

The Berea Baptist Banner

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Psalms 60:4)

Of Sanctification

By John Gill

(1697 - 1771)

The foundation of "sanctification" is laid in "regeneration"; as it is a holy principle, it is first formed in that; the new creature, or new man, is created in righteousness and true holiness; and it appears in "effectual calling", which is an "holy calling"; and is to be seen in conversion, which is a turning of men "from their iniquities": and that holiness which is begun in regeneration, and is manifest in effectual calling and conversion, is carried on in sanctification, which is a gradual and progressive work, and issues and is finished in glorification; so that it may, with propriety, be distinguished from regeneration, effectual calling, and conversion, and be separately treated of.



John Gill

There is a sanctification which is more peculiarly ascribed to God the Father; and which is no other than his eternal election of men to it: under the law, persons and things separated and devoted to holy uses, are said to be "sanctified"; hence those who are set apart by God for his use and service, and are chosen by him to holiness here and

hereafter, are said **"to be sanctified by God the Father"** (Jude 1:1).

There is a sanctification also that is more peculiar to Christ the Son of God; not only as he is the representative of his people, and is "holiness to the Lord" for them; which the high priest had upon his forehead, who was a type of him, and the

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The Methods of Missions

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941-2002)

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:46-48).

There is no church so small or so poor



Milburn Cockrell

that it is exempt from the worldwide com-mission that Jesus gave His church. The Lord was not addressing a large church with a nice edifice when He gave these challenging words. He was speaking to the church at Jerusalem which consisted of one hundred and twenty members. It was this local church that Christ charged with the business of preaching the gospel to all nations.

Such a vast scope indicates some methods of carrying out this work. Jesus Christ did not leave us at liberty to select our own plans of doing missionary work. In the practice of the New Testament churches, He has preserved some sane, safe, workable methods of getting out the gospel. Some are so afraid of using the wrong method that they commit the gravest sin by doing nothing. No method is as unscriptural as the one which does not carry out the Great Commission. The darkest scene imaginable is a church which has ceased to do anything for missions. Icabod should be written over

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Studies in Esther 4:9-17

By Jeff Short

Mantachie, Mississippi

In the third chapter of Esther, we read how Haman made his decree for the destruction of the Jewish people. He appealed to the baser instincts of Ahasuerus and gained his consent. Then he hastened his decree throughout the entire kingdom, so everyone would know what Haman had done and what great power he must be possessed of to issue such a law. There would have been eleven months time between the issuing of the decree and the execution of it.

In the beginning of chapter four, Mordecai gained knowledge of Haman's plot to kill the Jews and he found out about the money Haman was to give to



Jeff Short

the king's treasury. **I m m e d i a t e l y, "Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried a loud and bitter cry"**

(Est. 4:1). Mordecai was greatly distressed, mourning, and grieving over this proclamation. Esther found out about Mordecai's grief and sent him a change of clothes to cheer him up. However, he would not be

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Charity Never Faileth

By John Warburton

(1776-1857)

(Preached at Providence Chapel, Eden Street, London on Monday evening, April 25th, 1853).

"Charity never faileth" (I Cor. 13:8).

There is a very great talk about charity in the present day; and there is scarcely a professor of religion, but who is exalting charity, recommending charity, talking of acts of charity. But, it appears to me that the "charity" in the text is not that charity which natural men speak of, and which arises from their own doings; for I think the apostle completely cuts off such an idea as that. He says, **"Though I**



John Warburton

am a man may have all words and tongues, all gifts and abilities, and everything it is possible to enumerate; but if he has not charity he is but **"sounding brass,**

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and have not charity, I am become a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Then

Redeeming the Time

By Paul Stepp

Indore, West Virginia

Our text today is Eph. 5:14-16: **"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."** These verses speak of one that has been saved, **"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead"** and then is instructed to **"walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time..."** These verses are very applicable in our time. I am sure that it was applicable in the time of the apostle



Paul Stepp

Paul, and I am sure that it has been applicable in the time of every generation since the apostle Paul until now.

But, aren't these verses seemingly more applicable to us today than to any other of the preceding generations? Wouldn't you and I agree that perhaps this is the time in which the

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Of Sanctification

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representative of Israel; and as he has the whole stock of grace and holiness in his hands, which is communicated to the saints as is necessary; and as the holiness of his human nature, is, with his active and passive obedience, imputed to their justification, and so makes a part of that; hence he is said to be made to them "**sanctification**" (1 Cor. 1:30), but as the expiation of their sins is made by his blood and sacrifice; this is called a sanctification of them; "**Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his blood, suffered without the gate**" (Heb. 13:12).

But there is another sanctification, which is more peculiar to the Holy Spirit of God, and is called the "**sanctification of the Spirit**" (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:2), and this is the sanctification to be treated of. Concerning which may be enquired, **I. First, what it is, and the nature of it.**

It is something that is "holy", both in its principle and in its actings; and is superior to anything that can come from

man, or be performed by him of himself. It does not lie in a conformity to the light of nature, and the dictates of it; nor is it what may go by the name of moral virtue, which was exercised by some of the heathen philosophers to a very great degree, and yet they had not a grain of holiness in them; but were full of the lusts of envy, ambition, pride, revenge, etc. nor does it lie in a bare, external conformity to the law of God; or in an "outward reformation" of life and manners; this appeared in the Pharisees, to a great degree, who were pure in their own eyes, and thought themselves holier than others, and disdained them, and yet their hearts were full of all manner of impurity.

Nor is what is called "restraining grace", sanctification; persons may be restrained by the injunctions of parents and masters, by the laws of magistrates, and by the ministry of the word, from the grosser sins of life; and be preserved, by the providence of God, from the pollutions of the world, and yet not be sanctified.

Nor are "gifts", ordinary or extraordinary, sanctifying grace; Judas Iscariot, no doubt, had both, the ordinary gifts of a preacher, and the extraordinary gifts of an apostle, and yet not a holy man. Gifts are not grace; a man may have all gifts, and all knowledge, and speak with the tongue of men and angels, and not have grace; there may be a silver tongue where there is an unsanctified heart!

Nor is sanctification a restoration of the lost image of Adam, or a reparation and an amendment of that image marred by the sin of man; or a new vamping up the old principles of nature: but it is something entirely new; a new creature, a new man, a new heart, and a new spirit; and the conformity of a man to another image, even to the image of the second Adam, the Son of God.

Some make sanctification to lie in the deposition, or putting off, of the old man, and in the putting on of the new man. This has a foundation in the word of God (Eph. 4:22, 24), and belongs to sanctification, and may be admitted, if understood of the actings of it, as these are, which suppose a previous principle from which they arise. By the "**old man**", is meant corrupt nature; which is as old as a man is in whom it is, and which he brings into the world with him; and by the putting of it off, is not meant the removal of it from him; for it continues with him, even with a sanctified person, as long as he is in the world; nor any change in the nature of it, which always remains the same; much less a destruction of it, which will not be till this earthly house is dissolved: but a dispossession of it, of its power, a displacing it from its throne, so as not to yield obedience to the lusts of it; nor walk according to the dictates of it; nor have the conversation according to it. By the new man, is meant the new principle of

grace and holiness, wrought in the soul in regeneration: and by the putting on of that, the exercise of the several graces of which it consists (see Col. 3:12, 13).

Others distinguish sanctification, into "vivification" and "mortification": and both these are to be observed in sanctification. Sanctification, as a principle, is a holy, living principle, infused; by which a man that was dead in trespasses and sins, is quickened; and from whence flow living acts; such as living by faith on Christ; walking in newness of life; living soberly, righteously, and godly: all which belong to sanctification. And there is such a thing as mortification; not in a literal and natural sense, of the body, by fasting, scourging, etc. Nor is it the abolition of the body of sin, by the sacrifice of Christ; nor the destruction of the principle and being of sin in regenerate and sanctified persons; for though they do not live in sin, yet sin lives in them, and is sometimes very active and powerful: but the weakening of the power of sin, and a mortification of the deeds of the body, and of the members on earth; so that a course of sin is not lived in, but men are dead unto it; and to which the Spirit of God, and his grace, are necessary (Col. 3:5; Rom. 8:13). But leaving these things, I shall more particularly consider sanctification as an holy principle, and the holy actings of it.

1. First, as an holy principle. The first rise of which is in regeneration; there it is first formed, as before observed. And this is no other than the good work of grace begun in the hearts of regenerate ones.

It is a "work", not of men; for as regeneration is not of the will of men; nor conversion by might or power of men: so neither is sanctification; none can say, "I have made my heart clean", or have sanctified myself: it is the work of God; "**We are his workmanship**", and a curious piece of workmanship sanctification is; too curious for a creature to perform; it is done "**in the name**" of the Lord Jesus, and "**by the Spirit of our God**".

It is a "good" work; the efficient cause is good, God himself; the moving cause good, his love, grace, kindness, and good will; the matter good, some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel; the instrumental cause or means, the good word of God: and it is good in its effects; it makes a man a good man, and fits him for the performance of good works, and is the source of them. It is commonly called "a work of grace", and with great propriety; since it flows from the free, sovereign, and abundant grace of God in Christ; and is an implantation of all grace in the heart. And in scripture it is called "**the work of faith**", because faith is a principal part of it; and in the exercise of which sanctification much lies; hence saints are said to be "**sanctified by faith, which is in Christ**" (Acts 26:18).

It is an internal work; it is a work

"begun in" the soul, which the Spirit of God works in the hearts of his people, by putting the fear of God, and every other grace, there; hence it goes by various names, which show it to be something within a man, and not anything external (see Rom. 2:28, 29). It is called "**the inward man**", and "**the hidden man of the heart**", which has its place there, and is not obvious to everyone (Rom. 7:22; 1 Pet. 3:4), and not only from the author of it, the Spirit of God; and from the nature of it, being spiritual, and conversant with spiritual things; but from the seat and subject of it, the spirit or soul of man; it is called "**spirit**", being wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God (John 3:6).

It has also the name of "**seed**", which sometimes signifies the word; which being cast into the heart, and taking place there, becomes the "**engrafted word**"; and sometimes grace itself, which is like seed sown in the earth, which lies hid in it awhile, and then springs and grows up, a man knows not how; and this is that "**seed**" which remains in the heart of believers, and is never lost (1 John 3:9).

Sometimes it is compared to a "**root**", which lies under ground, is not seen, and is the cause of fruit being brought forth upwards; and may be what Job calls, "**the root of the matter**" in him; and which the stony ground hearers being without, withered, and came to nothing (Job 19:28; Matt. 13:21).

It is called, "**truth in the inward parts**"; which is expressive of the integrity and uprightness of the heart, of a true and right spirit created there, and of the truth and reality of grace and holiness, or true holiness, in which the new man is created (Psa. 50:6, 10; Eph. 4:24).

Once more; it is signified by "**oil in the vessel**" of the heart, had with the "**lamp**" of an external profession (Matt. 25:4). By "**oil**" is meant grace, so called for its illuminating nature, grace is spiritual light in the understanding; and for its suppling, softening nature, it takes off the hardness of the heart, and the stubbornness of the will; and because it will not mix with other liquids, as grace will not mix with sin; and which is had, held, and retained in the heart, as in a vessel; and from which the lamp of profession is distinct, which is more visible. I proceed,

2. Secondly, to consider sanctification in its holy actings.

(**1.**) With respect to God; which appear in the disposition of the mind, the motions of the heart Godwards, and in the behavior and conduct of a saint before him, and with regard unto him; and which become manifest,

a. In a holy reverence of him, on account of his nature, perfections, works, and blessings of goodness. In an unsanctified man, there is no fear of God before his eyes; but where a principle of grace and holiness is wrought, the fear of

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God soon appears; it is the beginning of wisdom; and is one of the first things that appears in a regenerate man; he cannot do what he before did, and others do; **“so did not I, because of the fear of God”**, said Nehemiah (Neh. 5:15), such an one will serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear.

b. Sanctification shows itself in love to God, and delight in him. An unsanctified man cannot love God, who is pure and holy; nor take any delight in him, in his word, his ways, and worship; **“The carnal mind is enmity to God”**, and desires him to depart from him, and chooses not the knowledge of his ways; nay, one that has taken on him the mask of religion, and is not sincere, can have no true affection for God, nor pleasure in the things of God. Job says of the hypocrite, **“Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?”** No, he will not (Job 27:10). But in regeneration and sanctification, the Lord circumcises the heart, or regenerates and sanctifies it, **“to love the Lord with all the heart and with all the soul”** that is, sincerely and cordially.

c. It appears in submission to the will of God in all things, even in the most adverse dispensations of providence; as the instances of Aaron, Eli, David, and others show; who murmured not, nor complained, but were still and quiet, and resigned to the divine will, under some severe rebukes of providence. Much of sanctification lies in the conformity of our wills to the will of God. That holy man Bishop Usher said of it, **“Sanctification is nothing less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, as a whole burnt offering to Christ.”**

d. It is to be seen in religious exercises, and in acts of devotion to God, and in the exercise of grace in them as in an affectionate attendance on the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances; and in fervent prayer, which is the breath of a sanctified soul towards God. Holiness only appears in these things, or is real, when grace is in exercise in them; for otherwise, there may be an outward performance of them, and yet no true holiness.

e. The holy actings of sanctification may be discerned in the earnest pantings and eager desires of the soul after communion with God, both in private and public; when a soul cannot be content with ordinances without enjoying God in them; when it pants after him, as the heart pants after the water brooks; and when without him, seeks everywhere for him, till it finds him, and then exults in its fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

f. A soul that is sanctified by the

Spirit of God, seeks the glory of God in all it does, whether in things civil or religious: one that is unsanctified, and only makes a show of religion, and of good works, he does all to be seen of men, and seeks his own glory therein; whatever show of devotion and holiness may be made by such persons, there is not a grain of holiness in them. Whereas he that seeks the glory of God in all, **“the same is true”**, hearty and sincere, a real saint, **“and no unrighteousness is in him”**, no insincerity and dissimulation, (John 7:18).

(2.) Sanctification discovers itself in its holy actings, with respect to Christ.

a. In applying to him for cleansing; as in a view of its guilt, it applies to blood for pardon; and to his righteousness for justification: so under a sight and sense of its pollution, and of the spreading leprosy of sin all over it; it goes to him as the leper did, saying, **“Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!”** and such deal with his blood for the purification of their souls, as well as for the remission of their sins; and have their hearts purified by faith in it.

b. In subjection to him, as King of saints; they not only receive him as their Prophet, to teach and instruct them, and embrace his doctrines; and as their Priest, by whose sacrifice their sins are expiated; but as their King, to whose laws and ordinances they cheerfully submit; esteeming his precepts, concerning all things, to be right, none of his commandments grievous; but, from a principle of love to him, keep and observe them.

c. In setting him always before them, as an example to copy after; being desirous of walking even as he walked; both in the exercise of the graces of faith, love, patience, humility, etc. and in the discharge of duty.

d. In a desire of a greater degree of conformity to the image of Christ, which is what they are predestinated unto; which first appears in regeneration, and is increased by every believing view of Christ and his glory, and will be completed in the future state; hence sanctified souls desire to be with Christ, that they might be perfectly like him, as well as see him as he is.

(3.) Sanctification is discovered in its actings, with respect to the Holy Spirit.

a. In minding, savoring, and relishing, the things of the Spirit of God.

“They that are after the flesh”, carnal, unregenerate, unsanctified ones, **“mind the things of the flesh”**, carnal and sensual lusts and pleasures; **“but they that are after the Spirit”**, who are regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, **“mind the things of the Spirit”**, which he reveals, recommends, and directs to; these they savor, relish, highly value, and esteem (Rom. 8:5).

b. In walking after the dictates, directions, leadings, and teachings of the Spirit; so sanctified persons are described as such **“who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** (Rom. 8:1).

c. In a desire and carefulness not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom they have their present grace and experience, joy and comfort, and by whom they are sealed to the day of redemption, by any disagreeable behavior to him, to one another, and in the world (Eph. 4:30).

d. In a desire **“to live and walk in the Spirit”**; to live in a spiritual manner, under his influence, to exercise every grace, and abound therein, through his power; to perform every duty by his assistance; and to wait, through him, for the hope of righteousness by faith (Gal. 5:5, 25; Rom. 12:11; 15:13).

