsi Lai Temple in Los Angeles.

These are extremely serious matters. Didn’t we taxpayers hire the special prosecutor and Chairman Hyde to protect us? We mean breaches of national security at the highest level—the selling of defense technology for campaign contributions, illegal use of federal agencies and illegal fund-raising and money laundering.

FOCUS ON MONICAGATE

The media have glossed over these scandals, as have most Republican leaders, particularly since the mid-term elections where they took a licking and the Clinton popularity polls rose. The focus has been Monicagate and “sex only” while downplaying the perjury, witness tampering and obstruction of justice. Except for Bob Barr and Gerald Solomon, Republicans have been completely silent about these other scandals that undermine the integrity and foundation of the American system.

By their silence they are accepting these crimes and therefore, the leaders of both parties are accessories after the fact and along with Ken Starr are culpable for not doing their duty. Our country must be governed by laws, not public opinion polls.

With four years and \$40 million, there’s no excuse for Monicagate only. For example, within a few weeks, Travelgate could have been handled. It clearly involved misuse of the Justice

Department, The FBI and the IRS to destroy the White House Travel Office professionals by order of the First Lady. Indeed, prompt action could have put the skids on other Clinton-Gore outrages.

MISSILE GUIDANCE TO RED CHINA

How could Ken Starr and our Congress possibly fail to give the very highest priority to immediate and thorough investigation of the known sale of missile-guidance technology to Communist China in an apparent *quid pro quo* for China’s donation of two million dollars to the 1996 Clinton-Gore reelection campaign?

Art. II, Sec. 4 of our Constitution requires removal from office of the president for treason and bribery. Art. III, Sec. 3 defines treason as “adhering to (our) Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort.”

Also involved are U.S. firms, Loral Space and Communications and Hughes Electronics, who donated millions to the Clinton-Gore campaign, got the waiver and sold the missile technology. Said President Clinton, “These donations do not affect our policy toward China.” Said General Eugene Habiger of the Strategic Air Command, “Now China has a missile capability that can reach most of the United States.”

SHAMEFUL RETREAT

The shameful retreat of congressional Republicans at the prospect of presidential impeachment is dereliction of duty—and the announcement of Chairman Hyde not to seek more facts is disgraceful. Equally disgraceful are the other Republicans who, before the elections, were hot to examine evidence of all impeachable offenses, but now, af-

ter the elections and polls, want to “put this matter behind us.” This is known as hypocrisy.

They do not have *carte blanche* to fold their tent and depart. They are bound by oath to “support (this) Constitution” (Art. VI). Their duty is clear. Malfeasance and misfeasance are at stake—and Ken Starr, Trent Lott and Henry Hyde must *not* be allowed to set precedents that undermine the office of the presidency and the U.S. Congress. It is imperative to tell them so—*emphatically!*

Edmund Burke, English statesman (1729-1797) had it right: “He trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch as well as he who goes over to the enemy.” We have to wake up and wake up Congress.

(Captain Evans is author of *Death Knell of the Panama Canal?*, \$7.00 post-paid, telephone 757-622-5583).

From the Mailbox

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Corbin, Ky. whom I suppose give you my name. Clarence Walker was ever my friend, as well as Berlin Hesel, Bob Jones, Carl Saddler, Rosco Brong, Norman Wells, Charles Ashcraft, and a host of others whom I have been honored to know and love as brethren.

Enclosed is my check which please use to pay for my paper, from the time you started sending it to as long as it lasts and please notify me when it is about to run out.

—Kentucky

God bless you all, and those wonderful children who work with you in the work of the Lord. In Christ and His Truth,

—Tennessee

Brethren,

Enjoy the BBB and look forward to each publication. Please renew our subscription. Thank you so much and God bless the ministry of His Word.

—Ohio

Then he said to them, “**Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy**

of the LORD is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). Brother,

This is what your paper does for others.

—Illinois

Please renew my subscription and also send one to the address below.

I enjoy your paper very much and pray God that you continue this very fine work.

Thanks and may God bless you and yours.

—Ohio

Dear Ministry,

I am a 19 year old very new Christian and would love to receive a 1 year subscription to your publication. I would be thankful for any other material you are able to send.

—Canada

Bro. Cockrell,

I don’t know you well, nor do I know what you believe on a lot of things. However, I have found myself drawn into a discussion on authority and succession. In the conversations, and email I have received, your name has come up often. If I understand your position correctly, you believe authority is passed on from one church to another. I understand you to believe that two or three baptized people “CANNOT” just covenant together and become a church. If my understanding is right, I SAY AMEN! I believe proper church authority and succession are what separates Baptists from Protestants. I have found that there are some men I can no longer fellowship with over this. Thank you for your stand on the subject.

Sir,

Please remove my name, Joe D. Lorimor from your mailing list.

In your Dec. 5, 1998 issue you have two articles that are totally misleading.

You either believe one or the other, not both. Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures vs. Why Join a Baptist church.

I, dear Sir, do believe in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Please point me to a verse of Scripture where Jesus said “I will build the Baptist church.” In Matt. 16:16 Jesus said, “I will build MY church.” So if the church belongs to Him how can it wear any name but HIS. Church of Christ (Church names what it is, of, shows ownership, and Christ shows the Name of the owner.) Acts 4:12 tells us that the Name of Jesus Christ is above every name so how can you call it the Baptist church

So, either Roy Mason is right and Christ started the Baptist church or The Bible is the Holy Inspired Word of God. You can not have both. Twist it and turn it every and anyway you want to, it doesn’t work, One or the other. I think Paul said it well, “The churches of Christ greet you.” Rom. 16:16 The old KJV says it well, “The churches of Christ salute you.” If that old KJV is right in everything else it has to be right in that too. And where do you get off calling a man “Reverend”?

Thank you,

—Joe D. Lorimor

Editor’s note: I received this letter from a Campbellite. (oops! I almost said “a Campbellite without any light”.

Dear Editor:

We thank you for sending us your paper, *The Berea Baptist Banner*.

It is full of lengthy articles, and when I began to read the article: “Christ on the Sabbath,” I thought, Oh, no, do they believe as the 7th Day Adventist? As I read further, I realize you do believe, that our Lord was resurrected the “FIRST DAY,” and NOT the seventh.

—Canada

Coming in the next issue . . .

What's the Good News? by Rosco Brong
Prerequisites to Spiritual Fruitfulness by Tom Ross
The Independency of God by Milburn Cockrell

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