

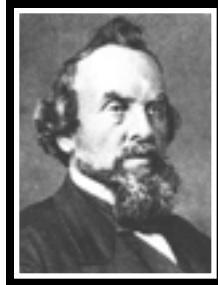
The Berea Baptist Banner

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

The Old Deacon

By John Ashworth
(1813 - 1875)

The mysterious law of association, by which the sound of bells, the scent of flowers, the falling of a leaf, or any other incident, calls up from memory's storehouse thoughts and feelings, long since cherished, but almost forgotten, seems by the order of Providence to be a wise arrangement, by which the events of the past shall bear some relation to the things of the present, and often to the future; binding together in a series of links generation after generation, making of all one vast family, so that anything affecting one, in some degree, affects all. The falling of a leaf one calm evening in autumn, became the parent of these reflections. The sun had just sunk down behind the hills, tinging the heavens with the purple hues of his departing glory; placid night hung out her sable pall,



veiling the distant objects from view,
And silence, with
her mighty eloquence,
Poured her
strange language on
the pensive soul.

I sat where I had often loved to sit, beneath the outstretched branches of the balsam poplar; the stillness of the evening was so intense that the striking of the hour of nine by the bell of old St. Chad's reverberated through the dale; and when the undulating sound had died away, the silence was more profound, but broken at length by the tick, tick, tick of a falling leaf, as it dropped from branch to branch, resting finally at my feet. Thoughts unbidden came at the sight of that leaf as it now lay amongst its dead

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The Man Who Played the Fool

By Wayne Cox
(1913 - 2007)



"And he spake a parable unto them saying, **The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater: and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God**" (Luke 12:16-21).

By way of introduction, I would like to point out this man was self-centered,

preoccupied with the affairs of himself, selfish. He used the personal pronoun "I" six times in these few verses. You can rest assured when hearing anyone talk constantly saying "I," "mine,"

that such a person is self-centered and selfish. It is so in the lesson before us. Six times he said "I. I don't know what I'll do." And then, "I do know what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build new, bigger barns; then I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

And so it goes---the man who played the FOOL.

There are five points suggested in
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"Be Not Thou Envious"

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them" (Prov. 24:1).

The deadly sin of envy is condemned and forbidden in this text. This verse warns Christians against desiring the pleasures and prosperity of wicked people. The way and end of wicked men are undesirable and soul destructive. The Christian has no just cause to envy sinners. The true Christian is the only enviable person on earth. For a believer to envy a sinner is to curse his blessings, wither his graces, canker his peace, cloud his confidence, stain his profession, and injure his influence for good.

ITS MEANING

Envy may be defined as a resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another with a desire to possess the same advantage. This passion causes



one to envy the prestige, profession, possessions, power, position, peace, and promotion of others. Envy will pursue; it will find some way to hurt its object and to keep its anger forever. An envious man is worse than an angry man. There is no protection against envy---it resides in the hidden man of the heart.

The English word envy is similar in meaning to the word jealousy. It is difficult sometimes to distinguish between jealousy and envy, for they often run side by side and blend together. The most valid distinction seems to be that jealousy is always personal. The envious person desires some good which another possesses; the jealous person suspects another of seeking to deprive him of

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The Mixed Multitude

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)



In Exodus 12:38, speaking of the children of Israel's going up out of Egypt, we read, **"And a mixed multitude went up also with them."**

In years gone by the writer felt that these Israelites had done pretty well by themselves in that they had all this multitude of people as their converts. But, since I began to study my Bible a little more carefully, I find myself saying, "Converts of what?"

In Exodus 11:7 we learn that God put a difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians in that not only did the death angel pass over the Israelites, but not even a dog growled at them that night. Just why did God put this difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians? Was it because the Israelites served Him as their God, or was it for some other reason? From Isaiah 55:8-

9 we learn that the best place to go for our answer is to the Book.

In Joshua 24:14, Joshua told the Israelites to fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and to put away the gods which their fathers served in Egypt. Not only is Joshua saying that the Israelites served the Egyptian gods while they were in Egypt, but now, more than forty years after they left Egypt, their children are still dragging the old Egyptian idols along with them. Else why would Joshua tell them to put away these gods?

In Ezekiel 20:6-8 God, speaking of His bringing Israel up out of Egypt, says He commanded them to cast the abomination from before their eyes. But

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*The home worth living in is one where each lives for all,
and all live for God.*

*If our circumstances find us in God,
we shall find God in all our circumstances.*

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

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

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office charges us \$.50
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The Old Deacon

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companions. What a lesson if wisely read. How emblematical of this life's changes. How descriptive of relatives and friends, who have dropped from their various spheres, and now lie in the dust. Never on any previous occasion had so many of those departed ones been brought back to memory: friends, old and young, rich and poor, from towns and hamlets, churches and marts, seemed to gather around me. It was a moment of subdued pleasure. I could not literally shake hands with them, as in bygone days, but I was glad they had stood before me, though only for a few moments. I never could discover a reason why anyone should fear holding mental communion with those departed dear ones, whose company we so much loved when living; they may or may not be unconscious of those sweet recollections that will not say to them farewell; we still see their smiling faces, hear their merry laugh, or listen to their cheerful song. We walk with them in the field, sit with them in the garden; mingle our psalms, our hymns, and prayers at the family altar, or in the church. Their well-known opinions govern many of our actions. What we know they would have thought, or what we think they would have done exercises no small influence on what we think and what we do. Is it not well for us that it is so? Many of the joys of the present spring from the joys of the past, and no small portion from a remembrance of those we have loved. But the great mistake is, when we make what might be one source of softened gladness, a cause of pain and sadness; murmuring and repining when we ought to calmly submit, and where submission would indicate the truest wisdom. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, was no foolish expression, for

*The dead are like the stars, by day
Withdrawn from mortal eye;
But not extinct, they hold their way,
In glory through the sky.*

One of the most prominent figures which seemed to stand before me that calm evening was a gray-headed veteran whose locks had become hoary in his Master's service, and one of those singular characters both loved and feared by several who knew him, for reasons they still remember. He was by trade a flannel weaver; steadiness and industry, in early life, enabled him to become a manufacturer; and by caution, prudence, and perseverance, he secured a competence that enabled him to retire from business before old age or infirmities compelled him; but he did not travel on the continent to spend his wealth, or build a mansion, and set up his carriage to consume it, or fill his house with servants and fast company to devour it; he knew who had given him all his bank

notes, and he knew he would some day be asked what he had done with them, and he tried to be a faithful steward.

I have no wish to forget my first, second, and last interview with the eccentric old man. I had gone to take service in the church of which he had long been a worthy member, and an active, patient, prudent deacon. For many years his house had been the home of the workers in the Lord's vineyard, irrespective of creed, and he furnished many a hungry ambassador with something more than a cup of cold water. I was then a very young man, and rather afraid of several in the congregation, the deacon in particular. His countenance was neither placid, sanctified, nor heavenly looking, but the very contrary; he had a large face, strong features, his eyebrows fledged with long white-bristles, and his hair, iron gray, defying all order; he knew little about syntax, but his language was powerful, and fearfully direct. Talleyrand said "that words were invented to hide thoughts." This may be true in regard to diplomatists, such as Talleyrand was, but the old deacon would have been astonished to have heard him. I had finished my day's work in the pulpit, and on leaving the chapel found the deacon waiting for me at the gate. Placing his arm in mine, he said---

"Well, my young friend, I suppose thou wilt have to take a little provender at my house; thou art very welcome, and that will make the feed no worse."

After the repast, he sitting on one side of the fire and I at the other, and after a considerable pause, he said---

"Art thou married, my young friend?"

"Yes," was my answer.

"And hast thou family prayer in thy house?"

"Yes," I again replied.

"I am glad to hear that. There are many people that can talk loudly about religion abroad that have not much at home; all their religion is for exportation, none for home consumption; but I am always pleased to see young married couples begin right, and there is nothing so likely to keep a family right as a family altar. Many families professing religion have gone wrong for the want of it; keep up piety at home, my lad, keep up piety at home, it keeps the fireside warm and comfortable. I am thankful that the very first day our Betty and me began housekeeping, we adopted Noah's plan when he came out of the ark. Did I ever tell thee about it?"

"No, sir, this is our first conversation."

"Well, then, I will begin a little further back. Before I began to follow her, as they say in this country, I was careless, ignorant, and sinful; I thought much about her, but if I offered to speak to her I lost all my words and trembled all over. I followed her at a distance from place to place, and one Sunday evening I followed her into a chapel. And it was well for me

I did; I shall never forget that night. The light of the Gospel of Christ shone into my mind with such terrible force that I saw and felt myself a great sinner. I forgot all about Betty in anxiety for the salvation of my soul. The day following, thinking I was the only person in the workshop, I kneeled down under my looms, and began confessing my sins and iniquities in a loud whisper, praying for pardon and peace, while sweat ran down my face. One of the weavers, who had entered the room in his slippers, hearing my groans and sobs, stooped down to look at me, and to my astonishment and confusion, said---

"Well, lad, if thou art half as bad as thou says thou art, thou ought to be sent to Botany Bay."

"I made no reply, but was greatly ashamed, and crept from under the looms to commence work. He said nothing to the other weavers about it, for which I was thankful. But the arrow from the Lord had pierced to the depths of my guilty conscience. I durst not again pray in the workshop, and I had no private place at home. I remembered that there was in a neighboring field an old deserted stone-delph. Again, and again, in that stone quarry did I plead the shed blood of Christ, shed for sinners, therefore shed for me. At last I found what was more valuable than all the delphs and mines in the world could yield. I found the pearl of great price, and was so happy that I durst tell the man who caught me praying under the looms.

"After considerable difficulty on my part, and unreasonable obstinacy on the part of Betty, we agreed to be married, with the clear understanding that at least once each day the Bible should be read, and both join in prayer for God's blessing to rest upon us. We have had many a laugh about our first beginning. Neither of us had ever engaged in prayer audibly in any meeting, though we had both been some time members of the church. So I took hold of the Bible, thinking I could manage that part better than the other. After reading a chapter we kneeled down, and I requested Betty to pray. I waited, and waited, but no voice. Then, with a choking utterance, she said, 'John, thee pray, for I cannot.' A big lump came in my throat, and as soon as I could get it down, I replied, 'Nor can I; what must we do?' After kneeling a little longer we rose to our feet without another word, for we could not speak. That was our first attempt at family prayer. And that God Who saw the fullness of our hearts recorded our wishes in Heaven.

"And while on this subject, I will mention one other occasion when my nerves were a little tried. Betty and I were very careful and industrious, I as a journeyman weaver, and she as a spinner. We saved a little money, and I bought a pair of looms, a jenny, and other requisite

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machinery; then another pair, and then another; then bought a pack of wool, and began manufacturing for ourselves, getting on and on until I could keep stock until the market suited me. One rather rough winter day, a dashing gentleman, with plenty of rings and gold chains, came to see my stock of goods. After a careful inspection of the whole he asked my price for all. I told him, and without a word he gave me a check on Rawson's bank for the amount. He then put on his coat and gloves, looked out into the dark wet night, and I saw he seemed troubled. The coach was gone, there were no cabs in our neighborhood, and railways had not then been thought of. He walked back into the house, and forward to a bright fire in the kitchen, our principal sitting room, and asked if he could not get lodgings somewhere in the neighborhood. 'Yes,' I replied, 'my wife can make you up a clean, comfortable bed, in a plain way. You should have seen our Betty's face when I said that; it was almost scarlet, for she was afraid of the fine gentleman; but she quietly went upstairs to make all ready. He took off his overcoat and gloves, and sat down by the kitchen fire, and seemed very glad to remain with us. We talked about wool and pieces, and prospects of trade, until eight o'clock, our time for family devotion. My wife had got all ready for the grand man, and was sitting in her usual place. I was rather timid, and had not taken hold of the Bible at the usual time. My wife saw it, and gave me a look which said---

"What, are you afraid of the big man, too? Do your duty and never mind him."

"That look nerved me, so I took down the Bible, saying to the merchant---

"Sir, ever since this dear body and me became man and wife, our custom has been to daily read God's Word and bow down before Him in prayer. I do not know your views or opinions about these things, but feeling it to be our duty, we hope you will excuse us."

"Certainly, certainly," was the reply.

"I read the one hundred and fourth Psalm, our lesson for the evening, and in prayer besought the Lord to make us thankful for the day's mercies, to bless the dear church to which I belonged, to bless the stranger sojourning with us for the evening, to save him from ever making a bad bargain, and that if his riches should increase, that he might never set his heart upon them; and I prayed for his wife and six children he had left in Scotland, that God would take care of them in the absence of the husband and father, and that not one of them might ever give their parents any trouble, finishing with the verse in the evening hymn

Oh may our souls on Thee repose.

The gentleman tried secretly to wipe

his eyes with his scented pocket handkerchief. The mention of his wife and children had touched his soul.

"I did much business with the fine Scotchman to our mutual profit, and he never sent an order without a note saying, 'Do not forget the Scotchman and his family when you pray, and use the words of that memorable night I was your guest, especially that part "may not one of his children ever give their parents any trouble."

"I did well in business, not only with the Scotchman, but with many others; and now, by God's blessing, I am provided with bread, but I am not without my crosses, and they always come from the wrong quarter, but they frequently remind me of an old packhorse driver that traveled this way fifty years since; he was a good Christian man, carrying his goods on the backs of two horses, from Manchester to Leeds and Halifax. One of these horses was black, and if he was well loaded, and as much on his back as he could carry, he would walk on safely, steady, and straight, and his master had no anxiety about him; but if he had a little load, and especially none at all, he would kick and gallop, leap over hedges, or run through gaps and open gates, getting both the driver and himself into scrapes and trouble. I am just like that wayward black packhorse; when the load is heavy and I have to cry to the Lord to help me to carry it, and when I feel my weakness and dependence the most, then am I the most strong, and walk the most safely. And the Lord knows that, and for my own good, and perhaps for the good of others, He keeps me well weighted; but bless Him, He will lay on me no burden but what He will enable me to carry."

I knew to what the deacon more especially referred when he was talking about his burdens, they mostly came from the church: and ever since the first seven deacons were chosen in Jerusalem to the present hour, deacons have had their full share of anxiety on behalf of others. A link between the pulpit and the pew, the minister and the people, they have often to carry the sins of both. A church, prosperous and at peace, is to them real happiness; a troubled, declining church is a perpetual sorrow; and with all their failings the church and the world owe much to patient, plodding, enduring deacons.

I have mentioned that the old deacon was very direct and pointed in his observations, he knew nothing of circumlocution. He was loving, honest, straightforward, and wished to do everybody good, as the following circumstance will fully illustrate.

I had called to take tea with him one Sunday. During the repast he was silent, and seemed a little troubled. A young man sat at the table who had been preaching that afternoon what he thought to be a most magnificent sermon,

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from the text, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless Thee." He opened out his discourse in a grandiloquent style, quoting from Young, "Morning stars exulting shouting o'er the rising ball"; from Shakespeare, "the cloud capped towers, the gorgeous palaces"; and that sublime piece from Pollok's *Course of Time*, beginning,

Whose garments were the clouds;

Whose minstrels, brooks; whose lamps, the moon and stars;

Whose organ choir, the voice of many waters;

Whose banquets, morning dews; whose heroes, storms;

Whose warriors, mighty winds; whose lovers, flowers;

Whose orators, the thunderbolts of God;

Whose palaces, the everlasting hills;

Whose ceiling, Heaven's unfathomable blue. Mounting up still amongst what he called the stellar worlds, he expatiated on the satellites of Saturn, Uranus, and Jupiter, and finished his aerie flight in the Milky Way. After tea, the old deacon requested the young preacher to go with him into the front parlor. When both were seated he said---

"My young man, thou hast been flying thy kite high this afternoon, very high, and if thou does not mind the string will break, and it will come wibble wobble down; thou hast been walking over the stars in stilts, cloud-capped towers, shouting o'er the rising ball, satellites, Jupiter, and Milky Way, indeed! It is thin milk in the pulpit. Thou got so high up, thou never saw Calvary where the Maker of all died for those gospel-hardened sinners that were staring at thee; thou never told us that the work of God that praises Him most was the work of redemption, shedding His blood for a guilty world, My dear young friend, do come down before thou tumbles down; keep at the foot of the cross, it is he and only he that humbleth himself that shall be exalted, either in the pulpit or out."

Few can conceive the agony of the young preacher, while the old deacon was so tenderly crushing him. He had to preach again the same evening, and preach to this terrible old man. He was in

great fear, and trembled as he walked up the pulpit steps. During prayer he wept, and the people wept with him. Christ crucified for perishing mortals was his theme, and God blessed His "own" Word, as He ever will. The old deacon met him at the church gate, saying---

"Thou wilt have to pass my house, and must call to take as much supper as ever thou likes, let me take hold of thy arm, for thou art younger than me. And now, my dear young brother, God has blessed us all tonight. I have been with the Master, and Peter, James, and John on the mount, for we never get on the mount without the Master. The Lord will make thee a very useful preacher when He has cured thee of cloud-capped towers."

The young minister never forgot the old deacon's theological lecture, nor ever will, but he counts him as one of his truest and best friends; he never walked over the stars in stilts after that day.

With all his mildness of disposition, his love and encouragement given to the humble and sincere, it will be seen how he could not bear foppery in the pulpit. The cloud-capped towers young man fared little worse than another rather inflated orator, who when speaking, frequently twisted his fingers in a rather showy watch-guard, and had so corked up his nose with snuff that it was painful to hear him speak, as it is all snuff takers. The hymn, "Awake, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb," was his mouth---

Awake, ad sig the sog

Of Boses ad the Lab.

This important man, when once taking tea with the old deacon, said---

"I think, Mr. Kershaw, it is woe unto me if I preach not the gospel." To which he received the answer: "And woe unto the gospel if thou does preach it." But so intense was the probationer's conceit that even this keen reproof was lost upon him. He only laughed at it. It would have been well for him if he had profited by is as the other young man did.

