

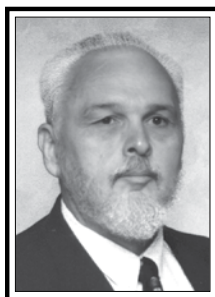
The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Drinking What Jesus Drank

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

Rather than write a small book with footnotes and extensive quotes, our purpose is to be as brief as possible and yet harrow the ground well. With today's easy access to books and other sources of information online, the reader can do his or her further research if they so desire. I am as firmly convinced as ever that wine is the proper element to be used in the Lord's Supper. At the same time I am an opponent of the social use



of liquor, wine and beer. If you profess to be a follower of the Lamb and have the modern beverages we call beer, wine and liquor in your home and imbibe these things privately or socially, I am convinced you are wrong in doing so. There is a danger that I see among people who believe that wine is the proper element in the

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The Empty Grave of Jesus

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:5-6).

Whether a place is occupied or vacant is sometimes a matter of great significance. During the 2000 presidential election in the United States, many of us for some weeks wondered who



would be our next president. In military operations we can see the advantage and folly of holding and abandoning

certain places. Of all the unoccupied places in the universe, I know of no teaching lesson so important as the empty grave of Jesus Christ. That grave held the body of Jesus for 72

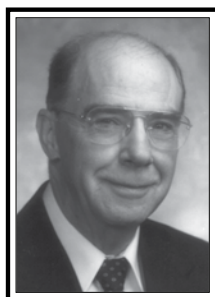
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Words

By Willard Willis
of Monroe, Ohio

"Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words" (Ps. 119:57).

Words can, by way of a phone, radio and other means, be transported across space and time and arrive at their destination in perfect condition, provided they are packaged (such as the Bible is packaged) and protected (such as the Bible has been protected).



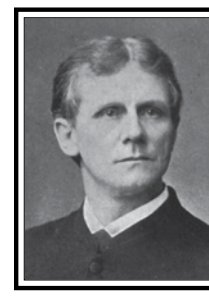
Words do not deteriorate in the course of time as do other things such as metal, wood, etc. Metal, for example, rusts. Wood, in a period of time, will decay and man, gradually, but surely, goes back to the dust. The means, such as books, by

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Why I Preach the Second Coming

By I. M. Haldeman
(1845 - 1933)

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not come into this world that He might go through the unspeakable horror of the cross; He did not hang on that brutal and torturing instrument of death as the criminal of the universe; He did not receive the down sweep of the essential antagonism of a holy God against the sin He represented; He did not cry the



cry of the lost, **"My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"**; He was not flung out like a derelict thing into the black, starless

night of God's inexorable law, measureless wrath and indignation where His humanity unanchored and alone was

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A rotten apple spoils its neighbor.

Such is the power of evil example.

One sickly sheep infects the flock, And poisons all the rest.

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9).

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

Drinking What

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Lord's Supper. That danger is this, men will reason that if it is right to use wine in the Lord's supper and since Jesus drank wine, it must be alright to drink wine and beer at home and out in public. So it is very important to learn what Jesus drank and with what liquid element He instituted His supper.

Many years ago a dear brother in the Lord - a good Baptist pastor now with the LDB - and a man whom I greatly respected because of his work's sake spoke to me on this matter. He believed that grape juice was the proper element for the supper. His words to me were these: "I'll drink anything that Jesus drank." I have never forgotten those words. I agree with him! And so we have given the title to this article: "Drinking What Jesus Drank." Surely every Bible believing saint of God will agree that Jesus did no wrong. Unless misinformed they will also agree that the Son of Man, the Lord from glory, not only turned water into wine, but drank it Himself. Surely if we as followers of the Lamb drink what Jesus drank, we shall not go wrong. The purpose of this brief examination of the subject is to show that the wine Jesus drank was quite different from those commercial wines produced and sold in the United States today. Drinking them is not drinking what Jesus drank!

It would take a book to introduce all the quotes from experts in agriculture, Bible commentators, Jewish historians, archaeologists, and others who support the view that the word "wine" in the Bible refers to an alcoholic beverage made from grapes. But our guide is the Bible and we shall look to it for guidance. I would urge all my

brothers and sisters to determine to believe and follow the Bible on this matter. In this article we shall - from the Bible - hope to satisfy all honest minds - as to what the word "wine" signified among the Jews in the days when our Lord walked among men. We aim to establish facts - indisputable facts. First of all, when the Bible speaks of wine it refers to an alcoholic beverage usually made from grapes or other fruit unless it refers to wine metaphorically. One such metaphoric use of the word wine is in Revelation 18:3. There it is prophesied that an angel will come down from heaven and cry out against the Harlot saying, among other things **"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication..."** The usual use of the word wine however, is the natural product of the grape. I use the term "natural product" because wine in Bible days was just that. It was not something brewed or distilled or concocted in a laboratory or brewery.

The facts are plain and clear. Sugar occurs naturally in the juice of the grape. Yeast or what the Bible calls leaven forms naturally on the skin of the grape. God made grapes that way. When the yeast comes in contact with the sugar in the juice at normally occurring seasonal temperatures, fermentation begins. This can occur when the skin of the grapes split open even while the grapes are still on the vine. Wild birds and even deer have been observed to be "tipsy" from eating such grapes in which fermentation has begun while the grapes are yet hanging in a cluster. The Bible speaks of this "new wine" being found while the grapes are still in the cluster in Isaiah 65:8. There it is written: **"Thus saith the LORD, As the**

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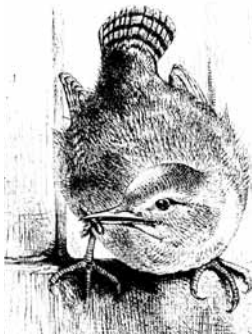
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new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all." Did you notice that God said there is a blessing in a cluster of grapes already begun to ferment – that is to turn into wine. Reader, if you believe the Bible, you, too, must say that there is a blessing there! That too much "new wine" or sweet wine would make people drunk is proven by Acts 2:13 where those who spoke in tongues were mocked as being drunk with these words: **"...These men are full of new wine."** The conclusion must be this: new wine is intoxicating wine and new wine can be found in the grapes while still in the cluster. In other words, as far as the Bible is concerned, there is no such thing as unfermented wine or non-alcoholic wine. It was recognized by the Jews that fermentation often started even before the grapes were crushed and certainly began when the grapes were dumped into the wine press.

In Bible times this crushing of grapes was done by putting them into a vat called a "winepress." Then people would tread on the grapes. The juice, leaven, sugar and all – mixed together - would flow out a hole in or near the bottom designed for that purpose. This crushing of the grapes results in more yeast (leaven) coming in contact with the sugar in the juice and so the fermentation process speeds up. Welch's brand grape juice and others like it are made by utilizing the pasteurization process which kills the yeast and thus stops fermentation. However, pasteurization does not remove the leaven from the

juice: it just kills it. And of course pasteurization was unknown to the people of Jesus' days on earth. These are the facts. (There is an idea floating around that you can take Welch's or a similar product and leave it uncovered at room temperature and that it will ferment and turn to wine. It will not. The leaven is in the juice, but it is dead. It is bacteria that acts upon the grape juice thus left at room temperature. It is not fermentation that takes place, but spoilage, and the result should not be used for human consumption.)

At least one grape juice advocate wrote that the Jews boiled their grape juice down to something like grape jelly and hermetically sealed it in great stone jars. He claimed that it was in this way that Jews kept their grape juice. When they wanted a drink, they just added water and stirred the grape jelly-like stuff until it was drinkable. This preacher hardly knows what to say about someone who would write such inaccurate things. Let me ask a few questions. First of all where in God's Word do you ever read about these great stone jars? And where do you read about Jews toiling away at the task of boiling down their grape juice in order to preserve it? And how did the Jews hermetically seal those jars? And can you really imagine the Jews carrying great stone jars of grape jelly with them on their forty years wandering in the wilderness? And why have not archaeologists found stashes of such great stone jars? And where are the great kettles necessary for such an imagined process?

What does the Bible say? What did the Lord Jesus Himself say about wine making? Let us stick with the facts: Bible facts! Why the Lord Himself used the Jewish wine making process, or at least part of it, as an illustration. He

said, **"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."** (Matt. 9:17). W. E. Vine in his Greek dictionary (a book every Baptist family ought to have) says the Greek word means a wine skin and goes on to say this: "A whole goatskin, for example, would be used with the apertures bound up, and when filled, tied at the neck. They were tanned with acacia bark and left hairy on the outside. New wines, by fermenting, would rend old skins (cp. Josh. 9:13; Job 32:19). Hung in the smoke to dry, the skin-bottles become shriveled (see Ps. 119:83)." In fact, if you look up "bottle" in his dictionary, you will be referred to "skin" for that is the meaning of the word in the original language. Now the Lord Jesus, in the above-quoted illustration, spoke of that which was common knowledge among the Jews. It was common knowledge because it was common practice. "New wine" or freshly crushed sweet grape juice, the Lord said, was not put into old (naturally brittle) wine skins. Rather new wine was put into fresh, sweet new skins sewed up into pliable, "stretchy" containers. Why? Because while the fermentation process is going on, the new wine moves itself and makes gasses. An old brittle bottle made from skin would not be pliable and would crack open at its weakest point and thus the wine would spill out and both the bottle and the wine be wasted. The Bible speaks of this moving action of wine in Proverbs 23:31 as follows: **"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright."** This new wine was in the process

of fermentation, thus requiring a container capable of stretching to accommodate the fermentation process. By the way, Merriam Webster gives one meaning of bottle as "a usually bottle-shaped container made of skin for storing a liquid."

We will get to modern wines later, but at this juncture we want to note this. Wine made and kept in the Jewish manner eventually turned sour into a kind of vinegar. Historians tell us that this sour wine was the drink of the common Roman soldier as well as ordinary Jewish field workers. We read of this vinegar in John 19:28-29 where it is written: **"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth."** Why else would there be "vinegar" at the crucifixion of Christ? A comparison of these two verses with related passages in the other gospels is sufficient to indicate that the vessel of vinegar was the usual drink of the ordinary Roman soldiers who stood 'round the tree upon which our Lord was crucified. That this vinegar or sour wine or old cheap wine was the usual drink of farm workers is seen in Ruth 2:14 where we read: **"And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left."** I know you have heard that older wines are better wines. It is a fact that modern wines – fortified wines – are aged, but they are kept in sealed or airtight bottles. The Jews did not have this

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option. The older their wines got the more sour they became. Some older commercially produced fortified wines are valuable today because of their age. Not so in Bible times. Then the best wines were the new wines – sweet and fresh. So it was that the wine Jesus made in Cana must have been fresh or new sweet wine for the governor of that feast said to the bridegroom, **“..Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now”** (John 2:10). The wine Jesus miraculously made certainly was not cheap sour wine. The LORD always does the best! What He does is good! He made sweet freshly fermented wine!