(4.) The holy actings of sanctification are apparent, with respect to sin.

a. In approving, loving, and delighting in the law of God, which forbids it, and condemns for it. An unsanctified man cannot brook the law of God on this account; he is not subjected to it; nor can he be, without efficacious grace exerted on him; he despises it, and casts it behind his back: whereas, a man sanctified by the Spirit of God, approves of the law of God, as holy, just, and good, and loves it exceedingly; **“How love I thy law!”** says David; and he delights in it, after the inward man, and serves it with his mind and Spirit (Psa. 119:97; Rom. 7:12, 22, 25).

b. In a dislike of sin, and a displicency at it; it is displeasing to him, as it is contrary to the holy nature of God, a breach of his righteous law, and is in its own nature exceeding sinful, as well as disagreeable in its effects and consequences.

c. In a loathing sin, and in an abhorrence of it. An unsanctified man chooses his own ways, and delights in his abominations; he takes pleasure in committing sin himself, and in those that

do it; sin is a sweet morsel, which he rolls in his mouth, and keeps under his tongue; but one that has the principle and grace of holiness, loathes his sin, and himself for it; and, with Job, abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes.

d. In an hatred of sin; unholy persons, hate the good and love the evil; but an holy man, loves righteousness and hates iniquity: such that love the Lord, cannot but hate evil; it being so extremely opposite to him: he hates, not only sinful actions, and even what he himself does, though he would not do them, but vain thoughts also (Rom. 7:15; Psa. 119:113).

e. In an opposition to sin: a sanctified man, not only does not make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it; does not regard it in his heart, so as to encourage, nourish, and cherish it; but he acts the part of an antagonist to it, **“striving against sin”**; **“the spirit lusteth against the flesh”**; grace opposes sin, upon the first motion of it, and temptation to it; he has that principle within him that argues thus, **“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”**

f. In an abstinence from it, even from every appearance of it, a passing by the ways of it, and avoiding every avenue that leads to it, as being what wars against the soul, and is dangerous and hurtful to it. The grace of God implanted in the heart, as well as displayed in the word, **“teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts”** (Titus 2:11, 12).

g. Sanctification appears in lamenting sin, in deploring the corruption of nature, bewailing indwelling sin, as well as all sinful actions, of thought, word, and deed; sanctified persons are like doves of the valley, everyone mourning for his own iniquities, and for those of others, and the sad effects of them.

h. In earnest desires to be wholly freed from sin; uneasy that vain thoughts should so long lodge within them, weary of a body of sin and death, they groan under the burden of it, and cry, O wretched men that we are! Who shall deliver us from it? They long to be with Christ, and to be in heaven; for this reason greatly, among others, that they may be entirely free from sin, and be perfectly holy.

Now can such actings in the mind, and in life, spring from nature? Must they not arise from a principle of holiness in the heart? Can there be such reverence of God, love to him, resignation to his will, affectionate and fervent devotion to him, desires of communion with him, and a concern in all things for his glory, without a supernatural principle of grace and holiness in the soul? Is it possible, that an unsanctified man should ever apply to Christ for cleansing, be subject to him as King, be desirous of walking as he walked, and of being wrought up to a conformity to him? Or be concerned to mind the

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Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WFTA, Tupelo, MS	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	101.9	3,000 FM
WLZA, Starkville, MS	Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	710	2,500 AM
WCNA, Myrtle, MS	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	95.9	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	680	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	550	5,000 AM
KORE, Springfield, OR	Sunday 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	1050	5,000 AM
DXRA, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	783 Khz...	10,000 AM
DWSS, Manila, Philippines	Sunday 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.	1494	16,000 AM

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things of the Spirit, and to walk after the Spirit, and to live in him, and be careful not to grieve him? Can there be such actings in the mind concerning sin, as to love the law, which forbids it; to dislike sin, abhor it, and hate it; engage in an opposition to it, abstain from it, lament it, and earnestly desire to be rid of it; can these be the produce of nature? Or be without being internally sanctified by the Spirit of God?

II. Secondly, the subjects of sanctification are next to be enquired into; who they are that are sanctified, and what of them.

1. First, who are sanctified? Not all men; all men are unholy, and need sanctification; but all are not made holy; some are filthy, and remain filthy still.

(1.) They are the elect of God; and all of them, whom God chose in eternity, he sanctifies in time; those who are a chosen generation, become a holy people; whom God chose, he chose to holiness, as an end which is always answered, and he chose them through sanctification, as a means in order to a further end, salvation; conformity to the image of the Son of God, in which sanctification lies, is what the chosen are predestinated unto; and, in consequence of their predestination, are made partakers of it. Faith, which is a part of sanctification, flows from electing grace, and is insured by it; as many as are ordained to eternal life believe, and are everlastingly glorified, which is their perfect sanctification.

(2.) They are the redeemed ones; the subjects of election, redemption, and sanctification, are the same persons. In order, they are first chosen, then redeemed, and then sanctified; those who are chosen by the Father, and redeemed by the Son, are sanctified by the Spirit. One end of Christ's redemption of them, was to sanctify and purify them, a peculiar people to himself, zealous of good works; and that they being dead to sin, and that to them, through his sacrifice for sin, they might live unto righteousness; hence of the same persons it is said, "**They shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord!**" (Isa. 62:12).

2. Secondly, what of those persons is sanctified? The whole of them; "**The God of peace sanctify you wholly**"; that is, as next explained, in soul, body, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23).

(1.) The soul, or spirit, is the principal seat, or subject of sanctification, in all the powers and faculties of it; "**Be renewed in the spirit of your minds**" (Eph. 4:23). It is the heart into which the fear of God is put, and which is purified by faith: it is the understanding that is enlightened, to discern holy and

spiritual things; and so to mind them, approve of them, and gaze at them, with wonder and delight: the will is bowed to the will of God, and made willing in the day of his power, to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; and which is resigned to all the dispensations of divine providence: the affections are made spiritual, holy, and heavenly; from whence springs a cheerful obedience to the commands of God and Christ: and the mind and conscience, which were defiled with sin, are purged from dead works to serve the living God.

(2.) The body also is influenced by sanctifying grace. As, though the heart is the principal seat of sin, out of which all manner of wickedness flows, and spreads itself, not only over the powers and faculties of the soul, but also over the members of the body; so that there is no part nor place clean: thus, though the soul is the principal seat of sanctification, yet it diffuses its influence, as over all the powers of the soul, so over all the members of the body; its sensual appetite and carnal lusts are checked and restrained by sanctifying grace; so that sin reigns not in our mortal bodies, as to obey the lusts thereof, and to yield our members, as instruments of unrighteousness, unto sin (Rom. 6:12, 13).

3. Thirdly, the causes of sanctification, by whom it is effected, from whence it springs, and by what means it is carried on, and at last finished.

(1.) The efficient cause is God, Father, Son, and Spirit. Sometimes it is ascribed to the Father, the God of all grace, who will make us perfect, perfectly holy; the very God of peace, with whom we have peace, through Christ, will sanctify us wholly; the Father, on whom we call, the Father of Christ, and of us, says, "**Be ye holy, as I am holy**", and who only can make us so (1 Pet. 1:15, 16; 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:23).

And Christ is not only our sanctification, but our sanctifier; "**He that sanctifieth**" is Christ, "**and they who are sanctified**" are his chosen and redeemed ones; and these "**are all of one**" (Heb. 2:11), of one and of the same nature; He partakes of their nature, and they are made partakers of His; all that holiness which they have, they have from Him; from that fullness of it which is in Him.

Though this work of sanctification is more commonly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, who is therefore called, "**the Spirit of holiness**"; not only from His own nature, but from His being the author of holiness in the hearts of God's people, and which is therefore called, "**the sanctification of the Spirit**"; it is He that begins, and carries on, and finishes this work; every grace is from Him, faith, hope, and love, and every other; and which are supported and maintained, and drawn forth into exercise, and brought to

perfection by Him.

(2.) The moving cause, is the grace and good will of God; the same grace which moved God to choose any to holiness, moves him to work it in them: the same grace which moved him to send his Son into the world to redeem men, moves him to send his Spirit into their hearts to sanctify them: the same great love, and abundant mercy, that moves him to regenerate and quicken them, moves him to sanctify them: as of his own good will he begets them again, it is of his own good will that he sanctifies them; "**This is the will of God,**" not only his will of precept, and his approving will; but the purpose and counsel of his will, what flows from his sovereign will; "**Even your sanctification**" (1 Thess. 4:3). The state and condition of the people of God, before their sanctification, clearly shows that it must arise, not from any merit or motive in them; but from the free favor and good will of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

(3.) The instrumental cause, or means, is the word of God; both the written word, the scriptures, which are holy scriptures; the author holy, the matter holy, and, when attended with a divine power and influence, are the means of making men holy, and of fitting and furnishing them for every good work; and also the word preached, when accompanied with the same power; "**Faith comes by hearing**", and is increased thereby; the doctrines of the gospel are according to godliness; and with a divine blessing, influence both the heart and life to godliness and holiness; the ordinances are made and continued, for the perfecting of the saints, for the carrying on, and perfecting the work of holiness in them; and various providences of God, even afflictive ones, are designed of God, and are means, in his hand, of making his people more and more "**partakers of his holiness**" (Heb. 12:10), of this use afflictions were to holy David (Psa. 119:67, 71).

4. Fourthly, the adjuncts or properties of sanctification.

(1.) First, it is imperfect in the present state, though it will most certainly be made perfect; where the work is begun, it will be performed: sanctification in Christ is perfect, but sanctification in the saints themselves is imperfect; it is perfect with respect to parts, but not with respect to degrees. Sanctification, as a principle, which is the new creature, or new man, has all his parts; though these are not grown up to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ, as they will do; where there is one grace, there is every grace, though none perfect; there is a comparative perfection in the saints, when compared with what they themselves once were, and others are; and when compared even with other saints, for one saint may have a greater degree of grace and holiness than another; "**let us therefore, as many as be**

perfect"; and yet the greatest of those was not absolutely perfect, even the apostle himself, who so said (Phi. 3:12, 17), all the saints may be said to be perfect, as perfection denotes sincerity and truth; so their faith, though imperfect, is unfeigned; their hope is without hypocrisy, and their love without dissimulation; but otherwise sanctification in the best of men is imperfect; this appears,

a. From the continual wants of the saints; they are always "**poor and needy**", as David says of himself; which could not be true of him as to things temporal, but as to things spiritual: the best of saints continually stand in need of more grace to oppose sin, resist temptations, perform duty, and persevere in faith and holiness; the grace of God is sufficient for them, but then that must be daily communicated to them; God has promised to supply, and he does supply all their need, as it returns upon them; but then it cannot be said that they are "**perfect and entire, wanting nothing**"; since they are continually in want of more grace.

b. This appears from their disclaiming perfection in themselves, and their desires after it. Job, David, the apostle Paul, and others, have in express words declared they were not perfect, nor thought themselves so, but far from it; and yet expressed strong desires after it, which showed they had it not; the apostle Paul has fully set forth both in those words of his, "**Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect**", etc. (Phi. 3:12-14).

c. That sanctification is imperfect, is abundantly manifest from indwelling sin in the saints, and the sad effects of it; the apostle Paul speaks of "**sin dwelling in him**" (Rom. 7:18, 19), and the apostle John says, "**if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves**" (1 John 1:8), and the experience of the saints in all ages testifies the same: this is clear from their ingenuous confessions of sin, such as made by Jacob, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and others; from their groans and complaints under the weight of sin, as an heavy burden, too heavy to bear; from the continual war in them between flesh and spirit, the law in their members and the law in their minds; from their prayers for the manifestation of the pardon of their sins, and for cleansing from them, and to be kept from the commission of them; from the many slips and falls which the best are subject to in one way or another; and from backwardness to duty, remissness in it, and that coldness and lukewarmness which too often attend it.

d. This is also evident from the several parts of sanctification, and the several graces of which it consists, being imperfect. Faith is imperfect; there are deficiencies in faith to be made up; the best of saints have had them, and their

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failings in the exercise of that grace have been manifest, as in Abraham, Peter, and others; and they have been sensible of their imperfection in it, as the apostles of Christ were when they said, "**Lord increase our faith**", or "add" to it (Luke 17:5), hope sometimes is so low as that it seems to be "**perished from the Lord**", and only the mouth is put in the dust with an "**if so be there may be hope**" (Lam. 3:18, 29). Love, however warm and fervent at first, remits and abates; its ardor is left, though that is not lost; the love of many waxes cold. Spiritual, experimental, sanctified knowledge is but in part, and will remain so until that which is perfect is come.

(2.) Secondly, though sanctification is imperfect, it is progressive, it is going on gradually till it comes to perfection; this is clear from the characters of the saints, who are first as little children, infants newly born; are in a state of childhood, and by degrees come to be young men, strong and robust, and overcome the evil one, and at length are fathers in Christ (1 John 2:13, 14), and from the similes by which the work of grace is illustrated; as that in general by seed sown in the earth, which springs up first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; and faith in particular by a grain of mustard seed, which when first sown is small, the least of all seeds, but when it grows up, it becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out great branches (Mark 4:28, 31, 32), so spiritual light and knowledge at first is very dim and obscure, like the sight that the man had whose eyes Christ opened; first he saw men like trees walking, and after that all things clearly; so the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Mark 8:23; Pro. 4:18), there is such a thing as growing in grace, in the grace of faith, and abounding in hope and love, and increasing in the knowledge of divine things which there would be no room for, if sanctification was perfect. Yet,

(3.) Thirdly, though it is imperfect, it will certainly be perfected; grace in the soul is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; it is always running to, and will issue in eternal life: it is certain, from election and redemption, the ends whereof would not be answered, if this was not completed; and from its being the work of the Holy Spirit, who having begun it, will finish it; he is a rock, and his work is perfect; having undertaken it, he will not leave it till it is done; and when he works, none can let; he will perfect that which concerneth his saints, and will fulfil the good pleasure of his will in them, and the work of faith, with power.

(4.) Fourthly, sanctification is absolutely "necessary" to salvation. It is

necessary for many things; it is necessary to the saints, as an evidence of their election and redemption; this is the closing work of grace, and is the evidence of all that goes before. It is necessary to church fellowship, to the communion of saints in a social manner. Members of churches are described as holy brethren, saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus, and none are meet to be admitted among them but such who are so; for "**what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?**" etc. (2 Cor. 6:14-16).

Sanctification is necessary as a meetness for heaven; for the inheritance of the saints in light; without regeneration, in which sanctification is begun, no man shall see, nor enter, into the kingdom of God. It is absolutely necessary for the beatific vision of God in a future state; "**Without holiness no man shall see the Lord**"; but being possessed of that, shall see him, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him forever (Heb. 12:14; Matt. 5:8; Psa. 17:15).

To say no more, it is necessary for the work of heaven, which is singing songs of praise, songs of electing, redeeming, regenerating, calling, and persevering grace; how can unholy persons join with the saints in such work and service as this? Yea, it would be irksome and disagreeable to themselves, could they be admitted to it, and were capable of it; neither of which can be allowed.

Methods of Missions

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her door before the next Lord's day.

Personal Witnessing

One sane and scriptural plan of long standing in the church for doing missionary work is personal witnessing for Christ. This was the plan used by Jesus Christ and the early Christians. In the New Testament every believer was a missionary or a personal witness for Christ and the gospel. I do not mean that every believer went out and baptized people and organized churches. But I do mean each redeemed child of God witnessed about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ witnessed to Nicodemus, the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, and many others who were sick and afflicted. Andrew witnessed to his brother Peter: "**He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ**" (John 1:41). Striking indeed is the statement recorded about the woman at the well, in John 4:39: "**And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that I ever did.**"

Every Christian has an influence with the people he comes into contact with daily. Those who are saved will desire and feel obligated to tell others about the Saviour. Not all can speak in the assembly of the saints, but all can witness to individuals among whom they live.

Qualified Witnesses

Every church member ought to be involved in personal evangelism, but only some are really qualified to be sent out by the church. Great harm has been done by sending those who do not have the personal prerequisites for the work. We honor God best by sending out only mature, trained Christians.

First, to be an effective witness, one must have salvation: "**Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy**" (Ps. 107:2). Is this not true of a personal worker, he cannot help falsifying the heart of the message of redemption. God seldom if ever blesses His Word by an unsaved vessel.

Second, one must have consecration or a measure of Christian maturity. This does not have to do with natural age, but rather growth in discipleship and manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus taught: "**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven**" (Matt. 5:16). If we are to hold forth the word of life, then we must "**be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation**" (Phil. 2:14-16). If success does not follow our efforts, we should look into our hearts and lives to see our condition.

Good morals are not just a desirable trait; it is a necessity. One of the reasons so many are against Christ and His church is their observation of a lack of consecration on the part of professed Christians. Paul wrote to the church at Rome: "**And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, doest thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you**" (Rom. 2:19-24).

Third, he who would witness for Christ must have developed a practical recognition of God's sovereignty. He must be brought to a place of utter dependence on God. This will prevent him from dishonoring God through his human efforts. This will cause him to believe that God will use his effort according to His pleasure.

Fourth, there must be a knowledge of the message. There is a strong warning in the Scriptures about falsification of the gospel (Gal. 1:8). The personal worker must avoid presenting the easy-believism of the modern evangelists. He must not follow religious tradition in his work; he must follow the Bible only. His message must not differ from the message of the early Christians. If it does, then he turns the gospel into a lie by a poor or false presentation of the message and comes under the curse of God. It is such a false and incomplete presentation of the message that has brought about all these post-conversions in churches.

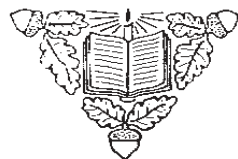
Fifth, the Holy Spirit is needed in this all-important work. He who would witness for Christ must have his affections, desires, and purposes under the Spirit's control. Philip was led of the Holy Spirit to witness to the church: "**Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him**" (Acts 8:29-30). It was the Spirit which led Peter to preach to the household of Cornelius that they might be saved (Acts 10:19; 11:12). Paul was Spirit-directed to preach in Corinth. The Lord told him: "**I have much people in this city**" (Acts 18:10). He was to preach there that the elect in that city could obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Yet the Apostle was "**forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia**" (Acts 16:6-7).

Personal witnessing is as much

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Methods of Missions

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missionary work as going to a distant land as a salaried missionary. Too many think of the glamour of going out as a missionary and never seek to reach the friend next door for Christ. A true missionary spirit should be present in each saved church member wherever he is.

