

The Berea Baptist Banner

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Whole Number 284

The Recurrent Church Ordinance

By George McDaniel

(1875 - 1927)

The record of the institution of the Lord's Supper is found in four places in the Bible. That we may have these Scriptures before us, I quote them.



"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and

blest 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).

"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. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my

Continued on page 442

George McDaniel

The Fall and Recovery of Man

By Christmas Evans

(1766 - 1838)

"For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (Rom. 5:15).

Man was created in the image of



Christmas Evans

God. Knowledge and perfect holiness were imprest upon the very nature and faculties of his soul. He had constant access to his Maker, and enjoyed free communion with Him, on the ground of his spotless moral rectitude. But, alas! the glorious diadem is broken; the crown of righteousness is fallen. Man's purity is gone, and his happiness is forfeited. **"There is none righteous; no, not one."** **"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."** But the ruin is not hopeless. What was lost in Adam is restored in Christ. His blood redeems us from the bondage, and His gospel gives us back the forfeited inheritance. **"For if, through the offense of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and**

Continued on page 446

The Life and Character of Moses

By John T. Christian

Part 1

(1854 - 1925)

Thomas Carlyle once said that Martin Luther was "a true great man; great in intellect, in courage, affection, and integrity; one of the most lovable and precious men. Great, not as a hewn obelisk, but as an Alpine mountain, so simple, honest, spontaneous, not setting up to be great at all; there for quite another purpose than being great! Ah! yes, unsubduable granite, piercing far and



J. T. Christian

wide into the heavens; yet in the clefts of it fountains green, beautiful valleys and flowers! A right spiritual hero and prophet; once more, a true son of nature and fact, for whom these centuries, and many that are to come yet, will be thankful to Heaven." All of this and more can be said of Moses. He combines the greatest service with the most disinterested

Continued on page 448

Tomorrow's Trials or Triumphs

By Timothy Hille

Ashland, Illinois

"Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

Here in our text the wise man writes of the folly of boasting about tomorrow. The main point of the proverb is to land a blow against fleshly pride and human boasting. The main thought that we wish to examine this evening is the truth of what is stated in the latter portion of the verse: **"for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."** One of the principles of life that we learn is that we do not know what lies ahead from one day to the next. What this should teach us is our utter



Timothy Hille

dependence upon the Lord, who never changes! Circumstances, people, and plans are all subject to change from one day to the next; but our lives as children of God are not dependent upon circumstances, people, or plans, but upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not know what events will occur before

Continued on page 444

Slow Growth

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941 - 2002)

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 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. 5:12-14).

The Hebrew writer was grieved that the Hebrew Christians had grown so little in the grace and knowledge of



Milburn Cockrell

Christ. Considering the length of time they had been saved, they should have been mature Christians who taught others the doctrines of the Word. Instead, they themselves needed to be taught the ABCs of the gospel. These Hebrew Christians were not clear on the essence of the gospel of grace. They desired to go

Continued on page 457

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

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Recurrent Church

Continued from page 441

blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:23-26).

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:19, 20).

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:22-24).

This is the second of two ordinances which Christ gave to His

church. In the preceding chapter we considered the first—baptism—and saw that immersion was unquestionably the practice in New Testament times, and was the command of Jesus to every believer. The world is coming back to New Testament practice in its admission of immersion only as baptism, and Baptists have practically won their fight for the mode and meaning of this ordinance. The best scholarship of the world is with the Baptists. One of the handsomest new Episcopal churches in Virginia is provided with a pool. The rector is reported as saying: "The world is returning to the original mode of baptism."

We cannot say as much for our position regarding the Lord's Supper. That position is not so well understood as is our position on baptism, and there is an erroneous sentiment, in the minds of many, concerning the Lord's supper, which makes it difficult to explain just what we believe about this ordinance, and our reasons for that belief.

THE BAPTIST POSITION STATED

The Christian world is divided into at least four divisions upon the Lord's Supper. The Catholics believe in transubstantiation, that is, the bread and wine are changed into the actual body and blood of Christ, and when you partake of these elements you do actually eat of the body and drink of the blood of Christ. This conversion of the elements into the flesh and blood of Christ is under the consecration of the priest. The Lutherans and some others hold to what is called consubstantiation, that is, "the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are there communicated to those that eat in the Lord's Supper," but this presence is by virtue of Christ's word rather than the priest's consecration. The Calvinists hold "that the body and blood are present in efficacy through the working of the Holy Spirit in the believing elect." The Baptists believe that the bread is only a symbol of the body of Christ, and likewise the wine, of the blood. We say there is no difference between this bread and other bread of the same kind except in the purpose for which it is used. It is just bread and wine; that is all. Against the Catholics, who say that the church, by a consecrating act, converts the elements into the body of Christ, and against the Lutherans, who say that the real body and blood are present because Christ said so, and against the Calvinists and all others who say there is a spiritual blessing and means of grace in the supper, we say, "No, the bread and wine only represent the flesh and blood," as

where Christ in the parable of the sower said the seed is the word and the field is the world, He meant that the seed sown represents the word and the field where the seed's were sown represents the world.