While it is true that neither in the Old Testament or the New is the liquid element used in the Passover and in the Lord's Supper specified, we know what Jesus used. Why any follower of the Lamb wishes to change the elements which the Lord Himself used in establishing His supper is beyond comprehension. Here are some facts about the institution of the Lord's Supper. First of all we know that the Lord established His memorial supper at the time of the Passover. The Jewish Passover feast had to be carried out according to instructions given by the LORD. One of those instructions was that no leaven (yeast) was to be allowed in Jewish households during that week. Leaven is a type of sin. God said in Exodus 12:19-20, **“Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of**

Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.” Ordinarily the Jews might eat leavened bread, but not during the Passover observance. However, they could drink wine since it was common practice for the Jews to separate the wine from the dead leaven which settled to the bottom of the wine skins upon the completion of the fermentation process. Again, this part of wine making in Israel was common knowledge because it, too, was common practice. In fact, the prophet used this separating process in a metaphorical sense in Jeremiah 48:11 where he wrote: **“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.”** Lees are the dregs including the remains of the leaven which died after it devoured all the sugar from the grape during the fermentation process. Another way that we know what was used in the Lord's Supper is from the calendar. Some would have us believe that the Lord instituted His supper with unfermented grape juice – as if such a thing existed in Israel. This was an impossibility unless they want to tell us that Jesus performed another miracle in which He turned water into grape juice somehow extracted from the grapes without mixing with the leaven on the grape skins. Why do we say that this was an impossibility? Because we know that Passover takes place in the springtime. Grapes are harvested in the fall. The Jews had no other way of preserving their grapes from fall until spring other than

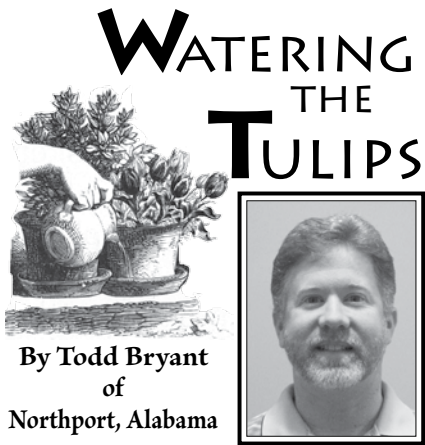
by fermentation – unless they dried them. (Drying grapes produces raisins, not wine.) And so we know what the Lord Jesus used in instituting His supper. He used wine. Do we need to say “fermented wine?” There was no other kind in Israel. Why change from that? Ought we not to observe the ordinance as the Lord instituted it – i.e. with the elements He used? Without leaven?

Now some have tried to make the matter of the element something of indifference. Some have said that the liquid element pictures the sufferings of Christ in the crushing of the grapes. However, the Lord did no say that. The Lord never alluded to the crushing of the grapes as picturing His sufferings and agony. Here is Matthew's account: **“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”** (Matt. 26:26-28). Jesus said the wine represented His blood. Nothing is said of the crushing of grapes representing the sufferings of Christ. Nor is the roiling action of the fermenting wine said to be representative of Christ's inner turmoil or mental sufferings nor His thrashing about on the tree – if He did that. Nor is the pouring of wine from vessel to vessel to remove the lees said to picture something about Christ. Why go beyond the Scriptures and speak of things involved in wine making about which the Scriptures are silent in this matter? We think it quite dangerous to say more than the Bible says!

Another thing to consider in determining what Jesus drank is this: wines made in the old Jewish manner as we have indicated above were necessarily of low alcohol content. Probably they contained about three to five percent alcohol. Modern wines, however, and not natural wines. They are fortified wines. The European Union regulates what goes into wines produced in the EU countries, including France, which I suppose could be considered the wine capital of the world. There are some fifty ingredients that are allowed in wine making in order to increase the alcohol content of EU wines. Sugar and yeast are often added to make modern wines more alcoholic. Even Bentonite (an impure clay containing absorbent aluminum phyllosilicate) can be used to clarify the wine along with egg whites, casein from milk, gelatin, isinglass from the bladders of fish, sulfur dioxide, activated carbon from charcoal, potassium ferrocyanide, silica and kaolin. A similar long list of ingredients is allowed in wines produced in the United States, Canada, etc. The result: modern wine making methods produce wine with an artificially increased alcohol content of ten percent or more with a lot of added ingredients used in the process. It may be said with absolute certainty that modern, fortified wines are not what Jesus drank!

There is one more thing that bears on our subject. It is this: the Jews customarily mixed their low-alcohol-content wines with water. The Bible proves this. In the Proverbs wisdom is personified – that is, spoken of as a person. She invites the simple ones – those needing wisdom to come to her table in terms

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By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

Are Our Priorities Straight?

“Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways” (Haggai 1:3-5).

First things first – the church is not Israel and the church building is not the temple. That said, there is certainly a lesson that we can learn from the above passage. The Jews were supposed to be rebuilding the temple. Cyrus the Persian had allowed Israel to return from the Babylonian captivity for just this purpose (Ezra 1:1-4). However, opposition from their neighbors and the indifference of the Jews themselves had caused the building to cease.

Our text verse really hits home. Rather than building the Lord’s house, the people of God were more interested in building their own homes. While the temple was lying in ruins, the Jews were constructing their own “paneled houses.” In plain English, Israel cared more for their own lives and their own possessions than they did about honoring God. Can we relate?

The common mentality today is “he who dies with the most toys wins.” As unbiblical as that is, many believers have fallen

into this same trap. We are often found pursuing the same wants and desires as the unbelievers around us. Is it any wonder that they do not see a difference in us? Is it any wonder that they do not desire what we have? In their eyes, we are the same. In their eyes, our goals are their goals. Simply, when our ambitions are the same as theirs, we are not properly showing the world the vanity of worldly “things” and the importance of serving God.

Paul said of his life prior to salvation, **“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith”** (Phil. 3:8-9). The things of this world should cease to be so important in our lives after we are brought to faith in Christ. Our goals...our desires...our pursuits...all these should change dramatically following regeneration. Sadly, in many circles today, Christianity is seen as nothing more than a means to gain the things that Paul counted as rubbish. Jesus has often become nothing more than a footnote to “religion” in hopes that the desires of the carnal mind would be fulfilled. Oh, let us never be found with such a shallow view of Christ.

Are we, as believers, truly interested in the furtherance of the Kingdom of God? Or, are our desires in this life similar to the desires we had before we were saved? Certainly, when a person is saved, they are **“a new creature: old things are**

passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Cor. 5:17). Is this us? Or, are we holding to the American dream more tightly than we are holding to Christ?



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familiar to the ancient Jews. It is written: **“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled”** (Pro. 9:1-2, 5). Twice in these verses the common and usual practice of mingling or mixing wine with water is mentioned. She is inviting the simple to her feast which included “wine” that she had “mingled.” The Psalmist says, **“For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping”** (Ps. 102:9). Here it means he has wept tears in such a volume as to mingle water with his wine. Remember that wine was included in those things offered to Jehovah and that the priests received at least a part of it for their own use. The only way the “fruit of the vine” could be had year ‘round in those days and in that place was this: the fruit of the vine had to be allowed to take its natural course. The grape juice had to be allowed to ferment. In this way wine was available for offerings, for meals, for tithes, for treating wounds, etc. all year long. Royalty and wealthy persons did at times mingle spices (and water?) with their wine. This is alluded to in Song of Solomon 8:2.

Old John Gill can be expected to tell us something of the customs of the Jews of those Bible times

– and he does. We quote: “Now the “mingling” of this wine is in allusion to the mixture of wine, either with something richer, as spice, Song of Solomon 8:2; or rather with water, as Jarchi observes, which was usual in those hot countries, to make it fit and suitable drink for the bodies of men: the mixture was no doubt according to the strength of the wine; the wine of Sharon, being strong wine, was mixed two parts water and one wine; which, with the ancients, before three parts water and two wine; though, according to Plutarch, they had three ways of mixing, which they called by three different names; the one was three parts water and two wine, the other three parts water and one wine, the third was one wine and two water; the first of them was reckoned the best mixture...”

The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia (Vol. 12, p. 533) states that in the rabbinic period at least “yayin’ [or wine] ‘is to be distinguished from ‘shekar’ [or strong drink]: the former is diluted with water (mazug’); the latter is undiluted (‘yayin hal’)” [Brackets added]. In the Talmud, which contains the oral traditions of Judaism from about 200 B.C. to A.D. 200, there are several tractates [treatises or articles] in which the mixture of water and wine is discussed. One tractate (Shabbath 77a) states that wine that does not carry three parts of water well is not wine. The normal mixture is said to consist of two parts water to one part wine. In a most important reference (Pesahim 108b) it is stated that the four cups every Jew was to drink during the Passover ritual were to be mixed in a ratio of three parts water to one part wine. From this we can conclude with a fair degree

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of certainty that the fruit of the vine used at the institution of the Lord's Supper was a mixture of three parts water to one part wine. In another Jewish reference from around 60 B.C. we read, "It is harmful to drink wine alone, or again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment. (II Maccabees 15:39)."

From the foregoing, what must we conclude? First of all, if we drink modern, commercial, fortified wines we are not drinking what Jesus drank. He instituted His supper with the "fruit of the vine" - no doubt the fourth cup of wine drunk at the Passover meal. It was wine and there is no reason to believe that it was not mixed or diluted with water - one part wine with three parts water - as was taught by the rabbis. It was a low alcohol wine to begin with, made by simple methods and allowed to ferment naturally without additives. Mixed with water it was still called wine by the Jews and was their usual or common drink. This fourth cup was called "the cup of blessing" by the Jews and by Paul in speaking of the wine used in the Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 10:16 Paul wrote, "**The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?**" Having been a prominent Jew in his earlier life, Paul needed no one to teach him about the Passover observances. In I Corinthians 11:23-24 Paul informs us that the Lord revealed to him the manner in which Christ instituted His supper. He wrote: "**For I have**

received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." The question is, shall we not bless "the cup of blessing" at Christ's supper? Shall we drink what Jesus drank?

There is absolutely no ground for followers of the Lamb to reason thus: "Jesus drank wine and turned water into wine, so it is permissible for us today to drink modern high alcohol fortified commercially produced wine." Let us drink what Jesus drank: simple low alcohol wine mingled with much water so as not to bring drunkenness. Let us resolve to use that drink in our observances of the Lord's Supper. Let us follow the Lamb! We shall not go wrong drinking what Jesus drank!



Words

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which words are transmitted, may grow old and unreadable, but the actual words can be reproduced to the "jot and tittle." Words can be considered to be eternal. Our body digests the food we eat and converts it into useable molecules of sugar, fat and protein---necessary for energy and for rebuilding and maintaining the 30 trillion cells of which our bodies are made up. We, however, when receiving and assimilating words, store them rather than using them up. Words therefore become incorporated into our very being. Some of the words we receive are latent with specific commands and directives. Some

act as a means to stimulate mental images, but each word we receive is processed and becomes food for our bodies.

WORDS ARE TIME AND SPACE TRAVELERS

The Apostle Paul died many long years ago, but the words he spoke are still with us today. Their meaning, power and authority, have not been altered by the rain, snow, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. Paul's words have come unchanged to us from the distant past and evoke the same response today as they did when they were first spoken.

Think now of the living Word. Jesus Christ is the Living Word. Consider when He fed the five thousand. They, when hearing Him speak, received and processed His words. They, as you will recall, were all fed. Remember, too, the parable regarding the good seed falling on poor and good ground.

FAITH IS BUILT UPON WORDS

It is recorded in Romans 10:17 that "**faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" Ancient words, then, as they are presented to us by way of the Holy Scriptures, are the basis for whatever faith that we, by reading and believing, have laid hold of. Our hopes and our dreams for a better day rest entirely on the foundation that the words of God have laid for us through the Scriptures. Those, on the other hand, in whom the words of the Scriptures have not taken root, or provided a solid foundation, can be compared to the seed which fell on stony ground or among thorns and was choked out. The words themselves, on the other hand, did not die, but simply found no embryo, or no abiding place.