Where Is It To Be Done

Missionary work is worldwide but it must begin at home. Jesus said: **"Beginning at Jerusalem."** When Christ healed and saved the man among the tombs, He told him: **"Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee"** (Mark 5:19). Home folks know us best. They know if our experience is real or not. The children of each Christian father and mother should be their first and greatest concern. If we are unable to convert them to Christ, it is doubtful if we can be used to convert others.

It can be done on the streets: **"Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him"** (Acts 17:17).

It can be done in places of business: **"And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him"** (Mark 2:14).

We must always follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in witnessing. Jesus Christ and the early church witnessed generally to one person at a time in private. This was the rule which Christ followed in John 3, when He talked to Nicodemus. There are times, however, when it is no doubt fitting to speak to more than one.

Church-Sponsored Missions

Another method of doing missionary work is church-sponsored missions. This method is scriptural and of great merit. This is where one local church without the aid of other sister churches starts a mission which is later organized into a church. The home church gives up some of its trained workers to go and assist in this endeavor. This is the fastest and best way of establishing another church. The home church gives the mission financial backing. Most of our city and rural churches should use this plan.

The New Testament churches used this method. The Jerusalem church established the Samaritan church and the Antiochian church. The church at Antioch sent out missionaries who established a number of other churches. This is the way most Baptists were brought into existence across the centuries.

In the last three years the Pinehaven

Baptist Church in Columbus, Mississippi, and her pastor, Elvis Gregory, have organized two other independent Baptist churches. Pinehaven in Columbus sent two of her own ministers out as missionaries, as did the church at Antioch, which sent forth Barnabus and Paul. In each instance she gave up some of her members to the new work and gave financial backing to the mission. The results of such church-sponsored missionary work are seen in the existence of the Pinehaven Baptist Church of Northport, Alabama and the Belair Baptist Church of Starkville, Mississippi.

What this church has done, other independent Baptist churches can and should do, with the proper leadership. It is an awful shame that many Baptist churches fifty to a hundred years old have never put forth any effort to organize any other church of like faith and order. This reveals gross ignorance of the nature of the Great Commission and great laziness toward the command of Christ to His church.

The local church should use every means at her disposal to get the gospel out to a lost world. There should be regular and stated meetings of the church where evangelistic preaching is heard. The newspaper, books, tracts, and all kinds of literature should be distributed in the community where the church resides. The gospel should be preached over the radio and television. The church must not spare any effort in getting out the word of salvation.

Churches Working Together

Still another method of doing mission work is by churches of like faith and order working together. The first churches did this as seen in the New Testament. The local church in Antioch asked the assistance of her mother church, the Jerusalem church, in deciding the dispute about circumcision. These two churches worked together to settle it once and for all that people are saved by grace through faith and not by any act of the law. This is seen by reading Acts 15.

The apostolic churches worked together in benevolence. When famine occurred in A. D. 41, in the days of Claudius Caesar in Judea, churches in other parts of the Roman Empire sent help to the saints in Jerusalem. These Gentile churches chose Paul and his missionary team to take the funds to Jerusalem (II Cor. 8:16-24).

There is no room for doubt as to whether they worked together in missions. The Scripture plainly teaches that they did. Paul was sent forth as a missionary by the church at Antioch, yet other churches supported him. He wrote to the Corinthians: **"I have robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from**

Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself" (II Cor. 11:8-9). Paul preached the gospel freely among the Corinthians by means of the support of already established churches.

Those who desire further study on this matter might notice the instructions which the Apostle John gave to Gaius and his church concerning some missionaries: **"Whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles"** (II John 6-7). This reveals the obligation of already established churches to aid and support missionaries abroad. This same truth is seen in Philippians 4:15-18.

Anti-Board Baptists

In the New Testament, examples of all funds were sent directly to the missionaries. The money was not sent to the mission board, and after taking out high office expense, some of that remaining was then sent to the missionaries. There is no mention in the Bible of missionary boards or missionary committees which acted as executives for the first churches. Missionary societies are of post-apostolic origin and extra-scriptural. They first originated among Pedobaptists and were unknown among the Baptists from apostolic times until 1792 when the Baptist Missionary Society was organized in Kettering, England.

Since sovereign grace independent Baptists are anti-board Baptists, some seem to have the opinion we are anti-missionary Baptists. Our opponents look upon us as a few contrary churches who criticize others who try to carry out the Great Commission. Thus, it behooves me to make our position plain for all to see.

We are not against missions. We believe and practice missionary support by the direct gospel mission plan. We give our missionary offerings directly to the missionary or to the sponsoring church who sends it to the missionary. No person is paid a high salary to keep the missionary books. All our money goes 100% to the laboring missionary. We look upon each local church as being the oldest and greatest missionary society in all the world.

We find no need or place for a missionary board or committee. The Great Commission was not given to a board or committee consisting of a few handpicked men who set in fine offices in Nashville, Tennessee, or Little Rock, Arkansas. Nor is there any scriptural authority for an outside agency separate and apart from the churches to act as an executive in hiring and firing missionaries. Why pay a man thousands of dollars to sit in an air-conditioned office behind a desk with a pencil over his ear to count missionary money? There

is nothing that a missionary society does that a local church cannot do just as well. Hence, missionary societies are not needed by the churches anymore than the churches in the first century needed them. If the apostolic churches could Christianize the known world of their day without these human inventions, we can do as much in our time without these modern innovations which are parasites feasting on the missionary program of the local churches.

I do not deny there are some good missionaries who have been and are now connected with mission boards. Nor do I deny that these men have done a great work in establishing churches among the heathen and at home. But I do deny that mission boards are scriptural. I affirm the direct gospel mission plan is the one set forth in the pages of the Holy Bible. I do contend that it is the age-old Baptist plan of missionary work. I do maintain that it is important to be scriptural. I do believe that the best plan is the plan that Heaven has set its approval upon.

Studies in Esther

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comforted. He rather told Esther about all the things Haman had decreed. Though Esther had sought to turn Mordecai from his sorrow, she was brought to sorrow.

In verse 8, He implored her to go to the king and intercede for their people. This is where we pick up in our study in the verses that are before us.

Verses 9-11 – "And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai" (Est. 4:9). Esther received the charge from Mordecai to go before the king and sent back her reply to him. **"Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days"** (Est. 4:10-11).

She made her case to Mordecai for not going before the king. Interestingly, Esther did not refuse outright to go before the king, but she sought to find if there was another way. She likely hoped that something could be done that would not endanger her so much. She offered Mordecai two compelling reasons why she should not attempt to appear before the king.

First, she reminded Mordecai of the law of the kingdom. Ahasuerus ruled over a kingdom that was a conglomeration of the kingdoms of the

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Outlines for Country Preachers by a Country Preacher

Sermon Outlines by Milburn Cockrell

The Sins of Youth

Psalms 25:7

Youth is a wonderful time. It is so good it is a shame to waste it on the young. Youth is the seedtime of spiritual happiness or woe. After life is the harvest time. What a man sows in his youth, he may reap in middle life and old age, be they the fruits of righteousness, or the bitter effects of sin.

I. THE SINS OF YOUTH.

1. Older people can well recall the hot-blooded follies of their younger years.
2. People are sinners from birth (Ps. 58:3) and have evil thoughts from their youth (Gen. 8:21).
3. Some prominent sins are—
 - (1) Disrespect of parents and teachers (Eph. 6:1-3).
 - (2) Refusal of instructions (Prov. 13:18). Fully persuaded of their own scholarship.
 - (3) Evil company (I Cor. 15:33; Prov. 4:14-19). Lot and Samson.
 - (4) Premarital sex—all sex outside of marriage is sinful (Ezek. 23:3; I Cor. 5:9).
 - (5) Vain amusement—rock music, dance, TV, movies, etc.
 - (6) Intemperance—drink, smoke, take dope, curse, etc.
 - (7) A bad choice of marriage partner (Prov. 5:18-21; Mal. 2:14-16).

II. THE SINS OF YOUTH PROVOKE GOD.

1. They abuse the most vigorous part of life. The body is most active, healthy and strong—the mind is clear and very susceptible. These rich advantages must not be prostituted to the service of Satan.
2. It is an awful waste of precious time—a time which shall be employed in gaining knowledge, purity, joy and Christian experience.
3. They ruin their names (Prov. 22:1) and contaminate their influence (Eccl. 9:18).
4. The sins of youth, if persisted in, tend to confirm a person in a life of sin in middle life and old age. Warnings lose their influences—afflictions, judgments and death do not scare some. Sin has a hardening nature. It sears the conscience and makes a person past feeling.

III. THE SINS OF YOUTH LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR BITTER REMORSE AND SOMETIMES FOR SEVERE PUNISHMENTS.

1. Sin produces disappointment, sorrow, distress (Jer. 2:19; 31:18-19; 20:11). Time does not wear out guilt. Some sins committed in youth bring a life in prison!
2. The sins of youth leave their mark—nail and nail hole. They affect—
 - (1) The body—blindness, lameness, fits, premature old age (Job 13:26).
 - (2) The mind—suffers more than the body (Prov. 18:14).
 - A. A painful retrospect. Scenes of wickedness—language of profanity—actions of impurity—a wicked life, and its influence upon others.
 - B. Painful harassing conviction. Infinite mercy abused—rejection of the Son, despite to the Spirit of grace, neglect of the Word, etc.
 - C. Great loss. Holy pleasures; solid joy; salvation to the present time; eternal life neglected for worldly pleasures.
 - D. The future. Prospect is dark and dreadful; “**a fearful looking for of judgment;**” a prospect, not of joy, but pain; not of rest, but of punishment; not of light, but of darkness; not of glory, but perdition; not of Heaven, but of Hell!
3. The sins of youth poison old age (Eccl. 11:9-10; 12:1; Job 20:11). Some older men would give a thousand worlds to bring back young manhood in order to obliterate the sins of youth.

CONCLUSION.

1. A word to parents. Nothing grows up so fast as children. The child leaves the house—no noise in the hall, no sleds, bats, or shoes to pick up—no laughing happy girls, dolls left to litter the best room. The mother's heart is heavy and the father's house is lonely! Did we bring them up in the way they should go? In the nurture and admonition of the Lord?
2. We speak of beginning life at 18 or 21. But in 9 cases out of ten all the questions of eternity are settled before this time. The first 21 years as a rule molds what his eternity will be.
3. Youth does not have to be a time of sin (Ps. 71:5, 17; I Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 2:22).
4. Sins of youth can be forgiven (Isa. 54:4).

Studies in Esther

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Medes and the Persians. In this kingdom, the king was to have contact with the common people only through his ministers. Furthermore, no one could come before the king unless he had been called for. If one would come without being called, he was to be put to death, unless the king extended the “**golden scepter**” and allowed him to speak. In her mind, this law was a strong deterrent to Mordecai's suggested course of action.

Secondly, she told Mordecai that this course would be even more difficult because she had “**not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.**” For some reason, she had not been in the king's presence for thirty days. She did not know why but probably feared that she had fallen out of his favor. The king had a reputation for being harsh and impulsive. Esther remembered what had happened to Vashti and thought her fate could be worse if she presumed upon the king's affection.

Mordecai, of course, was not convinced by her arguments against his advice. Esther did not seem to be convinced either, but she was daunted by the difficulty of the task. Mordecai here furnishes us with a good practical lesson. We are not to be dissuaded from the right course of action because the way is difficult. The level of difficulty does not determine whether we do a thing in the Lord's work or not.

Many people have a negative outlook on life in general and the work of the Lord in particular. They will consider a certain work and if they can discover many difficulties in it, they will take that as a signal that they should not even attempt it. Our responsibility is fixed by God's Word, our course is chosen by infinite wisdom, and our way is marked out before us by Divine providence. We are responsible to go and not cavil because of difficulties. To shrink from duty in this manner is to be like the “**sluggard**” who “**will not plow by reason of the cold**” (Pro. 20:4).

The Apostle Paul was no shirker of duty. In the twenty-first chapter of Acts, he was determined to go to Jerusalem, believing that it was God's will. He had many friends that loved him and sought to persuade him not to go to Jerusalem because of the danger involved. “**And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man the owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul**

answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:10-13). Agabus prophesied that if Paul went to Jerusalem, he would be seized, bound, and delivered to the Gentiles. His friends interpreted this prophecy to mean that he should not go to Jerusalem because of the difficulty. They even tried to keep him from going.

However, Paul said that necessity was laid upon him. The Holy Ghost had already told him that bonds and afflictions abided him in every city wherever it was that he went. He also told the Ephesian elders that none of these things moved him. The difficulties that the Holy Spirit confirmed would not move him off course. His face was set to go to Jerusalem.

Mordecai believed this was Esther's responsibility. He knew there would be some difficulties in trying to do it, but Mordecai did not believe that these things should keep her from doing what she was responsible to do.

God promises in His Word, “**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him**” (Jam. 1:12). When you have endured temptation, you shall receive the crown of life. Rewards are promised to those that are “**faithful unto death.**” We are not going to undertake to do anything for the Lord that there is not going to be difficulty involved. If we are truly serving God, there is going to be difficulty. “**All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**” (II Tim. 3:12). The Devil will also oppose in every way that he can.

Recall Israel's difficult journey from Egypt to Canaan. God said to Israel concerning this journey, “**All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years**” (Deut. 8:1-4). Note that God allowed the children of Israel to face difficulties to go to the land of Canaan. He allowed them to suffer

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Studies in Esther

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hunger so that they cried out to God that their bellies would be filled. God allowed these things to humble them and prove them.

God was telling the people of Israel to consider that they had come through a long, hard journey, which there was some chastisement there for sin but there was also the process of sanctification. God was humbling them and proving them to find out what was in their heart. He allowed them to suffer hunger but He did feed them though they did not know where it came from. He told them to look at the mercies that they had all the while: their clothes did not wax old nor did their feet swell.

God kept them in the way though it was a hard way. Out of this, they were to learn not only to depend on God for the physical things, but also to live by **“every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD.”** Mordecai knew the history of his people. He knew that God allowed His people to come into straight places, but he also believed that God would deliver them.

Verses 12-14 – “And they told to Mordecai Esther’s words” (Est. 4:12). Mordecai received Esther’s reply and reinforced his argument to her. He had already told her once to go before the king and she responded negatively. Mordecai did not give up though. He kept on exhorting and encouraging her. He responded with greater arguments.

“Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews” (Est. 4:13). He answered a thought that was likely in Esther’s mind. She had not mentioned this in her reply to Mordecai, but she must have thought it. Esther thought that she was the queen, and although she was a Jew, surely, the king would not permit his wife to be destroyed along with all of the rest of the Jews. She probably could not imagine that Haman would make such a bold move as to reach out his hand against the king’s wife. She probably did not want to seem selfish, but it may have entered her mind that she dwelt in safety, even if all of her other people were destroyed. Mordecai told her not to think that she would escape in the king’s house.

“For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this” (Est. 4:14)? Mordecai told her that the call to duty could not be refused. He told her she could not hold her peace when God is requiring something of her. Solomon wrote, **“If**

thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall he render to every man according to his works?” (Prov. 24:10-12). The people of Israel might be delivered by some other means and they may not know that Esther neglected to do her duty but God would know. If she refused to reach out to deliver them that were drawn unto death, when it was her power to do something about it, Mordecai told her that God would hold her accountable.

Mordecai also sobered her and warned her to not trust in man. She had based her hopes of deliverance on the king and his actions. The Word is plain upon this, God commands, **“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God”** (Ps. 146:3-6). Esther was trusting in the flesh if she thought that she would be delivered and the other Jews would be killed. Additionally, the king might die before this decree was executed, and then what would stop Haman from stretching out his hand to take her life also. Even if Esther did survive the slaughter of the Jews, some other means could be used in her extermination. She was not to put her trust in her heathen husband, nor in the strength of man to deliver her.

It is notable that Mordecai reasoned with Esther from faith. He avowed, **“For it thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.”** Mordecai knew the promises and believed them. **“He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant”** (Psa. 105:7-10). Mordecai was fully aware of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the people of Israel. He knew of the prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel of the restoration of the nation of Israel. He knew that the Jewish people were not going to be destroyed wholesale from the face of the earth and he believed it and reasoned from faith. He had bold faith in His covenant God. He told Esther if she held her peace that enlargement would be granted the Jews and deliverance from some other means, but it would come because God made promises and He is faithful in his

covenant. God does not cast away his people.

The promises of God that Mordecai was depending on gave hope in the cause. Why would he encourage Esther to do such a dangerous thing? Because he knew the promise and he believed God. He did not stagger at the promise. This gave him hope. This should give us hope also. This is the reason why we live. As the Scriptures testify, **“The just shall live by faith”** (Heb. 10:38). If we did not have the promises of God to rest in when we walked in darkness, we would be consumed with worry, doubt, fear, anxiety. However, God has made many wonderful and precious promises that pertain to his people and give them grounds for hope.

Mordecai cautioned Esther not to think of herself as indispensable. He said, **“But thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou are come to the kingdom for such a time as this.”** Esther was not to think that the Jews could not be delivered without her, or that she was indispensable in the work of the Lord, but that she was placed in this position for this purpose to do the service that God had given her. Mordecai made the point that if she refused to do her duty and deliverance came to the people of Israel, she would not go unpunished.