My last interview with the venerable pilgrim was one calm Sabbath evening, when his work was nearly done. I never see gray heads---those crowns of glory-

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--drop from the ranks of the church militant, but I know that church has sustained a great loss. Gray heads amongst young officers are ballast, for young officials are all clever, very clever, and yet I love to see young officers in the Christian church, the church needs them; they are the future hope of the church, and allowance must always be made for their youth; they mean well, and in time will think and do well. But the young in any Christian community would do well to set a very high value on age and experience; woe be to the church that rejects the counsel of gray heads.

For many years it has been my custom to get to the seaside as often as I possibly can, for I love the mysterious ocean, and often talk to its rolling waves, and sometimes to the countless pebbles and boulders that lie on the shores. Taking one up that was round and smooth, I addressed the stone, as if a living being, saying---

"Mr. Boulder, you are very smooth and very round; have you always been so smooth and so round?"

Could the stone have spoken it would have said---

"No, I have not always been smooth and round, I had once sharp corners on me; but I have been in many storms and many tempests, and those storms have rolled me out, and rolled me in, until they have rubbed all the sharp corners off, and now I am smooth."

So it is with old deacons, officers, and members: they have been in life's many storms, and sharp corners have been rubbed off them. Sad experience has mellowed them down, and they are invaluable to our churches. But leave us they must. The moment I beheld the now sick and feeble deacon, on the day of our final interview, it was evident the weary wheels of life would soon stand still. It was the Sabbath-school anniversary that day, and for more than forty years he had taken great interest in school anniversaries, but for him the last was come, and unknown to him the teachers and scholars formed in procession, the girls clothed in white, and went to sing the last song in this world for their dear old friend. Betty, the now aged Betty, his beloved companion through years of travel, sat near his couch, looking out at the open window, on the Dearnley vale. When the procession stopped at the front of the house, Betty, in a low but earnest tone, exclaimed,

"Dear me, dear me, what is this?"

The teachers and children, in full rich tones, sang, "When I survey the wondrous cross," and "There is sweet rest in heaven." The good old dying Christian, for whom they were singing, held his withered hands together. With

swimming eyes, he said---

It is too much, it is too much. What have I done to deserve this? Oh, what joy, what joy! Lord Jesus, Thou Prince of Glory, that died on the cross! Save every one of these dear teachers and scholars, so that I may hear them sing again in Heaven! Save them, save them!"

A few days after, the inhabitants of the village of Dearnley looked out from their doors and windows to take their sad farewell of old John Kershaw, long their neighbor, and long their friend, and many are still living who will remember the good old deacon.

(*Strange Tales From Humble Life*, Vol. 5, pp. 7-16)



"Be Not Thou

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some good that he already possesses. Jealousy is preferable to envy since it aims at the preservation of some good which belongs to a person; whereas envy cannot endure the good of others. But let us not take jealousy lightly for the Bible says: "**Jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame**" (S. of S. 8:6).

It is surprising how many different masks envy assumes, and how numerous the ways it tries to conceal itself under some less unlovable quality. Sometimes it appears in the character of injustice; sometimes it takes the form of rudeness and lack of courtesy; occasionally it appears in a sarcastic way of speaking. At other times it borrows the garb of piety, and shows itself under what might be mistaken for humility or sincerity. Beware of envy! It often lays coiled up like a serpent under some flower, and darts forth its venomous sting where and when you least expect to find it. "**Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?**" (Prov. 27:4).

It is said envy or jealousy is love. This is not true. Jealousy may be procured by love as ashes by fire, yet jealousy extinguishes love as ashes smother a flame. Jealousy can exist without love, for jealousy is sustained by pride as often as by affection. But neither envy nor jealousy can exist with true love: "**Charity (love) envieth not**" (I Cor. 13:4). True love never envies others the happiness they enjoy; it delights in their welfare. Love calms the angry passion of envy.

ITS MEDIUM

What is the source of envy? Where does the root of its origin lie? It is a sin which comes from the depraved Adamic nature (Gal. 5:21). This can be seen from Paul's words to the Corinthians: "**For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you ENVYING, and strife, and**

divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (I Cor. 3:3) (Emph. MRC). The carnal nature of man is "**full of envy**" (Rom. 1:29). The old Adamic man is discontent by another's prosperity and is filled with hatred and malignity and a determination to deprive its object of his happiness. How common is this evil manifest from a wicked heart! How often it comes forth to show clearly the deep depravity of man. It is found in almost every human breast and lives as long as we are in this tabernacle. It is so cruel in its pursuit that it rests not till the grave closes over it. Pope well said:

"*All human virtue, to its latest breath,
Finds envy never conquered but by death.*"

Envy springs from a spirit of hatred: "**Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. . . . And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren**" (Matt. 20:20-24). The disciples were angry because they were desirous to be preferred before James and John. Their desire to be exalted above their brethren begot hatred for their brethren and generated a quarrel among them. Nothing works more mischief among a group of preachers than the base ambition to be the greatest preacher.

Some times envy arises from unbelief: "**But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people**" (Acts 17:5). The unbelieving Jews envied and hated those that believed the gospel and those who preached it. They incited the scum of the city to oppose Paul and Silas. It is never below the dignity of the enemies of the gospel to use mob violence to injure God's messengers.

At other times envy grows out of ignorance and pride. "**If any man teach otherwise, and consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings. . .**" (I Tim. 6:3-4).

Those who are proud who know the least, for in all their supposed knowledge they do not know themselves. When a man leaves the wholesome words of Christ, the practical truths of Christianity, there is sure to arise a contest of words. Envy is the root of it all, for the controversy proceeds from discontent at the superior knowledge possessed by others.

It is to be greatly feared that among our

independent Baptist churches there is much strife of words because some claim superior knowledge in certain doctrinal matters. Religious controversies come when preachers are discontent with the words of Christ and frame notions of their own and try to impose them on their brethren. These words of man's wisdom are often in contradiction to God's Word. The envy and strife which is produced by these things saps our spiritual strength and produces ungodly living. Too many preachers major our differences and minor on the many points on which we are agreed. Many of our churches are small and dying because they spend too much time in envious disputings about unimportant and unsubstantial matters rather than preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ITS MISCHIEF

What mischief does envy bring into our lives? How does it affect the spiritual life of an individual believer? The Bible is replete with examples of its evil effects. It caused Joseph's brethren to hate him: "**And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him**" (Acts 7:9). They were dissatisfied with the favor their father Jacob showed Joseph, and they were envious of his dreams which indicated he would rule over them (Gen. 37:3-11). How awful is envy! It caused Joseph's brothers to sell him into slavery. While God overruled their abuse of their brother for good, God's providence in no way lessened their awful sin against their brother.

Envy caused the Israelites to despise Moses: "**They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD**" (Ps. 106:16). The Israelites owed Moses everything because he was their Divinely appointed leader. They begrudged him his Divine authority and position. How unreasonable was this envy, for Moses was the man who had labored hardest for their welfare. They should have sympathized with him and prayed for him to have Divine guidance. Who can hope to escape envy when the meekest of men was subject to it?

This evil disposition prompted Saul to desire to kill David. As young David returned from killing Goliath the women played and said: "**Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?**" (I Sam. 18:7-8). This envy caused Saul to make an attempt on the life of David the very next day (I Sam. 18:10-11). Envious men cannot endure any praise except of themselves. They are void of the wisdom from above (Jas. 3:17).

This unfortunate disposition caused

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the princes of Babylon to seek to overthrow Daniel: **“Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him”** (Dan. 6:4). These evil men were determined to bring Daniel down from his meritorious position to a state of ruin. The primary cause of their plot was envy and jealousy. They could not endure seeing a foreigner having such an exalted position in the government of Babylon. After all they said that he was one of the despised Hebrews, a captive people in Babylon. Being filled with envy, they were determined to bring about his disgrace and death.

These crooked politicians envied Daniel because of his good and greatness. The more godly a man is the worse his rivals think of him. Solomon declared: **“Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbor”** (Eccl. 4:4). He who excels in virtue is always an eyesore to those who exceed in vice. What a wretched and apostate state does envy put a man. It makes him offend with excellence and to hate a man because he approves of him! The envious man is so blinded that he is always degrading or misrepresenting things which are excellent. Such is downright diabolical.

Envy caused the Jews to speak against Paul’s teaching. God was blessing the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Multitudes were being saved and converted from Judaism. Then Acts 13:45 declares: **“But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.”** How these unsaved Jews hated to see the multitude embrace the gospel of Christ! Unrenewed men are always envious of the preacher God uses to bring multitudes to saving faith. They will venture to contradict the gospel of grace and to blaspheme its Author.

It was envy that moved the Jews to crucify Christ. As the Jews pleaded with Pilate to execute Christ, the governor could see clearly the sin the Jews were committing. Mark 15:10 reveals: **“For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.”** Pilate knew all too well the Sanhedrin wanted Christ dead because He had eclipsed them as a teacher among the common people. It was not Christ’s guilt but His goodness they hated. It was not that they resented his mischievous conduct; it was that they resented something meritorious and glorious in Him. Let all Christians hate the sin of envy. It is the sin which murdered the sinless Lamb of God. How

can I desire to commit the sin which killed the Prince of Life?

ITS MENACE

The ultimate harm of envy has never been revealed. “Envy is the daughter of Pride, the author of murder and revenge, the beginner of secret sedition, and the perpetual tormentor of virtue. Envy is the slime of the soul, a venom, a poison or quicksilver, which consumeth the flesh and dryeth up the marrow of the bones. It is composed of odious ingredients, in which are found meanness, vice, and malice, in about equal proportions. It wishes the force of goodness to be strained, and that the measure of happiness be abated. It laments over prosperity, pines at the visit of success, is sick at the sight of health. Like death, it loves a shining mark; like the worm, it never runs but to the fairest fruits; like a cunning bloodhound, it singles out the fattest deer in the flock.

“Envy is no less foolish than it is detestable. It is a vice which keeps no holiday, but is always in the wheel and working out its own disquiet. It loves darkness rather than light, because its deeds are evil. . . . He whose heart is imbued with the spirit of envy loseth much of the pleasures of life. The envious man is in pain upon all occasions which ought to give him pleasure” (THE GOLDEN GEMS OF LIFE, pp. 328-29, 1880 edition).

The envious man is tormented, not only by all the ills that befall himself, but by all the good that happens to another. His candle cannot shine in another man’s sun. One time a young man ran to Moses and said that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp of Israel. He asked Moses to command them to stop preaching. **“And Moses said unto him, Envious thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD’s people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them?”** (Num. 11:29). This young man grieved at the gifts and graces of Eldad and Medad. This was the fault of John’s disciples in that they envied Christ’s popularity because it shaded their master’s (John 3:26).

Envy is the cause of much church trouble. To the Corinthians Paul wrote: **“For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults”** (II Cor. 12:20). The church at Corinth was marred by jealousy, angry disputes leading to lawsuits, factions, revellings, swelling pride, grace disorders, and immorality. Modern churches are cursed with the same problem, and they always will be so long as envy rages in the hearts of men.

It was envy which caused ill feelings in

the heart of the brethren of the prodigal son. The father of the prodigal restored his wayward son upon his return to full sonship. His brother envied the blessings which the father gave to the returning prodigal (Luke 15:25-32). He was grieved over the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, and the party for the returning wanderer. He so envied his brother’s blessings until he refused to attend the party.

This sin of envy produces confusion: **“For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work”** (James 3:16). The desire to put self forward has split many a church and ruined many a home. This bad zeal and rivalry has produced great strife. When a man resolves to force his ideas upon others and to have his way, you can be sure envy lurks in his heart. He will rule or ruin. He will try to get various ones on his side, visit around and call secret meetings. He will flatter those who agree with him, but condemn and revile those who disagree. An envious man does the Devil’s work (I Cor. 14:33).

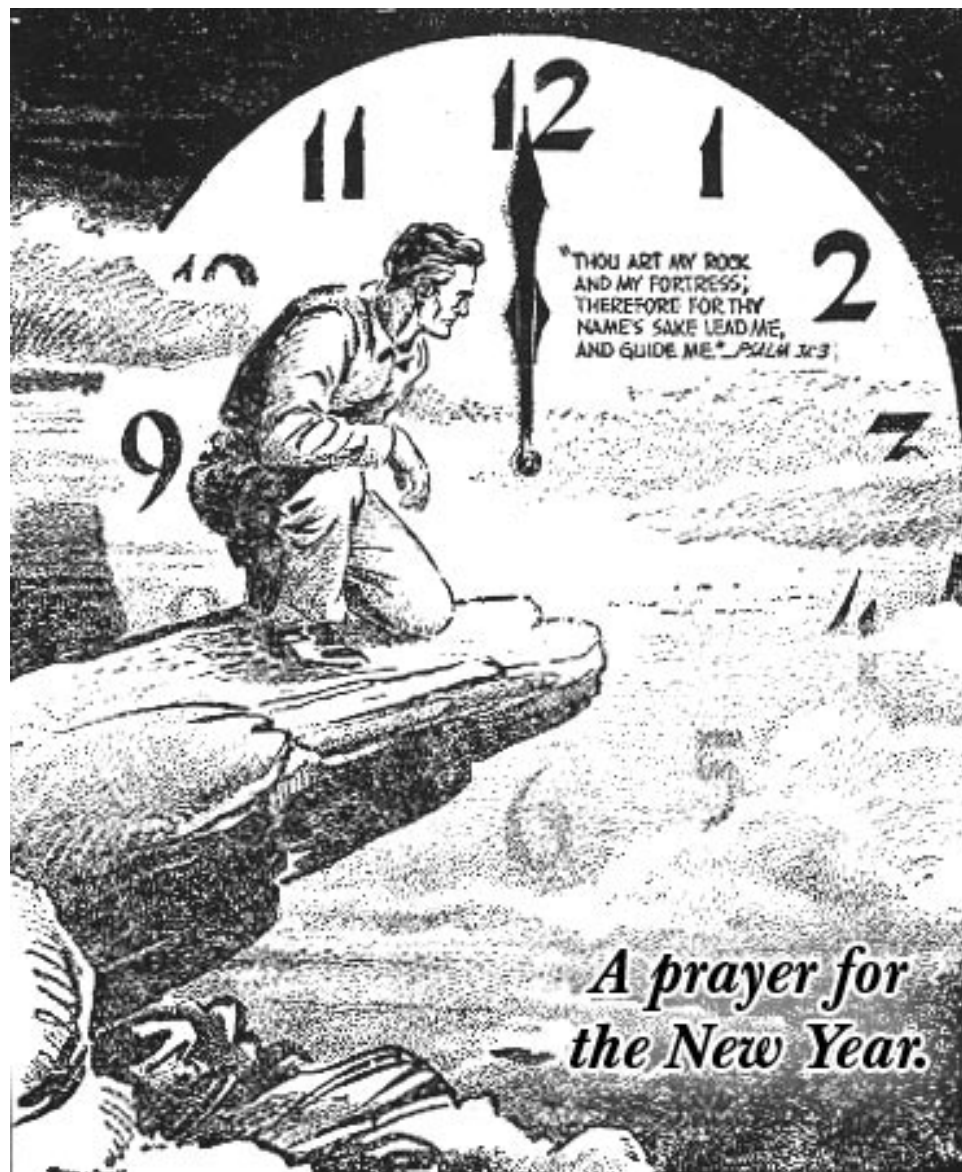
ITS MEDICINE

If a person has his heart filled with pure and fervent love for the brethren, there will be no soil in which envy can grow. **“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”** (I Cor. 13:4). Where love rules supreme, there is left no room for the spirit of envy. The man who abounds in the grace of love to God and the saints does not envy the temporal happiness of others, although it is what he does not possess, or is greater than he enjoys.

Another way to cure envy is to put on Christ: **“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and ENVYING: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof”** (Rom. 13:13-14) (Emph. MRC). Jesus Christ was never guilty of the sin of envy! As Christians we are to manifest Christ’s principles, to imitate His example, to copy His spirit, to become like Him. To put on Christ means to take Him as a pattern and to obey His precepts.

Another remedy for envy is to walk in the Spirit: **“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, ENVYING one another”** (Gal. 5:25-26) (Emph. MRC). As Christians we profess to live under the influence of the Holy Spirit and to control the appetites and desires of the flesh. Thus in our daily lives let us act accordingly. The man living a Spirit-controlled life has no envy on account of the superior wealth, rank, talent, and learning of others. All such distinctions in this world are temporary and are comparative trifles.

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Envy is a weed that grows in all soils and climates, and is no less luxuriant in the country than in the court. It is not confined to any rank of men or extent of fortune, but rages in the breast of men of every degree. We are apt to find it in the humble walks of life as in the proud. It carries a venom which ruins any life in which it finds lodgment--alienates the affections from Heaven, and raises rebellion against God Himself. We must take the utmost care to lay it aside: **“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings”** (I Pet. 2:1). To lay aside means to cast off forever.

ITS MODERATION

When envy is kept in check the grudges of the past will be forgotten. **“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, I am the LORD”** (Lev. 19:18). **“Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned”** (James 5:9).

When envy subsides there will arise meekness toward all men. Writing to Titus, Paul said **“To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men”** (Titus 3:2). Envy belongs to the old nature and the unconverted state (Titus 3:3).

CONCLUSION

Envy violates contracts, dissolves society, breaks wedlocks, betrays friends, thinks nobody is good. It injures and pains no one so much as the person feeling it. It is a self-consuming fire, a self-inflicted torment, an arrow which falls back and wounds only the archer. Its deadliest fruit is selfishness. It harms the flesh and spirit in man. It is as rottenness of the bones (Prov. 14:30). It is a hell which a man carries in his own bosom.

The very fact that you have envy in your heart shows how much you need salvation in Christ. Your resentful dislike of another's power, position, promotion, and possession proves you are an awful sinner. Those who habitually practice this sin cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21). Only Christ can cure this awful evil disposition. His blood is the only means of cleansing away its guilt in times past and the sole remedy to prevent its re-appearance.



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Flat Broke

By Harold Brunson
(1926 - 2008)

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged” (Luke 7:41-43).