THE VALUE OF READING

AND MEMORIZING GOD'S WORD

It is so very important that our eyes would be opened to the value of reading and memorizing God's Word. The Scriptures are filled with instructions to "**seek wisdom,**" to "**Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**" Consider the solemn commands in Deuteronomy 6:6-12 with which God, by way of Moses, instructed the Israelites. "**And these words, which I commanded thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets before thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates. And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, And houses full of all good things, which thou fillest not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantest not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.**"

SKILLED USE OF GOD'S WORD, IS

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Words

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PUTTING ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

The putting on of the “**whole armor of God**,” as spoken in the following passage of Scripture, refers to the skilled use of the Word of God. “**Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**” (Eph. 6:11). Remember how the Lord perfectly wielded the sword of truth against Satan’s intense onslaught so vividly described in Matthew 4:1-11. Notice in these passages of Scripture how Satan twisted the truth just as he did with Adam and Eve, only this time the second Adam meets him head on and with all skill uses the power of truth---God’s Word---to defeat the enemy.

Consider our Lord’s words to Peter when He said: “**He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.**”

Let us feed upon Him and praise His name through the skillful teaching of His Word. Let us hear and take nourishment from the following passages of Scripture. “**Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if a man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world**” (John 6:49-51).

FEEDING ON THE WORD

The importance of the words

that one finds from Genesis through Revelation is, in part, seen by an examination of the following passage of Scripture. “**Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts**” (Jer. 15:16). Jeremiah, when saying, “**thy words**,” points out that the words of the Scriptures are not of human origin. He says, in essence, that the words found in the Scriptures have come direct to us from “the Lord of hosts.”

It is for this reason that we should apply ourselves to make a thorough search of the Scriptures. Jesus, in fact, said: “**Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me**” (John 5:39). The Apostle Paul said: “**These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so**” (Acts 17:11).

Jeremiah’s words, “**Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart**,” reminds me of a day about sixty years ago when I found an apple tree with the best apples that I had ever eaten. I can say with Jeremiah, on a physical level, “I found apples on an old apple tree, and I did eat them; and they were unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” God’s Word, to each and every person, should be food that causes one’s heart to rejoice. The natural man, however, according to I Corinthians 2:14, “**receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.**”

NEW NATURE MUST BE

NOURISHED BY THE FOOD OF THE WORD

All understand that babies, if they are to grow, must be fed good food. It is also true that newborn believers must be fed the Word of God, or they will never grow up to be mature Christians. The Apostle Peter said: “**As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby**” (I Pet. 2:2).

One, in many cases, must use much persuasion to get a child to eat properly. A child, however, after tasting certain foods, will eat with a joyful heart. The Psalmist, when applying such to a spiritual level, said: “**O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him**” (Ps. 34:8).

JUNK FOOD

Much of the so called “spiritual food” which people are being fed, falls into the category of “junk food.” My reference is to all doctrine (teaching) that is contrary to that found in the Holy Scriptures. Our Lord, in fact, said the following regarding “junk food:” “**But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men**” (Matt. 15:9).

God’s Word, on the other hand, according to II Timothy 3:16, is “**profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto every good works.**” “Junk food,” on the other hand, is profitable for nothing. It, in fact,

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tears down rather than building up.

EATING SMALL PORTIONS

One, when eating a loaf of bread, eats only one slice at a time. Let us also understand that one, when eating God's Word, must take bites from it and chew it slowly. We cannot expect to eat and digest the entire Bible at one setting, but we must eat and digest it as set forth by Isaiah in the following passages of Scripture. **"Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, and precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little"** (Isa. 28:9,10).

HOW CAN LEARNING BE LIKENED UNTO EATING?

One, when eating, takes a portion of food into one's system where it becomes one's own food and nourishment. No one, for example, can take a loaf of bread from a person once the loaf has been eaten and digested. The same truth can be applied to those who eat and assimilate the Word of God. Fire or sword, for example, cannot remove a promise from God's Word that one has found, eaten, and assimilated. The song states, "There's a peace in my heart that the world did not give, and cannot take away." Paul's words on this matter are as follows: **". . . I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"** (Tim. 1:12).

EATING GOD'S WORD WITH MEEKNESS

It is said in II Samuel 9:13

that **"Mephibosheth. . . did eat continually at the king's table. . ."** It was because of a covenant that David had made with Jonathan that gave Mephibosheth the right and privilege to eat at King David's table. Mephibosheth, aside from the covenant (agreement) that King David had made with Jonathan, would have remained in Lodebar-Lodebar which means a place of no pasture. Mephibosheth, therefore, must have, with great meekness in heart and mind, thanked Jonathan each time he ate from King David's table. Let each of us who eat the Word from our Father's table, eat with meekness while realizing that it is because of the agreement that our Father made with His Son that we have the right and privilege to eat from our Father's table.

EVERY WORD IN THE BIBLE IS GOOD FOR US

There are certain foods that we like and others that we do not like. Every word in the Bible, on the other hand, is good for us and should be eaten, as Jeremiah said, with **"rejoicing in mine heart."** A good appetite, in most cases, is a sign of good health. Weakness and sickness will hound those who, as the result of a poor appetite, are poor eaters. Many believers are starved spiritually because of their poor appetite for God's Word. They cannot say with Jeremiah, **"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart. . ."**

I understand, when reading God's Word, that God is speaking to me as if I were the only person in the world. Keep in mind that Jeremiah said, **"Thy words were found and I**

did eat them." No one else can eat the Word of God for us, but we must eat it for ourselves. We, in other words, must learn from the Word of God and apply the same to our own lives. We, when reading God's Word, must not consider it to be mere history that occurred at some point in the distant past, but that it is applicable to me during my stay upon this earth.

PONDERING GOD'S WORDS TO US

We, when reading God's Word to us, should ponder it in our hearts and ask, "How does such apply to me?" We should, when reading God's Word, respond as it is said in Luke 2:19 that Mary responded to the Lord's words. **"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart"** (Luke 2:19).

MIX GOD'S WORD WITH FAITH

Many people, when reading God's Word, do not mix it with faith. The result of such, as recorded in the following passage of Scripture, is that the Word will not be of any profit to them. **"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed enter into rest. . ."** (Heb. 4:2,3).

You and I have no difficulty believing historians when they, by way of history books, advise us of the events that occurred in the life of Abraham Lincoln. There is not one of us who ever saw Abraham Lincoln or heard him speak; yet we believe that which has been written concerning him. We, in other words, mix with faith the written words of historians.

Note what John, in the following passages of Scripture,

has to say relative to our receiving the witness of God and the witness of men. **"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made God a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"** (I John 5:9-11) We, if we fail to believe the witness of historians concerning Abraham Lincoln, would be, by our action, calling them liars. The same is true if we fail to believe the record that God has given regarding His Son Jesus Christ.

The recorded record by historians is that Mr. Lincoln was the sixteenth president of the United States of America. I know of no one who doubts the record which historians have made regarding this matter. I, however, do know of some who doubt God's recorded record regarding the giving of His Son to save lost sinners from an eternal Hell. Multitudes, in fact, have never believed that Jesus Christ came to this planet, lived, died and rose from the dead so as to cleanse them from all their sins and to make them heirs to a kingdom that knows no end. What about you who now read these lines? Have you repented of your sins toward God and believed that Jesus Christ came to this planet to save you from all your sins? It is my prayer that God will grant to you, at this moment, the gift of repentance and faith.



The Empty Grave

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hours, but from then until now it has been empty.

In my text the angel said, **“Come, see the place where the Lord lay;”** that is, where He did lie, not now is. In this message let us mentally approach and see where the Lord was once lying. From the emptiness of His grave we may learn many truths.

I. THE EMPTY TOMB IS A WELL ATTESTED HISTORICAL FACT.

No historical event is more corroborated by more than 500 human witnesses. To the Corinthians Paul said, **“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. . .”** (I Cor. 15:3-6). Every word may be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6), and so 500 witnesses would be accepted by any court in the land.

Some of these witnesses were not easily convinced of Christ's resurrection. Even when the women told the apostles **“their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not”** (Luke 24:11). Peter and John did not believe it until they ran and examined the empty tomb. When they found the grave clothes in two neat piles they knew this precluded the possibility of Christ's body being stolen (John 20:1-8). Thomas refused even to believe the other disciples who had seen the risen

Christ, and he declared: **“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe”** (John 20:25). Shortly after this Thomas saw the living Christ and was fully convinced (John 20:26-29).

The testimony of over 500 human witnesses was strengthened by an elect angel. When the women entered the tomb an angel from Heaven said: **“Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen: he is not here: behold the place where they laid him”** (Mark 16:6). The steadfast word of an angel cannot be easily gainsaid (Heb. 2:2).

Even the enemies of Jesus Christ did not deny His resurrection. The chief priests paid the soldiers stationed at the tomb large sums of “hush money” to tell that Christ's disciples stole His body while they slept (Matt. 28:11-15). This was not a very good lie, for, if they were asleep, how did they know what happened to His body? People do not have to be paid to tell the truth, but they do require large sums of money to tell a lie.

The main purpose and the first duty of the apostolic ministry was to witness to the fact that Christ was risen. The apostles did not teach the resurrection of our Lord as a revealed truth like they did the doctrine of justification. They taught Christ's resurrection as a fact of experience, a fact which they themselves had experienced.

These eye-witnesses of the risen Christ saw Him not as a common man, or some ghost risen from the grave, but as the Son of God with omnipotent

power. They saw Him as the true Messianic King and the eternal Son of God. They recognized clearly and fully His Divine nature, and they were convinced He was the Conqueror of Hell and death.

Jesus Christ is not in the garden; He is not on the cross; He is not in the tomb; He is not on earth. He is in Heaven at the right hand of God. There is but one place, and only one, in which Christ is not to be found---His grave. As the angel said: **“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”**

II. THE EMPTY TOMB PROVED THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD.

During His ministry on earth, Christ foretold His coming resurrection. **“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day”** (Matt. 16:21). **“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again”** (Matt. 17:22-23). **“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again”** (Matt. 20:18-19).

Not only did our Lord affirm He would rise again the third day, but He also declared He would rise by His own power. **“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . he spake of**

the temple of his body” (John 2:19-21). **“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. . .”** (John 10:17-18).

No created power could take His life. He died on the cross by His own choice, and He rose from among the dead by His own choice. Life and death were the absolute servants of Jesus Christ. This is why He declared: **“I am the resurrection, and the life”** (John 11:25). Only One who was God could bring a dead body back to life (Acts 26:8). If Jesus Christ raised Himself from the dead, He was God. The empty grave is sure and undeniable proof of Christ's deity. When our Lord vacated the garden tomb the angel announced: **“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”**

III. THE EMPTY TOMB VERIFIED HIS MESSIAHSHIP.

Old Testament prophecy forecast that the coming Messiah would be crucified: **“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet”** (Ps. 22:16). This pointed to the sufferings of Christ and the kind of death He should die on the cross when His hands and feet were nailed to the tree. Zechariah relates how the returning Messiah will say to Israel: **“And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced”** (Zech. 12:10; cf. Rev. 1:7).

The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would die. Of Christ, the Servant of Jehovah,

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it is written: **"For he was cut off out of the land of the living"** (Isa. 53:8). Still it is written: **"He hath poured out his soul unto death"** (Isa. 53:12). The Prophet Daniel said: **"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off"** (Dan. 9:26). In Zechariah 13:7 we heard God the Father say: **"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."** Every time the priest killed a lamb, or a bull, they declared in typology the Messiah would die as the sinner's Substitute.

Old Testament prophecy not only foretold His crucifixion and death, but it also predicted His resurrection from among the dead: **"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"** (Ps. 16:10; cf. 110:1). Peter in Acts, chapter 2 verses 29-31, applies this prophecy to Jesus Christ's resurrection.

While walking upon this earth, clothed in human flesh, Jesus plainly declared He was the Messiah. **"The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he"** (John 4:25-26). **"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee"**

(John 9:35-37). Jesus Christ, on trial for His very life and under oath, told the high priest He was the Messiah. **"And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said"** (Matt. 26:63-64).