Mordecai believed that God fitted her for service and placed her in the situation to do this very duty. He did not believe in any blind chance nor did he believe that she had been gifted and found favor simply for her own benefit. This fact should be instructive to us because whatever we have, as far as our gifts and talents are concerned, God has given us those things and we ought to realize that God **“hath made all things for himself”** (Pro. 16:4). So God has fitted us with certain abilities or talents to be used in His service to bring glory to His name. We may use those things to provide for our families and meet our temporal needs. There is nothing wrong with that but the things that God has given us ought to be employed in His service. Many times people sit back in the church, possessing some abilities and gifts that they could be using, but they think there are plenty of others that can do that job.

Just as Mordecai told Esther, we should not think that we would not be held accountable for not using the things that God has given us in his service. He told Esther she was fitted for this service. Why was she the queen, married to the king of Persia? The narrative tells us that she was chosen because she was beautiful. Why was she beautiful? She was beautiful because God made her that way. She did not make herself beautiful. God gave her that graceful disposition that won her so much favor in the heart of the people. God had placed her in this situation and she was to use what she had in her station

for God’s service.

Verses 15-17 – “Then Esther bade them return to Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him” (Est. 4:15-17). Esther was strengthened by Mordecai’s encouragement. She had wavered, wanting to find another way. Mordecai continued to admonish her to go forward in this duty.

She requested the fasting and prayers of the Jews in Shushan. Hers was a duty that was not in the normal course of service. Not every person was called on to do such a great thing for the Lord. She took it very seriously and felt special need for fasting and prayer of **“all the Jews.”**

The Gospels tell of a time when a man came to the disciples with his son that was possessed by an evil spirit and they could not cast out the evil spirit. The father was so distressed over his young son’s condition. The Lord returned and cast out the foul spirit and the disciples asked why they could not do it. The Lord said, **“This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”** (Matt. 17:21). One application we may make from this is that sometimes we face things in life that just the usual, standard type of prayer is not going to get the job done. There will be some extra interest and fervency required in crying out to God for such a deliverance. She wanted the Jews to fast and pray to God for deliverance in this great and difficult thing she was about to do.

It is also clear here that we cannot all do the same work. We are not all called to the same office. God has gifted men and women differently to do different jobs that are needed. Sometimes when a person is not called to a high position they feel like there is nothing for them to do. Not all of the Jews, not even Mordecai, were called to go in before the king but Esther was. She depended on the prayers and fasting of the people. They certainly had their part. We can all take part in these ministries if we take part in prayer for the ministry of the church. Even Moses needed Aaron and Hur to hold up his hands.

Esther acknowledged that she could not seek to preserve her life, **“so will I go . . . and if I perish, I perish.”** She came to the place where she realized that in order to do God’s service, she would have to put her life on the line. The Apostle John wrote that Christ **“laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”** (I John 3:16). Epaphroditus put his life on the line to

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Mini-Edition

By Joseph Harris
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The Kinship of Liberalism and Radical Islam

For the last couple of years, something has been eating at me. Since 9-11, and the interest in Islam has surged, I have noticed something most conservatives have also noticed and watched with chagrin. It has to do with the attitude of the mainstream media toward Islam. Anyone with common sense and a touch of objectivity can see the obvious bias of the major old established media outlets (print and broadcast) in this country. They are agenda driven. They have consistently displayed animosity against Christianity and the God of the Bible, while covering for and promoting their new darling religion, Islam.

I kept asking why, believing the answer was more than it being just another attack against Christianity. Though I may not have the full story yet, the reason has finally hit me: blood is thicker than water. Liberalism and radical Islam are related. Notice the following similar characteristics. (Note: though the emphasis is on radical Islam, the same comparisons can be made with mainstream Islam, though to a lesser degree. Liberals would say I am a Islamophobe)

Both Are Intolerant. Only the most biased would object to the statement that Islam is intolerant. Look in the countries where Islam rules. Dissenting religious views are not allowed. In America, there is an organization called the Council on American-Islamic relations, or C.A.I.R. Why is there no Council on Arab-Christian Relations (C.A.C.R.) in Arabic Muslim countries? This type organization is about as likely to materialize as is the First Baptist Church of Mecca.

Notice also the intolerance of liberalism. While trying to hide under an invisible cloak of tolerance, liberals are the most intolerant ideologues to be found. Numerous are the accounts of conservatives on university campuses who have been shouted down and harassed by the "tolerant" liberals.

Both Are Exclusive. In arrogance, radical Islam purports to be the exclusive repository of spiritual truth. This philosophy results in a militant attitude that conquers by the sword or bomb. Liberalism, especially as evidenced in the media, is arrogantly exclusive. Before losing their stronghold on "reporting" the news, liberal newspeople have consistently displayed their disdain for all who disagree, flagrantly pushing their agenda. Thankfully, now people are

beginning to think for themselves by arming with information and forming an intelligent opinion.

Both Hate America and Christianity. Radical Islam hates America and all she stands for. Liberty and Christianity have both made America a target to those who would enslave us in a religious/political system that would produce hate and ignorance as it has in many countries. Liberalism hates America and Christianity with a passion. Liberalism would try and destroy that which gives it the freedom to exist. (For more info, read *Why The Left Hates America* by Daniel J. Flynn, www.primapublishing.com).

Both Play the Race Card. Radical Muslims, supported by C.A.I.R., have opposed profiling and cried "racism," yet, profiling is just good common sense. Though not all Muslims are terrorists, all terrorists have been Muslims. Muslim victimization has been the cry of the radicals. Liberalism has run the race card in the ground. When Blacks are arrested, liberals cry foul and blame everything on oppression and racism. The liberals began this mantra, but it has been taken up by self appointed Black leaders who care more about enriching themselves than liberating and empowering their own people.

Both Treat Women Terribly. Radical Islam is known for its lowly view of women. Polygamy is allowed, which disregards the woman. Mutilations occur and women are abused physically and emotionally in the marital relationship. Liberalism is hypocritical concerning the treatment of women. If liberals were really concerned about women, they would cry against abortion because of the emotional anguish that naturally follows when any mother kills her own child. Liberals are strangely silent when women are immorally victimized by high profile liberals such as Ted Kennedy and Bill Clinton. Even the feminists are silent, proving they don't really care about the treatment of women. Liberals promote "free speech" through pornography, which is demeaning and humiliating to women.

Both Are Preoccupied With Sex. Polygamy is not unknown in radical Islam. There is also the promise of 70 (some say 72) virgins for the one who will die in Jihad. Only the most naive would believe the polygamist would maintain a platonic relationship with multiple wives. And who believes the 70 virgins in paradise are provided just for decoration. Sex is the reward promised to the martyr. No one with a sane mind would argue that, for the liberal, sex has long been a

priority. Liberals believe in free sexual expression and encourage sexual experimentation among school children. We have not yet recovered from the free love immorality (true love is never free; it always has a cost) that was begun and perpetuated by the liberals in the 1960's.

It is true that opposites between liberalism and radical Islam can also be listed, as with any comparison and contrast between any group, but the above mentioned 6 things are significant enough to claim kinship, at least to a degree. (For more information, go to www.jihadwatch.org and www.anti-cair-net.org).

Revolt or Revival?

The revolt has arrived! The coup has come! The truth is finally beginning to come out. After YEARS of enduring a liberal dominated media (and government), the winds of change have blown in like a hurricane. Conservative talk radio continues to grow by leaps and bounds and this phenomenon has even filtered down to television via the Fox News network. Reason: sane, common sense minded, conservative Americans have had enough.

We the people are tired of being told what to think and what we should tolerate, condone and endorse. We are tired of seeing Christianity bashed, God blasphemed, perversion praised, and prayer and religion expelled from public and government life. We are fed up with Greenpeace, P.E.T.A., and all manner of environmental wacko-ism. We are disgusted with so-called racism, "inequality" of rights and multiculturalism. We are sick of government programs funded by over taxation that reward the lazy and immoral and perpetuate misery, ignorance, and crime.

We have simply had it with crooked politicians who refuse to accurately represent their constituents, while pandering to lobbyists and padding their pockets. We want the ACLU, NEA, NOW and every other liberal, God hating, freedom destroying group to back off and realize they DO NOT speak for the backbone of this country but represent a liberal fringe minority. We are at the end of our patience with appointed judges who rewrite the constitution, then shove their distorted interpretation down the collective American throat, through the "omnipotent power" of their federal bench. We are going broke paying through the nose to support a government education program in public schools, that falls more behind each year, educates few, disciplines none, and frustrates all.

Rush Limbaugh single-handedly began this revolution on radio. Today, some other choices are Sean Hannity, Laura Ingraham, Dr. Laura, Bill O'Reilly, Glen

Beck, and Michael Savage, to name a few. Each is a voice crying in the wilderness and their success is due to the fact that there is an audience for their message. But so much for the conservative revolt. For all its merits, a spiritual revival is preferred over a conservative revolt.

Though the message of talk radio conservatives is refreshing for the politically conservative, they leave a gap morally and spiritually. The conservative Bible believer realizes this hard truth. There is no real national conservative Bible believing voice (Biblically known as a prophet) that hits at the crux of the problem (sin), giving the real solution. Conservatism as a philosophy can only go so far and do just so much. Good morals can contribute to the solution but is not the solution (hey, even lost people can be moral). The real solution is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, preached and lived by God called preachers in true New Testament churches, backed up by church members who are born again believers. Soul winning, intercessory prayer and holy living will do more to change culture, affect society, empty prisons, close abortion clinics, shut down dope dealers, transform homosexuals, clean up government and kill pornography than any other one thing or combination of things.

The conservative revolt has been welcome and refreshing, true enough, but are we willing to lay hold on the real solution to the mess we are in: revival? Probably not, because it will cost. Jesus never said following Him would be easy. He likened it to taking up a cross and dying. The solution requires believers to die to self, die to the world, and live for God. Until we are willing to pay the full price, do not expect any real changes.

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

1. Does Galatians 5:4 teach falling from grace? --- Kentucky



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Yes, Galatians 5:4 teaches falling from grace. But what is "falling from grace"? Falling from grace is not losing your salvation as is commonly taught by most denominations. It is quite apparent from scripture that Jesus gives eternal life, not temporary life, or life until we sin. Jesus, by grace through faith in him, gives believers the same kind of life he has, eternal life.

Falling from grace means to cast away, or go away from the sweet loving-kindness and favor from God that looks upon totally depraved sinners with love, compassion and mercy. Falling from grace is failing to trust or believe Christ has justified us or will continue to keep us secure. Falling from grace is going away from the sweet provision of God for cleansing from sin and enablement for holy living. Falling from grace is trusting your own works to keep you saved, justified and sanctified. The end result of falling from grace is believing that you are able to keep yourself until you are able to glorify your own body at the resurrection.

Needless to say, in the beginning, the churches of Galatia believed they were totally depraved sinners in need of the grace of God. After they were saved, they rightly believed they still needed the grace of God to live for him, and to be glorified at the resurrection. In process of time, however, someone came into their midst and taught a different gospel, which the churches accepted. They no longer believed they were saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They no longer believed they were justified by faith, but they changed from being justified by faith to being justified by works. These false teachers convinced them they needed to keep the law in order to keep themselves. Therefore, they "fell" from the blessed position of completely trusting Christ to the depraved position of trusting their own works in keeping the law of God.

In Galatians 1:4, Paul expressed at the beginning of this epistle, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might

deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Christ gave himself for us that he might deliver us from this present evil world. It is Christ who saves us, keeps us, and will deliver us. We are completely, totally dependent on God for everything.

Immediately after making that statement, Paul reveals his amazement that these churches had so soon left the pure gospel of Christ for the perverted gospel of salvation and service by works. Galatians 2:16 declares, "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."

I might add as a footnote that Galatians and James are not contradictory, but complementary. When a lost person tries to fulfill the demands of the law, the Holy Spirit will show him his absolute inability to keep the just commands of God, and he will be brought to the mercy and grace of God in salvation. A saved person, by obeying the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, will automatically conform to the demands of the law.

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"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

Yes, this passage of Scripture teaches falling from grace. The Holy Spirit moved Paul to write this passage to the Galatians, and this verse is just as true as every other verse in God's word. "Fallen from grace" is the condition of all those who would be justified by the law.

Galatians 2:16 says, "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." We also read in Galatians 3:11, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

There were those in the churches of Galatia that thought that they had something to gain in relationship to God by keeping the law. They may have believed in Jesus Christ as their savior but they failed to realize that they not only need Christ to be saved but they also need Christ to live a godly and holy life. Therefore, if you are trying to keep God's law in order to be right with God you will fail miserably and you will place yourself back under the bondage and condemnation of sin. Galatians 3:1-3 says, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" In chapter 4 verse 9, we read, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

The main point of Galatians is that we do not live a holy and godly life by keeping the law, but by walking in the Spirit. To keep the law of God is to walk in the flesh, and there is nothing good that we can do in the flesh. But to walk in the Spirit is to be free from the law and free from the bondage of sin. When we walk in the Spirit we will do those things that are pleasing to God and we will not satisfy the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-25).

If we have been saved by grace then we will also live by grace. If someone chooses to live by the works of the flesh then they are "fallen from grace." This doesn't mean they are lost, it means they turned from grace to works. They need to repent and turn back to Christ. You cannot please God by yourself. You need Christ!

Paul sums it up in Galatians 2:19-21, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if

righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." May we read and understand God's word.

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Obviously, something is meant by the statement that these had "fallen from grace." However, this phrase doesn't mean what many in Christendom today think it does. Let me see if I can explain.

Many, if not most, in the church at Galatia had been drawn away from the truth of free grace in Christ unto a false gospel spoken through false teachers (Gal. 1:6). They were believers, but, they had been misled by blind teachers. Paul is teaching them about the destruction that can come from legalism, or, the false belief that works play a part in salvation.

Paul taught them that trusting in works destroys our trust in Christ. That is what he means when he says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you." It is not that the blood of Christ, which once cleansed them, now is powerless. It is that they had begun to trust in themselves so much that their trust wasn't in the One it should have been in. This is perhaps the greatest danger of legalism.

Paul then taught them that if they trusted in their works, they had "fallen from grace." He doesn't here contradict the many passages in the Bible that speak of our security in Christ. He is warning against trying to gain favor with God by works. Many would tell us that this verse teaches that sin can cause you to lose your salvation. Yet, there is nothing about sin spoken of in this verse. In fact, this verse is teaching that good works cannot gain favor with God. It actually teaches that there is real security in Christ and there is no security in good works, which contradicts everything those who think you can lose your salvation believe. "Fallen from grace" doesn't mean that these have lost their salvation; it means that they have fallen from trusting in Christ alone to trusting in their good works to earn the keeping of their salvation (a grievous error which many hold to today).

This passage doesn't teach they that had fallen from *salvation*, it teaches that they had fallen from the freedom of grace in Christ back into the legalism taught by the Jews. They had placed themselves under the bondage of the law rather than using the law as a good rule for moral purity. What Paul is speaking of is not their having lost their salvation, but, their

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2. If the early church had at least 120 members according to Acts 1:15, why did Jesus observe the Lord's supper with only the eleven? --- Kentucky



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The institution of the Lord's Supper was prior to Christ's death and resurrection. The first observance of the sacred ordinance occurred when Christ was observing the Passover with His eleven apostles. After His resurrection there was a period of 40 days before Jesus ascended back up to Heaven. It is very possible that the other 109 souls were added to the church during this time frame, though we have no Scripture to support this idea. Thus, we cannot be dogmatic with this assertion.

If what is stated above is not the case, I have no clear cut answer as to why the others were not included in the observance of the Lord's Supper, except for the sovereign providence of God. As much as we hate to admit it, there are some questions that cannot sufficiently be answered this side of glory. Suffice it to say that there is a purpose, however mysterious it may be. When I come across such a question I simply file it in my Deuteronomy 29:29 file which states: **"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."**

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"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" (I Cor. 12:28).

We know from this verse of Scripture that the twelve apostles were the first church members. During the time before

Christ died there may not have been any other members to partake of the Lord's Supper with them. We have no reason to believe that all the disciples of Christ were members of the church. We do know that there were a hundred and twenty members after Christ ascended into heaven, but we do not know when these members were added. We also know the Lord's Supper took place before He died. It may be that the rest of those hundred and twenty members were not even yet added to the church until after Christ's resurrection.

Another thing is that we know Christ intended for truth to be perpetuated through the obedience of His people. Christ clearly did not want to personally observe the Lord's Supper with every disciple, but just with His apostles. He desired afterward that the apostles would in turn go and teach others all His commands and precepts (Matthew 28:19-20). This is the way God meant for truth to be perpetuated, and it is still true today. None of us were present at the original Lord's Supper, but we have the testimony of Scripture and the ministers of the word who have taught us the ways of the Lord. This is why we are able to observe the Lord's Supper to this day. **"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone"** (Eph. 2:20).

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Acts 1:15 states, **"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty)"**

The question before us seems to presuppose that the instituting of the Lord's Supper and this day were relatively close in time. However, a good study of the Scripture will assure us that there were at least 50 days between the establishment of the Lord's Supper and the day of Pentecost. Jesus was in the grave for 3 days before His resurrection. After His resurrection, He was **"seen of**

them forty days" (Acts 1:3). This makes 43 days. And it seems that there were around 7 days from His ascension until Pentecost. The day spoken of in Acts 1:15 fell between His ascension and Pentecost, which would put from 43 to 50 days between these two events giving plenty of space for things to happen.