We shall occupy ourselves with three thoughts found in the words of our Scripture. These thoughts are *The Sinner's Indebtedness, The Saviour's Forgiveness, and the Summation of Simon*.

THE SINNER'S INDEBTEDNESS

As we view the Sinner's Indebtedness, there are three things which are very obviously revealed in this story preached by the Master. First, every sinner is in debt. **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). **“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”** (I John 1:8). **“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us”** (I John 1:10). Every person is in debt to God and should realize his indebtedness.

Second, every sinner is deeply in debt. **“I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD”** (Ps. 40:1-3). Here in Psalm 40, David says that he was lifted out of a horrible pit and out of the miry clay. The Psalmist would have us to understand that he was deeply in debt to God, and that his feet were stuck in the miry clay. This is the position of every lost person. He is in a deep pit; he is in a dark pit; and in this deep, dark pit his feet are immovable in the miry clay.

Third, every sinner is so deep in debt until it is impossible for him to ever pay out. **“For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money”** (Isa. 52:3). **“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you”** (I Pet. 1:18-20). Multiply the wealth of the East Texas oil fields by the sands of the



sea, and multiply the wealth of Fort Knox, Ky., by the stars in Heaven, and multiply the wealth of Wall Street by every leaf on every tree, and then multiply all of this by infinity and if such an astronomical number could be reached, even this could not buy the soul of one sinner.

To sum it up, every sinner is in debt, every sinner is deeply in debt, and every sinner is so deep in debt until it is impossible for him to ever pay out. Every sinner is flat broke!

THE SAVIOUR'S FORGIVENESS

One of the most beautiful thoughts that can come to the human mind is the thought that our Saviour is a forgiving Saviour. His forgiveness is marked in every book of the Bible, from the first book to the last book. First, He forgives frankly. **“And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?”** (Luke 7:42). The phrase, **“He frankly forgave them both,”** is a revelation that it was not just on the surface or a superficial forgiveness. It was frank and from the heart. It would be wise to remind ourselves that Christ always frankly forgives.

Second, He forgives freely. **“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”** (Rom. 3:24). **“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of water of life freely”** (Rev. 21:6). **“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”** (Rev. 22:17). One man owed fifty pence, the other man owed five-hundred pence. Neither of these men could pay what they owed, and we see the free forgiveness of the Saviour coming alongside of his frank forgiveness. How marvelous when viewed in the light of the fact that our forgiveness cost Heaven its brightest star, its most precious jewel, God's only begotten Son.

Third, He forgives fully. **“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified”** (Heb. 10:12-14). **“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from**

us” (Ps. 103:12). **“Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back”** (Isa. 38:17). Oftentimes human forgiveness is based upon certain reserves and conditions. The Lord's forgiveness has no reserve. It is full, that is, to the nth degree. Every reader has heard someone say in their life time, “I'll forgive, but I won't forget it.” However, the Lord's forgiveness never has this burning reminder attached to it. He frankly declares that our sins and our iniquities will be remembered no more. **“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”** (Heb. 10:17).

*“Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved,
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.*

*“Ere since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming grace has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.”*

As the Lord's people find themselves frankly, freely, and fully forgiven, we behold our standing and unanimously exclaim. “We Are Upon Hallelujah Ground.”

THE SUMMATION OF SIMON

In the Summation of Simon, his answer to the interrogation, **“Which of them will love Him most?”** reveals a marvelous aptitude for the truth. We see three things in His answer.

First, the forgiven debtor will love. John declared, **“We love him, because he first loved us”** (I John 4:19). Whenever you see someone completely devoid of love for the Master, you may readily know that he has not experienced the Master's forgiveness.

Second, the forgiven debtor will love in proportion to how much he was forgiven. **“And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but his woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little”** (Luke 7:42-47). How many times have we seen a person who seemingly was beyond

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hope, only sometime later to be saved by the sovereign grace of God, and then witness that same person burn up his life in devoted service to the Master's cause. A person like this exemplifies the truth, "He which is forgiven little, loveth little, and he which is forgiven much, loveth much."

Third, the forgiven debtor will express his love. In this case Simon had given the Master no water for His feet, but the repenting woman had washed His feet with her tears, and then dried His feet with the hairs of her head. It is well to note that the Bible says, "**but if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering**" (I Cor. 11:15). This weeping lady washed His feet with her tears, and then dried them with the flowing locks of her beautiful hair. Simon had given the Master no kiss, but the repenting woman had not ceased to kiss His feet from the time He came into the house. Simon had not anointed the Master's head with oil, but the weeping, repenting, loving, forgiven woman had anointed, not the head, but the feet of the Master with ointment. All of these gestures were expressions of her love to the One Who had forgiven her sins.

Today when few people carry the load of the cause of Christ, and while the multitudes journey the ways of the world, the mark of distinction is simply this: the forgiven express their love while the unforgiven have no love to express!

Though this woman came to the house of Simon "flat broke" spiritually, she left eternally rich because her faith in the Master had saved her, and for the first time in her life she could go on her way in peace. "**And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace**" (Luke 7:50).

The following is written on the fly leaf of my Bible. I don't remember where I read it or who the author is, but I think it illustrates the differences between being flat broke spiritually and rich spiritually.

"Whosoever has God is rich indeed,

If he has nothing else in the world.

Whosoever has not God is poor indeed,

If he has everything else in the world."



Played the Fool

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this great lesson before us. I want to be deliberate, specific and definite in the presentation of these five points. In verse 16, for example, you have his "prosperous" condition; in verse 17 you have his present "dilemma"; in verse 18 you have his settled "purpose"; in verse 19 you have his self "congratulation"; and in verse 20 you have his terrible "awakening."

And then, of course, you have the Lord's application of the parable.

First of all this morning, let us notice--and please, those of you who have your Bibles keep them open to the passage, and let us do some studying; there is no substitute for the Word of God. Visions, dreams, inclinations, impressions will not suffice as a substitute for God's eternal Word. As a matter of fact, this passage is a great sermon within itself. If I were to just read this again without even commenting upon it, and you were to be dismissed and go home you would have heard a masterful message: for Jesus was the Prince of Preachers. When He spoke parables they were masterful sermons as He presented great truths enlightening those with whom He was conversing.

Notice in verse 16 his prosperous condition. You know the Apostle Paul tells us in I Timothy 6:10 that the "**love of money is the root of all evil.**" Not "money," now, but the "love" of money is the root of all evil. Men kill, murder for money. But in this verse before us the Lord tells us that the "**ground of a certain rich man. . .**" Now he was "already" rich. Here is a text that so many people overlook. In the study of God's Word certain words escape those that read. This man was not striving to become "rich"; he was already rich, but he wanted to get a little "richer."

I don't know if it is true or not, but it has been said that someone asked Mr. Rockefeller one time, "You have all the wealth that your heart could desire, and all the material possessions that money can purchase, what else do you want?"

And Mr. Rockefeller said, "Just a little more money."

The man in the parable was such a man. Jesus said, "**The ground of a certain rich man (he was already rich) brought forth plentifully. . .**" May I repeat with emphasis that he was not trying to "get" rich; he was trying to get "richer." He was already rich.

I've said this many times, that money cannot buy the best things in life. Salvation is a gift of God, and it cannot be purchased. "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them**" (Eph. 2:8-10).

In Titus 3:5, Paul said, "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.**"

Money, therefore, cannot buy salvation; it is not for "sale."

There was a certain man in a small village who was quite wealthy--I know him. He and another man in this community had words over a fence, and the man said to him, "I do not wish to hold hard feelings; I am sorry if I have

offended you."

This rich man said to him, "My friend, I care nothing for your apologies; I care nothing for your offense. The only thing I am interested in is your money, not your welfare. Now if you have money, that is what I want."

A friend of mine running a service station was servicing the car of this same man one afternoon, and he asked him the question: "What are you going to do with all that money that you have acquired?"

He replied, "I am hoping that I can buy my way into the Pearly Gates (those were his very words), and if my money cannot buy, cannot purchase, my salvation then I am a goner."

My friend said to him, "I am happy to inform you that that is 'one' thing that your 'money' cannot buy. You are left out."

In Psalm 49:6-7, the sweet singer of Israel had this to say concerning the fact that money cannot buy redemption: "**They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.**"

The Psalmist David points out that they who trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the abundance of their riches cannot with these things (talking about his wealth) by any means redeem his brother, nor give a ransom unto God for him. David said, "Your money cannot redeem, and you cannot ransom one with your money. It's not for sale."

A kidnapper comes along and kidnaps someone and puts a price tag on the victim, and the victim's family, or those interested in his welfare, will pay the ransom price. So Jesus Christ with His own blood has paid our ransom price. It is not purchased with money; it is not purchased with wealth, not purchased with riches, but with something far more infinitely precious than that: the blood of Jesus Christ.

David further points out in the same Psalm 49:16-17, "**Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.**"

David said, "Be not afraid when one is made rich, and when the glory of his wealth has increased for when he dies, he shall carry nothing away, and his glory shall not descend after him. Be not afraid, because he is going to die, and when he does, he is going to leave his wealth behind; his glory shall be left behind and shall not descend after him."

The most wretched man on this earth is the man who thinks in terms of dollars and cents. But while the Master said how difficult it is for a rich man to be saved, the apostles said this to Him: "**Lord, who then shall be saved?**" And Jesus said, "**With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**"

Wealth in many instances stands as a barrier before men separating them from God. They love their money; they love their wealth, and sell their souls to acquire it, then die and go to Hell, leaving it all behind. This man is a man who played the fool.

Notice the second thing under consideration is his present dilemma in verse 17: "**What shall I do? what shall I do?**" He thought within himself. God blessed him with the proper rainfall, and his land produced bumper crops; he looked at his barns and realized that they were inadequate; he looked over his farm and saw that he had such a crop that his barns would not contain the commodities grown thereon. He was in a dilemma: "**What shall I do?**" He left God out; he was planning without God. He didn't say, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" but he said within himself, "**What shall I do?**" He was directing his life without God. His life was without purpose because it was without God. He was in a dilemma: "**What shall I do?**"

May I say this as kindly and tenderly as I know how: I have seen men, and so have you---there are those perhaps in this church---who are in love with money so much that they have wrecked their spiritual lives. Their lives go on the rocks; they become an ineffective Christian because they put money before God. This is a truth that I dare you to deny---any of you. You visit folk in the community and the church and they invariably say they don't have time for church because they have to work, work. God gave you six days in which to work, not seven. When will people learn that? When will people learn that you can't trifle with God? When will folks learn that God gave us six days in which to labour, hallowed and sanctified the seventh and rested from His labours, but man out-thinks God--he "thinks." But they don't. Now when you die and go to Hell you are going to leave that money behind. You just remember that. You are not going to take it with you.

"**What must I do?**" he said. Folk ruin their lives, corrupt themselves, ruin their testimony, destroy their witnessing, because they are eager to get wealth; they are self-centered and ambitious. Greedy, that is why. Greedy, after that mammon.

This man left out God, and we are going to see what happened to this fellow who left God out. Notice his settled purpose in verse 18: "**This will I do.**" the die is cast; there is no turning back now. There is no reformation now; it's too late; there is no repentance now; the die has been cast. "This will I do: I'll tear down my old barns, build bigger new barns." He was weighed in the balance and found wanting. Brother, just as sure as your pastor stands before you this morning, God weighs me in the balance; He weighs you in the balance. Do you think that

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God was only concerned about folk in the past? Don't you think God is concerned with folk today? Do you think that folks of today can get by with anything in the world? Why certainly not, no more than those in the past got by. You are dealing with a sovereign God.

You know, old Belshazzar's father invaded the Holy Land, and in order to insult the Jews he apprehended the vessels from the temple, the holy vessels, the sanctified vessels; he carried them into Babylon with him; there in Babylon--I want you to get this now--Belshazzar had a great feast and invited hundreds of his lords and governors. They came and drank and were in a hilarious state. After awhile, in order that he might heap insults and abuse upon the Jews in captivity, he brought the sacred vessels, poured wine and strong drink in them, and the people drank from them. Suddenly there was a finger writing on the wall over against the candlestick, and old Belshazzar became frightened; he trembled and his knees smote together. Here was a man who had exalted himself against God. Here is a king over a world empire. Here is a king who laughed at God, and desecrated the holy temple of God; here is a king that ignored God, but do you know what that message said? **"Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians"** (Dan. 5:27-28). And in the very same night old Belshazzar was killed.

In the lesson before us the man said, "Here is the settled purpose, I know exactly what I will do: I'll tear down my old barns and build new, bigger barns." Thus, the die is cast; there is no turning back now; there is only one road to travel, and he is on it now. He has the skids under him sliding rapidly into Hell. But in this modernistic age folks don't believe in Hell. I'll tell you one thing, when they get there they will believe in Hell. I can take this Bible and show you a letter from Hell--you hear me now, hear me out. You say, "Why the Bible doesn't teach there is a literal, burning Hell."

Well, friend, I can take the Bible and show, read, you a letter from Hell. Luke 16, there it is. And brother, that wasn't a parable, either.

So the die is cast; the man is on the skids; he is on the road that leads to Hell. He has left God out; he has ordered his life as though there were no God; he must pay the price.

But notice how self-centered he is in verse 19, his self-congratulation as he says, "Now then, Soul, take thine ease; you have much goods laid up; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry."

Well, that is exactly what the Devil wants folks to do. That is what the Devil

wanted this man to do, and he did. But here is a man who paid for his crime in Hell. You might ask me this morning: "How long will he, will any man, have to suffer in Hell to pay for his sins?" He never gets through. He suffers eternally and never gets through paying for his sins. If a man dies without Christ, he must go to Hell, and he stays there forever and forever, as long as God lives, paying for his sins, and he never gets through paying for them. He can never pay the debt. If he could, then, he could suffer so long as to be taken out of Hell. That is what the Catholics would have you believe, but that isn't so; there is not a word of truth in that.

This man was self-centered: "I congratulate myself," he said, "I congratulate myself."

You go ahead and play the fool, but listen to what God says. You can play the field; you can run the gamut; you can trifle with God, walk upon His precious blood all you please, but God will not hold you guiltless: **"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things (get this now) God will bring thee into judgment"** (Eccl. 11:9).

You can go ahead, ignore God, trample with unhallowed feet upon the blood of Christ, do despite unto the Spirit of grace, ignore His Bible, scorn and ridicule God all you please, but **"know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."** And I'll tell you, beloved, it is an awful thing to trifle with God and to fall into the hands of the living God.

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days (or time)" (James 5:1-3).

You hear me now, you trifle with God, you just go ahead and ignore God, trifle with Him, be greedy, sell your soul for a little wealth; trying to get wealth, just go ahead, but God will bring you into judgment and consign you to Hell. Then notice this man's terrible awakening (verse 20). But God said unto him (here it is--God said), **"Thou fool, (thou empty-headed fool, thou fool. Such a terrible denunciation from the lips of the Master. Thou fool, thou empty-headed fool; you have played the fool); this night (too late now, brother; you have heaped your wealth around you; you've sold yourself; you've consorted with the Devil; you have ignored me and forgotten my Word. You have sold yourself to the Devil and now--) this night thy soul shall be required of thee."**



"Thy soul. . ." Now I have sense to know that the word "soul" sometimes means life, but not so here. It means more than animation, or animated life; it means that inward part of man, that part that shall either spend eternity in Hell or with God. **"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"** They shall be left behind. What did David say in Psalm 49:16-17? **"Be not afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him."**

God said, "Thou fool: you have provided lots of goods, but whose things shall these be thou hast left behind. You have played the fool. This night, this night, this night, they soul shall be required of thee--this night."

I tell you, you can't trifle with God. "What shall it profit a man, anyhow, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Jesus asked this question in Mark 8:36-37: **"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"**

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Tell me that! Tell me that!

One soul is precious. One soul is worth more than ten thousand worlds. One soul

is worth all the wealth of the universe--and far more than that, but you trifle with God, and God shall require thy soul; it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of a sovereign and angry God, who shall consign men to Hell.

This man woke up, but it was too late. Lots of people are awakened out of their lethargy, but it is too late. He awoke, but it was too late. He came face to face with the inevitable fact that God was taking charge now. "Thou fool, this night I am going to require thy soul. . ."

I say now in closing: God owes no man anything. God is still on the throne; God still rules in the affairs of men. He can take my life or your life without a moment's notice; there is only a thread between me and the grave, between you and the grave, between me and eternity, and between you and eternity: the brittle thread called life.

Suppose God should say to you this morning, "You have played the fool; today, thy soul shall be required of thee." What would you do? Where would you spend eternity? That is the question: Where? And there are only one of two places to which a man can go when he dies: one is to be with Christ, and the other is to Hell.

Then notice last: the Lord's application (verse 21): **"So is he that layeth upon**

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treasure for himself (for himself--for himself), **and is not rich toward God.**"

"**Not rich toward God,**" when He has placed within our reach the unsearchable riches of Christ is to play the biggest fool of all. Then, who are you this morning? Are you a fool, or are you wise because you trust Christ? He is your everlasting portion. Amen.



Mixed Multitude

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He says they rebelled against Him and refused to cast away the abominations from before their eyes, or to forsake the idols of Egypt. In Exodus 14:12, we hear the Israelites asking Moses, "**Is not this the word we did tell thee in Egypt, saying Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?**" How can we say any longer that the Lord put this difference between these people because the Israelites served Him and refused to forsake the idols of Egypt? Surely, we must say it was not because of anything the Israelites believed, or did. We cannot even say they wanted to be delivered from their bondage. They were perfectly contented to remain in Egypt, which is a clear, distinct type of this present evil world of which Paul speaks in Galatians 1:4.

The question arises then, "Why did God put forth all this effort to deliver a people who wanted to remain in bondage, and who had done absolutely nothing to merit this favor?"

It might be suggested that the Lord took pity upon this people because of their crying and groaning. But have there not been other people through the ages, who have cried and groaned under their burdens, to whom He has not stretched forth His arm to deliver? So we must look further for our Lord's reason for His putting this difference between these peoples.