Jesus of Nazareth died upon the cruel cross. After three days and three nights He arose, fulfilling the sign of the Prophet Jonah: **"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"** (Matt. 12:38-40). This was the only sign Jesus ever gave the scribes and Pharisees to prove He was the glorious Messiah.

The resurrection of Jesus proved His Messiahship to Jew and Gentile: **"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"** (Rom. 1:3-4). His resurrection did not make Him the Son of God (He was that by an eternal generation); it declared Him to be such. The Father, by His omnipotence, effected the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Eph. 1:19-20). The Father would not have endorsed the character of an impostor.

A voice from Heaven comes from the empty grave of Jesus and proclaims in trumpet tones that He is the glorious Messiah of which the Old Testament prophets wrote. A false messiah could not rise from the dead. Remember the angel avowed: **"He is not here: for he is risen as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."**

IV. THE EMPTY TOMB ATTESTS THAT HIS SACRIFICE WAS ACCEPTED BY GOD THE FATHER.

I believe the Bible teaches the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was sufficient and efficient for all for whom it was made. In the grave of Christ we see the curse of the broken law buried, and the wrath of God finally and effectually appeased in relation to every one who enjoys an interest in a risen and glorified Redeemer. The Father was satisfied with the sufferings and death of our Lord. **"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied"** (Isa. 53:11).

Satisfaction is the central truth of the atonement. Christ made full satisfaction to God's outraged justice. He died the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. He suffered and died for His people in such a way that the Father is more satisfied with the believer in Jesus than the damned in Hell to all eternity. The inmates of Hell are never able to discharge the debt they owe to the justice of God, but every believer by his Surety has paid the uttermost farthing.

An aged saint was asked what was the gospel she believed, and how she believed it. Her simple reply was: "God is satisfied with the sufferings and death of His Son, that is the gospel I believe; and I am satisfied with His

sufferings and death, that is how I believe it."

Had Jesus Christ not rendered satisfaction to the Father, there would have been no resurrection nor empty tomb. **"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"** (Rom. 4:25). The resurrection of Christ was for the purpose of justifying His people. Our Lord arose that He might present His blood to the Father in the heavenly tabernacle as our great High Priest. **"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us"** (Heb. 9:12).

As long as Christ lay in the grave there was no assurance that His redemptive work had been accepted (I Pet. 1:21). If Christ is still under the power of death, we are under the power of condemnation. **"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins"** (I Cor. 15:17). As surely as He is risen, so surely we can know we are saved (Rom. 5:10).

Well did the angel assert: **"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."**

V. THE EMPTY TOMB SUBSTANTIATED THAT ALL THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST SHALL RISE AS HE ROSE.

Jesus Christ never acted more representively than in rising from the dead. **"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man**

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in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor. 15:20-23). Christ is the firstfruits, and the after fruits must come.

The first ripe of the wheat in Palestine was immediately brought into the Temple and waved before the Lord, as a pledge that every stalk of wheat growing should be safely gathered into the storehouse. Even so, the resurrection of Christ demonstrates that all His people will be raised again. In John 14:19 Christ stated: **"Because I live, ye shall live also."** The spirits of the dead in Christ now in Heaven, whose bodies sleep in the ground on earth, will come back with Christ at the Rapture to get their resurrection bodies (I Thess. 4:13-18).

How comforting these words are to those who have departed friends and relatives. When we go to the graveyard to attend the remains of departed relatives and friends, and stand before their bones, which are in the grave, we ask ourselves, "Can these bones live? Can the dead live again?" As surely as the tomb of Christ became an empty sepulcher, so surely the graves of His people shall become empty sepulchers. Just as Christ rose to life and immortality, so surely shall His people come out of the graves the morning of the first resurrection. How beautiful the Prophet Isaiah expressed it: **"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead"** (Isa. 26:19). **"And God**

hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power" (I Cor. 6:14). **"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you"** (II Cor. 4:14; cf. Rom. 8:11).

The empty grave of Jesus Christ is prophetic of the emptiness of the graves of all His followers. These graves may be on land or sea, but they are destined to become empty. Christ will never be fully satisfied until we are completely conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29). In Philippians 3:20-21 it is written: **"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."** As believers we will never be fully satisfied until we are like Him: **"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness"** (Ps. 17:15; cf. I John 3:1-2).

Thank God for the empty grave of Jesus! Thank God one day all the dead in Christ shall be in the likeness of their Lord. Soon the graves of the departed saints will be as empty as the grave of their covenant Head. **"He is not here: for he is risen as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."**

VI. THE EMPTY GRAVE CONFIRMS THAT WE HAVE A LIVING ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER IN HEAVEN.

The resurrection of Christ was necessary to His being our everlasting High Priest: "Who is

he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34). Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven to defend those for whom He offered a sacrifice. His intercession consists in the perpetual application He makes to His Father of the blood He shed on the cross for the salvation of the elect. By the perpetual efficacy of His blood our sins are removed as far as the east is from the west. This never-ceasing intercession of our ever-living High Priest not only procures the remission of our sins, but also all spiritual blessings.

A dead high priest could not intercede for any person. Unless Joseph's tomb is empty, we have no Intercessor, no Advocate, no Mediator. Thank God, Jesus Christ ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). Our High Priest is not in some grave in Palestine. Listen again to the words of the angel: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay"

VII. THE EMPTY GRAVE ESTABLISHED A FUTURE JUDGMENT DAY.

Our Savior had to be brought back from the dead in order to be the Judge of all the earth. In the before-time covenant the Son agreed to execute the office of a judge. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22, 27). The risen Christ will occupy this office primarily in the future: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1).

A dead man upon a cross could not be the Judge of all the earth. But our ever-living Lord Jesus Christ can do this. He is "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10:42). It is written in Acts 17:31: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." The Father has given assurance of a future judgment day by raising Jesus Christ from among the dead. God would not have worked a miracle in favor of an impostor.

Do not be deceived by the Devil. The God who made the world will judge it. That day is fixed in the counsel of God, and it cannot be altered. The Father will judge the world by the Lord Jesus Christ to whom all judgment is committed. Christ is not in the grave. He has been raised up to judge the world. The angel declared: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

VIII. THE EMPTY TOMB ARGUES FOR THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

To the church at Thessalonica Paul wrote: "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thess. 1:10). If our Redeemer did not arise from the dead and ascend back to Heaven over 1900 years ago, He cannot come a second time. A dead Christ in Joseph's tomb could not come or go any place. Because He is presently at the Father's right hand, we can be fully persuaded that one day

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What is the permissive will of God?

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There are three kinds of "will" revealed in Scripture concerning God. The first and most important (to us) is the directive will of God. This is essentially the Bible (and conscience/Rom. 1:20, 2:15). Every "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" is the directive will of God. Selah! Think about it! The directive will of God is perfect in purity, holiness and in plenary instruction. If we had nothing else but the Bible, it would be all that we need. **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (II Tim. 3:16-17).

The second will of God is His decretive will. This involves the decrees of God, His foreknowledge and foreordination. Basically it involves prophecy concerning predicted future events, births and even the actions of men and women. **"Thou shalt have a Son," "He shall deliver my people"** and such restrictive and decretive prophesies reveal a God that is working out His will in every matter. **"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring**

the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: ..yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isa. 46:9-11). Included in this great decretive will of God is election and the predestination of God's sovereign grace in the salvation of lost mankind. **"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"** (Eph. 1:11). **"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"** (Rom. 9:13).

The third aspect of God's will is the permissive will of God. The simplest definition here is: The longsuffering of God. The permissive will of God is seamlessly merged with the aforementioned aspects of God's will. It is, in fact, an integral component of the decretive will of God, in that anything that God does not directly decree to be (**"Let there be light"**), He still decrees to ALLOW TO PERMIT (darkness on the OTHER side of the planet). God allows (permits) the evil actions of men ONLY to the point of working out His sovereign decretive will in all matters of life. The most vivid example of the permissive will of God working out the decretive will of God is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. **"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of**

Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. ...Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: ...Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 4:27-28; 2:23, 36).

God is not guilty of making the Jews and Romans kill His Son, but He did allow and purpose it! God is not hindered by the evil actions of Judas Iscariot, Adolf Hitler, or Charles Manson. But rather, He PERMITS the free agency of men ONLY to the point of accomplishing His decreed purposes in society. As you read the story of Balaam in Numbers 22-24, God gives Balaam enough rope to hang himself (which Balaam does!), but will throughout the narrative achieve His ultimate purpose of blessing His people Israel (and every other purpose along the way!).

The reason we must distinguish between God's decretive will and His permissive will is to clarify in our mortal minds the critical tenet that God is NOT the author of evil. God does not cause or create evil in the sense of ordaining it to come to pass. But He knows all hearts and conditions and ordains beforehand to use the foreknown evil to bring to pass His perfect will and purposes. As we study this subject of God "allowing" evil, we must also see the other side of this coin of deity. God's NON-permissive will! God does not permit ANY evil (or moral) actions that would not work out to His glory and our good! Even what we might consider a good action, will NOT be permitted,

if it is not within His framework of ultimate glory and goodness. Selah! Think about it!

Ultimately, even though we have divided up God's will for our study and edification into two or three parts, there is in reality only ONE SEAMLESS AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD! **"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"** (Rom. 8:28). God's Perfect Will! Selah! Think about it.

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The will of God is His faculty of self determination and choice according to His own sovereign, holy, and fixed purpose or decree. God's will is free and sovereign, meaning that it is not constrained by anything outside His own nature (Psalm 115:3; 135:6). God's will is invincible and powerful in the sense that everything He has decreed and purposed will come to pass. Job 23:13-14 declares: **"But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him"** (cf. Dan. 4:35). God's will is as eternal and immutable as He is, meaning that whatever He decreed in eternity will come to fruition in time as Ephesians 1:11 suggests: **"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Please explain Romans 16:17 and what is meant by “avoid them.”

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It is obvious that Paul was writing to the church that was in Rome. Paul was concerned about their wellbeing and their faithfulness. But there were those that would try to interject their own doctrine, false doctrine, many times in Paul's day it was the Judaizers. With this false doctrine they were dividing the churches that existed at that time. These Judaizers had given Paul trouble in other churches (please read Philippians 3:17-21).

Paul gives two instructions: “**mark them**” which means to identify them, and “**avoid them.**” Romans 16:20 may suggest that these false teachers really come from Satan, and one day he will be completely defeated.

I will quote Dr. Gill here, “and if found to be contrary thereunto, note them as false teachers: and avoid them; shun their ministry, drop attendance on it, depart far from them, have no private conversation with them, receive them not into your houses, nor bid them God speed; withdraw from them as disorderly persons, who act contrary to the doctrine and order of the Gospel, and after proper admonition reject them from all fellowship with you.” Verse 18 tells us why, “**For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own**

belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18).

The exhortation (encouragement) to mark, or turn away and keep away from false teachers seems harsh and many have looked upon Paul's advice in that way. Some have considered that a softer approach could perhaps win over false teachers and bring them back into line with the truth, but Paul makes no allowances for this type of behavior. There are many issues at stake. Error can lead away the young and innocent. As Paul notes, those who spread false teaching (doctrines) cause divisions and are not concerned about the havoc that may result from their activities.

We have this problem today. I have had many come to the mission who want to impress upon us their doctrine. I am not a pacifist, I will not deny it, but I try to be hospitable and friendly up until the time someone comes in and wants to take over. There was such a man recently and the next time he came I was going to politely show him the door. But the Lord intervened and he never came back, but not after he sent me a nasty text and said I was a fraud. Just to give you one example of something that he tried to impress upon all of us after I was done preaching, he said, “God is not able to control Satan.” That was just one of many. To show you how hospitable I was, I drove an hour and a half to talk with him on a Saturday, spent three and half hours talking with him, bought his lunch and

he never once asked me about our doctrine or what we believed. And he never brought a Bible with him on Sunday morning. Like I said, he was one of many.