The apostles were set in the church first (I Cor. 12:28) and were perhaps the only members of the church when He instituted the Supper. This is very possible since the commission had not yet been given. After the resurrection of Jesus, He was seen by many—some of which it is said that **"their eyes were opened"** (Luke 24:31). We know that He was seen by over 500 at once after He was risen (I Cor. 15:6). No doubt, many believed on Him after His resurrection as this gave us the complete gospel message (I Cor. 15:1-4). Surely, these were instructed by Christ of the way into the church, namely, baptism. Not that baptism saves, but, it is a prerequisite to church membership (by this, we mean membership in the local church as that is the only type of church spoken of in the Bible). Also, it is very possible that some were saved after the Great Commission was given, but, before this day spoken of in Acts 1:15.

It is impossible to answer this question definitively as the Bible is not plain concerning this. However, as we have seen, there are several possibilities of how this could be.

It is easy for us to read the gospel account and immediately think that Acts 1:15 is speaking of just a few days later. However, after seeing that there was at least one and a half months between the two, we can see the possibility of many things happening.

I pray that this feeble attempt to answer this tough question is a help to the asker.

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Matthew 26:20 states, **"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve."** Mark 14:17 states, **"And in the**

evening he cometh with the twelve."

Christ did not take the Lord's Supper with all the members of the first church because he was assembling together with his disciples to observe the Passover when he instituted the Lord's Supper. According to Exodus 12:4, the number of disciples present was restricted according to the eating of the Passover lamb. Exodus 12:4 states, **"And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb."** From what I can find, it would take approximately 20-25 people to completely consume one lamb. If this were the case, many church members would not be present. They would be observing the Passover with their own families. This did not hurt the other church members, or make the Lord's Supper invalid. It is a church ordinance, and it is valid whether all the members are present or not.

When the church I pastor observes this ordinance, we observe a valid Lord's Supper whether all the members are present or not. Likewise, when our church baptizes a believer, that baptism is valid and binding on the entire church, whether all the members are present at the baptismal service or not. Christ gave the Great Commission to the church that was present in Galilee. If some of the church members were not present, their absence did not invalidate the Commission.

John the Baptist did not baptize all the members of the first church, but that did not make his baptism less valid. John 4:1-2 records that the early church baptized before the apostles were added to the church in Luke 6. The baptisms of John 4:1-2 were just as valid as the baptisms of John the Baptist, and the baptisms in the book of Acts and later baptisms.

The Lord's Supper was the last supper Jesus partook with the disciples, before the crucifixion and resurrection. I believe the real significance was Jesus' directives to his church to celebrate it in his remembrance.

On another, perhaps unrelated thought; there is some doubt in my mind that only the twelve apostles were present at the Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper. I realize our minds are fixed on thirteen people taking the Passover and thirteen people taking that first Lord's Supper, mainly because of all the pictures we have seen of the Lord's Supper. If we would look only at scripture, our minds might be able to see a different picture.

1. The Passover is a family event, not a national event. Therefore families would be gathered together. It is apparent from Exodus 12:4 that it was permissible

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Forum Question #1

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having lost the liberty we have in Jesus.

This passage has nothing to do with salvation, but, rather with a doctrinal deviation which causes a great unnecessary burden to be placed on the saint. May we all see that we are free from the penalty of the law in Christ. By this, I am not belittling the law or saying that the moral law of God is not intact—it is and we should strive to keep it. However, it is not this *keeping* that either saves or keeps saved.

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Galatians 5:4 declares: **“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”**

No, this verse does not teach that a true child of God can somehow lose their salvation and fall out of the grace of God. It does however, teach that anyone who believes that the law has anything to do with salvation has fallen from the teaching of the free and sovereign grace of God. The Galatians had been infected with the worst sort of legalism that emphasized the keeping of the law (specifically the rite of circumcision) as part of the formula for salvation. The power of Christ's sacrifice is of none effect for those who believe that their observance of the law in any way earns them God's favor. A sinner cannot believe in a combination of his keeping of the law and Christ to save. Salvation is bound up in Christ alone! We are not saved by keeping or trying, but by trusting completely in the merits and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

The theme of salvation by grace through faith versus the false notion of law keeping for salvation is emphasized throughout the Epistle to the Galatians (cf. 1:6-8; 2:16, 20-21; 3:1-3, 10-11, 26; 4:4-6, 21-31; 5:1; 6:12-16). In spite of such overwhelming evidence, proponents of Christian apostasy continually take Galatians 5:4 out of its context to support their heresy. The people who hold to this pernicious doctrine are the very ones who Paul is condemning in this passage of Scripture. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that the person who has believed on Christ is justified from all things (Acts 13:38-39), accepted by God as righteous (Eph. 1:7), is a possessor of eternal life (John 3:16, 36; 5:24), in an indissoluble life union with Christ (Col.

3:1-3), and kept by the power of God (I Peter 1:5), with no possibility of ever being severed from the love of God in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:35-39). Those who believe that a person may be saved and then subsequently lose salvation deny the sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross, the power of His resurrection, and His ability to take care of His purchased sheep. They are in effect saying that Christ is a liar in light of John 10:27-28 which states: **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”**

The teaching of Galatians 5:4 is very simple. If a person seeks to be justified by the works of the law he has fallen away from the teaching of grace. If an individual is attempting to earn salvation by his efforts at keeping the law, then Christ and the grace of God will have no effect upon him. To attempt to be justified by the law is to reject the way of grace and cut yourself off from the benefits of the finished work of Jesus Christ. The pure grace of God in Christ is not to be mixed with the defiled works of man as a basis of salvation. Romans 11:6 illustrates this principle beautifully: **“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”**

TOM ROSS

Forum Question #2

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for more than one family to gather together to take the Passover.

2. I know Simon Peter had a wife, who no doubt would be present at this national holy day.

3. Paul stated in I Corinthians 9:5, **“Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?”** Did these apostles indeed “lead about their wives” as stated by Paul? It is indeed possible that other apostles had wives who were also present with Jesus to eat the Passover.

4. Mark 14:15 states, **“And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.”** There would be no need for a large room for thirteen people, but a large room would be necessary if there would be some 20-25 people present.

5. Luke 8:1-3 states: **“And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven**

devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.” Here is the record that the twelve disciples were with Christ, and these three women, and many others who continually company with Christ as he travels from place to place. Would any of these women be present with Christ to take the Passover?

I know these things are speculative, so I am not making an absolute statement on the number of people present to take the Passover with Christ.

WAYNE REYNOLDS

Studies in Esther

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minister to the Apostle Paul. David put his life on the line to go against the Philistine, Goliath, and slay him. David's three mighty men put their lives on the line to go to the well of Bethlehem and bring back the water to David. God has required that kind of service before and will require it again.

Esther acknowledged that if God required her to lose her life, then she should not seek to save it or she would indeed lose it. Her spirit was consonant with that of Christ when He said, **“He that findeth his life shall lose it: he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it”** (Matt. 10:39). We may be required to give up all. Esther had realized that she could not seek to preserve her life. She had to put the will of God first and do His duty, even before seeking her own safety.

Esther said, **“If I perish, I perish.”** She realized that if she is indeed fulfilling the commandments of God, doing the will of God, and she does perish, she has fulfilled God's will. Some would look at it and say she was a failure. No, she would not have been if she were doing God's service. When we are doing the will of God and carrying out His commandments, even though from the physical standpoint we seem to fail, we are not failures. We are doing the will of God. Whether by life or death, we serve Him and we have not failed.

Then Mordecai gathered the Jews in Shushan and told them they were to fast for three days and three nights. They were to pray to God that this thing would go well and be worked out to the glory of God and the deliverance, the blessing, of His people.

Conclusion – It is notable that Esther said, **“I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days”** (Est. 4:11). At this very time, for thirty days, the king had not called her into this presence even though she was one that was highly in his favor. She does not know why he has not called her. This is interesting providentially because this makes Esther's duty all the more difficult.

We see the hand of God's providence here because He had ordained this. He is the same God that told Israel, **“I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction”** (Isa. 48:10). Sometimes God permits and brings obstacles in the way for us to go through. He told the children of Israel that He was going to prove them. This was daunting to Esther.

We see Mordecai as a messenger of the mercy of God to Esther. In many ways, we look at what Mordecai did and might see it as a reproof. Most of us do not like to be reproved or have it pointed out that we are doing something that is wrong, or that we ought to do something in another way that would be right. Solomon wrote that when you rebuke a wise man he would become even wiser (Pro. 9:8-9). The ones that will not receive rebuke are those who stiffen their neck and their end is going to be destruction.

Esther received this reproof. Mordecai was a messenger of the mercy of God because Esther's faith was strengthened within her at the words of Mordecai. He had a strong belief and faith in the promises of God and the deliverance of the people of Israel, which encouraged her. She drew strength from Mordecai.

He admonished her and recovered her from the fear of man. She was staggering at the promises because she was afraid to come into the king's presence. If she thought it no big deal to come into the king presence, then she would not have hesitated at all but she was afraid of man more than she was afraid of God. Christ told us not to fear men nor trust in them.

Thirdly, we see something that Alexander Carson observed, “that confidence in God does not preclude the use of means” (*Confidence in God*, p. 54). Mordecai here had a very strong faith. He believed in the promises of God, but he also believed that God's promise and His purpose was going to be executed through means.

So our faith has to be put to work. James wrote, **“Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone”** (Jam. 2:17). Real faith in God means we are going to use all ordained means and trust in God to prosper it in our hand. **“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God”** (Jam. 2:21-23). What was the faith and works on the part of Abraham? God had promised Abraham that he would have a son, and that, through his son, he was going to become a blessed man. He told him there was a

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Studies in Esther

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nation that was going to come from his seed. God had told him to go up and offer up Isaac. Abraham was responsible to obey what God had told him to do. But, if Abraham had killed Isaac there, he would have had no lineage, then the commandments of God could not have been true. **“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness”** (Rom. 4:3). Abraham was willing and prepared to do what God told him to do and all the while, he believed that God would provide Himself a sacrifice in the place of his son. Mordecai exemplified this faith, because he was seeking to use all the ordained and lawful means to bring about the deliverance of the people of Israel, yet his ultimate faith was in God for that deliverance.

Charity Never Faileth

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or a tinkling cymbal.” Charity does not consist in flowery speeches nor in all the tender words that may come from the tongue.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” Then a man may have a vast number of gifts, a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the mysteries of truth, and may **“have all faith,”** (it does not say, “little faith,” O no! not “little faith,”) but he may **“have all faith,”** and be eternally lost. What numbers there are who, with all their talk about charity, and all their gifts and abilities, have not a grain of religion in their hearts, and who, living and dying without charity, will be everlastingly damned at the last.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” What! Give all his goods to feed the poor, exercise himself in acts of sympathy with the poor and needy, and even give his body to be burned, and not have charity? Then I know this charity cannot consist in man’s performances; it cannot be that which arises from nature, with all its adornment; it cannot be the product of flesh and blood. No, it is nothing more nor less than the sovereign, discriminating love and choice of the Holy Trinity fixed upon the elect. That is a charity which few men will speak well of. They have charity for themselves, charity for their fellow-mortals, charity for infidels, charity for everything under the sun. But they have no charity for God’s discriminating love, mercy, and grace; this

they treat with the greatest possible detestation. Ah! And it is a wonderful mercy that you and I are not among them. I once was, and should have been now one of them, had it not been for charity.

We shall endeavour to notice this charity,

I. In its *fountain*.

II. In the *objects that it relieves and provides for*.

III. In its *durability*: **“Charity never faileth.”**

I. By the *fountain* of charity I understand the Holy Trinity in unity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—one God.

Just look at the blessed sovereign, discriminating love, compassion, and tenderness of God the Father in the gift of His beloved Son, His equal, His fellow! A sovereign, free gift, including all the treasures that ever a God could provide for the salvation and glorification, the deliverance and bringing home of His blessed family to immortal glory. This is an act of charity in God the Father that beggars language to describe; yea, and it is not within the power of the heart to enter into its height and depth, its breadth and length; it is like a sea of boundless flow, which overwhelms with astonishment. The apostle could only wonder at it and admire it. **“Thanks be unto God,”** he says, **“for his unspeakable gift,”** the gift of charity, none of us have ever merited such a gift as this; we have deserved only bitter torments and everlasting damnation for ever. But this blessed gift of God the Father is an act of sovereign, discriminating grace. He gave His beloved Son; and as the apostle says, if He **“spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”**

Here you see the blessed freeness of charity, in the electing love of God the Father, not sparing His own Son, but giving Him up to be smitten by justice, to be the propitiation for our sins. The apostle John says, **“In this was manifested the love of God toward us.”** Charity has nothing to do with any merit, with anything we have ever done or ever could do. **“Herein is love.”** How? **“Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”** He sent Him to bear our sins, to suffer for our sins, to agonize on the tree for our sins. Is not that an act of charity? **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”** What a blessed gift! And nothing can overthrow it; nothing internal, external, or infernal. All the blasphemous thoughts that rise up in your heart, all your wretched unbelief, all your wretched sinking—nothing within or without can ever overthrow this gift, that was given for the propitiation of the sins of His elect. It is a

gift that shall stand for ever; and therefore it is charity worth speaking of.

If the Holy Ghost is pleased to give us a sight of charity in the fountain, the Son of God as equal with the Father in doing, completing, and perfecting every jot and tittle that ever the church of God or justice requires; if the Spirit of God leads you and me by faith into this blessed act of charity. The Son of God in performing all this for us, it will be such a blessed spectacle as to break our hearts and humble our souls, and bring us with love to His feet, and make us mourn like a dove that we have abused Him in the manner that we have. Was it not charity to come and take our nature into union with His divine person? Was it anything but an act of charity that ever He should come and be **“made under the law,”** have all its demands placed to His account, to carry this to the cross, to stand as the Head and Surety, and Bondsman of His people, and to have all the wrath poured out on Himself that they had merited, that they might be saved with an everlasting salvation? This is charity, my friends, **“charity”** that hides or covers **“a multitude of sins.”** He has done the work and completed it; He has gone to **“the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;”** and He has done it completely and perfectly.

The longer I live, the more I feel that if there were one thing left undone, if the devil were not conquered, sin not expiated, justice not satisfied, the law not honoured and magnified, death not overcome, and every burden not carried, I should not have a ray of hope. I used to think I saw this as clear as the noon-day thirty or forty years ago; but I saw it very differently then to what I see now; for I see and feel now that if one hair-breadth is left for me to do to merit heaven, or bring as a plea before God, I am undone for ever and ever. But on the Mount of Calvary the Lord Jesus Christ undertook the cause of His people; that there is not a jot nor a tittle that He left undone, but **“by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,”** and **“there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”** Here is complete perfection. **“Saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.”** “Ah!” say you, “you get very high.” You want to get as high as that if you are poor beggars; I know you do; and I can assure you it is very sweet and precious to get up into these things. I must say from my heart I hate corruption though I have so much of it; and I hate doubts and fears, for all I am so plagued with them. But to come up into the blessed fullness of Christ, and to see His acts of charity, and to rejoice that His blessed work is finished, this is sweet indeed. And now He has gone to glory; and as sure as the Head is there, the members will go there too.

If the Comforter leads you and me to have a sweet sight of that charity which is in Christ as the fountain, equal with the Father, how it will humble our hearts! What could have moved the Holy Spirit to pick us up out of the world, to stop us from going to hell? We were going there headlong; we were drinking in iniquity like water, scorning the things of God, partaking of the pleasures of time and sense; and even though we stood, as it were, upon the very precipice of eternity, we were hardened in sin, and still turned our backs upon the Lord. What, then, could have moved the Holy Ghost to stop us? It was charity, nothing else. What could have moved Him to touch the heart of one thief on the cross and leave the heart of the other untouched? What could have moved Him to stop Saul of Tarsus in his career? What could have moved Him to stop Manasseh? And what could have moved Him to stop you and me? Why, nothing but His own grace. **“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.”** **“By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.”** It is sovereign, free charity, flowing from His infinite affection and love to the objects of His choice.

What could have moved the Holy Spirit to strip you and me of our own righteousness? How gladly we would have covered ourselves with our own robes! How hard we struggled and toiled to get at something that would make us more fit for the presence of God, and better prepared to receive His mercy! And how He put them off again and again, and brought us to see an end of them all! What could have ever moved His godly pleasure, that He should stand by us as He has done, after beginning the good work in our souls, which He says He will carry on and **“perform unto the day of Jesus Christ?”** It is all charity; and, little charity as I have, I love this charity; I love it in my heart. I have been told scores and hundreds of times that if I had a good deal more charity it would be much better. So it would; I wish I had more of this charity; but as for that fleshly, fawning charity which men use to bolster up and pamper one another, God keep my soul from it! I know this charity, the blessed Triune God in His everlasting mercy, when it is felt in the heart, will produce all the fruits that are honourable to God, and useful to man, and comfortable to the heart. It shall never be without these blessed fruits and effects. But it is charity that never can be bought and never can be sold; it is perfect and complete.