In Genesis 15:13-14, God told Abraham that his seed would be afflicted in a strange land for four hundred years. But after that He said they SHALL come out. Now that the four hundred years affliction have come to an end we read in Exodus 2:24, "**And God remembered his covenant with Abraham.**" And in Ezekiel 20:9 He says, "**But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.**" "**Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away**" (Matt. 24:35). Then in Mark 13:13 we read:

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Again, in Psalm 138:2 we read, "**Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.**" So, is that not reason enough for God to deliver this people, even though they had done nothing to merit it, and did not even desire it?

Let us remember that the book of Exodus is a book of redemption, not in word so much as in action. And all this we have been discussing is a clear, distinct type of how God saves lost sinners. The lost sinner is just as contented as the Israelites ever were in Egypt until the Lord takes the initiative. And He takes the initiative because He said in John 6:37, "**All that the Father giveth me SHALL come unto me.**"

I realize that many wonderful Christians believe and teach that those who give themselves to the Lord are the ones who SHALL come to Him. But I am unable to see that in this Scripture. I am fully aware of the fact that my lack of knowledge concerning God's precious Word is astounding. I want to say that before someone else might feel led to say it. The subject of God's sovereignty, and especially as to salvation, has always been a hard saying; who can hear it (John 6:60)? When our Lord had finished His lesson on this subject that day, all the multitude had gone home, or somewhere else. We hear Him saying to the twelve in verse 67, "**Will ye also go away?**"

We teachers and preachers of today would be foolish to expect the crowds to universally hear us on this doctrine when they refused to listen to the greatest teacher of all time on it. I am persuaded that many of our Lord's dear blood bought saints have never yet come to see this precious doctrine. And they will never see it until, in His own good pleasure, He reveals it to them. He says the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them (Prov. 20:21).

When we leave the "free will of man" out of our teaching, it becomes a hard saying indeed. But I find it hard to see how there can be any sure prophecy concerning anything unless God is sovereign in everything, including our salvation. For instance, Matthew 26:21, speaking to the twelve, our Lord said, "**One of you shall betray me.**" Then in verse 23 He tells which one of the twelve was to do the betraying. Now, if we say that every person has a "chance" to be saved, we must say that Judas Iscariot could have reconsidered the matter and could have "accepted" Christ as his Saviour," as the familiar phrase goes. Had he done that, he most certainly would not have betrayed his Lord and Saviour. In that case, what would have come of our Lord's clear and definite statement? Someone may say Judas had "sinned away his day of grace," But I am such a poor

Bible scholar that I did not so much as know a lost person had any day of grace.

Since I am so weak on this subject of the "day of grace," let us look at a couple of fellows called "the beast and the false prophet." If every one has a "chance" to be saved, then we must of necessity give these two a "chance." And if they have a "chance" and take it, then what kind of predicament will our Lord find Himself in? In Revelation 19:20 we are told that the beast and the false prophet are cast into Hell alive. Now, should these two people decide to "accept Christ," our Lord would have to either cast two of His children into Hell, or see His Word fail, both of which are preposterous.

Someone may say the Lord knew these two would not believe. That poses a serious question in my mind. If the Lord knows they won't be saved, what "chance" do they have to be saved? Facts like these literally thrust me upon such Scriptures as, "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him**" (John 6:44) and "**All that the Father giveth me shall come to me**" (John 6:37).

But, let us get back to our original subject, that is, the mixed multitude and their reason for going along with the Israelites. Since the Israelites were serving the same idols that the Egyptians were serving, we are convinced that there was no conversion connected with their action at all whatever. That being true, why would this mixed multitude be interested in going up with this host of slavers? We would not be dogmatic on the subject, but since God had just poured out all those terrible judgments upon Egypt, these people might have feared other judgments. I am persuaded that many among the mixed multitude in the churches today have joined a church as a sort of fire insurance. Then, too, that mixed multitude, seeing God's great blessings poured out upon Israel, may have gone along hoping to partake of God's material blessings upon His chosen people.

But now that we see them going out with the Israelites, let us look to see just what was the result of their going. In Numbers 11:4-6 we find that the mixed multitude fell a lusting. And from the context we are persuaded they were lusting after the flesh-pots of Egypt. Now if no one else had been affected by their lusting, it would not have been worthy of mention. But if we look closely at this Scripture we shall see that their lusting caused the Israelites to become dissatisfied with what the Lord was feeding them. So it is today. The mixed multitude in the churches begins to lust after the things of the world and as they do so, many of the Lord's people begin to notice how dry God's precious Word is. As a result there soon comes on the scene, the brotherhood banquet and the sisterhood banquet, and the sweetheart banquet, the Sunday school banquet, the training

union banquet, and when they are out of names for it they just have a banquet. And for their programs they must have fun games of some sort, some singing and contests, a lot of fun and frivolity, in fact, just anything except that old dry manna. For those who wish to keep the mixed multitude happy, and their pocket books open, this type of program is very highly recommended.

The mixed multitude, or its counterpart, has ever been present wherever the Lord's people have existed. Even in the garden of Eden, when old Satan had no one to send, he went along himself. A little later when Abel went to offer his sacrifice before the Lord, we see Cain tagging along. And when God chose Abraham to go to the promised land, even though in Isaiah 51:2 He says, "**I chose Abraham alone,**" we see Terah and Lot dragging along with him. Even though Lot was a justified man, he was out of place here.

The devil's crowd will resort to all kinds of trickery, and deceit in order to be outwardly affiliated with the Lord's people. In Joshua 9:1-9, the Gibeonites worked wilyly; that is, they resorted to trickery and deceit in order to gain a covenant with Joshua and his people. Here we see the subtlety of the serpent in the garden. These people came to Joshua wearing old tattered clothing, old worn out shoes tied on their feet, carrying old worn out wine bottles, or skins, and old dry moldy bread in an effort to prove they were not of the land of Canaan. In verse 9 they told Joshua they had come from a very far country because of the name of the Lord thy God. Please note, they said, "**thy God,**" not "our God." Some three days later Joshua and his people learned that the Gibeonites were really some of the people of the land whom they had been commanded to utterly destroy.

In Nehemiah 5:17, Nehemiah says there were at his table an hundred and fifty Jews beside those that came unto them from among the heathen. This mixed multitude seems to have made it fine at Nehemiah's table. While eating his food, they probably had more fun than a barrel of monkeys. But in the first three verses of chapter 13 of this same book, we find that studying, the law separated them. It will do it every time. Many a Baptist pastor of today who lives sumptuously every day would probably have to make tents, so to speak, to help support his family if he really began to preach the Word, and left off all the flesh-pots of Egypt. No one knows this better than those preachers themselves.

One of the truly great Baptist preachers of our day was asked how he came to leave the Convention. He said he did not leave the Convention, but when he began to preach the great doctrines the Lord revealed to him in His Word, they left him.





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Lawgiver, The Law, and The Lawless

In our generation we find ourselves surrounded with a diversity of laws. There are physical, moral, civil, and spiritual laws in our complex society. Living in such an environment, it is necessary that we acquaint ourselves with the meaning of the word law.

"Law" is "something layed down," or "something established." It is a general expression of will enforced by power. It knows no persons or personalities. Law applies to all classes and in more than one case. There can be no law without power to enforce it. Without power to enforce, it becomes the expression of mere wish or advice.

The essential idea of law is will enforced by power. It implies a lawgiver, subjects, a general command, and a power to enforce. Or better stated, law is a general command from an authoritative being enforced by power upon other beings.

Law is an expression of the nature of the lawgiver, and it reveals the normal relation of the subject to the lawgiver. Any law which fails to represent the nature of the governing power will eventually become obsolete. All permanent law is a transcript of what must be in order to have harmony between the governing power and the governed subjects.

GOD AND LAW

God is not subject to law, He is the source of law. James 4:12 says: **"There is one lawgiver."** God's law is an expression of the Divine will enforced by supernatural power upon His creatures who are duty-bound to obey Him, and who are liable to pains and penalties for disobedience. It expresses the moral nature of God and calls His creatures to absolute conformity to His holiness (I Pet. 1:15-16; Matt. 5:48). This complete conformity to God's law is the normal condition of man. The whole law can be summed up in three words: "Be like God."

The underlining idea of sin is law: **"Sin is the transgression of the law"** (I John 3:4). All sin is against the will and nature of God. It is a lack of conformity to the law of God, either in disposition, act or state. It is a destitution of correspondence with the Divine law; a rejection of the Divine authority.

All sin is law-breaking. Sin cannot exist without the law of God. Romans 4:15 declares: **"For where no law is, there is no transgression."**

THE THREE SYSTEMS OF LAW

Law is a term found about two hundred times in the Bible, meaning a rule which regulates human conduct. Three subdivisions are mentioned: **"the law of God"** (Rom. 7:22, 25), **"the law of Moses"** (John 7:23; Acts 13:39), and **"the law of Christ"** (Gal. 6:2).

These expressions are not synonymous in meaning. Failure to distinguish between them has brought about no small amount of confusion. Law cannot be understood in the Bible unless one understands these three expressions.

The law of God is God's unchanging moral standard of regulating the conduct of all humanity. Sometimes the term refers to the whole revealed will of God, and at other times it points to the Ten Commandments. It is a transcript of the mind of God as to what man ought to be. This law expresses God's holiness, for it discloses God's holy face to human sight.

Obedience to this law is man's first duty: **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"** (Eccl. 12:13).

The law of Moses is the entire system of legislation, judicial and ceremonial, which the Lord gave to Israel during the time of Moses. It contained three parts: (1) moral regulations, Ex. 20:1-17; Matt. 22:36-40; (2) social requirements, Ex. 21:1-23:33; (3) ordinances for worship, Ex. 25:1-31; 38. Much of the law of God was incorporated into the moral regulations of the Mosaic law, but this Mosaic system was not given to the Gentiles (Acts 15:5-6, 10).

The law of Christ is God's law in the hands of Christ our Mediator. Christ was made under this law (Gal. 4:4) and this law was in His heart (Ps. 40:8). It was this law that He came to fulfill. **"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill"** (Matt. 5:17).

Thus the law of God is almost synonymous with the law of Christ. As creatures we are under the law of God our Creator, but being in union with Christ, believers are inlawed to Christ (I Cor. 9:21). Christ was responsible to the law for us, so that we are no longer responsible to it, but to Him. So the believer is not without law to govern his conduct when inlawed to Christ.

MISCONCEPTIONS OF GOD'S LAW

The law of Jehovah is not temporary, for it manifests the essential nature of God. Moses broke the tables of stone upon which the law was inscribed, and Jehudi cut up the scroll and cast it into the fire (Ex. 32:19; Jer. 36:23), but the law continued as eternal as before in the nature of God and the constitution of man.

"The moral laws are just as stable as the law of gravitation. Every fussy human chicken that is hatched into this world tries to fool with those laws. Some grow wiser in the process and some do not.

"We talk about breaking God's laws. But after those laws have been broken several billion times since Adam first tried to play with them, those laws are still intact and no seam of fracture is visible in them---not even a scratch on the enamel.

"But the lawbreakers---that is another story. If you want to find their fragments, go to the ruins of Egypt, of Babylon, of Jerusalem; study statistics; read faces; keep your eyes open; visit Blackwell's Island; walk through the graveyard and read the invisible inscriptions left by the Angel of Judgment, for instance: 'Here lies the fragments of John Smith, who contradicted his Maker, played football with the Ten Commandments, and departed this life at the age of thirty-five. His mother and wife weep for him. Nobody else does. May he rest in peace!'" (W. Raushenbusch).

Men do not actually break God's laws; they break themselves against them. Jesus Christ said, **"The Scriptures cannot be broken"** (John 10:35). Here our Lord affirms the permanent authority of the Scriptures. Nothing can deprive them of their authority, for they are settled forever in Heaven (Ps. 119:89).

Some are prone to think of God's law being merely negative. This is an error because conformity to God is the inmost requirement of law. The law is spiritual and required likeness in character and life to God Who is Spirit. Behind the negative expression of God's law are legions of positive moral requirements. When a sin is forbidden the contrary duty is commanded (Isa. 1:16-17).

It is also an error to think of God's law as being to only one part of man's being. Man's law binds the hands only, God's law binds both the hands and the heart. It requires purity in soul and body (II Cor. 7:1). Anything which comes short of perfect purity in soul or perfect health in body contradicts the law and is a transgression.

The law of God is not always outwardly published or externally written. There was a law against murder (Gen. 4:8-15) and adultery (Gen. 38:24) in ancient time which have not come down to us in writing. Moses gave to man the first written law, but God's moral law existed

from the creation of man. It is written in Genesis 26:5: **"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."**

During the old dispensation the Gentiles were without an externally written law. But they had a natural law written on their hearts. It was sufficiently clear to secure at the day of judgment their acquittal or condemnation. It is written in Romans 2:14: **"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not a law, are a law unto themselves."**

Man's consciousness or unconsciousness in no way limits the scope of the law. The law of the Lord exists like the law of nature whether men recognize it or not. We cannot rid ourselves of God's dominion by denying its existence or refusing submission to it. **"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh"** (Ps. 2:2-4).

God's law is not capable of modification, even to save a world of sinners. God cannot change it without ceasing to be God. The requirements of the law are not lessened because man is unable to keep it. Duty is not measured by ability. I may borrow money from the bank and then become unable to pay it back, but my inability does not excuse the debt. The obligation of man to obey the law is based upon man's original gifts and abilities. Man must render to God that which God first gave (Luke 19:23).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAW

The moral law is all-comprehensive. It is over us at all times and in every circumstance. It cannot be confined to one place, person, or people. It requires every conceivable virtue and forbids every conceivable sin. **"Thy commandment is exceeding broad"** (Ps. 119:96).

Omissions as well as commissions are condemned by it. **"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"** (Jas. 4:17). The neglect of doing good is actually a moral evil. To hold the truth captive is to be guilty of unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

"For we know that the law is spiritual" (Rom. 7:14). It breathes spirituality in its nature and intent. It embodies the demand of Him Who is Spirit. The law's essence is of like nature with the Holy Spirit Who gave it. God's law reaches to the spirit of man, and it gives him directions on how to be a spiritual man. It requires spiritual purity.

"The law of the LORD is perfect" (Ps. 19:7). Law is as the Lawgiver (Matt. 5:48). It needs no addition or subtractions. **"Wherefore the law is**

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The Lawgiver

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holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12).

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). The moral law expresses in its least commandment the one requirement of harmony with the Creator. The violation of one precept is all that is needed to condemn us.

The least sin separates from God. Little snakes are still snakes. The least offense makes us guilty of the whole law in that it reveals our lack of love which is required in all the commandments. One must keep every part of the law in order to be a lawkeeper. You cannot offend in one point without being a lawbreaker.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

Only to Adam was the law proposed as a method of salvation. With the first sin, all hope of obtaining God's favor by perfect obedience was lost. Since the fall, man cannot submit himself to that Divine rule of life which is the practical expression of friendship with God. His aversion to the law makes subjection impossible, for sin cannot be in subjection to the law. **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"** (Rom. 8:7).

God never intended for man to be justified by the law. **"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified"** (Rom. 3:20). No corrupt man can ever be justified by the law in God's sight. The deeds of the law may justify us in the sight of the church and state, but never in the eyes of the Omniscient One.

Paul clearly states: **"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"** (Gal. 2:16).

It was not the office of the law to remove sin. **"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. . . . For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"** (Heb. 10:1, 4).

The law was the primer. It taught the elements of Christianity by objective lessons, but it could not meet man's need of justification and sanctification. It could not satisfy the demands of justice or make reconciliation for iniquity.

"For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). If a man can be justified by the law, he needs no Saviour. If he needs Christ at

all, it is because he is condemned by the law.

The commandments were added at Sinai as a standard of life for a redeemed people. It was not a covenant of works in the sense that Israel's salvation depended upon obedience to it. The Israelites were saved just as we are by grace through faith. Acts 10:43 says: **"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."**

"For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). The law was given to show man that he was a sinner. **"What shall I say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet"** (Rom. 7:7). Those who would know sin must get a knowledge of the law in its strictness.

The law opens our wounds, but it offers no remedy. The commandments make sin to **"become exceeding sinful"** (Rom. 7:13). It, like a mirror, shows man his dirty face, yet it is a poor object to wash his face.

God's moral law stopped man's mouth. **"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God"** (Rom. 3:19).

The law convicts and condemns both Jew and Gentile. It prevents any man from boasting of being free from sin. It silences boasting by convicting men of their sins. It makes the world to come under the judgment of God and to stand condemned at His bar.

"The law worketh wrath" (Rom. 4:15) against all who break it. It pronounces a curse upon **"every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"** (Gal. 3:10). The law was **"the ministration of death"** and **"the ministration of condemnation"** (II Cor. 3:7-9). All the law could ever do was to condemn a man for his sins against God.

If the law could not save or justify us, then what was its Divine purpose? The answer to this question is found in Galatians 3:19: **"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."**

The law was given to make sins take the character of transgressions, and thereby the consciousness of sin be intensified and the desire for redemption aroused. It is the office of the law to awaken in man the consciousness of sin, in order that he may feel the need of a Saviour.

The office of the law was similar to that of a pedagogue, or tutor, who had the care and control of children in those days when the New Testament was written. The tutor was to watch, restrain, and often

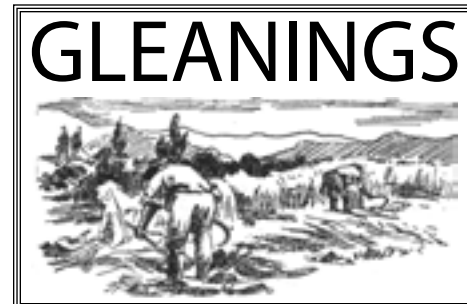
severely discipline the children. **"Thus, even as the slave who leads a child to the house of the schoolmaster, so the law had led us to our teacher Christ, that by faith we might be justified"** (Gal. 3:24 Conybeare's Translation).