False doctrine cannot be allowed to infiltrate our churches, “**Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves**” (Matt. 7:15). “**Mark them,**” “**Avoid them.**” God Bless!

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Verses 17 & 18 need to be taken together. “**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple**” (Rom. 16:17-18). At the time of the Apostle's writing this book of Romans, there were probably not any irregular churches yet (non-Baptist), but the roots of those departures were beginning. Already the writers of the New Testament were warning about antichrists and the mongers of heresy. “. . .even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (I John 2:18-19). “**Study to shew thyself**

approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, ...and overthrow the faith of some” (II Tim. 2:15-18), (Titus 3:9-11; Jude 4; II Peter 2).

The Apostle Paul was not loathe to name names. Hymenaeus and Philetus were causing “divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine” of the church. Paul marked them as dangerous men! “**Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words**” (II Tim. 4:14-15). We should mark these heretics and not be afraid to name names, either! Selah! Think about it!

The practical application of discipline in the Lord's church requires a purity of doctrine and holy living. Following the commandments of our Lord, we are to excisively act to purge the church of any leaven. “. . .but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Matt. 18:17). “**To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus**” (I Cor. 5:5). “**Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme**” (I Tim. 1:20).

But also, I think a practical application must be made of “marking” and “avoiding” false churches and their false teachers, in our day. On a church level, we

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Forum #1

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things after the counsel of his own will" (cf. Isaiah 46:9-11; Acts 15:18).

Theologians through the years in an attempt to explain God have tried to divide the will of God into several categories. I think most of them confuse the issue instead of throwing light upon it. God's will of purpose or decretive will was framed in eternity before anything or anyone existed. Everything flows from that will of purpose including instances where He has allowed men to commit wicked deeds. God is in no sense the author of sin or evil, since His nature is absolutely holy and righteous. However in His wise Providence He channels the depravity of man to accomplish His immutable will as seen in the classic example of the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 2:23; 4:26-27). God had decreed and purposed the death of His Son as the only means of reconciling elect sinners (I Pet. 1:19-20). In time God channeled the depraved desires of wicked men to accomplish His purpose. The men who crucified Christ were not forced by God to put Him to death, they did it most freely of their own volition according to the depravity, malice, and envy of their own hearts.

There is a sense that God has a will of command as revealed in His infallible, inerrant Word. This is often referred to as His will of approbation, or His revealed will as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Depraved mankind often resists, denies, casts off, and disobeys the commands, precepts, and warnings of the Word. God will hold man accountable and will judge him for his rebellion (Prov. 1:24-33).

Though I cannot delve into all

the secret counsel of the Lord and explain all the intricacies of His sovereign will, I am confident that He does all things well. I rest in the truth of Deuteronomy 29:29: **"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."**

I really like the way John Gill explained the will of God in his Body of Divinity:

"There is but one will of God; but for our better understanding it, it may be distinguished...The distinction of the secret and revealed will of God has generally obtained among sound divines; the former is properly the will of God, the latter only a manifestation of it. Whatever God has determined within Himself, whether to do Himself, or do by others, or suffer to be done, whilst it is in His own breast, and is not made known by any event in providence, or by prophecy, that is His secret will; such are the deep things of God, the thoughts of His heart, the counsels and determinations of His mind; which are impenetrable to others; but when these open by events in providence, or by prophecy, then they become the revealed will of God."

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"So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways" (Ps. 81:12-13)!

Let us first look at the definition of the "Permissive." One definition given is: allowing freedom of behavior, allowing or enjoying the freedom to behave in ways others might consider unacceptable, particularly in sexual matters. This would be as in the Scripture given above. God left them (Israel) to **"their own hearts' lust."**

Another Scripture that comes to mind is Romans 1:28, **"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."** So here God also allowed them freedom, please read the rest of the chapter. Even though He allowed it and/or gave His permission, there would be consequences.

Another definition of "permissive" is giving permission, and/or granting permission. This is seen in the case of Satan coming to God and God asking him, **"And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil"** (Job 1:8)? After a brief conversation God said, **"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD"** (Job 1:12). That was God giving Satan His permission to do whatever he wanted but not to touch Job's physical body. Satan goes to God a second time in chapter two and again God gives Satan permission, allowing him now to touch Job's body but to spare his life, **"And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life"** (Job 2:6). Dear reader, I would encourage you to read the first two chapters of Job for the full

picture. I believe it gives great testimony to God's "permissive will."

Let me go one step further with the question and ask what is the "permissive providence" of God? "Providence" meaning the wisdom, care, and guidance believed to be provided by God; God perceived as a caring force guiding humankind, as in the case of Job.

Scripture abounds with illustrations of God's "permissive providence." Joseph was sold into Egypt in the anguish of his soul, and amidst the lamentations of his father. In Egypt, he endured fierce temptation and imprisonment, yet the whole of his affliction came to be seen as part of the divine plan of preserving his family alive. The "evil" of Joseph's brethren became the divine "good." Is not the "permissive providence" of God evident when He used the smallest circumstance to accomplish His will on behalf of the Jews? A sleepless night of the king was overruled to save a people from slaughter (Esther 6:1). **"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ"** (Eph. 1:11-12).

So God's "permissive will"/"permissive providence" are for His honor and glory, and for His will and purpose, **"Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place"** (I Chro. 16:27). God has a perfect plan and it will be carried out as He sees fit, therefore He allows many things to happen to accomplish all! God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

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cannot fellowship publicly with non Baptists. We cannot share pulpits (allow non Baptists in our pulpits), accept alien immersion (only Baptist baptism), open communion (to non members), dilute our teaching of one true church (Landmarkism) nor open ANY door to Ecumenicalism, where any church is as good as another. We might be accused of “unchurching” these other congregations, but in reality, they have done it themselves, by claiming teachings and founders other than Jesus Christ! Quoting an early American Georgia Baptist: “...we say that the loss of the (chain-link) succession (on paper) can never prove it futile, nor justify any one out of it. The Pedobaptists, by their own histories, admit they are not of it; but we do not, and shall think ourselves entitled to the claim until the reverse be clearly shown.” – Jesse Mercer, 1811.

God has a purpose in this “marking and avoiding.” While we can many times on a personal level have some sort of social and neighborly fellowship with heretics, if they seek to cause divisions and offenses by their remarks and behavior, then we must avoid even this communal interaction. The purpose is to avoid confrontation, contamination and “ill repute.” **“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”** Flattery and eloquence that serve self and not the Lord and His church are destructive to the onlookers and the young in the faith. It might sound good to ears not seasoned in the truth! **“Doth not the ear try**

words? and the mouth taste his meat” (Job 12:11)? **“For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”** (Heb. 5:13-14). Can you tell when they are lying or leaving Scriptural principles? Only if you are much studied and faithful in reading and applying God’s Word in your own life!

We should shield our young folk from these vain disputings and heretical philosophies. If Satan can just plant a seed, it might destroy the young Christian, as Eve was beguiled in the Garden of Eden. Mark them and avoid them like the plague! Give them the gospel and show them the truth as the Lord opens doors, but separation and consecration must be exercised by the Lord’s sheep and churches. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

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Romans 16:17-18: **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”**

These verses are a simple warning for believers to be on guard and to beware of those who are divisive and contentious

in their spread of false doctrine and practice. Those who teach contrary to the precious truths revealed in the Book of Romans are to be identified and avoided. If they deny total depravity, the doctrines of sovereign grace, justification by faith, the power of the true Gospel, the truth about Scriptural baptism, unity of the local church, the tenets of practical Christian living, and devotion to God, etc. all of which are clearly set forth in Romans, they are to be marked as false teachers and not the servants of Christ. Their ministry and teachings ought to be rejected and departed from. II Thessalonians 3:6 issues a similar admonition: **“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”**

TOM ROSS



The Empty Grave

(Continued from page 11) ◊

before too long “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven” (I Thess. 4:16). Before leaving this world our Lord said: “I will come again” (John 14:3). We can be certain the Father “shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you” (Acts 3:20). Therefore we should be eagerly looking forward to the coming of One whose arrival is anticipated at any time.

The resurrection of Christ is the ground and guarantee of His return. Had He not risen from the dead, there would be no hope of His coming again to rescue us from future wrath (Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 19:15). The angel proclaimed: “He is not here: for

he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

IV. THE EMPTY GRAVE AFFIRMS THAT IT IS SAFE TO TRUST JESUS FOR SALVATION.

How could we trust in Christ if His grave were not empty? With the empty tomb before us, we know who He is and what He has done. It is safe to trust Him with your eternal salvation: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). We trust in a living Savior who was once dead (Rev. 1:18), but is not dead now. His grave was once occupied, but it is now empty. Nothing is safer than trusting Christ, and the safety is indicated by His empty grave. Oh, sinner hear the words of the angel: “He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

CONCLUSION

1. Study these lessons carefully, for they are profitable. The more they are understood, the greater our joy in Christ.

2. Christianity depends on the empty grave of Jesus Christ. Its origin, existence, continuance, extension, and moral power rest on: “He is risen, as he said” (Matt. 28:6). If Christ be not risen, there is no resurrection of the dead, our preaching is vain, our faith is vain, and we are false witnesses before God and yet in our sins (I Cor. 15:12-18). If the grave in the garden in Palestine is not empty, we are the biggest fools this side of Hell!

3. Praise God! Christ arose! He will never die again. He lives to save sinners who come to Him.



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.

HOUSE VOTE SMALL CONSOLATION TO PRO-LIFERS

(WNS)--Congressional efforts to please pro-life advocates fell short at the U.S. Capitol as the nation marked the 42nd anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision. The U.S. House of Representatives approved a ban on taxpayer funding for abortion, but most of the conversation in Washington, D.C., revolved around what Congress did not consider. The Republican effort to pass a ban on abortions after 20 weeks collapsed in the 24 hours leading up to the March for Life on the National Mall, leaving lawmakers in the awkward position of touting their pro-life credentials at the same time they explained themselves to angry activists. "I am disgusted by this act of moral cowardice," said Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. "The congressional Republicans seem to think that pro-lifers will be satisfied with Ronald Reagan rhetoric and Nancy Pelosi results. They are quite wrong."

SUPREME COURT AGREES TO HEAR MARRIAGE CASES

(WNS)--The Supreme Court in late January said it would decide whether all 50 states must issue licenses for same-sex marriages. It was only a matter of time before

the court agreed to take up the issue, with circuit courts issuing contradictory rulings on state marriage laws. This fall the high court allowed many lower court rulings striking marriage laws to stand, expanding gay marriage to 36 states. The court in its order today said it will consider two questions: One, whether the 14th Amendment requires states to license same-sex marriages; and two, whether states must recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AT ISSUE WITH NEW DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LAWS

(WNS)--The mayor of Washington, D.C., has signed two laws that could violate the religious liberty of Christian organizations. The first one, according to Life Site News, prohibits employers from discriminating against an employee based on her "reproductive-health decisions." Opponents of the measure fear it could require D.C. employers to provide health coverage for abortions, in opposition to the Supreme Court's ruling in the Hobby Lobby case. The other law says religious schools cannot prohibit gay and lesbian student groups from using campus facilities. Congress will review both measures and has 30 days to vote to block them. If not, they automatically become law.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS AFTER ATTACK ON CHURCH, KENYAN PASTORS REQUEST GUNS

(WNS)--Kenyan pastors have renewed calls to be allowed to carry firearms following the killing of a church official in Mombasa, but a lawmaker has rejected the plea. Speaking after a meeting with Mombasa deputy county commissioner Salim Mahmoud, the pastors said they needed to carry weapons for self-protection against religious opponents, an apparent reference to suspected Muslim extremists who have attacked churches and Christians in the recent past. In the latest incident this past Sunday, gunmen on a motorbike shot dead an assistant pastor at the Maximum Revival Centre before escaping. Police have yet to arrest the assailants. Christian leaders made a similar request in October 2013, soon after the killing of two evangelical pastors inside their churches. Mombasa churches currently receive police protection during services.