II. Let us notice the *objects that charity relieves*.

The objects! Why, it is not the rich. A man that is rich in his own

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Charity Never Faileth

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performances, a man that is pleased with himself and his own doings, neither wants charity, nor will charity give him a crumb. The rich charity "sends empty away." When our Lord speaks of Charity providing a supper, and having His table spread with all manner of dainties, and going out to invite certain characters to come and partake of it, one said he could not come, for he had bought a yoke of oxen, and was going to prove them. His oxen and all that he had were dearer to him a thousand times than all the feast Charity could provide. A second says, "**I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come;**" so that he had no taste for it. Well, then Charity, the master, sends out into the highways and hedges to poor needy wretches that seemed cast out, with none to help them, and says, "**Invite these;**" yes, "**and compel them to come in;**" He says, "**that my house my be filled.**" Why, some of those poor wretches, could not think of going in. Such ragged wretches, such poverty-stricken wretches, such dreadful rebels, to think of coming to Charity's table, where the King of kings was in all His glory! Their poor souls say it would be presumption; but the Master says, "**Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.**" So mighty power constrains them, and they come; and Charity receives the halt, the lame, the blind, the leper, the beggar, the pauper—poor souls destitute of anything to help themselves. All they can do is to beg; and Charity relieves these.

For all these, a rich feast is provided; and God sends His messenger to you. Are you needy, and wanting strength; naked, and wanting righteousness; lost, and wanting salvation; sorrowful, and wanting comfort? Charity has provided everything to supply you. And, what a blessing is it when charity opens the door for such poor begging, groaning, crying souls, and they get to have a taste of the feast He has provided, and the blessings he has prepared for them, and that He gives them so freely, "**without money and without price!**" There is nothing wanting but the appetite. To enjoy a glass of cold water, we must have thirst; and just as God brings the soul to feel its wants and distresses, so Charity provides for him, though he may sometimes be knocking at the door, and begging again and again, afraid that God will never relieve him.

How many times that case has been an argument to my soul, the case of the poor woman that came to Jesus Christ for her daughter, who was "**grievously vexed with a devil;**" who could go nowhere else, who had no doubt tried everything she could. The woman cried after Him that He would have mercy upon her, for her daughter was grievously vexed with a devil; and He answered her not a word. But she was not discouraged. She was like

a poor beggar that comes and applies for relief again and again. An old woman used to come to our house for years, every Saturday, and she looked for her halfpenny or her penny as naturally as could be. One Saturday she came when I was in a sad confusion; I had no text, and things went wrong to flesh and blood; it was a cold, wintry, stormy day, and I spoke very roughly to her, and told her to keep at home, and not to come there every Saturday. "I hope, Sir, you will not turn me off," she said, "after serving me so long a time; it is very wet and cold." I began to think how I had been to the Lord again and again a poor beggar, and what would have been the case if the Lord had turned His back upon me.

So the poor woman that followed Christ cried after Him. The disciples said, "**Lord, send her away, for she crieth after us.**" But Jesus speaks to her, and His words seem more calculated to strike terror into her heart than to encourage her; but charity propped her invisibly up; aye, charity was in her heart, teaching her to beg, and how to go on, for it was not her ingenuity that was at the bottom. The Lord says, "**I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;**" and she came and fell down before Him, and worshipped Him. "**Lord, help me,**" she said, "**I am a poor needy beggar.**" He answered her and said, "**It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs.**" One would have thought that this would have been enough to stop the woman's mouth; but she had the teaching of the Holy Spirit in her heart; the teaching of God was in her soul, telling her to seek charity in that very spot and in that very way. She said, "**Truth, Lord.**" She was not offended at His setting her forth as a dog, a poor Gentile dog; no, she was a poor beggar, stripped of everything, and had only Him to come to; but she looks up with a childlike simplicity, and says, "**Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.**" So, she was brought to creep under the table, and beg for the crumbs that fell from it; not to sit at the table, and be a prince amongst them, but to be favoured to go and sit underneath, and catch the crumbs that the children might drop. Come, broken-hearted soul, that can creep as a very dog under the table, and beg of God for the crumbs to drop down into your heart. What a wonderful answer He gives! "**O woman,**" He says, "**great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.**"

So charity provides for paupers, for beggars, for the needy, for the helpless, for the miserable, for the sick, for the halt, that cannot help themselves. Wherever He gives the appetite, He will give the provision in His own time; and wherever He gives the poverty, He will in His own time give the riches, and display His mighty glory.

III. And we find the *durability* of

charity, that it "**never faileth.**" It always continues. What a blessing that is. We have not got to the worst of our pauperism yet; God will keep showing us more and more of it, and will make us see more and more of our emptiness and need. And, blessed be God, charity never fails; it is a rich treasure, day by day, and week by week; and let your troubles be whatever they may, there is a storehouse provided, for every blessing is laid up in Christ, and it will supply the poor all through time, and bring them home to eternal glory, for "**charity never faileth.**" How often the child of God is afraid that he has wearied the mercy of God. I have been afraid of it many a time. After all my wandering, and carnality, and deathly feeling, and discontentedness, notwithstanding many blessings, and mercies, and kindnesses I have received from the Lord, I have been afraid lest I have so wearied His love that He could not bear with me any longer. But charity is everlasting, immutable; there is no wasting in love, there is no death in love; there is nothing that can extinguish love, there is nothing that can drown love, there is nothing that can ever overthrow it. It is fixed upon the weaklings, the children, the lambs; upon the poor, the needy, the empty, and the polluted; and while God keeps us sensible of our beggary and our misery, and enables us to come to charity's door, all is well, and all will end well.

Ah, "**charity never faileth!**" I know very well that if it were to fail we should be cut off; but it never can; and therefore in all our necessities, with all our abusing and despising of it, charity is sufficient to supply and cover all. If we go to Him as beggars, standing in his righteousness, we shall by and by hear the blessed assurance: "**I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.**" "**Charity never faileth,**" and never will fail. God keep you and me poor beggars! I used to be afraid of being kept too low; but I have lived to find the blessedness of being kept a beggar upon charity.

There is nothing that charity requires, but one thing. "I thought you said before that charity was all free, sovereign." Yes, but it requires one thing, and it will have it. What is that? Why, gratitude, and thankfulness and praise. Now, even amongst men, if a giver of charity finds that the object of it, instead of being thankful, looks for it as a right, it would shut up his heart directly. "It is good to give thanks unto the Lord;" and therefore, wherever charity comes it produces gratitude, and a blessed feeling of praise and honour unto God as the Giver; not gratitude as a merit, as if it would buy charity, but gratitude as the effect and fruit of charity. There is a great deal of difference between the two; and therefore, my friends, look at your hearts here. I have watched this in my heart. I

have felt at times in my soul a mercy from God, and something else has caught my attention, and drives away my gratitude. But be sure of this, that wherever there is this charity, it will produce gratitude, and bring the soul up to God, and lead to glory, obedience, honour, and love to His holy name. God bless you and me with more of it, and grant that we may have the apostle's desire, that our hearts may be directed "into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

Redeeming the Time

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days are evil more than any other time? When has there ever been such a worldwide sense of evil? When have men ever dedicated themselves on such a universal level, to commit such deeds of evil and wickedness? When has man ever made his inherent depravity so outwardly evident? We read concerning the time of Noah that "**..God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**" (Gen. 6:5.) Now, if in the time of Noah men were so wicked, and then we read in Lk. 17:26, "**And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man**", then we must believe that these days which we live in must be very wicked indeed. These days are so wicked that when God once before saw this level of depravity He destroyed the entire population of mankind (with the exception of eight in the ark) with a flood. This time, He will take out His people and then He will subject mankind to a terrible tribulation. Since the days are certainly evil, these verses must apply to us in a very direct way. Therefore, we must be extremely conscious of the use of the time that is given to us.

Wouldn't you and I also agree that this is the day when time itself is at a premium more than any other day? When have men ever rushed about in such a frantic manner? In Dan. 12:4 we read, "**But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.**" The day in which we live is perhaps the time of the end. Certainly today it is true that many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased. Today time is at a premium. It seems that none of us have enough time to do the things that we want to do. At the end of the day, we realize that there was so much more that we needed to get done. And I am talking about physical things. How much more terrible it is that at the end of the day we can look back and see that we did not get around to doing the things that would have been appropriate to do in the service of the

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Lord!

I want to think about these verses and some similar verses today, and use these to exhort and instruct us. Perhaps we may find, as we study these verses, that we are convicted concerning our poor use of time. Hopefully, though, we will find some encouragement and some incentive to continue on, and to seek to use what time that God has allowed us to glorify and honor Him.

Time

In the first point, I want to think about the concept of time itself. I believe that time, as we know it, is a creation of God. We read in Gen. 1:3-5, **“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”** Now, it is a very interesting thing that day and night were created before the sun, the moon, and the stars were created (Gen. 1:14-19) on the fourth day. It is also interesting that God tells us after He has created day and night, and light and darkness, that the evening and the morning were the first day. This seems to me to be the first evidence of the existence of time. After all, this was the first day. Before this, there was only God. But, as He goes about to bring His creation into existence, the first thing that He does is create light. (The darkness is there, and it is His creation only in the fact that it is known to be darkness through the knowledge of light.) Along with the coming of light, there is time.

Time is an intangible thing, but it is nevertheless something that exists. Only God is unaffected by time. He stands outside of the circle of time, and it has no bearing on Him. He is eternal. He is the I Am. We as saved individuals have everlasting life (Jn. 3:15, 16, 36), but our earthly life has a beginning. Even the spiritual life that we have begun when God gave us life (Eph. 2:1). In a sense, we could say that the everlasting life that we have is eternal, since its source is God eternal. However, if we consider the beginning of our life to be when the Holy Spirit quickened us and made us alive, then we can say that from that moment on we had everlasting life, but it can be traced to a beginning.

As I want to consider it today, I believe that time is actually a gift. (See Eccl. 5:19.) You and I do not own time. You and I cannot create or destroy time. You and I cannot give or take time. It just is. However, our God is gracious and He alone can give and take time. (See Josh. 10:12-14 and II Kings 20:8-11.) He alone can create and destroy something that is intangible and so much unaffected by us. And in His mercy and grace He has

determined to allow us a certain amount of time. We cannot receive more than He has determined, neither will we receive one second less than He has determined to allot to us. Since time is a gift, we must consider it as such.

The Restrictions of Time

Time affects everyone. All men and women, boys and girls, are subject to the restrictions of time. We are born into this world, and from the moment that we are born, we are under the constraints of time. We must proceed forward in time and we cannot slow it down, nor can we speed it up. **“I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them”** (Eccl. 9:11-12; see also Eccl. 3:1-8). Time **“falleth suddenly”** upon each of us. We cannot delay it, nor can we avert it.

Our bodies are tied to time. We will grow as time moves on – or else we will die. Then as our bodies grow, we will eventually get to the point where we are full-grown. We read in Ps. 90:12, **“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”** Our days are numbered and we will live a certain amount of days on this earth. The sooner that we realize this, the sooner we can apply our hearts unto wisdom. From the time that we are grown-up, it seems that time is evidenced by our deteriorating bodies. If we return to Ps. 90 and read v. 10 we find that Moses tells us, **“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”** No one yet has been able to eradicate the effect that time has on the human body.

Another restriction of time is that we cannot seemingly get everything that we want to get done in a day's time. No matter how much you have to do, you must allow that time will not always permit you to accomplish everything that you have planned to do. The writer of Ecclesiastes spoke of a **“race”** (Eccl. 9:11). The Apostle Paul also spoke of a race in ICor. 9:24, **“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.”** This is very true in the spiritual realm. We are involved in a race. There is a start line and there is a finish line. What we do in between, and how we serve the Lord in between is what counts. But there is also a physical application here. In our physical lives we are daily caught up in the running to and fro that Daniel spoke of in Dan. 12:4. The days of our lives are

hectic and disorganized. Sometimes the chores of the days stretch into the nights. These things distract us from our service to God. We should first take care of the things that are necessary to nourish the spiritual man, and those things that draw us closer to God, and then we will find that the physical things are not such a burden nor are they such a distraction.

The Days are Evil

Since we all are subject to time, and since we all have to deal with the restrictions of time, we all have an opportunity before us. All of us are given the opportunity, every moment that we are allowed to live, to do something of value. It is a terrible thing when we do not take advantage of the opportunity that we have before us. In Lk. 19:11-27 we read the parable of the ten pounds. In this parable we are instructed that one day the nobleman will return. In His absence we are to use the talents that He has given us (v. 13) to gain more talents (vv. 16-19). Those that do not use what He has given them are counted as wicked servants (v. 22) and even that which they seem to have is taken from them (v. 24).

What we are being told in our text verse is that the days are evil. What is a day, except a measurement of time? Therefore, what we are being told is that we must *redeem* the time from its normally evil tendency. In other words, if we allow things to proceed as they normally do, only evil will be done. We are to snatch that time from the grasp of evil and dedicate that time unto the service of God. There is no natural man who labors under the constraints of time that does any good on his own. The requirement that is placed upon us is that we should do good with the time that is allowed us. The Lord Jesus gives us an example of this, when He tells us in Jn. 9:4, **“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”** We must labor while these wicked days continue. We must not rest on our laurels and allow others to do the work. We must not let the wicked days of this time pass us by unheeded.

The Redemption of Time

Though sometimes we fail, there are times when we do take advantage of the time that we are allowed. This gift of time that God has given to us is something that we need to take advantage of. When we are successful, then we are doing that which we were created for. We read in Is. 43:21, **“This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.”** We are obligated to praise the Lord while we are yet in this world. We are the only men and women that are capable of honoring and praising God willingly, for we are the saved from amongst a wicked and totally degenerate race of men. Since we have been saved from eternal damnation, and since we have been given everlasting lives that we do not deserve,

it behooves us to redeem the time serving and praising the Lord God of heaven and earth.

In Is. 38:18-20 we read, **“For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.”** These are the words of King Hezekiah when he was informed by Isaiah that the Lord had granted unto him a healing from the sickness that he had and had added unto his days fifteen years. Hezekiah did not intend to squander those additional days that the Lord had given unto him. And as we study his life we can see that he did not waste those days, but he did seek to teach Judah the ways of God, and he did spend much time praising God in the house of the Lord. Oh, that we were faithful to serve the Lord with the time that He has given us, even as Hezekiah was faithful!

You know, the fifteen years that were added to Hezekiah's life were considered an extension of his life. But as far as you and I know, our day of death could be today, tomorrow, or next week. Or perhaps the Lord could return on any of these days as well. Therefore, we should consider each morning that we awake in this present world as an extension of our lives. We should therefore seek to redeem that time from the evil that surrounds us, and praise the Lord and serve the Lord as it is required of us. Each and every new day should be considered to be an opportunity to heap additional praises upon the Lord that we could not have done if we had been in the grave. What I mean is that once our bodies lie in the grave we will no longer have opportunity to praise God before men. We will no longer have the ability to witness to men and women and to testify of the greatness of our God. Men and women will still be saved, but it will not be as a result of our testimony. Let us pray that God will use us while we are yet alive. Let us tell God on a daily basis that we are His to use, and please make use of us while we are yet on this earth.

Conclusion

Time is something that we cannot avoid, alter, create, or destroy. It is given to us by a gracious God, Who would have us to do wonderful things to glorify Him in the time that He has allowed us. You know, if we do glorify God while we are living, we do not make Him *more* God, nor do we make Him *greater* God. We do not change Him. God desires that we would serve Him, and redeem the time, so that we can be found to be worthy servants. He desires that we can be found

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THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

America Bids Farewell to President Ronald Wilson Reagan

WASHINGTON (EP) – Hundreds of thousands of Americans waited long hours in stifling conditions to pay their final respects to former President Ronald Reagan in California and Washington, D.C., during the second week of June. Reagan died from complications associated with Alzheimer's disease on June 5 at age 93.

Folks stood in lines up to a mile-and-a-half long to wait for a turn to view the flag-draped casket of the nation's 40th president. In California, some waited over eight hours. Visitors in Washington faced similar waits, as well as battles with high temperatures. Emergency workers reported over a hundred cases of heat exhaustion and set up first aid tents.

But the throngs of people who faced the long lines and difficult conditions did it with reverent patience. It didn't matter how long they had to wait or how uncomfortable they might be. They wanted to show their respect for a man they thought was great.

The American public's reaction to the death of Ronald Reagan was a testimony to the popularity and influence of a man who had been out of the public eye for over 10 years due to the illness that ultimately took his life. He was a man credited with ending the Cold War and starting an economic resurgence the country still enjoys.

But Christians and pro-life leaders remember more than Reagan's foreign and economic policies. They also remember him as a pro-life president. In what some call one of the most important presidential proclamations ever made, Reagan declared:

"I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim and declare the unalienable personhood of every American, from the moment of conception until natural death, and I do proclaim, ordain, and declare that I will take care that the Constitution and laws of the United States are faithfully executed for the protection of America's unborn children" - Presidential Proclamation, Jan. 14, 1988.

And though Reagan was never able to pass legislation to protect the unborn,

many say his pro-life message was an important beginning to the work of undoing Roe v. Wade.

Sixteen years later – though the nation is still embroiled in a fierce battle over the issue of human life – many Christians remember Ronald Reagan as the president who shaped much of their thinking about public policy and gave them hope for the cause of life in America.

In the days after his death, many of those former friends and admirers remembered the man who once said, "Whatever else history may say about me when I'm gone, I hope that it will record that I appealed to your best hopes, not your worst fears; to your confidence rather than your doubts. My dream is that you will travel the road ahead with liberty's lamp guiding your steps and opportunity's arm steadying your way."