The Holy Spirit uses the law to convict the sinner of his sins. By means of it He makes us sick of self and fond of Christ. He brings us to see our condemnation that we will trust Christ to save us. He uses it to strip us of all pretense of natural righteousness so Christ can cloth us. He uses the law to shut us up unto faith in Christ as the only avenue of escape from Hell.

*My lips with shame my sins confess
Against thy law, against thy grace;
Lord, should thy judgment grow severe,
I am condemned, but thou art clear.*

*Should sudden vengeance seize by breath,
I must pronounce thee just in death;
And if my soul were sent to Hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well*

*Show pity, Lord, O Lord, forgive;
Let a repenting rebel live;
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in thee?*



SIN

Sin is a missing of the mark (Rom. 3:23). The mark we are all aiming at is the glory of God. All have fallen short. This thought of failure is the most frequent of all the references in the New Testament to sin. In the light of Genesis 2 and 3, this is not surprising.

Sin is ungodliness (Rom. 1:18, Rom. 5:6). Positive irreligion, a refusal to render to God the worship due to Him is a common failure on the part of man. Both the inward condition of the heart and the outward conduct of the life reveal much ungodliness.

Sin is lawlessness (I John 3:4). This means that man lives willfully contrary to the known law of God.

Sin is unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). This means that sin is that which is not right and not just---a violation of justice and equity and a deflection from the absolute standard of God.

Sin is heedlessness (Rom. 5:19). This means that sin is hearing imperfectly, hearing amiss, failing to hear---and all this willfully and deliberately. This unwillingness to heed results in gross disobedience.

Sin is transgression (I John 3:4). This means the crossing of a forbidden line. It means going beyond the divine limits set by God's law. It means trespassing on property not your own.

Sin is ignorance (Heb. 9:7). The expression **"errors of the people"** literally means the sins of ignorance. However, this ignorance is an oversight that could have been avoided and a want of knowledge when we might and should have known better.

Sin is a loss (Rom. 11:12). When Israel fell, it was a diminishing of the fullness due---a loss of that which brings to God. This meant that sin merely resulted in a loss to Israel.

Sin is a debt (Matt. 6:12). We owe God our whole life. **"We ought to obey God,"** said the apostle. When we sin, we become indebted thereby. It's a debt which must be paid either by the sinner through his suffering in Hell, or by Jesus Christ on the cross.

Sin is worthlessness (Rom. 5:12). God even declares that by sin we become unprofitable. The lost sheep was of no profit to the shepherd as long as it was lost. So with the coin.

Sin is impurity (Rom. 1:24; I Tim. 1:9). It makes the soul unclean. It pollutes, defiles, and renders each individual morally and spiritually impure.

Sin is depravity (Rom. 1:29). It is corruption of heart, malignity of spirit and baseness of action. This is shown by the fact that man will not hesitate to go on uninterrupted in evil. Micah even refers to those who commit **"Evil with both hands earnestly"** (Micah 7:3).

Sin is weakness (Rom. 6:19). The effect of a sinful nature is moral and spiritual powerlessness. Thus, the reason that man is incapable of fulfilling the divine requirements---his helplessness is caused by sin.

Sin is selfishness (Rom. 1:29). One of the marks of evil is a greedy desire to have what is not possessed. Covetousness is essentially an expression of sin and when the thing that is desired is wrong, the selfishness is still deeper and darker.

Sin is wandering (Rom. 1:29). Sometimes this is a going astray in thought, involving wrong opinion (Cf. Eph. 4:14). Sometimes it is a going astray in conduct showing wrong actions (Cf. James 5:20).

Sin is deceit (Eph. 4:22). Sin offers advantages, but it fails to substantiate them (Cf. Heb. 3:13; II Thess. 2:10). It may offer butter in a lordly dish, but behind are the nails and the hammer (Cf. Judges 4:21-22; Jer. 17:9).

Sin is enmity (Rom. 8:7). It starts with rebellion and always expresses itself in hostility.

Sin is unbelief (Heb. 3:12) Of course, the supreme sin is lack of belief in Christ (John 16:9), because the opposite of unbelief, faith, is believing what God

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Gleanings

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says. This is how sin originally entered human life (Cf. Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 14:23).

These are some of the mournfully numerous words which reveal sin in all its hideousness. The more they are studied, the more evident will be the conviction that sin is an abominable thing which God hates.

GOD'S SUFFERING SAINTS

By J. O. Tidwell

Suffering and sorrow has enriched the literature of the world. Our forefathers under God's leadership had their troubles, trials, and sore disappointments. Suffering is our portion in this world of sin and sorrow. We cross dark valleys that are rough and steep. Christians are not exempt. Jesus said, "**In me ye might have peace. In the world, ye shall have tribulation**" (John 16:33).

A saint is a saved person, but not a finished product. A saint, in the strictest sense, is a saved person born of the spirit; made a new creature in Christ Jesus; separated from the old life of the world; and dedicated to Christ and the new life.

This new life is a spiritual one in our old bodies. This new life is born of the spirit of God. Jesus told Nicodemus, You must be born again--born from above. Read John 3:3, 5, 7. You cannot grow in grace until you are saved by grace. Ephesians 2:8.

This new man in Christ and the old man of flesh living in the same old body do not get along very well. Read Romans 6. The natural man and the spiritual man are in conflict; thus the Christian's warfare; and war always causes trouble, suffering and sacrifice. There are battles to be fought and victories to be won.

It is designed that the inner man is to overcome the outer man.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).

Prayer is a divine order for the Christian. Prayer is our approach to God. When in trouble---when life is drab and dull---when no one to lean on is near, then open the Book and read John 14.

Suffering is a teacher that no one welcomes or appreciates. The Psalmist said, "**Before I was afflicted I went astray. . .It is good for me that I have been afflicted**" (Ps. 119:67, 71).

The Apostle Paul said, "**For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us**" (Rom. 8:18).

No cross, no crown; no loss, no gain.

*"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?"*

*No, there is a cross for every one
And there is a cross for me."*

*"Servant of God well done,
Rest from thy blest employ.
The battle's fought, the race is won,
Enter the Master's joy."*

*"Servant of God well done,
Thy glorious warfare's past.
The battle's fought, the race is won,
And thou are crowned at last."
(Random Thinking by J. O. Tidwell).*

REPENTANCE

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (Ps. 51:17). **"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy"** (Prov. 28:13).

On bended knees, replete with godly grief,

See, where the mourner kneels to seek relief;

No, "God I thank thee," freezes on his tongue,

For works of merit that to him belong;

Deep in his soul conviction's plowshare rings,

And to the surface his corruption brings;

He loathes himself, in lowest dust he lies,

And all-abased, "Unclean, unclean," he cries.

From his full heart pours forth the gushing plea,

"God of the lost, be merciful to me!"

The light of life descends in heavenly rays,

And angels shout, and sing, "Behold, he prays."

Behold here an individual on his knees, weeping. He is in great distress of mind; he has retired from the busy walk of life, and come to this place of solitude, to give vent to his feelings. His groans break the surrounding silence; they return in soft but melancholy echoes to his ears. Above his head are seen descending particles of heavenly light; a little in the rear stands the plow; imbedded in the opening earth.

This is an emblem of Repentance. The man bowed on his knees represents the true penitent, whose soul is humbled under the mighty hand of God. He withdraws from the vanities of the world; he is sick of sin; he breaks the silence of solitude with his inquiries of, "O, that I knew where I might find him!" He does not, in the pride of self-righteousness, exclaim, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men," etc. Oh, no! Too deeply he feels the plague of his own heart.

As the plow enters the hard soil, and lays bare furrow after furrow, even so has conviction penetrated the heart of the true penitent, and laid bare its deceitful folds, and discovered its once hidden

depths of pollution and guilt. He abhors himself in dust and in ashes; he can only say, God be merciful to me a sinner. The plowshare of God's convicting spirit has entered and broken up the fallow ground of his heart; hence he brings the sacrifice with which God is well pleased---that is, **"a broken and contrite heart"** ---and the light of Jehovah's countenance falls full upon his soul, as an inward token of divine acceptance.

Repentance consists in a change of mind or purpose, wherein the penitent "ceases to do evil," and "learns to do well." The prodigal repented when he said, **"I will arise and go to my father,"** and departed. The farmer's son, who, when he had refused to go and work in the vineyard, and afterward altered his purpose and went, repented. Saul of Tarsus, when he refused any longer to obey the mandates of the chief priests and scribes, and inquired, **"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"** repented. Thus we see it consists in actually doing the will of God. It is not mere anxiety; Simon Magus had this; nevertheless he was still in the **"bond of iniquity."** Nor mere trembling; Felix trembled, yet retained his sins. Nor remorse; Judas had this, and died in despair; and Dives also, though in the regions of the lost.

Repentance is the gate of Heaven. It is the condition, upon the fulfillment of which depends eternal life. "You repent, and I will forgive." Hence the ambassadors of Heaven have invariably directed the attention of sinners to this as a first step toward obtaining the favor of God, and every promised blessing. The prophets, in their denunciations; John of the desert, in his fiery exhortations; the Savior, in His divine instructions, and the apostles, in their warm appeals, enjoined upon every soul **"repentance toward God."**

Through this gate all have passed who have at any time been recognized by the Almighty as His servants. The children of Israel passed through it, typically, when they ate the bitter herbs---before they behold the pillars of cloud and of fire in the wilderness; Isaiah, ere he touched the sacred harp of prophecy; Elijah, ere he ascended in the chariot of ethereal fire; Ezekiel, before he gazed upon the visions of the Eternal; Daniel, before the Angel of God pronounced him **"Blessed;"** Paul, ere he was **"caught up to the third heaven;"** and John of Patmos, before the glorious Revelations of **"Alpha and Omega"** filled him with wonder and astonishment; and **"the hundred and forty-four thousand,"** ere they sung the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Repentance is a sacred duty; God **"now commands all men every where to repent."** Why? **"Because all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"** and **"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."**



Salvation

By Eldon Joslin
of Birmingham, AL

It is with a great deal of anticipation that I write this article. I have greatly admired this paper and its present authors. Brother Cook and Brother Wooten are truly giants in the Faith, who with your prayers, we might help in this place of service. I trust if the Lord is willing and pleased that through the articles of this paper many more of God's children will be blessed.

It has been my experience, as I observe general Christendom and most Religions, that the great deceiver had blinded the minds of this world and they seek to be saved by what they can do. Salvation to them is do this and do that and as long as you do more good than you do bad you will be alright in the end. It seems the more difficult the task the more there are who will follow. An example of this is in Mexico where at certain seasons the people will crawl for miles causing their knees, ankles, feet and hands to bleed. They crawl in pain to a statue that to them represents the Virgin Mary and salvation. It greatly saddens me to see this because they are so wrong in thinking that as they do this it will help them to be saved. Many Churches use things much more subtil and far less drastic. They teach salvation comes as one is baptized or joins the Church, or believes things found in the Church's Confession of Faith. These things that one might do that they might be saved will only leave that poor person on the road to destruction which is broad and many there be that go in thereat.

At this point let us try to answer the question, what is Salvation? Salvation is a gift from God. One receives this as he is born with a spiritual birth from above as is described in John 3:1-8. This Gift was given to us before the world began (Eph. 1:4). Our salvation is not do, do, do, but done, done, done. This means there is nothing, absolutely nothing, we can do to save ourselves. If it depended on something we could do even if it were the smallest of matters, maybe as simple as asking Christ to save us, we would wonder as long as we lived if we had succeeded in doing it right. Now when we reached heaven and eternal life we would surely boast throughout all heaven that we had done well, else how did we succeed in getting there?

Now closer to home we find there are those who would say, we must believe, have faith, receive Christ, repent, give your heart to Jesus, (He doesn't want that dirty sinful thing because our righteousness is as filthy rags). We that are Christians realize that these things

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are done, but only after salvation has come to pass and we are now being led by the Holy Spirit. God Who planned our salvation also planned the way and the means by which we would be saved. If one of God's elect lives in the deepest jungle in Africa, and it would take a million dollars to reach him, God will provide with His people all that is necessary that the one so far from the fold can be brought in. All of God's elect will be saved at the time that it fulfills our Savior's pleasure. Those who believe that salvation can come without the work of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, can not prove their position according to the Word of God. These Scriptures can be given for your consideration, please read them and let the Word of God judge our thoughts and that which we believe; Ps. 119:50, Rom. 1:16, Eph. 1:13, 5:26, Phi. 2:16, Heb. 4:12, I Pet. 1:23-25, James 1:13, II Thes. 2:13-14 and I Pet. 1:2. These Scriptures teach God's plan to save those whom He will.

In conclusion, we will say that there is no work in salvation on our part. Our ability to believe and have faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-10). When this is revealed to us, we having been saved, put our total trust in the Lord for all things. Our Salvation is done and we did nothing to receive it, thus pray tell me what could we possibly do to lose it (Titus 1:2)? Pray for us.

(Scripture Notes, January 1983)



The Quiet and Busy Life

By James Owen

“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing” (I Thess. 4:11-12).

The Christians in Thessalonica were distinguished for their brotherly love; and yet there was need to exhort them to advance in it. There is always room for growth; the life of the soul is to be one of endless progression in knowledge, in moral qualities, in righteousness, in obedience, in love. There is no limitation here. They had done much; they could do still more. As if the apostle had said to them, “I am glad to know that love is abounding among you; you have learned this lesson; you have been taught of God; instead of bitterness and strife, there is the glow of spiritual affection; instead

of the sounds of Babel, there is peace; the bequest of the Divine Testator has been received, **‘Peace I leave with you’** (John 14:11).” They had been taught of God to love one another; and more than that, **“ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia”** (I Thess. 4:10). Reality, expansiveness, these are the marks of God's influence and working. It is possible to utter brotherly platitudes on platforms, to be fervent in expressions of affection for everybody; and there is an end of the matter. On the other hand there are some who say but little, but **“ye do it.”** And whatever may be your attainments, yet there are heights to be gained---**“we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more”** (I Thess. 4:10). Never think that you can rest, as if the progress were sufficient. Do not mistake the milestone for the goal; there are many milestones to be passed; travel on.

And then follows the practical counsel which I have read as a text. It sounds like commonplace; but it presents to us, as we think upon it, another proof of the apostle's sanctified common sense, of his prudence as well as his earnestness and zeal. There are some who would describe Paul as a visionary, an enthusiast; and he was enthusiastic, Christianity is enthusiasm; it cannot lay hold on a man's nature without kindling enthusiasm. Christianity brings fire into a man's soul, and it is needed; there so much ice of selfishness and indifference to be melted. If Paul had not been enthusiastic he would not have spent such a life of exhausting labour; would not have compassed sea and land to make Christ known. But these are not the words of a fanatic. As if he had said, “Cultivate brotherly affection, the spiritual discernment and taste that will enable you to appreciate every trace of the likeness of Jesus Christ; but do not let your love become an officious meddling with affairs that do not belong to you, a prying into matters with which you have no concern. **‘And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work’**” etc.

It is evident from these two Epistles that the second advent of our Lord was a subject that was very prominent in their Christian faith, and on which their hearts were set. It occupied their thoughts, it was the topic of their conversation, perhaps the most absorbing of all themes. No doubt it had formed a part of the apostle's teaching among them; and it had laid hold on their hopes, on their imagination, and kindled them into a very rapture of expectancy. And they, standing as it were on the very threshold of the Christian economy, were eagerly looking for its close, the finale of God's dispensations. Why was this? Because they had been enlightened to see the chaos that prevailed in society, the perversion of justice, the moral and

social wrongs that existed, and they were anxious to see the defeat of iniquity and the enthronement of righteousness and truth. And there was probably then, as there has been since, impatience with gradual process of moral recovery. And the words of Jesus concerning His advent had produced on their minds the impression that this great crisis in the history of the world was close at hand, that during their lifetime the hour would strike, and the drama of the world's history would be ended. They were looking for this, and so looking that they were neglecting their regular duties and occupations. There was a fever of religious excitement upon them, and they were in danger of bringing religion into ridicule. Some might have said, “It was quite right to neglect all the affairs of this world with such a prospect opening before them. The second coming of Christ was a very solemn subject, involving the most tremendous issues; were they not bound to be showing all earnestness? If they had thought of nothing else, talked of nothing else, what excitement would have been unreasonable at such a time as that?” This is a danger to which Christians in different ages have been exposed; they so felt the powers of the world to come; they were so influenced by a sense of the neatness of eternity, as to neglect all the concerns of time, and live in a constant atmosphere of dissipation and delirium. Against this the apostle warns us; he says in effect, “Be as earnest as you can, strive to abound more and more in holiness and brotherly love, waiting for the blessed appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, but do it all quietly; you need not be in a constant turmoil; you have your business to attend to; do it then; as long as you are in this world fill the station wherein God has placed you, in order that men may learn to respect you, and yourselves need nothing.” Neglecting their own tasks, they would become a burden on those who were diligent, and who were endeavouring to do their duty as members of families and of the community. Here as in a nutshell we have the argument against a monastic life of idleness, the life without labour as the more holy really condemns some brother to a double share of that labouring life to which he fancies the highest holiness is denied. He is too holy to labour himself; and yet somebody must labour to supply him with bread and butter. Among some heathen nations---in India, for example---the eminently religious man is the fakir, the begging ascetic; and this idea, like other bits of paganism, has been imported into the Roman Church; and vows of poverty have been regarded as evidences of piety, and the words “saint” and “beggar” were synonymous. I do not question the sincerity and conscientiousness of many who retired from the busy world into monasteries, to live a religious life;

but it is not the conception of religion which is expounded by the apostle with his sane, healthy mind, and consecrated heart. He did not pronounce a blessing on indolence; he did not encourage it. Hands, energy, mental powers, were given to be used, for the good of society, and for the glory of God.