BRITISH LAWMAKERS OK THREE-PARENT BABIES

(WNS)--Lawmakers in Britain's House of Commons voted today to allow doctors to create three-parent embryos. The technique, which takes DNA from one egg and implants it in another, is designed to prevent children from inheriting potentially fatal genetic conditions. But critics say it could lead to the engineering of "designer" babies, with parents selecting specific traits for their children. They also warn children born as a result of the technique have not been studied enough to know what unintended consequences might occur. The U.S. Food and Drug

Administration warned last year it could take decades to determine whether the procedure is safe. British Prime Minister David Cameron strongly supports the measure. He had a son born with severe epilepsy who died at age 6 in 2009. The measure now goes to the House of Lords where it must pass before becoming law.



Why I Preach the

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forsaken both by God and man; He did not hang there in the torment of His body, suffering all the agony the most exquisitely wrought, nerve-centered body of the universe could suffer of physical pain and anguish; God did not make Him to be sin and treat Him as the blackest and most repulsive thing in existence; He did not lay upon Him the weight and demerit of a world's guilt that He might suffer in His innocence, His purity and innate sinlessness on behalf of the vilest outcast this side of Gehenna, the lake of fire, just that He might keep us from lying, cheating, swearing, getting drunk, giving ourselves up to immorality, licentiousness and sensualism; He did not send Jesus Christ His only begotten and well-beloved Son to die a spectacle to Heaven, to earth and Hell that He might make us merely decent and right and morally correct in our relations to one another. All that is involved in the fact of redemption just as fragrance is involved and included in the rose, as harmony is expected to be a part of music and rhythm as well as meter a part of verse and song.

Cleanness and morality are involved quantities in a Christian.

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The moment the new life of the risen Christ is wrought in a believer and he is linked up by the Holy Ghost to the glorified body of the Son of God he has in him all the impulse and power of the highest morality, the most exalted purity, the rarest spirituality and the discernment of spiritual things. All that is self-evident--but the Son of God came into this world and went through the amazing tragedy and sacrifice of the cross to do something more than to make us merely moral and good. He came into the world, He died the foreordained death of the cross that He might deliver us from death and the grave.

Death is the blackest and most shameful blot on the face of the earth, the grave the most repulsive of scandals, drawing the trench of its corruption and stain round the girdle of the globe.

To bring a human being into the world, give him no choice of father or mother, of place, of time and circumstance, endow him with a brain to think, a heart to feel and love and then set him face to face with death, hide from him the hour of his going like a criminal who knows not the hour of his execution; to allow the old to live till they are withered, shriveled and helpless, a burden to others and a still greater burden to themselves, cursing the fact they must live and yet afraid to die; to take a young man in the splendor of his youth, on the threshold of assured success, snatch him away without warning from the parents devoted to him, the wife who loves him and the children dependent on him; and then leave them both, the decrepit and useless old and the needed young to drop into the

tongueless silence of the grave, that silence broken only by the sound of the clods as they fall on the coffin lid or the splash of tears, or the choking sob; to allow the living whose hearts are torn and twisted and smashed by the robbery that death brings upon them to stand there and strangle themselves with the unanswered and unanswerable questions: "Whence," "What," and "Whither," and then say all this is the work of a good, a compassionate, a tender and loving God, and that death is as natural as birth?

Nay!

Those who say and teach that death is as natural as birth are guilty of pure unintellectualism and are unwarranted deniers of the facts.

The birth of a child is like the coming of the dawn. It is like the note of a new and joyous song. It is the revelation of a new world, a world of life, of hope, of promised and larger activities. No one who is sane and true and wise will deliberately seek to hinder birth; but death! ah! everything is against death and by right against it.

Every remedy taken from materia medica, every operation of the surgeon's knife that adds even a day to the sufferer's existence, every hospital, every precaution and invention to prevent accident, all the genius exercised by man to conserve health and strength are a protest against death and a proclamation that it is unnatural, a discord and a wrong.

Every human being who has the slightest pulse of sentiment, who is not sunken in the soddenness of moral unconsciousness feels that death is the shadow shutting out the sun of day and hiding the stars of night, the false note that breaks the lilt in any song, the

thief who takes the treasure no money can replace, the mocker who bids us readjust our days and live as though those whom we have loved and lost had never been a part of us, so that their going has put more of death in those of us who remain to live than life---even the brute feels and knows death is---an enemy.

Nor does God Himself leave us in any doubt about it.

He says death is an enemy; even as it is written:

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

And since in itself it is an enemy, it is, necessarily, the work of an enemy.

It is the work of any enemy who has the power of death.

He who has the power of death is---the Devil; even as it is written:

"Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

The Son of God came into the world that He might destroy the Devil and his work of death.

He came to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light.

He came to make us something more than---just moral.

He came to make us---immortal.

There is only one man in the universe who has immortality; and that man is He who is our Lord Jesus Christ, very God and yet true and actual man.

There is not an immortal human being on earth today.

There is no such thing as an immortal soul.

But here I bid you halt!

Let no one take up this statement and go hence and say I teach the final annihilation of the soul.

He who should go forth and say that would be, after what I shall further tell you, a robber of truth

and character.

On this round earth at this hour there is no man who has spoken more, written more and, under God, done more to rebuke and smite this slaving, slobbering, unintellectual and Devil-inspired deception known as Russellism, Christadelphianism and Seventh Day Adventism than the man who now speaks to you.

I affirm here that by the will of God the soul must exist forever whether it be in Heaven or in Hell; but, I say to you the preacher who seeks to deny and overthrow the doctrine of annihilation by defending the immortality of the soul is beaten before he begins. He has his pains for his labor. He can find no such expression as "immortal soul" in the Bible nor any such doctrine taught there. Above all, he is guilty of excuseless philological blundering. The soul is immaterial. Immortal is applied to that which is material. The words, "immortal," and "immortality" are never applied in the New Testament to the soul---never! but always and exclusively to the body.

To be immortal means to have a deathless, incorruptible body like unto that of the Son of God.

This, and this alone---as related to man---is Scriptural immortality. The Son of God came into the world to give this boon of immortality to men.

This is the supreme objective of redemption.

Till that objective is obtained, redemption is not complete and the blood of the cross is not justified.

Do you call the redemption of Paul complete so long as his body lies mingled with the dust of the highway by the banks of that yellow Tiber where he was slain?

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Do you call complete the redemption of those you love and I love so long as the Devil like the strong man armed with the law holds the mortgage on their bodies and keeps them in his dark and worm-filled house---the grave?

It is true, blessedly true, thank God, the moment a believer dies he is absent from his home in the body and immediately present at his home with the Lord in the Third Heaven, in the beautiful country of Paradise, in the Holy City, the place prepared.

It is true the dear departed ones are clothed with the white robe of immaculate light woven on the unjarring looms of Heaven, a temporary clothing which preserves their form and makes them visible and recognizable to one another; but with it all they are disembodied, and in spite of the comfort and the consolation of it, in spite of the fact that their state is **"far better"** than this at its best, still they are souls whose vehicle is no longer body, but spirit (wherefore after death they are sometimes spoken of as spirits); nevertheless, the Son of God did not come to make us eternal, even if happy---ghosts.

If Christians should continue to die and should remain as white clothed ghosts in Heaven forever they would be an incongruous environment and abiding scandal to the immortality of the Son of God Himself. A living, immortal man shining in a glorified human body surrounded by bodiless souls forever! What a contradiction that would be, what a scandal, indeed. It would be the declaration that the Son of God had power to rise from the dead, make His own body

immortal, impervious to death, but in respect to those for whom He died and who died trusting in His promise He either did not have the power or did not care to keep His promise.

Such a conclusion in either member of the proposition is impossible. It is impossible, for no such postulate as inability or faithlessness can be laid against the Son of God.

By His own immortality as the first-fruits of them that slept, as the ordained forerunner and sample of all those whom He has redeemed He is, and in the nature of things, under bonds to give immortality to each, to raise the dead and transfigure the living in His likeness.

As the dead can be raised and the living changed only when He is personally present then He must come to this world again to give that immortality of which seated on yonder throne in Heaven He is the promise and the pledge.

He made this promise by the grave of Lazarus.

Standing there with His cheeks wet with tears of sorrow over the one He loved and in profound sympathy with the grief-stricken sisters, groaning in Himself, not merely as one who was under the spell of sorrow and heartache, but full of "indignant protest" (this is the meaning of the word "to groan") against the havoc of death as the work of that being whom we so familiarly call "Devil," without stopping to measure his dignity, malignity and power, He said:

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Wondrous, gracious, far

reaching and full of measureless comfort is the promise, but none out of ten who repeat it seem never to have comprehended the full import of it.

For this is what He meant.

Listen to it as I quote it in its fullness of intent:

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet when I come again---shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me---when I come again---shall never die."

Nor is this a fictional fancy of mine, but the direct declaration of the Holy Spirit to the Church speaking through the Apostle Paul; for he says:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then (and not till then---not when we die and go to Heaven, but when the dead are raised and the living are changed---then---and not till then) shall be brought to pass the saying that is written (written by the Prophet Isaiah in the twenty-fifth chapter of his prophecy), **Death is swallowed up in victory.**

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

And mark it well, the context of this Holy Ghost promise is the declaration that the resurrection of the dead, the transfiguration of the living, this changing from mortality to immortality will

be the resurrection and the transfiguration of those who are "Christ's at His coming."

Yes! He will come.

He will descend from Heaven with a shout of command. He will pass it on to the archangel. The archangel will pass it to the angel who is called the **"trump of God."** He will cause a sound, a blast, an utterance of power at which the doors of graves of every sort shall open outward, every secret hiding place of the purchased dead will be revealed and the sacred dust will bloom with life; for, in the body of every regenerated soul there is planted the germ of the new body; and just as the buried seed is linked by the unseen air to the fructifying sun in Heaven and as at a given moment we call the germination is quickened and at last comes forth a new form yet the same essential embodiment as when planted; so, the regeneration nucleus of the new body is held by the Holy Spirit (of which the air is the symbol) to the risen, glorified body of the Son of God in Heaven; and no matter what may befall the body in which it was buried it will abide to that hour we call the resurrection and transfiguration and at the shout, the voice and action of the trump of God will come forth in the glow of unfolded and eternal beauty as the sheath, the house, the home, the perfect dwelling place, the royal robe of the souls the Lord shall bring with Him; while the living shall flash forth in the same immortality and glory.

Yes! the dust of death shall bloom and mortality shall put on immortality at the Coming of the Lord.

And I for one want Him to come.

I have loved ones waiting within

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the gates of the upper city for that morning hour.

I have one there my heart in these days yearns to see.

But a short time ago death with rude and sudden hand snatched from me my only child, the son of my heart; a son grown to splendid young manhood; a son who loved me, revered me, believed as I believe, a member of my own Church, baptized by my own hand in early days; a son on whom I hoped to lean in peace if the shadows should deepen round me ere my Lord might come. And in the going of that beloved son of mine the light of day has seemed at times to fail, the stars of Heaven have grown so dim and far away I think of them often as tears of distant eyes that pity me. There are moments when I crave him as a hungry man does food and as a thirsty man in desert ways yearns for a draught of limpid waters. I have a hurt here in the heart of me no medicine of earth can cure; but because I know when the Lord comes, this son of mine shall rise and I shall meet him and the old glad life renew in larger, richer, fuller measure; and because I know there is only the sound of the trump between me and that longed-for hour; that the door of Heaven is always afar and my Lord may come at any moment and bring us to the hand clasp and the love embrace again, I bear my hurt, I rest in the Lord and preach this blessed hope to other hearts that ache---the coming of Him who is the resurrection and the life and whose last earthward utterance to His Church is:

"Behold, I come quickly."