The Rev. Billy Graham – who was a spiritual advisor and close friend to Reagan for many years – remembered Reagan's presidency and friendship fondly, and asked Americans to pray for his family. Graham – who had been hospitalized following surgery for a pelvic fracture – was released from an Asheville, N.C., hospital the day after Reagan's death.

"Today I would ask all of those who have been praying for me – and for whose prayers I am so very grateful – to lift up our nation, our late president and his wife in her time of mourning," Graham said in a press release from the hospital.

Dr. James Dobson – president of Focus on the Family – also shared memories of his encounters with the former president. During Reagan's administration, Dobson served on several presidential committees dealing with family issues. He and his wife, Shirley, were frequent visitors to the White House.

"Ronald Reagan will always be one of my heroes because he had the courage to defend the unborn child and openly support the institution of the family at a time when it was considered politically suicidal to even utter such things," Dobson wrote.

Dobson recalled the president's determination to ease the tax burden on American families and to protect children from the evils of pornography. And he worked with Reagan throughout his presidency on issues such as teen

pregnancy and parental rights.

But Dobson reminded his audience that when the work is done and life draws to a close as it has for President Reagan, what matters most is eternity.

"Not only did Ronald Reagan's day in the sun quickly come to an end, but so must yours and mine. Even for the highest and mightiest among us – those who achieve every honor and accomplishment – there will come a time when the books will close on our brief journey on this earth," Dobson said.

"My lifelong prayer has been that when that moment comes for me, I will hear those words from Jesus Christ, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world.' I believe Ronald Wilson Reagan was greeted by the Savior with those words of welcome when he reached the portals of heaven. I hope to meet him again someday in that bright land that will know no night."

House Considers Bill to Protect Churches' Tax-Exempt Status

WASHINGTON (EP) – Churches that allow political activity on their campuses would face reduced fines before losing their tax-exempt status under a provision in a tax bill the House is scheduled to consider in June.

The proposal was introduced by House Republicans to protect churches from immediately losing their tax-exempt status for mistakenly endorsing political candidates. Opponents of the legislation say it will blur the line of separation of church and state.

The bill – the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 – would impose reduced fines against churches and other places of worship that "inadvertently allow political activity on their properties more than twice a year," The Associated Press reported. On the third violation, the religious organizations would lose their tax exemption for one year.

The Internal Revenue Service prohibits political campaign activity from taking place at all organizations that receive tax exempt status under a section of the federal tax code – including most churches and religious groups. Violators could lose their tax breaks and face excise taxes.

The plan "provides the IRS with a remedy short of revoking tax-exempt status," said a Republican aide to House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep. Bill Thomas of California, who wrote the corporate tax bill, which was formally filed June 4.

Barry Lynn – executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State – criticized the legislation.

"This just basically tells churches that ignorance is the best policy," Lynn told AP. "If you claim you don't know what the policy is, you can get away with multiple violations and dramatically reduced fines."

Bush campaign spokesman Steve Schmidt said Lynn represents "an extreme position – he wants to exclude people of faith from America's civic life."

"Not only is that misguided, it's dangerous," Schmidt told reporters. "You don't want to exclude people from the electoral process, from the democratic process. You want to include people."

"People of faith have as much right to participate in the political process as anyone else."

Senate Hears Testimony on Denial of Religious Freedoms in America

Senators got an earful recently from Americans who are tired of losing their religious rights, but not all of the lawmakers think there's a problem

WASHINGTON (EP) – Religious freedom isn't only in jeopardy in places like China and North Korea – it's under fire in the United States, too. Some members of the Senate heard that firsthand June 8 from people whose rights are being trampled – but some lawmakers weren't moved.

The hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights was held in response to reports of schools kicking religious groups off campus, kids being told not to say "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and government seals being targeted for bearing a cross, according to Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who chairs the subcommittee.

"This pervasive hostility to faith is wrong," he said, "and it is without constitutional basis."

But some on the committee, such as Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., denied there is a problem.

"I disagree a bit with the title of this hearing, 'Hostility to Religious Expression in the Public Square,'" Feingold said. "At least in my experience, I do not think that there is such widespread hostility."

The committee then heard tearful testimony of persecution from a 12-year-old Muslim girl, a Jewish family, and World War II veteran Barney Clark, who is a frequent visitor to a Balch Springs, Texas, senior center where he went to court to defend his friends' right to sing religious songs at the facility.

"The Constitution guarantees each American the right (of) peaceful assembly," Clark said. "Now I ask you, what could be more peaceful than a bunch of old folks sitting around singing good ole Gospel songs that this country was founded on?"

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Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., who urged support of his Constitution Restoration Act recognizing the rights of the states to acknowledge God, said the courts are exceeding their power.

"These tortured legal decisions," he said, "distort our Constitution, our nation's history and its tradition in an effort to secularize our system of government and to divest morality from our rule of law."

Former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore also testified, telling committee members the debate is "not between those who believe in God and those who do not — it's between those who understand the First Amendment and those who do not."

Federal Court Blocks Partial-Birth Abortion Ban

SAN FRANCISCO (EP) – Supporters of a federal ban on the grisliest abortion technique on the market suffered a blow June 1 when a San Francisco federal court judge ruled that the partial-birth abortion ban is unconstitutional.

The ruling means that the ban cannot be enforced against Planned Parenthood Federation of America clinics and affiliated abortion providers, who perform at least half of the estimated 1.3 million abortions each year in the U.S. Planned Parenthood brought the lawsuit against the government.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Phyllis Hamilton came in one of three lawsuits challenging the federal law. The other two cases – in New York and Nebraska – are expected to end within a few weeks.

President Bush passed the Partial Birth Abortion Act last November. The law banned a type of abortion in which an unborn child is partially delivered and then killed by the puncturing or crushing of his or her skull.

Justice Department attorneys argued that the practice is inhumane, causes pain to the unborn child and is never medically necessary. A government lawyer told the judge that partial-birth abortion "blurs the line of abortion and infanticide," according to The Associated Press.

Several doctors testified that an unborn child does feel pain during the procedure. But Judge Hamilton was unmoved by the defense attorney's arguments, and agreed with pro-abortion activists who contended that a woman's "right to choose" is paramount. Hamilton said it is therefore "irrelevant" whether an unborn child suffers pain.

"The act poses an undue burden on a woman's right to choose," the judge wrote in her decision.

Pro-abortion proponents were thrilled with the decision. Beth Parker, a

San Francisco lawyer who represented Planned Parenthood, told reporters that the decision "is an enormous victory for women's health, the right to medical privacy and the right to choose."

But Justice Department spokeswoman Monica Goodling said the ruling is a defeat for the lives of unborn children, and that the government "will continue to devote all resources necessary to defend this act of Congress, which President Bush has said 'will end an abhorrent practice and continue to build a culture of life in America.'"

The Justice Department plans to appeal the ruling, and it will likely wind up in the Supreme Court.

Bush's re-election campaign responded to the decision, saying: "Today's tragic ruling upholding partial-birth abortion shows why America needs judges who will interpret the law and legislate from the bench... John Kerry's judicial nominees would similarly frustrate people's will and allow this grotesque procedure to continue."

Gary Bauer, political activist and chairman of Campaign for Working Families, echoed the president's concern about judicial activism. "This law – banning one of the most obscene and barbaric abortion procedures – passed Congress overwhelmingly," Bauer said. "Yet, once again, one arrogant, un-elected judge has overturned the will of the American people, and hundreds, perhaps thousands of innocent babies may die needlessly this year from this horrific form of infanticide."

Bauer also emphasized that the November election is vital for the appointment of more pro-life judges to federal posts.

"This November we have a tremendous opportunity to expand our (Republican) majority in the Senate," he said. "If we sweep these seats, we can break the judicial logjam in the Senate and confirm President Bush's conservative judicial nominees to the federal courts."

Oregon Churches Key in Ballot Drive for Constitutional Amendment

PORTLAND, Ore. (EP) – While the U.S. House of Representatives debates a federal measure to protect the tax-exempt status of churches that mistakenly engage in political activity, churchgoers in Oregon are making no mistake about mixing politics and religion.

Supporters of a state constitutional ban on homosexual marriage have tapped about 1,000 Oregonian churches to help collect the 100,840 valid signatures needed to get the measure on the November ballot.

Though the Internal Revenue Service forbids tax-exempt organizations – including churches – from formally endorsing political candidates – the law

does allow some lobbying on legislative matters, including ballot initiatives.

Churches are taking advantage of that provision to collect signatures in the hopes of forcing a referendum on an amendment.

At the New Hope Community Church in Clackamas, Ray Cotton, the pastor, said tables are set up in the church foyer and people are encouraged to sign the petitions after the service, according to The Associated Press. About 1,000 people signed May 30, he said, the first major effort to get signatures.

Ballot measure advocates often spend months collecting signatures. But the sponsors of the same-sex marriage ban didn't get court approval to begin circulating petitions until May 21. The signature deadline is July 2.

"That's quite a tall order," Tim Nashif of the Defense of Marriage Coalition, which is leading the campaign, told AP. "We wouldn't be able to do this unless Oregonians as a whole respond. It can't just be the churches."

And while the order might be tall, history suggests Oregon might be up to the task. The Oregon Citizens Alliance used ballot initiatives in the late 1980s and early 1990s to qualify initiatives against the homosexual and abortion agendas.

Virginia Park Halts Baptisms in River; Free Speech Advocates Outraged

RICHMOND, Va. (EP) – The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) rarely takes up for Christians. But even the ACLU is crying foul over a recent incident at a public park in Virginia where officials asked a minister to leave after baptizing 12 new members of his congregation in the park's river.

The Rev. Todd Pyle – pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Stafford – said he chose the outdoor baptism because his church does not have a baptismal pool. He said he thought the park's river would be the perfect spot because it was calm and shallow and there was a shaded area offshore for people to stand.

"It was a very serene place," he told The Associated Press. "It was special."

But officials at the Falmouth Waterfront Park near Fredericksburg tried to break up the ceremony, claiming it might be offensive to nearby swimmers or other people using the park. Pyle was able to finish the baptism, but then he was asked to leave.

Pyle said few people seemed to notice the small congregation during the 30-minute ceremony May 23.

The incident has outraged free-speech advocates from both ends of the political spectrum.

"These people are being discriminated against because of the content of their speech," said the Rev. Patrick

Mahoney, who heads the Christian Defense Coalition. "It's one of the most egregious violations of the First Amendment I have ever seen."

Mahoney's group has threatened to file a lawsuit if the park refuses to allow future gatherings by religious groups, something for which the park admits it has no written policy.

But park officials said religious groups seeking to perform a service in the park still need to apply for a permit or else gather under a shelter or inside.

"We don't want to tread on anybody's First Amendment or constitutional rights," Brian Robinson, director of the Fredericksburg-Stafford Park Authority, told AP. "What we try to discourage is anything not formally permitted that just sort of occurs spontaneously."

John Whitehead, director of The Rutherford Institute, a Charlottesville, Va.-based civil liberties organization, told reporters that's a clear violation of the church members' constitutional rights.

"Could a church have a picnic in the park and sing hymns? Of course they could," he said. "Parks have been forums since time immemorial to do these types of things."

The American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia also said in a statement: "If the park rules allow people to wade and swim in the river, then they must allow baptisms in the river."

Robinson said the park's board has formed a special committee to examine its policy and to put it in writing. If the church applies for the proper permit, he said it's "certainly possible" they would be allowed to use the river for another baptism.

Senate to Consider Hate Crimes Amendment

Two Republican senators seeking to add special protections for sexual orientation to federal hate-crimes statute

WASHINGTON (EP) – Federal hate-crimes legislation is back on Capitol Hill, with the Senate expected to vote in June on a measure that would extend special protections to homosexuals.

The legislation comes in the form of an amendment to the Local Law Enforcement Act, which regulates the prosecutions of local crimes. Two Senators – Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Gordon Smith (R-Oregon) – are proposing the amendment which would add sexual orientation to the federal hate-crime statute and give federal grants to local law enforcement agencies to prosecute crimes motivated by a bias against homosexuality.

Michael Schwartz, vice president of governmental relations at Concerned Women for America, says since federal grant money is involved, the legislation would essentially act as a cash incentive

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for police departments to categorize crimes as being motivated by sexual orientation. And Schwartz says the measure is part of a larger agenda that could ultimately be harmful to Christians.

"Gaining hate-crimes protection is a key objective of the gay lobby," Schwartz said. "We've seen what laws like this do in Canada, Great Britain and in Scandinavia. They become charters for the persecution of Christians."

Some examples:

- A pastor in Sweden was arrested last summer in his pulpit for reading verses from the Bible about homosexuality.

- The Anglican bishop of Chester, England, was hauled into to the local police station and questioned about a sermon he gave, because it might have been in conflict with Britain's hate crimes law.

- In Canada, human rights commissions have fined people for publicly stating their opposition to homosexuality. In one well-known case, a Saskatchewan man was convicted and fined for sponsoring a billboard listing Bible verses regarding homosexuality.

Even more ominously, the Canadian Parliament recently passed bill C-250 into law. That measure makes it a criminal offense to engage in "hate speech" against homosexuals. Though it has a weak religious exemption, the bill places the burden on the individual to prove he or she is exempt from prosecution.

- Just this week, Hungary's constitutional court struck down a hate-crimes bill adopted by the nation's parliament that mandated prison terms for people convicted of "hate speech." In a unanimous decision, the court said the bill would violate the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.

Robert Knight, director of the Culture and Family Institute, said the idea that someone could be punished merely for speaking out should be offensive in a democracy.

"You're not talking about hitting or abusing someone, say, for walking down the street — which we all would oppose," he said. "We're talking just about speech which is offensive to certain groups."

In the past, Senator Ted Kennedy's hate-crimes bills — which are similar to the amendment proposed by Hatch and Smith — have been stopped in conference committee or by the leadership of the House and Senate using parliamentary procedure. But last November, Hatch publicly announced he was joining Kennedy in his attempt to push through hate-crimes protection for homosexuals.

"Last year, Orrin Hatch actually held a press conference with homosexual activists and denounced opponents of any hate-crimes bill, telling them they had to

'grow up,'" Knight said. "Grow up? Those of us who oppose this bill do so because it violates equal protection under the law. It sets up some groups as more worthy of protection than others. And it can lead to the eventual destruction of freedom of expression."

SUDAN (EP) — Open Doors U.S.A. reports what could be good news for Christians and others in Sudan. The war-torn African nation's government and top rebel group have signed a peace accord, which could pave the way for a final agreement ending over 20 years of bloody civil war. The civil war between the predominantly Arab Muslim north and the mostly African Christian/animist south has claimed 2 million lives — many because of war-induced famine — and displaced four million from their homes. Sudanese Christians have been caught in the crossfire of the civil war with many being tortured, raped and killed. Christian villages and churches in the south have often been attacked, bombed and burnt. Sudan is ranked No. 15 on Open Doors' "World Watch List," which rates countries where Christians suffer most for their faith. Despite the fighting and violence, Christianity has grown rapidly in southern Sudan. According to "Operation World," Christianity in the south has grown from 5 percent in 1960 to 70 percent in 2000.

PAKISTAN (EP) — Voice of the Martyrs reports that Samuel Masih, a Pakistani Christian who had been accused of blasphemy under Pakistan's strict Law 295, died May 28 in the Lahore hospital where he was a patient. Masih was arrested August 23, 2003 and was accused of throwing waste against the side of a mosque. He was held in the Lahore Central Jail until, suffering from tuberculosis, he was transferred to a local hospital on May 22. Two days later, early in the morning, Masih was attacked by one of the policemen assigned to guard his room. The policeman, a Muslim, reportedly told investigators that it was his religious duty, as a Muslim, to kill the Christian man. "I have offered my religious duty for killing the man. I'm spiritually satisfied and ready to face the consequences," he is reported to have said.

RALEIGH, N.C. (EP) — Despite protests from local homosexual activists and the local chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Focus on the Family will bring its Love Won Out conference to Raleigh, N.C. on June 12. The Love Won Out conference is aimed at providing biblically-based information on homosexuality, and helping those struggling with homosexuality to overcome their sin. Focus on the Family has been organizing similar conferences since 1998, and reports that over 22,000 people in 27 cities have attended. Pro-

homosexual activists and NOW are organizing demonstrations to protest the Raleigh conference. Mike Haley — a former homosexual and the conference host — says he is not surprised by the hostility. "The opposition being staged by pro-gay activists in Raleigh is just another example of their myopic misapplication of tolerance," Haley said in a press release. "Thousands of men and women know firsthand that there is a way out of unwanted homosexuality. Attempting to silence and discredit us shows a cruel disregard for individual civil and human rights — it's our right to choose not to be gay."

MILWAUKEE (EP) — A woman accused of taking hundreds of thousands of dollars from the downtown church where she was bookkeeper and using it for gambling faces a four-year prison term, according to The Associated Press. Prosecutors said Rebecca Piekarski, 38, took money from collections at Gesu Catholic Church and gambled it away at the Potawatomi Bingo Casino. Piekarski, who worked for the parish for eight years, was in charge of processing and depositing the donations. Authorities said she stole church bank accounts with bogus checks and ATM withdrawals and also by simply taking cash from the collections. The parish has calculated the total loss at more than \$800,000, including about \$687,000 in cash. As part of the sentencing Monday, she was ordered to pay \$518,000 in restitution and serve six years of post-release supervision.