“Study to be quiet” or “be ambitious to be quiet.” Let this be your ambition, the object of your quest. This is a strange thing. Generally ambition lies in the direction of making a noise in the world. Be conspicuous; assert yourself; in the jostling throng where every one is seeking a price, elbow your way; make a place for yourself, make a name for yourself. Aspire; be ambitious for power, fame, wealth. That is the direction in which ambition generally goes. But here it is, “be ambitious to be quiet,” unobtrusive, unostentatious. God works quietly. With the noiselessness of the dew and the gentleness of the light the stupendous operations of nature are carried on. It is true that God has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm; but His mightiest powers, such as gravitation, are gentle and silent; and He draws nearest to man in the **“still small voice,”** the whisper of compassion. “Thy gentleness hath made me great.” Christ worked quietly. He “did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.” The gradual extension of His benignant sway is contrasted with the “confused noise,” the down-treading of the poor, and the sufferings which attend the progress of an earthly conqueror. So, the apostle says, instead of being fussy, inquisitive, meddling, covet the power to be quiet.

Come away from the din and the glare into the presence of God; bury your life in His; merge your wishes in His will; let the fretful, chattering brook of your life flow into the calm sea of the Divine Being, and so find rest. Worry is a curse that has been aggravated by the hard struggles, and competitions and feverish excitement of modern business life. The rottenness of much of it is now and again disclosed, and revelations are made of the falsehood, chicanery and fraud on which public companies may be built. Worry is un-Christian. Jesus says it is pagan. The heathen who know not a living Father in Heaven, see no Divine hand holding the reins of circumstances, hear not the pulsations of the heart of love, think only of pitiless Fate, or a cruel Avenger, may well be anxious as they face the dark Future---the Tomorrow, so full of mystery and dread. But worry should not intrude with its bloomy visage within the domain of Christian thought and feeling. If our faith is worth anything, if prayer is a reality, and not a farce, if our convictions of the mercy of God have any root, if there is a covenant between the soul and God, then why

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worry? Let the peace of God, the calm of God, the Sabbath of God, come down upon you, and fold you within its tender embrace. This is your possession; do not put it away from you, do not refuse this blessed gift: be ambitious to appropriate and own it. There can be no mental or spiritual growth without quietness. The artist cannot see the beauty of nature when his heart is torn by conflicting passions. The poet cannot catch the vision of truth when his soul is disquieted and cast down within him. The Christian worker cannot minister to the needs and sorrows of others when he does not carry with him a heart "at leisure from itself, to soothe and sympathise." The unrest, the turmoil, the anxiety that are so rife, are antagonistic to progress in intellectual and moral strength. By His example and His teaching Jesus has shown us the need of seasons of seclusion and quietness for meditation and prayer. As the stars mirror themselves only in the unruffled lake, and the calm surface is required for the pictures of the surrounding hills and woods, so the glory of the Shekinah flows down only into the soul that is restful. In the calmness and silence of the night, when there is no roar of traffic, no din of the crowd, but a solemn hush all around, the grove has been flooded with sweet music, for the nightingale was burdening the air with its dulcet, ravishing trill. And when the storm of human thought and desire has grown calm beneath the "Peace, be still," of Jesus, when the din of the world is hushed, then the song of God's nightingale is heard. In the cool of the day his tread is heard in the garden. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10). You cannot know it until you are still. If you would be strong, masters of yourselves, masters of the things that so often annoy and harass, you must get out of the rush and bustle, if only for short intervals. "Study to be quiet." It may be difficult, for people are so accustomed to noise. The claims of business are so exacting, and the rivalry so keen and incessant, that a man feels he must remain in the hurly-burly. But there is no "must"; it is left to your choice. If you covet the power, if you are ambitious to be quiet, you may often have the "still hour," and rightly spent it is an hour full of blessing.

This quietness, of course, did not mean indolence. With the same breath the apostle tells them to be quiet and to be active; he tells them not to be busybodies on the one hand, and not to be idle on the other. Knowing the tendency of many, in the exuberance of their charity, to mind other people's business as well as their own, thus manifesting a great capacity for business, the apostle recommends his friends to pay attention to their own

business, knowing that it would suffice for their energies and resources, to do their own work, to do it well, and to do it quietly.

Professor John Caird, who has just been taken away, one of the finest intellects in Scotland, preached a sermon once before the Queen and the Prince Consort, on "Religion in Daily Life," and it was published and had a very wide circulation. It seemed to be accounted as a new discovery that religion should be linked to business. Why, it is the common teaching of the New Testament, only the teaching has been obscured. There are many who in the wear and tear of a busy life say they have no time to think of spiritual things, no time to be religious. If they had "retired," if they had nothing else to do, then they would be religious. But it has been truly said that it is a most perilous situation for one who has nothing to do but to be religious, nothing to do except to think of being pious. It might seem to you a fine opportunity, but believe me it is most hazardous. We have been made for work; industry is the law of life, and you cannot violate or evade the law without sustaining moral hurt. Do your duty; and let religion guide you and help you in the doing of it, that it may be thoroughly done.

"That ye may walk honestly toward

them that are without" (I Thess. 4:12). And this does not mean merely that we are to keep our hands out of other people's pockets and tills; but the word "honestly" meant a great deal more when our Bible was translated than it means now; and I am surprised that the revisers did not adopt another word. In the parable of the sower we are told that the seed on the good ground refers to those who "in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Again, in Acts 6, it is said, "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report" (Acts 6:3), where I presume the translators did not intend us to believe that the Christians as a rule had rather a doubtful character as to common honesty. To give the full meaning of the word, we might say, "That ye walk with dignity, like honourable men." This is the real force of the word. It included everything that was fair and good and dignified. "Walk with dignity." There is need to restore the true conception of dignity and honour. It is not to be found in outward show, in idleness, in luxury, but in the right character. In this there is a dignity before which the splendours of wealth and the pomp of royalty fade away. There is a common Latin phrase in use, *infra dignitatem*, which

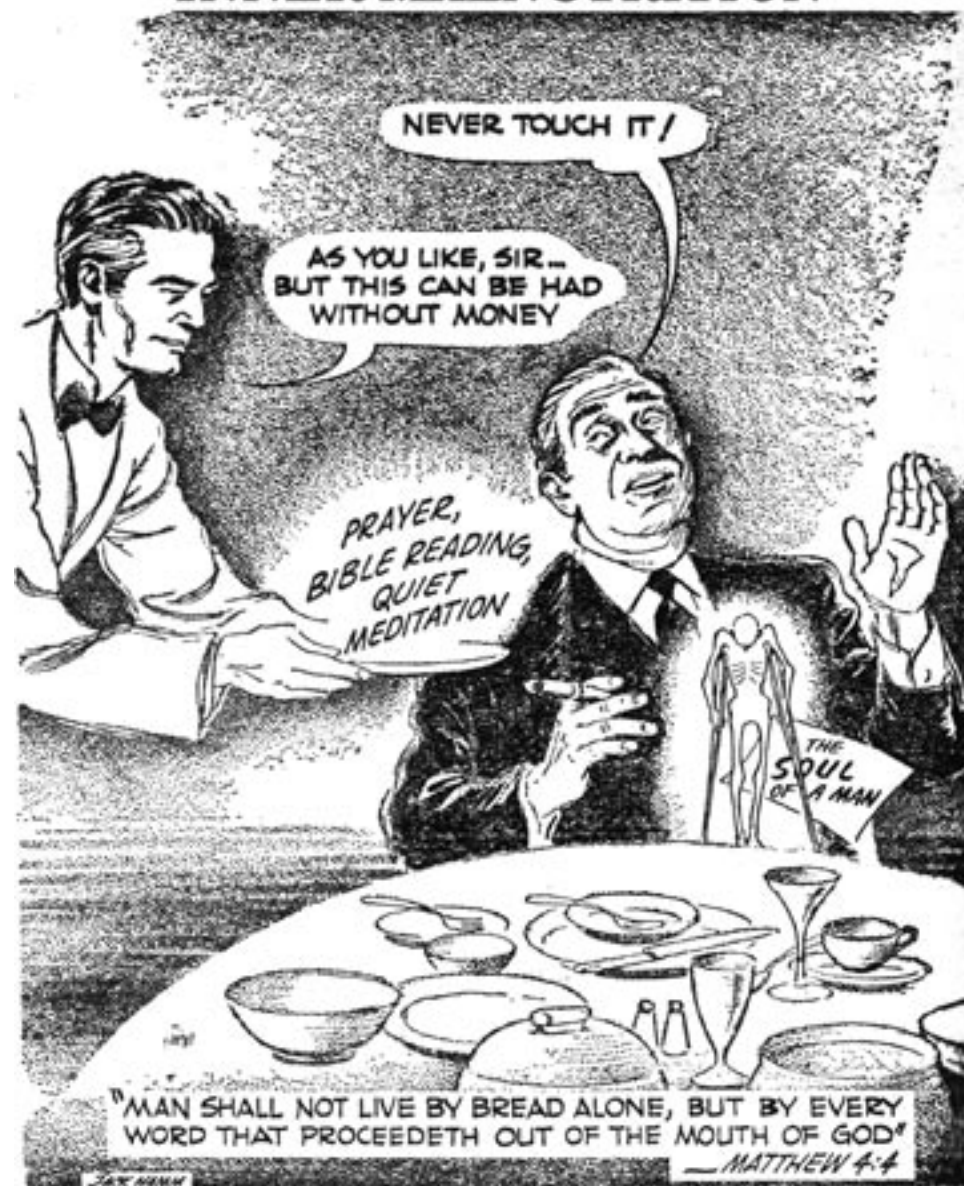
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is shortened into *infra dig.*; and men say it is *infra dig.* to do a certain thing, to take notice of some silly tale, to answer some impudent accuser. Would that Christians always felt that it was *infra dig.*, not worthy of them, not worthy of the name they bear, of their relations to God and His children, of their privileges, to do anything that is false, mean, selfish! When Nehemiah was advised by a false prophet to go into the temple and hide from his enemies, he answered, "Should such a man as I flee?" (Neh. 6:11). Placed in a responsible position, knowing that his example would influence others, he would not play the coward, he would not degrade himself. Jesus speaks of His disciples being "worthy of Him." If we love any one before Him, we are not worthy of Him. If we refuse to take up the cross, and follow Him, we are not worthy of Him. If we are guilty of anything that is mean, dishonourable, we are not worthy of Him. He demands that we should be clothed as His disciples, with a certain dignity, that our walk should be worthy of our calling, that we should have a keen sense of honour, and not bring a stigma or a stain upon the Great Name.

"That ye may walk toward them that are without, and that ye may honestly have lack of nothing" (I Thess. 4:12), or "of no one"---that you may not have to lean on anybody, but possess what Robert Burns described as "the glorious privilege of being independent." Christianity encourages industry, thrift, temperance. In no book can you find saner or more healthy teaching upon a man's duty in his earthly calling than in Paul's epistles. The idleness, the oppression, the extortion, the waste, the drunkenness, that are such prolific sources of poverty and misery are sternly opposed by the whole teaching and spirit of the gospel. The restoration of man to God implies the restoration of man to himself, to self-respect, to his work, to his home, to society. When Christianity has free course in the thoughts and habits of the people, it contributes to their temporal prosperity, it improves their environment. This may be seen in many individual instances today; it may be observed in nations; and they have the greatest enterprise, grit, power, courage, whose character has been moulded and

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INNER MALNUTRITION



Quiet and Busy

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invigorated by Christian influence. The modern conditions are peculiar. In these days of destructive conflict between capital and labour, of discussions of such subjects as Old Age Pensions and Socialism, let us remember that whatever social theories may be adopted, or experiments tried, you will never get rid of the individual; what he is will determine what he will do and have. His power, his health, his will, his character must be taken into account. But the spirit of the gospel, if it were welcomed, would soon settle disputes between employers and employees; the spirit, not of mutual suspicion and distrust, but of brotherhood and sympathy. The future of this country is largely in the hands of its toilers, its working population. If the great bulk have the salt of truth and purity in them, then all will be well; but should they become corrupted by infidelity and enervated by vice, then nothing can prevent the decay and ruin of the nation. **"Happy is that people"**--and only that people---**"whose God is the Lord"** (Ps. 144:15).

"That ye study to be quiet and do your own business." This does not mean selfishness. If there is any suffering that you can alleviate, any wrong that you can redress, it is your business to do it. Slave-owners might say to Wilberforce when he was working and pleading for emancipation, "Mind your own business," but Wilberforce felt that it was his business to endeavour to break the fetters of the slave. The authorities of Rome said in effect to Luther when he protested against the sale of indulgences, "Mind your own business," but the Reformer knew that it was his business to wage war against superstition and sin. It is your business and mine to do all the good we can, wherever we may be placed.

Engage in Christ's service. What master is so kind and merciful? He became the Servant of all; and He toiled for our redemption with loving heart and steady purpose. Let the eloquent appeals that come from the Garden of Gethsemane and the hill of Calvary arouse us from our selfishness and sloth, that we may ask Him: **"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"**

*"Your place in the ranks awaits you,
Each one has his part to play,
The past and the future are nothing
In the face of the stern today."*

"While it is called today, hearken to His voice." Obey it, that you may stand before Him as a **"workman that needeth not to be ashamed"** (II Tim. 2:15), and may find in His **"Well done"** (Matt. 25:21) your Heaven.

THE

BIBLE 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.

N.Y. COURT RECOGNIZES OUT-OF-STATE GAY MARRIAGES

(EP News)--A New York appeals court ruled in November that same-sex couples married in other states, but now residing in New York State, should receive government benefits. The 4-3 decision stopped short of declaring that gay marriage should be legalized, but encouraged the Legislature to "deal" with the issue. Gov. David Paterson has been pushing lawmakers to legalize same-sex marriage before the end of the year.

AMENDMENT TO PROTECT MARRIAGE FAILS IN THE HOUSE

(EP News)--The Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act of 2009 is being debated in the U.S. House of Representatives. It would give employment benefits, such as health care, to the same-sex domestic partners of federal employees. An amendment, presented by Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, which failed on a 15-20 vote, would have specifically protected the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Jordan is concerned H.R. 2517 could open the door to lawsuits, which could eventually overturn DOMA. "It's basically an end run to redefine what marriage is and to undermine the Defense of Marriage Act," he said.

NEW JERSEY LAWMAKERS RETHINK GAY MARRIAGE VOTE

(EP News)--The New Jersey Family Policy Council is reporting two gay marriage bills winding their way through the state Legislature may not have the votes to pass before the Jan. 12 deadline. Len Deo, executive director of the Family Policy Council of New Jersey, said the bills appeared to be moving forward until the election on Nov. 3. In a contest watched by pundits across the nation, conservative Republican Chris Christie upset incumbent Democrat Gov. Jon Corzine by six points. "The election had a great impact," Deo said, "in taking the wind out of the sails of the pro-same-sex marriage movement here in New Jersey." Democrat leadership has indicated it would not have the bills heard unless they knew for sure that they had the votes were there. That looks doubtful. "It seems like they're having a very difficult time garnering the votes that they need for passage," said Deo.

D.C. ELECTION BOARD REFUSES TO ALLOW MARRIAGE VOTE

(EP News)--The District of Columbia Board of Ethics and Elections said a measure that would define marriage as the union of

one man and one woman cannot go on the ballot, saying it would conflict with the city's Human Rights Act. The City Council is expected to pass a measure in December that would allow same-sex unions.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS ON THE RISE

Sexually transmitted infections continue to rise, with the number of chlamydia cases setting another record in 2008, government officials said Nov. 16. There were 1.2 million new cases of chlamydia last year, The Associated Press reported, up from 1.1 million cases in 2007. Syphilis also has been increasing, with 13,500 cases of the most contagious form reported in 2008. There are an estimated 19 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections annually. Experts say the most common is human papillomavirus (HPV).

S. C. JUDGE: RELIGIOUS LICENSE PLATE UNCONSTITUTIONAL

(EP News)--Pro-family advocates will take a different approach now that a federal judge has ruled against the state of South Carolina issuing "I Believe" license plates. Judge Cameron M. Currie said the plates were unconstitutional, because they violate the First Amendment ban on government establishment of religion. The liberal group, Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AUSC) was one of the groups that opposed the plates. The Palmetto Family Council has reserved the name "I Believe" with the secretary of state. Nonprofit organizations are allowed to have private license tags issued by the state if the group can guarantee a certain amount will be purchased.

MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OPPOSES TRADITIONAL FAMILY POLICIES

(EP News)--The American Medical Association (AMA) voted to oppose "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the federal policy that allows gay-identified individuals to serve in the armed forces as long as they don't discuss their sexual orientation. The group also made a declaration that state marriage amendments are bad for people's health. The statement says unmarried people are more likely to go without health insurance and those without insurance are at risk for "living sicker and dying younger." Gary Rose, a consultant with the conservative Medical Institute for Sexual Health, said the AMA should stick to medicine. "Taking the position that's political is a little bit outside the boundaries of what

I would consider appropriate," he said. "The most important thing for physicians is that they're dedicated to offering health care. That should be their primary concern."

MAINE CHURCHES THREATENED OVER MARRIAGE SUPPORT

(EP News)--Gay activists in Maine are encouraging people to report churches to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for supporting the effort to restore one man, one woman marriage in the recent election. According to the Maine Marriage Equality Web site, churches should be singled out for IRS investigation and possible revocation of the tax-exempt status. The site provides information on how to file a complaint with the IRS, complaint forms, and address and fax information for the government entity. Ken Graves, senior pastor at Calvary Chapel in Bangor, said they welcome the challenge. "We know what the law is, what we're allowed to do," he said. "We've acted within the context of the law. We've directly consulted the ethics commission here in the state of Maine with regard to our political involvement."

MARRIAGE IS POSITIVE FOR KIDS

(EP News)--Having a married mom and dad has an impact on a child's future, according to data from The Heritage Foundation. The group used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to look at marriage and the role it plays in raising healthy children. Christine Kim, policy analyst for The Heritage Foundation, said "A Portrait of Family and Religion in America," found families with a high level of conflict had an impact on children later in life. "Their marriage may be less functional" Kim said. "There might be more tension, so there is an inter-generational effect that carries through as well."

SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY AMONG ADULTS SPRINGS FROM CHILDHOOD FAITH

(EP News)--The Barna Group asked adults to think back on their upbringing and to describe the frequency of their involvement in Sunday school or religious training. Among those who frequently attended Sunday school or other religious programs as children, 50 percent said they had attended a worship service in the last week, which is slightly higher than the national average and well ahead of those who rarely or never attended children's programs. Among those who frequently attended religious programs as teenagers, 58 percent said they had attended a worship service in the last week. David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, said, "The odds of one sticking with faith over a lifetime are enhanced in a positive direction by spiritual activity under the age of 18."

GAY ACTIVISTS WORK TO SPREAD SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(EP News)--One year ago, the Connecticut Supreme Court legalized same-

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sex marriage. Since then, half of the gay couples who have married in the state have been from other states or other countries, the Hartford Courant reported. Marriage advocates say the influx of out-of-staters indicates Connecticut was part of a national strategy. "This isn't a surprise to me," Peter Wolfgang, executive director of the Family Institute of Connecticut, told the Courant. "We warned all along that they would use this state as a springboard to force it on the rest of the country. This wasn't accomplished by people that cared about Connecticut. This was accomplished by people who had a national strategy. They achieved their aim and then they moved on." Thirty-one states have voted in support of marriage, including Maine, which voted this month to overturn a gay marriage law passed by the Legislature earlier this year.

POLL SHOWS MAJORITY OPPOSE ABORTION IN HEALTH-CARE REFORM

(EP News)--According to a CNN poll, 61 percent of Americans are opposed to government funding of abortion. What's more, 51 percent said they believed payment for abortions should come directly from the women seeking them. Pro-life members in the House were able to get an amendment passed banning federal funding of abortions. Word on Capitol Hill, however, is that the amendment and the House version of health care were dead. Now it's the Senate's turn. Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, has announced he will introduce an amendment with similar pro-life language, but said he was not having much success finding Democrats who would support it. "It will be much more difficult in the Senate," he told Politics Daily. "There are so few (Democrats) you can really turn to." Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid promised there would be no abortion coverage in his health care bill.

CONTROVERSIAL JUDICIAL NOMINEE CONFIRMED

(EP News)--By a 59-39 vote, the U.S. Senate confirmed David Hamilton to sit on the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals. President Obama nominated him in March, but Hamilton's extreme views delayed the confirmation. Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., expressed his concerns on the floor of the Senate. "Mr. Hamilton was a board member and vice president of the ACLU chapter of Indiana," he said. Sessions was also troubled over Hamilton's ruling that the Indiana Legislature could not open its sessions with prayer. Hamilton also struck down a sex-offender registry, saying it violated the offenders' right to privacy. Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch, said this could lead the administration to bring more extreme nominees. "If they think they can push judges like this through with little or no debate," he said, "they're going to have the incentive to push hard on this."

"But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn" (Pro. 29:2).

PARENTS MATTER IN TEENS' DECISIONS ABOUT SEX

(EP News)--Multiple measures of parental involvement and engagement are associated with teenagers' decision to delay sex. That's according to a recent brief published by Child Trends, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center. Child Trends analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth to explore how parenting practices are associated with the probability of early sexual experiences. The researchers found that positive parent-adolescent relationships, high parental awareness and monitoring, and family dinner routines all played a role in delaying sex. The researchers cited two recent nationally representative polls of 12- to 19-year-olds, in which nearly half reported their parents had the most influence on their decisions about sex.

BIOLOGICAL MOTHER ORDERED TO GIVE UP CHILD

(EP News)--Superior Judge William Cohen ruled in November that Lisa Miller, a former lesbian who is now a Christian, must hand her daughter, Isabelle, over to her former partner, Janet Jenkins by Jan. 1. Miller conceived Isabella through artificial insemination while she was in a civil union with Jenkins. About a year later, Miller left homosexuality. Jenkins sued for custody, even though she has no biological tie to the child. Historically, courts have sided with the biological mother in custody battles, and Staver said the judge has never questioned Miller's fitness as a parent. "How can a third party, a stranger," he asked, "interfere with the parental rights of a biological parent when that parent is fit?"



The Coming of Caesar

By Dr. Mark W. Hendrickson

(EP News)--We have a problem. This could be "the big one"—bigger than coping with the Ahmadinejads, Kims, and Chavezes of the world and bigger than our current economic woes. Our republic, our society, may be heading for a crackup. We are bankrupt, both financially and politically.

The source of the problem is democracy. Decades of so-called "progressive" thought have led us to abandon the limited-government, constitutional republic established by our founding fathers. In the name of putting more power into the hands of "the people," the government has arrogated sweeping powers.

There is a famous passage (possibly cobbled together from several separate statements and authors) that explains democracy's fatal flaw, the inherently self-destructive element that caused our

founding fathers to distrust democracy (google "James Madison on democracy" for more): "A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship."

Crude, majoritarian democracy (as in, "there are more of us than there are of you, so we're going to redistribute your wealth") inevitably undermines the harmony of society. A free market, as competitive as it is, is based on peaceful, voluntary cooperation. When commerce is free and unfettered by government interference, both sides to a transaction normally gain, thereby promoting social harmony.

Democracy, by contrast, engenders social conflict. Money changes hands by force of the taxman and the threat of imprisonment, not voluntarily. Democracy pits citizens against each other in a sordid squabble whereby many strive to have the state confer benefits seized from their fellow citizens.

Today, Washington redistributes trillions of dollars annually, so the capital is swarmed by battalions of lobbyists, representing myriad special interests, each trying to secure more political rent from government than what government takes from them. As the late, great economist Hans Sennholz described it, the democratic "transfer society" resembles the absurd spectacle of a circle of people, each trying to pick his neighbor's pocket. How can there be social harmony when everyone is trying to rip off someone else?

This process of using government to extract wealth from other citizens (dubbed "legal plunder" by the 19th-century French economist Frederic Bastiat in his brilliant essay, "The Law") has reached the point where Uncle Sam is essentially bankrupt. With government spending and deficits soaring under the present administration, the day of reckoning approaches. If foreigners should decide to cut their losses and balk at financing any more of our debt, either interest rates will soar, collapsing the economy, or the Fed will monetize all the debt, collapsing the dollar and the economy.

Can that day of cataclysm be postponed? Perhaps the wealth-redistribution system can be kept on life support a while longer, if government can confiscate a much larger share of the middle class' wealth (yes, the middle class, because there aren't enough rich people to finance all of Uncle Sam's promises) or

by dramatically slashing benefits.

When that momentous day arrives, there will be a lot of angry Americans. One might say that the so-called "social contract" will be broken, but the problem is, there isn't just one such "contract." There are two, and they are fundamentally and irreconcilably opposed to each other.

One "contract" is the government's long-standing promise to support those in need. Many Americans have been taught to believe that they are entitled to a share of other people's property, even if they have contributed nothing of value to society themselves and have made poor choices. The other social "contract" is the traditional implicit promise of America: namely, that if you work hard, you are entitled to the fruits of your labor.

When a financial crackup occurs, those who have been taught to depend on government will demand continued government benefits. If government fails to provide them, those demands could turn violent. On the other hand, if government moves to confiscate a significant chunk of whatever wealth remains in the hands of an already-hurting middle class, then millions of peaceful, law-abiding, hard-working Americans may finally reach the breaking point and rebel, as our forebears did in the 1770s, against a government viewed as abusive and oppressive.

How bad could it get? If the social order breaks down, civil unrest could disrupt markets and shortages of essential goods could occur. The resulting chaos could trigger martial law. A strong leader—a Caesar—could institute some sort of command order. Millions would resent it, but it would be accepted, because the alternative—civil conflict, chronic disorder, and impending starvation—would be intolerable. In such a calamity, Caesar would be the lesser of two evils. The American Republic and Constitution would join earlier democracies in the ashbin of history.

God help us.



The Race and the Goal

By Alexander MacLaren

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize" (Phil. 3:13-14).

This buoyant energy and onward looking are marvelous in "Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ." Forgetfulness of the past and eager anticipation for the future are, we sometimes think, the child's prerogatives. They may be ignoble and puerile, or they may be worthy and great. All depends on the future to which we look. If it be

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the creation of our fancies, we are babies for trusting it. If it be, as Paul's was, the revelation of God's purposes, we cannot do a wiser thing than look.

The Apostle here is letting us see the secret of his own life, and telling us what made him the sort of Christian that he was. He counsels wise obliviousness, wise anticipation, strenuous concentration; and field of life. Christianity is the perfection of common sense. Men become mature Christians by no other means than those by which they become good artisans, ripe scholars, or the like. But the misery is that, though people know well enough that they cannot be good carpenters, or doctors, or fiddlers without certain habits and practices, they seem to fancy that they can be good Christians without them.

So the words of my text may suggest appropriate thoughts on this first Sunday of a new year. Let us listen, then, to Paul telling us how he came to be the sort of Christian man he was.

I. First, then, I would say, make God's aim your aim.

Paul distinguishes here between the "mark" and the "prize." He aims at the one for the sake of the other. The one is the object of effort; the other is the sure result of successful effort. If I may so say, the crown hangs on the winning post; and he who touches the goal clutches the garland.

Then, mark that he regards the aim towards which he strains as being the aim which Christ had in view in his conversion. For he says in the preceding context, "I labour if that I may lay hold of that for which also I have been laid hold of by Jesus Christ." In the words that follow the text he speaks of the prize as being the result and purpose of the high calling of God "in Christ Jesus." So then he took God's purpose in calling, and Christ's purpose in redeeming him, as being his great object in life. God's aims and Paul's were identical.

What, then, is the aim of God in all that He has done for us? The production is us of God-like and God-pleasing character. For this suns rise and set; for this seasons and times come and go; for this sorrows and joys are experienced; for this hopes and fears and loves are kindled. For this all the disciple of life is set in motion. For this we were created; for this we have been redeemed. For this Jesus Christ lived and suffered and died. For this God's Spirit is poured out upon the world. All else is scaffolding; this is the building which it contemplates, and when the building is reared the scaffolding may be cleared away. God means to make us like Himself, and so pleasing to Himself, and has no other end in all the varieties of His gifts and bestowments but only this, the

production of character.

Such is the aim that we should set before us. The acceptance of that aim as ours will give nobleness and blessedness to our lives, as nothing else will. How different all our estimates of the meaning and true nature of events would be, if we kept clearly before us that their intention was not merely to make us blessed and glad, or to make us sorrowful, but that, through the blessedness, through the sorrow, through the gift, through the withdrawal, through all the variety of dealings, the intention was one and the same, to mould us to the likeness of our Lord and Saviour! There would be fewer mysteries in our lives, we should seldomer have to stand in astonishment, in vain regret, in miserable and weakening retrospect of vanished gifts, and saying to ourselves, "Why has this darkness stooped upon my path?" if we looked beyond the darkness and the light, to that for which both were sent. Some plants require frost to bring out their savour, and men need sorrow to test and to produce their highest qualities. There would be fewer knots in the thread of our lives, and fewer mysteries in our experience, if we made God's aim ours, and strove through all variations of condition to realize it.

How different all our estimate of nearer object and aims would be, if once we clearly recognized what we are here for! The prostitution of powers to obviously unworthy aims and ends is the saddest thing in humanity. It is like elephants being set to pick up pins; it is like the lightning being harnessed to carry all the gossip and filth of one capital of the world to prurient readers in another. Men take these great powers which God has given them, and use them to make money, to cultivate their intellects, to secure the gratification of earthly desires, to make a home for themselves here amidst the illusions of time; and all the while the great aim, which ought to stand out clear and supreme, is forgotten by them.

There is nothing that needs more careful examination by us than our accepted schemes of life for ourselves. The roots of our errors mostly lie in these beliefs that we take to be axioms and never examine into. Let us begin this new year by an honest dealing with ourselves, asking ourselves this question, "What am I living for?" And if the answer, first of all, be, as, of course, it will be--the accomplishment of nearer and necessary aims, such as the conduct of our business, the cultivating of our understandings, the love and peace of our homes, then let us press the investigation a little further, and say, What then? Suppose I make a fortune, what then? Suppose I get the position I am striving for, what then? Suppose I cultivate my understanding and win the knowledge that I am nobly striving after, what then? Let us not cease to ask the question, until we can say,

"Thy aim, O Lord, is my aim, and I press toward the mark," the only mark which will make life noble, elastic, stable, and blessed, that I "may be found in Christ, not having mine own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith." For this we have all been made, guided, redeemed. If we carry this treasure out of life we shall carry all that is worth carrying. If we fail in this we fail altogether, whatever be our so-called success. There is one mark, one only, and every arrow that does not hit that target is wasted and spent in vain.

II. Secondly, let me say, concentrate all effort on this one aim.

"**This one thing I do,**" says the Apostle, "**I press toward the mark.**" That aim is the one which God has in view in all circumstances and arrangements. Therefore, obviously, it is one which may be pursued in all of these, and may be sought whatsoever we are doing. All occupations, except only sin, are consistent with this highest aim. It needs not that we should seek any remote or cloistered form of life, nor shear off any legitimate and common interests, but in them all we may be seeking for the one thing, the moulding of our characters into the shapes that are pleasing to Him. "**One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life**"; wherever the outward days of my life may be passed. Whatever we are doing, in business, in shop, at a study table, in the kitchen, in the nursery, by the road, in the house, we may still have the supreme aim in view, that from all our work there may come growth in character and in likeness to Jesus Christ.

Only, to keep this supreme aim clear, there will be required far more frequent and resolute effort for what the old mystics used to call "recollection" than we are accustomed to put forth. It is hard, amidst the din of business, and whilst yielding to other lower, legitimate impulses and motives, to set this supreme one high above them all. But it is possible, if only we will do two things, keep ourselves close to God, and be prepared to surrender much, laying our own wills, our own fancies, purposes, eager hopes and plans in His hands, and asking Him to help us, that we may never lose sight of the harbour light, because of any tossing waves that rise between us and it, nor may ever be so swallowed up in ends, which are only means after all, as to lose sight of the only end which is an end in itself. But for the attainment of this aim in any measure, the concentration of all our powers upon it is absolutely needful. If you want to bore a hole you take a sharp point; You can do nothing with a blunt one. Every flight of wild ducks in the sky will tell you the form that is most likely to secure the maximum of motion with the minimum of effort. The wedge is that which pierces through all the loosely-compacted textures against which it is

pressed. Roman strategy forced the way of the legion through loose-ordered ranks of barbarian foes by arraying it in that wedge-like form. So we, if we are to advance, must gather ourselves together and put a point upon our lives by compaction and concentration of effort and energy on the one purpose. The conquering word is, "**This one thing I do.**" The difference between the amateur and the artist is that the one pursues an art by spurts, as a paragon---a thing that is done in the intervals of other occupations---and that the other makes it his life's business. There are a great many amateur Christians amongst us, who pursue the Christian life by fits and starts. If you want to be a Christian after God's pattern---and unless you are you are scarcely a Christian at all---you have to make it your business, to give the same attention, the same concentration, the same unwavering energy to it, which you do to your trade. The man of one book, the man of one idea, the man of one aim is the formidable and the successful man. People will call you a fanatic; never mind. Better be a fanatic and get what you aim at, which is the highest thing, than be so broad that, like a steam spreading itself out over miles of mud, there is no scour in it anywhere, no current, and therefore stagnation and death. Gather yourselves together, and, amidst all side issues and nearer aims, keep this in view as the aim to which all are to be subservient---that, "whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, I may do all to the glory of God." Let sorrow and joy, trade and profession, study and business, house and wife and children and all home joys, be the means by which you may become like the Master who has died for this end, that we may become partakers of His holiness.

III. Pursue this end with a wise forgetfulness.

"Forgetting the things that are behind." The art of forgetting has much to do with the blessedness and power of every life. Of course, when the Apostle says "Forgetting the things that are behind," he is thinking of the runner, who has no time to cast his eye over his shoulder to mark the steps already trod. He does not mean, of course, to tell us that we are so to cultivate obliviousness as to let God's mercies to us "life, forgotten in unthankfulness, or without praises die." Nor does he mean to tell us that we are to deny ourselves the solace of remembering the mercies which may, perhaps, have gone from us. Memory may be like the calm radiance that fills the western sky from a sun that has set, sad and yet sweet, melancholy and lovely. But he means that we should so forget as, by the oblivion, to strengthen our concentration.

So I would say, let us remember, and yet forget, our past failures and faults. Let us remember them in order that the remembrance may cultivate in us a wise

♦ (Continued on page 258)

The Race and the Goal

(Continued from page 257) ♦

chastening of our self-confidence. Let us remember where we were foiled, in order that we may be the more careful of that place hereafter. If we know that upon any road we fell into ambushes, "not once nor twice," like the old king of Israel, we should guard ourselves against passing by that road again. He, who has not learned, by the memory of his past failures, humility and wise government of his life, and wise avoidance of places where he is weak, is an incurable fool.

But let us forget our failures, in so far as these might paralyze our hopes, or make us fancy that future success is impossible where past failures frown. Ebenezer was a field of defeat before it rang with the hymns of victory. And there is no place in your past life where you have been shamefully baffled and beaten, but there, and in that, you may yet be victorious. Never let the past limit your hopes of the possibilities; nor your confidence in the certainties and victories, of the future. And if ever you are tempted to say to yourselves, "I have tried it so often, and so often failed, that it is no use trying any more; I am beaten and I throw up the sponge," remember Paul's wise exhortation, and "forgetting the things that are behind. . . press toward the mark."

In like manner I would say, remember and yet forget past successes and achievements. Remember them for thankfulness, remember them for hope, remember them for counsel and instruction, but forget them when they tend, as all that we accomplish does tend, to make us fancy that little more remains to be done; and forget them when they tend, as all that we accomplish ever does tend, to make us think that such and such things are our line, and of other virtues and graces and achievements of culture and of character, that these are not our line, and not to be won by us.

"Our line!" Astronomers take a thin thread from a spider's web and stretch it across their object-glasses to measure stellar magnitudes. Just as in the spider's line in comparison with the whole shining surface of the sun across which it is stretched, so is what we have already attained to the boundless might and glory of that to which we may come. Nothing short of the full measure of the likeness of Jesus Christ is the measure of our possibilities.