An Unshaken Trust

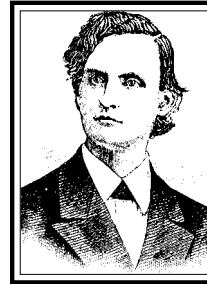
By J. B. Hawthorne
(1837 - 1910)

"Let come on me what will. . . Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:13,15).

God delights to honor a true man. He takes pleasure in placing him where the world may see the excellence of his character and feel the power of his life. But before He sets him in a regal place and encircles his brow with a crown of glory, He suffers him to be tried. He subjects him to a baptism of fire. He lets the world and Satan smite him with manifold afflictions. In this way He prepared such men as Chrysostom, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Carey, and Judson for their exalted stations and work. Having suffered with Christ, they now reign with Him over the hearts and lives of men.

God saw in His servant Job a man in whom He was well pleased. **"Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?"** Such integrity must not be permitted to dwell in obscurity. It must be exalted and made visible to men of every land and age. But as a preparation for such exaltation, Job must pass through great tribulation.

What God loves the Devil hates. What God delights to honor the Devil loves to defame. When God said, **"Hast thou considered my servant Job, ...a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil,"** the Devil answered, **"Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not**



made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed

the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." By this Satan means that Job is a hypocrite, that selfishness is behind all his piety and fealty to God, and that if deprived of his temporal prosperity he would be utterly wicked and faithless.

The Devil today is just what he has ever been. The same sneer is on his face and the same venom is on his lips. Where is the man in this city, in this country, or in the wide world, who fears God and eschews evil in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, against whom some emissary of Satan has not brought the charge of insincerity and hypocrisy? How often we hear the remark, "Such a man belongs to the church because it helps him in his temporal affairs. He gets the patronage of the church in his business. But let misfortune come upon him, let him lose his custom, and let his business go down, and he will make shipwreck of his faith." Who has not heard the mean indictment that ministers of the gospel are mere hirelings, that they are preaching for pay, that they are making merchandise of religion, that they have no faith in what they preach, that they care

nothing for the souls of men, and that if their emoluments were taken from them they would desert their flocks, go over to the ranks of infidelity, and curse the Christ whose gospel they have preached?

If the men who make these charges are sincere, they not only repudiate Christianity, but pronounce themselves utterly faithless toward men. They believe that man is too selfish to be able to approximate an act of disinterested goodness. They believe that all his conduct toward God and his fellow-men is inspired solely by the desire and purpose to advance his own earthly interests.

Just that is what the Devil professes to believe, and you know what the Devil is. He has neither pity nor respect for man. He is man's enemy. His work is to degrade and damn him. Men who have no confidence in their fellows have none in themselves. Believing the whole human race to be entirely selfish, all their transactions are inspired solely by the love of self. They use their fellow-men only as instruments to accomplish their selfish ends. If it is to their interest to applaud a man they bind the laurel on his brow, but if they can put money in their purse or elevate themselves to political office by detraction and slander, there is nothing in their depraved hearts to restrain them.

No man is better than his faith. He who has faith in mankind, he who sees among the ruins of the fall traces of a primeval glory, which through God's infinite grace may be recovered, he who believes that there is human pity that is real, and human love that is pure, he who believes

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that there is a Godward side to man's being which is capable of real fellowship with the true and good, is man's friend. But he who believes that the central and ruling principle of every human heart is the love of self and that human aspiration can rise to nothing higher and nobler than the gratification of self, is man's enemy. Like Satan, conscious of his own self depravity and vileness, he would drag earth and Heaven down to a level with himself.

How miserable must such a man be! In all the broad world of humanity he sees nothing that is worthy to be loved and honored, and nothing in which he is willing to confide and look for sympathy and support in the day of trouble. Satan said he was going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it. He is the most miserable being in the universe because he loves nothing and confides in nothing. Peace has forsaken the breast of that man who believes that the regnant principle of every human heart is unmitigated selfishness. Such a belief unfits him for the enjoyment of any blessing. He looks upon every man as his enemy. He regards all human conduct as deceptive and every offer of kindness as the forerunner of a base betrayal. Regarding himself as a devil incarnate in a world of devils, he walks up and down the earth, hoping to find some grains of comfort in reviling and cursing his fellow-men. His years are all winter, his world all hollow and false, and his universe all gloomy and ghastly.

Young men, the days are evil. The moral atmosphere

which you breathe is laden with poison. All around you are men whose material prosperity depends upon your degradation. Just to the extent that they corrupt your minds and lives they add to their ill-gotten gains. These men would tell you that man is incurably selfish, and therefore incapable of disinterested goodness. They would tell you that those Christian temples are only monuments to the hollowness and hypocrisy of the men who built them. They would tell you that religion is only a cloak, under which men seeking their own aggrandizement conceal the iniquity of their hearts. They would tell you that even the men who have been leaders of our sacramental hosts, and whom the world has loved and honored for their Christian virtues, were deceivers of mankind and went down to their graves with a lie on their lips.

They would teach you to despise the faith of the Christian mother who nurtured your childhood and to despise the counsel of the Christian father who breathed upon you his dying benediction. They would persuade you to forsake the Christian sanctuary and spend your Sabbaths in club rooms. They would tell you that Ingersoll's tracts are better than the Bible, and the lascivious songs of the beer saloon sweeter than the songs of Zion. They would entreat you to hate and cry down every man who would put restraints upon unholy lust or who would insist upon honesty in business and fair dealing at the ballot box.

These are the men who set themselves up as your teachers, and who would give direction to

your lives. Will you accept such a leadership? Will you allow them to destroy your reverence for all things sacred? Will you suffer them to pluck from your hearts the faith that was planted there by a mother's love, and the lessons of honor and rectitude received from a father's lips? Will you exchange the cup of the Lord for the cup of devils? Will you forsake Christ for Belial? If not, then join in holy alliance with those who are fighting the worst adversaries of God's truth and man's welfare, and help to generate a moral atmosphere in which this upas tree of infidelity, blasphemy, and dishonesty cannot live.

Are there any honest men in the world? The Devil says there are none. Among the millions of men and women who wear the Christian regalia and follow the crimson banner of the cross, are there any who love truth and righteousness more than themselves, and whose allegiance to God's cause cannot be shaken by any tempest of adversity? The Devil says there are none. He is a liar, and the truth is not in him. His indictment is a libel as black as the starless night to which eternal justice has consigned him.

I am not blind to the world's depravity. I recognize the fact that among the millions who claim to be believers and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are many whose hearts and lives are stained with the deepest hypocrisy. But virtue has not forsaken the world; honesty, honor, and patriotism still live. In the marts of trade there are thousands of men whose moral integrity has withstood every temptation to wrong dealing.

The assumption of certain political henchmen that every American voter has his price is absolutely false. That there is a large element of our population who have no appreciation of the dignity and responsibility of citizenship, I do not deny. That vast sums of money have been raised to corrupt the ballot, and that thousands of ignorant and impecunious wretches have bartered their birthright, I am compelled to admit. But patriotism lives; and I believe will live forever in the hearts of the American people. The majority of the property holders of this country in the last Federal election voted for what they believed to be for the welfare of the whole country. And there are millions of the horny-handed sons of toil in our workshops and factories, on our farms and in our mines, who would resent as an unpardonable insult to their manhood any attempt to purchase their ballot or to intimidate them in the exercise of their constitutional right to vote according to their honest convictions.

Unselfish devotion to Christ's kingdom is one of the most manifest realities of this world. The pages of history are luminous with the names of men who were loyal to God in the midst of affluence and luxury, and who were equally loyal in the depths of poverty.

I have gone to the almshouses of this country and found men who were once merchant princes. They were Christians in the heyday of their temporal prosperity, but still better Christians in the dark day of adversity. All such facts demonstrate that man is capable

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of disinterested fealty to God, and that when he plants himself by faith on the foundation of God's eternal truth, not even the gates of Hell can prevail against him.

In the sacred narrative before us Satan declares that selfishness is at the bottom of Job's uprightness and piety, and that if Job's material possessions were taken from him he would not only forsake religion, but curse the Holy Being whom he had worshipped and served. God accepts the challenge and suffers the test to be made. All that Job has of temporal treasure is placed within the power of Satan. From what follows we may judge what would become of the possessions of any God-fearing and upright man, if Satan were allowed absolute control of them. If it were proclaimed today by the civil authorities of this country that for the next week all laws against vice and crime would be annulled, and that all evil-doers should, within that period, be absolutely free to do whatever their malign passions should prompt them to do, what a reign of terror would ensue. Scarcely a Christian home would escape the torch. Stores would be rifled, banks robbed, and factories and churches demolished.

That such results would follow the removal of all restraints from evil-minded men we can readily believe when we see how the upright man in the land of Uz fares in the hands of Satan. At a time when he had no thought of evil, and imagined himself secure beneath the protecting arm of Him whom he had served so faithfully,

there came a messenger and said: **"The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them; and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain thy servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."**

Hardly had this messenger finished his sad story before there came another, who said: **"The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."**

While he was yet speaking there came another messenger, who said: **"The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."**

What next? Before this man had uttered the last work of his fearful message there came another, who said: **"Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."**

Terrible agents were these in the hands of the arch-demon. Sabeans, Chaldeans, whirlwind, and fire combined their fury against one defenseless man.

What is the result upon Job's mind, upon Job's faith and integrity? Sheep and camels all stolen, servants burned to ashes, and bodies of his children mangled and dead beneath the ruins of a dwelling. Surely,

if it be possible for temporal calamity to make a godly man faithless, Job will now fulfill the prophecy of Satan, renounce his religion, and curse the God whom he had worshipped.

But how does this servant of the Most High deport himself as he contemplates the wreck of his earthly fortune and hopes? Does he fall out with religion and proclaim it a vain thing to serve God? Nay. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly, but fell to the ground and worshipped him, saying: **"The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."**

What is the significance of this story? It is God Almighty's refutation of a lie. Satan says man worships his maker only for temporal advantage. God answers, "It is false," and proves it by the conduct of his servant Job.

From the birth of true religion to this hour, Satan, speaking through human lips, has charged that men who worship God are inspired with no higher motive than the desire of temporal aggrandizement; and though the contradiction has been made by millions of holy men who preserved their moral and religious integrity in the depths of poverty, amid the gloom of the dungeon and the flames of the stake, the lie still lives and men still repeat it with all the malignity and venom of their Satanic master.

As the old patriarch Job stood upright and unswerving amid the desolation that surrounded him, God said: **"Still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause."**

The Lord God is proud of

the triumphs of His people, and when the registering angel records a victory for the least of His flock, banners wave from all the hills of Heaven and the enraptured millions of the blest tune their harps anew and rise to higher notes of praise.

Satan, discomfited in his first attempt to overthrow this righteous man, proposes to renew the attack and challenges the Almighty to subject Job to another test: **"Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face."**

God knows His people. He knows that neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, can separate them from Him. He is not afraid that they will forsake Him in the hour of their darkness and distress. Having this confidence in their loyalty, He accepts this new challenge. **"So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."**

Poor Job! Behold him, pity him. Covered with disease the most foul and loathsome, his flesh rotting and falling from the bones, stinking with corruption, he sits down in ashes and scrapes himself with a potsherd. Conscious of his integrity, knowing that he had done nothing to merit such suffering, doubtless his breast was the arena of bitter conflicts and the temptation to renounce God came upon him with tremendous power.