WASHINGTON (EP) — The FCC reached a \$1.7 million settlement with Clear Channel Communications Inc., the nation's largest radio company, which would clear them of all pending charges of indecency. Critics of the settlement say the fine is not punishment enough for a multi-billion dollar company. They say the Broadcast Decency Act would dramatically increase the fines that the FCC can levy. The act was passed overwhelmingly in the House, but now is stalled in the Senate where it is held up by Senators weighing it down with numerous amendments.

HEILONGJIANG, China (EP) — Gu Xianggao — a leader in the underground Christian church in China — was beaten to death on April 27 while in the custody of Chinese Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers, according to Voice of the Martyrs. Gu, 28, was a teacher in a church in Heilongjiang Province, northeast China. The PSB in Harbin City, Heilongjiang province, conducted major raids on the group in April, and Gu was one of those arrested April 26th. Xu Shuangfu — another Christian leader — was also taken into custody. "This is another tragedy in China," said Todd Nettleton, spokesman for The Voice of

the Martyrs. "No one, no matter their religious background, deserves this kind of treatment. It is time for the world to stand up and take notice of China's treatment of unregistered religious groups."

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 5-1-2004 to 5-31-2004

Beginning Balance	\$827.16
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Betty Chamness, Kingsbury, TX	53.40
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	603.40
TOTAL	1,430.56
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	887.00
Postage	21.70
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	908.70
.....	871.86
Bank Charge	-10.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$861.86

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,211.52
RECEIPTS:	
Total	1,211.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,051.52

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 5-1-2004 to 5-31-2004

Beginning Balance	\$4,242.07
RECEIPTS:	
Arthur D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	26.10
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	1,100.00
Berea B. C., Stontington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Betheal M. B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Carl Crawford, Springhill, TN	10.00
Central Ave. B. C., Tampa, FL	25.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	20.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME	200.00
Faith M. B. C., Clarksville, TN	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Gerald Price, Johnson City, TN	15.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Helen Miley, South Point, OH	100.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL	50.00
L. H. Farrell, Kenner, LA	150.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Lords Church, Goose Creek, SC	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
New Testament B. C., Leivasy, WV	100.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	75.00
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wareen, OH	50.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	200.00
Wendell Beall, Cedarville, WV	80.00
West Milton B. C., West Milton, OH	50.00
Subscriptions	211.00
Dividing checks	269.00
Anon.	245.00
Sub Total	\$5,521.10
TOTAL	\$9,763.17
EXPENDITURES:	
Wage	3,680.00
Printing	517.86
Postage	784.06
FICA taxes	281.53
Dividing checks	269.00
Total Expenditures	5,532.45
.....	4,230.72
Bank charge	-18.31
ENDING BALANCE	\$4,212.41

The Lord Working With Them

By Charles Spurgeon

(1834-1892)

“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them” (Mark 16:20).

Like the thought of Christ being taken up to heaven because His work was done, and His people being left on earth because there was still work for them to do, if we could steal away to heaven, what a pity it would be that we should do so while there is a single soul to be saved! I think that, if I had not brought to Christ the full number of jewels that He intended me to bring to adorn His crown, I would ask to come back again even from heaven. He knows best where we can best serve Him, so He ordains that, while He sits at the right hand of God, we are to abide here, and go forth to preach everywhere, the Lord working with us.

This work of the disciples was *aggressive*: “they went forth.” Some of them were bound to stay for a while at Jerusalem; though that old nest was eventually pulled down, not a stick of it was left, and the very tree on which it was built was cut down. Persecution drove forth the bulk of them further and further; we do not know where they all did go. There are traditions, which are not very valuable, to show where each of the apostles went, but it is quite certain that they all went somewhere or other; starting from the one common center, they went in various directions preaching Christ.

They worked: “They went forth, and preached.” The disciples did not say: — “Well, the Master has gone to heaven, the eternal purposes of God will be quite sure to be carried out, it is not possible that the designs of infinite love should fail, the more especially as He is at the Father’s side, therefore let us enjoy ourselves spiritually. Let us sit down in the happy possession of covenant blessings, and let us sing to our hearts’ content because of all that God has done for us and given to us. He will effect His own purposes, and we have only to stand still and see the salvation of God.” No, it was not for them to judge what they ought to do.

When they were told to tarry at Jerusalem, they did tarry at Jerusalem. There are times of tarrying; but, inasmuch as the Master had commanded them to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, they also, when the hour had struck, went into all the world, and began to preach everywhere the gospel they had learned at Jesus’ feet. It is not for us to judge what would seem most reasonable, much less what would be most comfortable; it is for us to do as we are bidden, when we are bidden, and because we are bidden, for are

we not servants and not masters? It is not wise to map out the proceedings even of a single day, but to take our cue from Him who is our Guide and Leader, and to follow Him in all things.

There are some who only come to the communion; why? Because they are always at work for Christ in some way or other. They are at work in some mission-station, or trying to open a new room for preaching, or doing something or other for the Master; the Lord bless them! I do not want all to go out at one time; but I do want you all to feel that it is not the end, though it may be the beginning, of Christian life to come and hear sermons. Scatter as widely as ever you can the blessing which you get for yourself; the moment you find the light, and realize that the world is in the dark, run away with your match, and lend somebody else a light. Be glad of the light yourself; but, depend upon it, if God gives you a candle, and all you do is to lock yourself up in a room, and sit down, and say, “Sweet light! Sweet light! I have got the light while all the world is in the dark; sweet, sweet light!” your candle will soon burn out, and you also will be in the dark. But if you go to others, and say, “I shall have none the less light because I give some to you,” by this means God the Holy Spirit will pour upon you fresh beams of light, and you shall shine brighter and brighter even to the perfect day.

“They went forth.” Oh, that some people I know of could have their chapels burnt down! They have been stuck in a hole down a back street for the last hundred years. They are good souls, and so they ought to be; they ought to be matured by now after so much storage; but if they would only come out in the street, they might do much more good than at present. “Oh, but there is an old deacon who does not like street-preaching!” I know him very well; he will be gone to heaven soon. Then, as soon as ever you have had his funeral sermon, turn out into the street, and begin somehow or other to make Christ known. Oh, to break down every barrier, and get rid of every restraint that hides the blessed gospel! Perhaps we must respect these dear old believers’ feelings just a little, but not so much as to let souls die; we must seek to bring sinners to Jesus whether we offend men or whether we please them.

These disciples went forth *promptly*, for though there is not a word here about the time, yet it is implied that, as soon as the hour had struck, and the Holy Ghost had descended from Christ, and rested upon them, “they went forth, and

preached the word everywhere.” Alas, too often are we “going” to do something! If about a tenth part of what we are going to do were only done, how much more might be accomplished!

“They went forth.” They did not talk about going forth, but “they went forth.” They did not wait until they received directions from the apostles where they were to go, but Providence guided each man, and each man went his own way, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You believe the gospel; you believe that men are perishing for lack of it; therefore, I pray you, do not stop to consider, do not wait to deliberate any longer. The best way to spread the gospel is to preach the gospel. I believe the best way of defending the gospel is to spread the gospel.

They served their Master *obediently*: “They went forth, and preached.” Suppose they had gone forth, and had “a service of song”? Suppose they had gone forth, and held a meeting that was partly comic, with just a little bit of a moral tacked on to the end of it? We should have been in the darkness of heathendom to the present day. There is nothing that is really of any service for the spreading of the gospel but preaching. I mean by preaching, as I have already said, not merely the standing up in the pulpit, and delivering a set discourse, but talking about Christ, — talking about Him as risen from the dead, as the Judge of quick and dead, as the great atoning Sacrifice, the one Mediator between God and men. It is by preaching Jesus Christ that sinners are saved. “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

Whatever may be said outside the Bible about preaching, you have only to turn to the Word of God itself to find what a divine ordinance it is, and to see how the Lord makes that mainly to be the means of the salvation of men. This is the gun that will win the battle yet, though many have tried to silence it. They have had all sorts of new inventions and contrivances; but when all their inventions shall have had their day, and proved futile, depend upon it, the telling out of Jesus Christ’s name, and gospel, and work amongst mankind will be found to be effectual when all things else have failed.

“They went forth and preached.” It is not said that they went forth and argued, or that they went forth, and wrote Apologies for the Christian faith. No, they went forth and proclaimed — told out the truth as a revelation from God; in the name of Christ they demanded that men should believe in Him, and left them, if they would not believe, with this distinct understanding, that they would perish in their unbelief. They wept over them, and pleaded with them to believe in Jesus; and they felt sure that whosoever did believe in Him would find eternal life

through His name. This is what the whole Church of Christ should do, and do at once, and keep on doing with all its might, even until the end of the age.

There is one more word, *everywhere*. One of our great writers, in a very amusing letter which he has written to a person who had asked for a contribution towards the removal of a chapel debt, wants to know whether we cannot preach Christ behind hedges and in ditches. Of course we can, and we must do so, provided it does not rain too hard. Can we not preach Jesus Christ at a street corner? Of course we can. Yet in such a climate as ours we often need buildings in which we can worship God, but we must never get into the idea of confining our preaching to the building. “They went forth, and preached everywhere.”

John Wesley was complained of for not keeping to his parish, but he insisted that he did, for all the world was his parish; and all the world is every man’s parish. Do good everywhere, wherever you may be. Some of you are going to the sea-side for a holiday; do not go without a good stock of tracts, and do not go without seeking an opportunity, when you are sitting on the sands, to talk to people about the Lord Jesus Christ. A man had nothing particular to do except to go and sit down on a seat in Hyde Park, and there talk with ladies and gentlemen who came and sat there; he would tell them that he had a pew at the Tabernacle, and he would lend them his ticket, so that they might have a comfortable place; and then he took care after the sermon to talk to them about Christ. He said, “I cannot myself preach, but I can bring people to hear my minister, and I can pray God to bless them when they come.” I saw another brother, who leaves his home at 8 o’clock on Sunday morning. There are, or there were, church members who walked twelve miles every Sunday morning to hear the gospel, and walked back again to their homes at night. This brother starts at 8 o’clock in the morning, and puts one of my sermons into each of the letter-boxes in a certain district as he comes along. So he utilizes a long, walk, and in the course of the year circulates many thousands of sermons. What a capital way he has found of spending the Sabbath-morning! Having done that service for his Lord, he enjoys the gospel all the better because of what he has himself done in making it known to others.

You remember the passage in which we are said to be laborers together with God. Is it not gracious and kind on the Lord’s part to let us come and work with Him? Yet it seems to my mind more condescending for God to come and work with us, because ours is such poor, feeble, imperfect service, yet so He does: “the Lord working with them.” The Lord is working with that dear sister who, when

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Redeeming the Time

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faithful. Remember the words that Paul spoke to the Philippians: "**Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.**" (Phil. 4:17.) We will only pass this way once, and once time has passed us by, we can never again recover it. If we fail to redeem time in the present, we cannot go back into the past and redeem it. Be careful of how you make use of time! If you spend your time doing things that you shouldn't and being distracted by the things of this world, then pray to God that He would give you the strength and the desire and the ability to praise and serve and honor Him. For that is the only proper way to redeem the time.

The Lord Working

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she takes her class, feels that she is quite unfit for it; and with that brother who, when he preaches, thinks that it is not preaching at all, and is half inclined never to try again. Oh, yes, "the Lord working with them," such as they were, — fishermen, humble women, and the like! This was wonderful condescension.

The Holy Ghost made what they said to be divinely powerful. However feebly they uttered it, according to the judgment of men, there was an inward secret power that went with their utterances, and compelled the hearts of men to accept the blessed summons of God. I believe that when we are seeking to serve Christ, we little know often how very wonderfully God is working with us. I had an instance; there was a certain district of which I heard that there was great need of the gospel there, and that there were many people in that district who were as ignorant of the way of salvation as Hottentots, and the various places of worship seemed to affect a very small portion of the people. A brother visited the neighborhood for me, and I prayed very earnestly that his visits might be blessed. It is a very curious thing that, while I was thinking about that district, there were certain Christian people close to it who were thinking about me, and longing for the gospel to be carried to their neighbors; and after I had moved ever so little in the matter, I received a letter from them saying how much they wanted somebody to come and labor for the Lord among them. I said to myself, "This is strange; I have known this district for years, yet I have never noticed that anybody wanted me or my message; but the moment I begin to move towards the people they begin to move towards me."

You do not know that you may not have a similar story to tell. There is that street you feel moved to go and work in, — God has been there before you. Do you

not remember how, when His children had to go and destroy the Canaanites, the Lord sent the hornet before them? Now, when you have to go and preach to sinners, God sends some preparatory work before you, He is sure to do so.

In other cases God works afterwards; sometimes, immediately afterwards; at other times, years afterwards. There are different sorts of seeds in the world. The seeds of some plants and trees, unless they undergo a peculiar process, will not grow for years. There is something about them which preserves them intact for a long time, but in due season the life-germ shoots forth: and there are certain kinds of men who do not catch the truth at the time it is uttered, and it lies hidden away in their souls till, one day, under peculiar circumstances, they recollect what they heard, and it begins to affect their hearts.

If we work, and God works with us, what is there that we may not expect? Therefore, the great need of any working church is for God to work with them, and therefore this ought to be our daily confession, that we need God to work with us. We must always realize that we are nothing apart from His working; we must not pretend to compliment the Holy Ghost by now and then talking about Him, as though it were the proper thing to say that of course the Holy Spirit must work. It must be a downright matter of fact with us that the Holy Spirit must work, as much as it would be with a miller that his sails could not go round without the wind; and then we must act as the miller does. He sets his sails and tries to catch the wind from whatever quarter it blows; and we must try to work in such a way that the Holy Ghost is likely to bless us.

I do not think the Holy Ghost will bless some service that is done even by well-meaning people, because if He did, it would seem as if He had set His seal to a great deal that was not according to the mind of the Lord. Let us so act in our work, that there is never the smudge of a dirty thumb across the page, and nothing of pride, or self-seeking, or hot-headedness, but that all is done humbly, dependently, hopefully, and always in a holy and gracious spirit, so that we may expect the Holy Spirit to own and bless it. That will, of course, involve that everything must be done prayerfully, for

our Heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; and we must ask for His greatest of blessings, that God the Holy Spirit may work with our work.

Then we must believe in the Holy Spirit, and believe to the highest degree, so as never to be discouraged or think anything difficult. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Can anything be difficult to the Holy Spirit? It is a grand thing often to get into deep water so as to be obliged to swim; but we like to keep our feet touching the sand. What a mercy it is to feel that you cannot do anything, for then you must trust in God and God alone, and feel that He is quite equal to any emergency! Thus trusting, and thus doing His bidding, we shall not fail. Come, Holy Spirit, and work with all Thy people now! Come and rouse us to work; and when we are bestirred to a holy energy, then work Thou with us!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The South Park Missionary Baptist Church of Seattle, WA will be hosting their annual July 4th weekend conference Friday July 2nd through Sunday July 4th. The scheduled preachers are Elders Garner Smith, George Kelly, Eugene Plaskett, Larry Killion, Jeff Short, Ted Tweet, Matt James, and others. For more information, contact Pastor Jim Tweet at 206-683-3754, or via email at james_tweet@yahoo.com.

The Salem Missionary Baptist Church of Willow Hill, IL will be hosting their 6th Annual "Focus on the Singles" conference August 5th through August 7th. The speakers for this year's conference will be Bro.'s Garner Smith and Philip Potter. If you wish to attend, you should contact Pastor Billy Holbrook at 618-592-3806 or via email at holfam5@shawneelink.net for more information.

The Northside Baptist Church of Elkton, KY will be hosting a Bible conference August 5 through the 7th. Services will begin Thursday evening

at 7:00 p.m. with Elders Don Titus and Wayne Bowling preaching. Services will begin Friday morning at 9:30 a.m. with Elders Bob Asbury and Lonnie Badger preaching. A noon meal will be served and the afternoon service will begin at 2:00 p.m. with Elders Roger Jones and Dan Gordon preaching. An evening meal will be served at 5:00 p.m. with the evening service beginning at 7:00 p.m. Elders Lee Hammel and Randy Titus will be preaching in the evening service. Services will begin again on Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. with Elders Garner Smith and L. G. Richardson preaching. The conference will conclude with a noon meal on Saturday. The church building is located at 532 North Main Street, Elkton, KY. For more information, contact Pastor Irving Cummins at 270-265-9665 or via email at icummins@commandnet.net.

The Dessie Baptist Church of Clem, WV will be hosting the annual "Voice in the Wilderness Bible Conference" August 13th through the 15th. There are several preachers on the program. For more information, contact Pastor Mark Minney at 304-462-5591 or via email at dessiebaptist@rtol.net.

The Landmark Missionary Baptist Church of Granite Bay, CA will be hosting their annual Bible conference September 17th through the 19th. Services will begin on Friday the 17th at 7:00 p.m. The morning services will begin on Saturday and Sunday at 9:30 a.m. The theme of the conference will be "Missions" and some missionaries and their pastors will be present to preach and speak about their work. For more information, contact Pastor Rick Perdue at 916-791-7046 or via email at rperdue@jps.net.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Tulsa, OK is currently in need of a pastor. Any interested preacher that is not currently pastoring may contact Sis. Katie Wilson at 918-437-3904 for more information.

The Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Texarkana, TX has called Elder Randy Johnson as their pastor.

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