There is a mannerism in Christian life, as there is in everything else, which is to be avoided, if we would grow into perfection. There was a great artist in a past century who never could paint a picture without a brown tree in the foreground. We have all our "brown trees," which we think we can do well, and these limit our ambition to secure

other gifts which God is ready to bestow upon us. So, "forget the things that are behind." Cultivate a wise obliviousness of past sorrows, past joys, past failures, past gifts, past achievements, in so far as these might limit the audacity of your hopes and the energy of your efforts.

IV. So, lastly, pursue the aim with a wise, eager reaching forward.

The Apostle employs a graphic word here, which is only very partially expressed by that "reaching forth." It contains a condensed picture which it is scarcely possible to put into any one expression. "Reaching out over" is the full though clumsy rendering of the word; and it gives us the picture of the runner with his whole body thrown forward, his hand extended, and his eye reaching even further than his hand, in eager anticipation of the mark and the prize. So we are to live, with continual reaching out of confidence, clear recognition, and eager desire to make the unattained our own.

What is that which gives an element of nobleness to the lives of great idealists, whether they be poets, artists, students, thinkers, or what not? Mainly this, that they see the unattained burning ever so clearly before them that all the attained seems as nothing in their eyes. And so life is saved from commonplace, is happily stung into fresh effort, is redeemed from flagging, monotony, and weariness.

The measure of our attainments may be fairly estimated by the extent to which the unattained is clear in our sight. A man down in the valley sees the nearer shoulder of the hill, and he thinks it the top. Reaching the shoulder he sees all the heights that lie beyond rising above him. Endeavour is better than success. It is more to see the Apline heights yet unscaled than it is to have risen so far as we have done. They who thus have a boundless future before them have an endless source of inspiration, of energy, of buoyancy granted to them.

No man has such an absolutely boundless vision of the future which may be his, as we have if we are Christian people, as we ought to be. Only we can thus look forward. For all others a blank wall stretches at the end of life, against which hopes, when they strike, fall back stunned and dead. But for us the wall may be overleaped, and, living by the energy of a boundless hope, we, and only we, can lay ourselves down to die, and say then, "Reaching forth unto the things that are before."


So, dear friends, make God's aim your aim; concentrate your life's efforts upon it; pursue it with a wise forgetfulness; pursue it with an eager confidence of anticipation that shall not be put to shame. Remember that God reaches His aim for you by giving to you Jesus Christ, and that you can only reach it by accepting the Christ Who is given, and being found in Him. Then the years will

take away nothing from us which it is not gain to lose. They will neither weaken our energy nor flatten our hopes nor dim our confidence, and at the last we shall reach the mark, and, as we touch it, we shall find dropping on our surprised and humble heads the crown of life which they receive who have so run, not as uncertainly, but doing this one thing, pressing towards the mark for the prize.



Mini-Edition
by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist
College, Laurel, Mississippi
www.miniedition.net



The First Non Black African-American President

Truth is not hard to find and is available for those who dare to seek and accept it. The opponents of truth use any and all means to suppress and change truth. Concerning the subject of this writing, Marxists, and liberals will play the race card and accuse me of racism, since these statements of truth are concerning their untouchable golden child, Barack Hussein Obama. As I have stated in the past, remarks about race are not racist. I could care less about race concerning this president. I am concerned about his Marxist policies. I do, however, believe race was used in an appeal to vote for him and "make history" based on his racial background. Concerning President Barack Hussein Obama I have two defining statements of truth:

First, Barack Obama is not the first Black American president. Some voted for him to help "make history" by electing the first Black president and actually think he is the first Black president. This "fact" has been shouted so much that no one questions it and if you speak to the contrary, people wonder which planet you are from. Why does everyone think he is Black? Is it because he has certain physical characteristics? Is it because his wife is Black? Is it because he attended a Black church in Illinois? Or is it because one of his parents was Black?

And the answer is: because one of his parents was Black. Well, here is a cold, hard fact: since his father was Black and his mother was White, then Obama is bi-racial, and neither Black nor White. Bi-racial means, according to Websters: [biracial-*bi-ra-cial*, adjective, consisting of or involving two races, esp. blacks and whites. Websters New World Dictionary, Copyright © 2009 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio.] In other words, he is not the first Black president, he is the first bi-racial president. Period. End

of discussion. It's not up for debate. His father was Black, his mother was White, therefore he is neither Black or White, but both. Liberals cannot stand any redefining of Obama that does not fit their agenda, especially when pertaining to race, and they will immediately call me racist for speaking the truth. But truth is truth. Shoot the messenger if you will, but the truth remains. He is the first bi-racial president.

If anyone wants to push the issue, the case could be made that he is actually White. He was reared primarily by his White mother and later his White grandmother and exposed more to White culture. And if you follow the ancient Semitic tradition, ethnicity is passed on from the mother, not the father. This is why young Timothy, student of the Apostle Paul, was considered to be Jewish and not a Gentile. His father was a gentile Greek, but his mother was Jewish, therefore, he was Jewish. This is also why the "seed of the woman" is referred to in Genesis 3, concerning the offspring of Adam and Eve. Here, the woman was referred to as having seed and not the man.

Second, Barack Obama just may be the first African-American president. Since there is no long form birth certificate from Hawaii available for inspection, he could have been born anywhere. He could have been born in Hawaii and he just could have been born in Washington state and he could have just as likely been born in Kenya, as some maintain. The bottom line: we don't know. We know what he has said and what others have said, but we actually know nothing that can be documented. I really hope that he was born in Hawaii, in order to avoid a constitutional crisis (as if anyone cares about the constitution anymore), but I do not KNOW that he was born in Hawaii. And his birthplace is an important issue. If he was born in Kenya, then we do have the first African-American president, since Kenya is on the continent of Africa. Of course, then he would be a usurper and disqualified from the office, and therefore cease being the first African-American president. Conclusion: it is not possible to have a real African-Born-American president or anyone foreign born, for that matter. Looks like foreigners just can't win..... the presidency that is.....or can they?

Here's a question. If a white person born in South Africa, which is definitely on the continent of Africa, moves to the US and becomes a citizen, what is their classification? Do they then become an American or an African-American? Again, the cold, hard answer: they are African-American, since they are originally from Africa, regardless of color. Just something to think about.



GLEANINGS



WHEN THOU COMEST BRING THE BOOKS

On this the great Spurgeon commented:

Even an Apostle must read!

He is inspired, and yet he wants books!

He has had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books!

He had been caught up to the third heaven, and heard things which it is unlawful for man to utter, and yet he wants books!

He had written the major portion of the New Testament, and yet he wants books!

The man who never reads will never be read. He who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men's brains proves that he has no brains of his own.

Thus strongly did Spurgeon write. -- Selected (News & Truths).

THE ODD SPARROW NOT FORGOTTEN

A little Spanish boy in Vigo, who became a devout Christian, was asked what was used to give him a knowledge of the Saviour.

"It was all because of the odd sparrow," the boy replied.

"I do not understand, what odd sparrow?"

"Well, sir, a gentleman gave me a Testament, where I read, '**are not two sparrows sold for a farthing,**' and again in Luke, '**are not five sparrows sold for two farthings,**' and I said to myself that our Lord Jesus Christ knew well our custom of selling birds.

"As you know, sir, we trap the birds and get one chico for two, but for two chicos we throw in an extra sparrow. That extra sparrow is only a make-weight and of no account at all.

"So I thought to myself, that I am so insignificant, so poor, and so small that no one would think of counting me. I am like the fifth sparrow. And yet the Lord Jesus Christ says, 'Not one is forgotten before God.'

"I have never heard anything like it, sir. No one but the Lord would ever have thought of not forgetting little me."--- (Faithful Words, 1918).

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS' PRAYER

Professor William Lyons Phelps, of Yale, is authority for the statement that President John Quincy Adams

knelt down by his bedside in the White house every night of his term of office, as was the general practice of his life, and repeated the prayer: "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray, Thee, Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take." However imperfect one may feel this prayer is for the expression of a grown man, still to a God Who loves us as children, it might not have been so ill-timed or inopportune as the worldly wise suppose. Complexity is not a mark of spiritual maturity. This was the meaning of our Lord when He took the little child and set him in the midst of His disciples. As we grow in spiritual stature we must gradually unlearn so much, until we come to realize with Margaret Ogilby that "so few things matter." Life at its best, and this is especially true of the life in Christ, is a simple life, a life of abounding faith, abounding hope and abounding love. (News & Truths, 1930).

THAT DOUBTFUL THOUGHT

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25).

The very fact that a doubt is tolerated is convincing evidence of Satan's presence and influence in the formation and processes of thought. It is evidence that Satan has found access to our thinking plant and has begun to dictate the character of our thinking. The character of the questioning thought reveals the extent to which Satan has succeeded in corrupting our thinking. Satan is the author of all doubts. Any doubt concerning the wisdom, integrity and justice of the words of the Son of God is the work of Satan---the father of lies (John 8:48; II Cor. 11:3).

Let the person, who tolerates a doubting thought about the Word of God know that Satan is trying, by these very questioning thoughts, to rob them of the richest happiest experience in the world---an inspiring fellowship with Jesus. In this way Satan is seeking to disqualify, the disciple of Jesus, for a service acceptable to God and effective for lost souls by disturbing their fellowship with Jesus. Through faith alone can this fellowship with the Lord Jesus be maintained, and this fellowship in itself is the preparation in strength, wisdom and courage essential to the winning of lost souls.

There can not be peace, power, and victory except as we abide in Jesus (John 15:4). Christ dwells richly in our hearts by faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6; John 1:7; 2:4-5; 3:20-22). Our hope must rest in His inerrant Word (II Peter 1:19-21). ---G. E. Kennedy (News & Truths, 1928).

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Few churches are well filled at the morning worship on the Lord's Day. Compared to enrolled membership, the number present is small. Visitors and strangers fill some exceptional churches which have fine preachers. This is the general condition with some outstanding exceptions, in almost every region. And the second service has declined to numbers steadily for many years, until a mere handful are present in many churches.

Let us note some possible causes:

(1) Many rivals to the church which did not exist a generation ago.

(2) About twenty-five years ago, Christian parents began to be indifferent to regularity in attendance, and now their children go not at all. We are reaping what was sown earlier.

(3) Segregation into groups. In some churches a half dozen groups meet, but few attend the church services.

(4) The spirit of "onceness." We mean the idea so widely prevalent that to be in church one hour a week is fulfilling all obligations, and satisfying every spiritual need. We know elders and missionary presidents who have no more thought of entering the church door more than once a week than they do of taking a trip to the moon. They may sustain financially; but witness-bearing by presence is not in their list of duties.

These are some of the causes working among Christians. Of course a multitude of other reasons could be given to explain why the people of the world do not attend. The cure? Now that is a question hard to answer. Let us mention some things that might help.

(1) Sound gospel preaching. We know of some great churches filled twice on the Lord's day; week after week, because the preacher is able and willing to put forth all effort to proclaim the whole counsel of God. We have known preachers in small churches and places who had steadily increasing audiences by preaching the gospel as it is in Jesus Christ in fullness and after diligent study.

(2) Unfailing regularity. Church open when it ought to be open, with few outsiders to "present causes" or be guest preachers. No one is more acceptable to any congregation than the pastor whom they know, love and trust.

(3) Diligent pastoral work. Never mind the conferences and plans and organizations. Stay on your field, Bro. Pastor.

(4) Pray and get others to pray. The best way to "compel them to come, that the house may be full," is to pray constantly for individuals by name. (News & Truths, 1931).



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 11-1-2009 to 11-30-2009

Beginning Balance \$11,422.27

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN 50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Everson, WA 800.00
..... 1,175.00
TOTAL 12,597.27

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 710.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 710.00
..... \$11,887.27
Interest + .96
..... 11,888.23
Less Corbin, KY des. -966.12
ENDING BALANCE \$10,922.11

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance \$1,126.12

RECEIPTS:

..... 1,126.12
Radio Time (WCTT) 160.00
ENDING BALANCE \$966.12

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 11-1-2009 to 11-30-2009

Beginning Balance \$2,860.71

RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX 25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL 27.51
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 1,036.48
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN 150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX 100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID 100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 300.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV 50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR 25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME 20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL 50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK 35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 200.00
Janet Stevens, Marion, KY 10.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA 100.00
Leonard Meador, Scott Depot, WV 65.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM 100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 400.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN 20.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN 100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA 25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS 50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL 100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C. Silsbee, TX 30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC 100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 80.00
Sub Total \$3,708.99
TOTAL \$6,569.70

EXPENDITURES:

Printing 581.71
Postage 704.99
Wages 2,300.00
Wages* 777.00
FICA 203.56
Total Expenditures 4,567.26
ENDING BALANCE \$2,002.44

*Extra wages of \$777 were for extra help on several projects we are working on. These funds reimbursed by Berea Baptist Church.

Needed - Faithful Men to Preach Eternal Truth

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

PAUL TOLD TIMOTHY TO COMMIT THE TRUTH TO FAITHFUL MEN - FAITHFUL PREACHERS ARE STILL NEEDED

"What things thou didst hear from me through many witnesses—commit these things to faithful men who will be fit also to teach others" (II Timothy 2:2, independent translation).

Questions of truth and righteousness are not decided by majority vote. On the contrary, the majority of the human race have generally preferred error to truth and sin to righteousness. **"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"** (Matt. 7:13, 14). Christians are to be witnesses of Christ exactly because the world does not know Him.

Moreover, among God's own people there has always been a need for leaders and teachers with a special calling and responsibility to instruct and exhort His people in His way. And so we read that to His New Testament institution, His church, **"He gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelist; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"** (Eph. 4:11,12).

THREE THINGS NEEDED

Our text suggests three things that are needed in the New Testament ministry: (1) the true message, (2) faithful men, and (3) fitness to teach others.

Can there be any doubt that these things are still needed today, and that most of our professed Christian ministry, yea, most of our Baptist ministry, is failing to provide them?

So it was even in Paul's lifetime: **"All they which are in Asia be turned away from me"** (II Tim. 1:15). **"For I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"** (Philip. 2:20,21). **"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works"** (II Cor. 11:14,15).

THE TRUE MESSAGE

"What things thou didst hear from me through many witnesses" - Paul was concerned that these truths should be preserved for future generations. Thus he had already admonished Timothy:

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

Too many would be preachers have a false message, or no distinct message at all. Baptist churches are being overrun and their testimony destroyed by a flood of infidels masquerading as ministers poured out of modernistic colleges and seminaries—infidel preachers who deny the Bible, serve self instead of Christ, and stand for nothing but the great Diana of denominationalism.

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle" (I Cor. 14:8)? No wonder that ordinary Christians are confused and powerless, when their spiritual leaders have come to terms with Satan and daily deny the deity and lordship of Christ! What can an ordinary Baptist church member do, when seminaries that ought to uphold his faith consort with enemies of the cross of Christ, rejecting and ridiculing the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and the perpetuity of his church?

The gospel that we have to preach is an **"everlasting gospel"** (Rev. 14:6). It is not subject to change to suit the whims and fancies of men. **"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"** (Gal. 1:8).

Let Satan's ministers parade their philosophies and theologies of human production under the cloak of "liberal Christianity" true ministers of Jesus Christ can have no other message than that which Paul preached—the faith



once for all delivered to the saints.

Men are prone to evaluate a sermon according to what they think of the personality of the preacher, but this is just everyday human depravity. It is not the messenger, but the message from God, that is the important thing. **"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"** (II Cor. 4:7). Most supposedly Christian schools have so devoted themselves to polishing up the vessels that they have lost much of the treasure of divine truth.

If a man lacks knowledge, understanding, and wholehearted acceptance of this Word, he has no business trying to preach at all.

FAITHFUL MEN

The truths of God's Word which Paul preached were to be committed to **"faithful men."** It is not enough for a preacher to know what the Bible teaches; he must himself be faithful to the Book and to its Author.

Surely it is obvious that no honest man should undertake to represent or lead in a cause in which he does not believe himself. So-called Christian ministers who do not believe that Christ was Who and What He claimed to be ought, in common honesty, to stop calling themselves Christians.

Furthermore, wisdom, eloquence, courage, tact, strong personality—all these may be admirable qualities for a preacher, but they are not of chief importance. **"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."** (I Cor. 1:26.)

In the parable of the talents, the servant with only two talents received the same words of commendation as the servant with five talents, because he was faithful in what was out in his hands: **"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"** (Matt. 25:23).

Whether a preacher is "big" or "little" in the sight of the world, whether he is "successful" or not, whether he becomes famous or remains a "nobody"—these

things are trifled compared to the all important question: is he faithful to Christ and to His Word?

FIT TO TEACH

A man may know the truth and be faithful to the truth and yet be a poor teacher of the truth. Not all good students are good teachers. Sad to say, there are Baptist preachers who believe and stand for the truth and yet fail to indoctrinate their churches. This is why so many churches are so easily led into compromise and heresy. Members so such a church were accustomed of Christ without much understanding on their part, and now they are following a minister of Satan, still not understanding where they are being led.

We need preachers who are **"apt to teach"** (II Tim. 2:24). The best teacher, the best preacher, on the merely human level, is the one that makes himself unnecessary to his disciples by making them true disciples of Christ, so that they come to learn of the Master Teacher Himself.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, WA is in need of a pastor.

The church is small, and the new Pastor will need support from sister churches.

There is a faithful nucleus. They have a building in town. They are grounded in Sovereign Grace Landmark truths and are good people who love the Lord. Any brethren who may be interested please contact Gerard Griesen - 360-388-8697 or write to: Victory Baptist Church 1617 N.W. West St. Chehalis, WA 98532

The Grace Baptist Church in Fredericktown, OH is currently seeking a pastor, and also guest speakers.

Our current services: Sunday school at 10:00 am, Worship service at 11:00 followed by lunch and an afternoon service at 1:00 pm. Wednesdays at 7:00 pm.

Any brethren that may be interested in filling in to help our ministry can contact Bro. Tory Smith at (614) 205-0729 or by email toremup@columbus.rr.com.

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

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

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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