But to add to the severity of his trial, the devil enters into the wife of the patriarch. So loathsome has he become, so

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sickening and horrid the stench of his running sores, the she, the partner of his life, the wife of his bosom, and the mother of his children, is constrained to forsake him. Sick, disgusted, and horrified, she turns away from him with the exhortation to curse God and die. But under the pressure of all this suffering, desolate, forsaken, an object of loathing even to the wife who up to this hour had been loyal and faithful, Job did not sin. The loss of property, the loss of servants, the loss of children, the loss of health, the loss of all human affection and sympathy, presented a mighty temptation, and yet he serenely faced it and conquered it.

Still another trial awaits him. Worse than poverty, worse than disease, worse than the death of children, and worse than the desertion by one's own flesh, is the loss of one's good name. As Job was a great sufferer, men looked upon him as a great sinner. They regarded his calamities as only the just and inevitable penalty for some villainous transgression which he had sought to hide beneath the covering of a religious profession.

The pangs of dying are sweet in comparison with the anguish which an upright man feels in being subjected to a base-born suspicion which he is powerless to remove. And yet, when God laid this burden upon the heart of Job, his faith did not fail him. Loving and serving the Lord for the Lord's sake, cleaving to the truth because it was truth, and holding on to the right because it was right, he said: "**Let come on me what will, . . . Though**

he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

When men stand up before the world and declare that the Christian's faith is unreal and that his Christian labors and self-denials are inspired only by the hopes of temporal advantage I almost wonder that the sheeted dead do not rise from their graves and rebuke them.

Was it for temporal gain that Paul was obedient to the heavenly vision which called him into Macedonia? Was it for temporal gain that he submitted to five Jewish scourgings and three Roman flagellations? Was it for temporal gain that he endured the prolonged insolence of provincial magistrates and the gnashing fury of frenzied mobs? Was it for temporal gain that he wore for three years a felon's chain and slept in a felon's cell? Was it for temporal gain that he suffered the loss of all things and at last expired at the hands of a Roman headsman? Was it for any earthly good that Francis Xavier carried the gospel into India? Was it for any temporal reward that he suffered among the poor, degraded pearl fishers of the straits of Manaar? Was it for any hope of earthly gain that he preached the gospel where earthquakes, pestilence, and savagery imperiled his life at every moment?

No! No! It would be flattery to call that man mean who would question the sincerity of such a life or attempt to cast a shadow upon such a name.

In the present generation there are moral heroes who will not suffer by comparison with those whose names illumine the pages of history. Immediately around us are men and women who, amid conflicts dark

and dire, hold to truth and virtue and God with a faith as unflinching and firm as that of the patriarch Job. Go with me tomorrow and I will conduct you into a chamber where lies the wasted and skeleton form of a man who for months and years has not had one hour's exemption from pain, and yet he is uncomplaining and peaceful. With the cold sweat of agony standing on his brow and his whole body quivering with anguish he is wont to say: "**It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good."**

Follow me again and I will lead you beneath a humble roof where the deepest and saddest poverty dwells, poverty unpitied because unknown to the world. There a frail woman, too noble to beg, plies her needle from morn till midnight that her fatherless children may not lack for bread tomorrow. No word of complaint drops from her lips; but grateful to God for a little meal in the barrel and a rude shelter above her head, and looking forward to a heritage of peace and plenty beyond the stars, she exclaims: "**What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"**

Go with me to yonder city of the dead. There beneath a weeping willow a mother kneels at the grave of her only child. Sorrow has plowed deep furrows in her face, but the light of hope is in her eye. As her tears fall and mingle with the dust we hear her say: "**The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."**

I dare say that in the secret solitude of hearts before me

today there are wounds and aching griefs which only Heaven can cure. There are some here whose cup is all bitterness, and yet day by day they look up to God and say: "**Let come what will. . . Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."** Such men and women are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. They are witnesses for God and His truth whose testimony can never be refuted. May God multiply their seed and their triumphs until the last infidel voice is silenced and the last skeptic shall lift his eyes to the cross and exclaim, in the language of the Roman soldier: "**Truly this was the Son of God."**

(An Unshaken Trust, pp. 19-35, 1899 edition).



GLEANINGS



Favour Neglected

By James Smith
(1802 - 1862)

"**I gave her space to repent. . .; and she repented not**" (Rev. 2:21).

So spake the Saviour in reference to some ungodly characters at Thyatira; and the testimony is true of many in our beloved country. Many have space to repent, who have not grace to repent. These are very different things, and do not always go together. Each of them is a favour, a favour conferred

♦ (Continued on page 22)

Gleanings

(Continued from page 22) ♦

on those who may justly be punished for their sins, and be punished without one moment's delay.

Space to repent is a favour. Consider your **ORIGIN**: you are a child of a traitor; of one who rebelled against God, under the most aggravating circumstances, in the most inexcusable way. Look at your **NATURE**: your heart is enmity against the God in whom you live, move, and have your being. You have hated Him with a perfect hatred, and so far as you have known Him or His will, you have manifested it. Review your **CONDUCT**: it has been in direct opposition to His Word. You have said unto God, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Read the **SENTENCE** passed upon you long since, "**The soul that sinneth it shall die.**" "**He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.**" Think of your folly, in childhood, youth and manhood. How have you slighted the most solemn warnings, trifled with the most gracious invitations, and put away the message of mercy from you, judging yourself unworthy of everlasting life! Put these things together, and say, if God give thee space to repent, is it not a favour? Could it be demanded, or expected as a matter of right? It could not. It is a favour, and one which should be instantly improved.

The design of this favour is that you may repent. The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. Time is given you that you may reflect upon your conduct, perceive your danger,

feel the need of mercy, confess your sins to the Lord, obtain the pardon of your transgressions, and reform your life according to His Word. It assures you that God has no delight in punishing, but would rather that you turn from your wickedness and live. He does not desire that you should perish in your sins, or He would have cut you off long ago. He prefers penitence to punishment; this is clear from His **NATURE**, which is love; from His **WORD**, which invites you to His throne of grace; from His **OATH**, "**As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?**" ---from His **CONDUCT**; He waits to be gracious, and never yet cast out one that came; from the **PROVISION** He has made: He has provided a Saviour, sent a message of mercy, suspended punishment, appointed a public judgment, given space for repentance, and commanded "**all men every where to repent.**"

But see how His favour is neglected, and what obstinacy is manifested "**She repented not.**" So it must be said of many. Reader, can it be justly said of you? What! do you still prefer sin to holiness; Satan to Jesus; and hell to Heaven? Is not repentance necessary, necessary for you? Is it not required? Does not Jesus say, "**Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**" Is it not promised? Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the remission of sins. Did you ever desire to possess it? Did you ever seek it? Is it not expected, expected of you? Are you not inexcusable if you live and die impenitent?

You must repent, or perish. Just contrast the patience and longsuffering of God, with the pride and obstinacy of men. Remember, that repentance alone can prevent your ruin, your eternal ruin. Repentance requires time: space is given you for repentance, you have it today, but it may expire before tomorrow. Yea, you are not sure of another moment. Where time is given, fruits meet for repentance are expected. How many years have been given you? How often has the Lord come seeking fruit on you, a barren fig-tree? And if He should now say, "**Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?**" How fearful! How dreadful this! When the space given for repentance is trifled away, the sinner perishes with double destruction. Aged sinner, read, tremble, repent; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

"Repent, the voice celestial cries,

Nor longer dare delay,

The wretch that scorns the mandate dies,

And meets a fiery day.

No more the sovereign eye of God

O'erlooks the crimes of men;

His heralds are despatch'd abroad

To warn the world of sin.

The summons reach thro' all the earth;

Let each attend and fear;

Listen, ye men of royal birth,

And let your vessels hear!

Together in His presence bow,

And all your guilt confess;

Embrace the blessed Saviour now,

Nor trifle with His grace.

Bow, ere the awful trumpet sound,

And call you to His bar;

For mercy knows the appointed bound,

And turns to vengeance there."



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

1-1-2015 to 1-31-2015

Beginning Balance	\$7,463.99
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	425.00
TOTAL.....	7,888.99
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	363.98
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,525.07



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

1-1-2015 to 1-31-2015

Beginning Balance	\$2,299.52
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	100.00
B.C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....	60.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....	25.00
Eldon Joslin, Birmingham, AL	225.00
Evelyn James, Aztec, NM	90.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL.....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC ...	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY.....	30.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH.....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH	75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	145.00
Anonymous	1,210.00
Dividing checks	170.00
Sub Total	\$4,090.95
TOTAL.....	\$6,390.47
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing.....	490.00
Postage	672.75
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.90
Dividing checks	170.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,808.65
.....	2,581.82
Bank Charge	13.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,568.82

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A new mission work has begun. The Providence Baptist Church located at 1115 Jones Mill Road, Cartersville, GA 30120, is an outreach of the Tibet Baptist Church of Ludowici, GA. Service times are Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., Morning Worship at 10:45 a.m. and Evening Worship at 5:00 p.m.

For more information please contact Bro. Bruce Allen (502) 468-6563, Email: providencebc30120@gmail.com or on Facebook under Providence Baptist.

The Windsor Baptist Church of Windsor, IL is seeking a qualified candidate for pastor. They are small in number but rich in truth. Candidate should meet the qualification in I Timothy 3. For more information please contact Brother John Gregory at (217) 728-9966 or Email windsorbaptist.grace@gmail.com.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or email recoffeypot@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email jamijoe@wowway.com.

The Glade Creek Baptist Church, Summersville, WV is in need of a pastor. This church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

The Faith Missionary Baptist

Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

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

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is in need of a replacement pastor. Elder Raymond T. Ellis is the current pastor, but due to his age, is needing to resign. The church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and the local church. Any interested Elder may contact Elder Ellis at (618) 983-8697 or Bro. Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228.

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church's website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com

for more information.



God's Gift to His Son

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

Often people are surprised to hear that the Father gave His Son this special gift. In John 6:37 The Lord Jesus said, **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."** The Father gave some people to His Son, the Lord Jesus. Ephesians 1:4 tells us that God **"...hath chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world..."** God did His choosing before **"the foundation of the world."** These people God gave to His Son as a gift. Christ spoke to His Father specifically of, **"...the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me..."** (John 17:6). He spoke of them as "sheep." Consider these three statements the Lord Jesus made about His "sheep." **"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine"** (John 10:14). **"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and**

they follow me" (John 10:26-27). Christ knows His sheep and they know Him. They hear Him and they follow Him. People reject Christ because they are not His sheep. The Lord did not say that people were not sheep because they rejected Him. A "goat" does not become a "sheep" by believing.

God does not have any spiritual goats! He does not turn goats into sheep! At one time each of God's sheep were lost sheep, but they never are said to have been spiritual goats. The Lord Jesus also said, **"...I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd"** (John 10:15-16). The Lord Jesus said He would die for His sheep. Christ is never said to have died for any goats because He does not have any. He died in the place of His sheep. He also spoke of "other sheep," these were non-Jewish sheep and He stated that He must bring them into the one fold. A fold is a place of protection in which sheep were kept at night and in bad weather. It does not refer to the church because churches have unsaved members. This fold is exclusively for Christ's sheep. Notice also that it is Christ who does the bringing of the sheep. God must work first in the matter of the salvation of His sheep. Remember the Lord Jesus said, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:44). If you have come savingly to Christ, it is because you were drawn (as Peter drew his sword) to Christ. God exercised His power on you and if you have come, you were and are His sheep. Rejoice!



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