We say there is no more efficacy in the Lord's Supper than in baptism. Each is a symbol and the only blessing is that which comes from obedience to Christ and from meditating upon the truths set forth in those symbols. So that, not to invite one to the Lord's Supper is not shutting him off from a means of grace. Those who take so much to heart the action of Baptists in not inviting them to the table, seem to think there is some mysterious grace in the supper just as they seem to think there is some efficacious power in the water of baptism. No, the baptism is only a picture setting forth Christ's burial and resurrection, and the supper is only a picture of Christ's death. By it we commemorate the sufferings and death of our Saviour and profess to be in communion with Him. There is no hint of observing it in remembrance of one another, nor for the expression of affection and fellowship. Lansing Burrows, Sr., used to say, "Every reference to the supper in the New Testament connects it with Jesus." To make either of these ordinances mean more, is a perversion of Scripture. Every Baptist believes this much about baptism, and if he is logical he will believe the same about the Lord's Supper.

This is our position as to the import of the Lord's Supper. Our practice has been severely criticized by those who would have been milder and more generous if they had understood our interpretation of the meaning of the ordinance. What is there objectionable in our practice? Let me state that practice in one sentence, — We do not invite unbaptized persons to the Lord's table, and as we do not extend invitations to such persons, we do not accept invitations of unbaptized persons to partake with them. Thinking as we do, that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance to be preceded by baptism, we could not act otherwise. And since the ordinance is not a means of grace, we have not deprived those whom we do not invite of any mysterious or special blessing. I candidly affirm that our position is both scriptural and logical. And I say furthermore that while you may be a Baptist and be an open communionist, yet your brother who believes in restricted communion is more consistent than you.

THE BAPTIST POSITION VINDICATED

We have seen that immersion was the uniform practice of Christ and His

apostles. Having explained our belief and practice, it is now proposed to give a reason for our custom.

There is no such thing in the Bible as free and open communion.

1. Restricted and located in the church. **"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it"** (I Cor. 11:18).

The ordinance is not to be observed in the home. Administering the supper in rooms of the sick and dying is not only contrary to Scripture teaching and practice as to the place for its observance, but is also to teach that there is some saving merit in the supper itself. Baptism of the dying comes from the same belief, namely, that the ordinance is essential to salvation. A more deadly or more anti-scriptural heresy never blighted a land.

2. Restricted to the pure in life. **"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no, not to eat"** (I Cor. 5:11).

3. Restricted to an orderly walk. **"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"** (II Thess. 3:6).

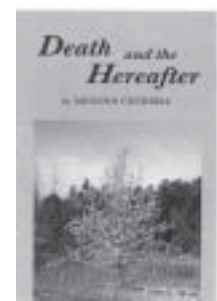
The disorderly member is out of the church and hence away from the table. If I were a member of a Pedo-baptist church and should preach the doctrine I now hold, they would exclude me for heresy. Being excluded they would not invite me to the table. But, holding these same views, and being a Baptist, they invite me to the table. That is, they are better to me as a Baptist than they would be if I belonged to them. This is inconsistent and unnatural.

Continued on page 443

Death and the Hereafter

by Milburn Cockrell

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Recurrent Church

Continued from page 442

4. Restricted to discernment of the Lord's body. **"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body"** (I Cor. 11:29).

One dare not think of wife or friends at the table of the Lord. Scripture, not sentiment, is the guide, and Paul says one must discriminate, must see, the Lord's body.

5. Restricted where divisions and schisms exist (I Cor. 11:17-20). Note the twentieth verse as it reads in the Revised Version, **"When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper."** The margin of the Authorized Version reads, **"Ye cannot eat,"** and the reason assigned is the existence of divisions or schisms.

Let us suppose the Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Disciples, Episcopalians and Baptists assembled around one table to observe the Lord's Supper. Now, we have what the Christian world needs! The one thing supposed by many as wanting for the speedy conquest of the world for Christ is supplied! How beautiful to see all denominations around one table! But, wait a moment before you break that bread. "Are you agreed in other matters now that you have come to a common table?" "Are you united in doctrine and practice?" If there be divisions among you there "you cannot eat." The Catholic believes in an infallible pope and a church through which alone people are saved. The Presbyterian detests Roman Catholicism, but believes that children of believing parents are to be members of the church. The Methodist believes in Arminianism to an extent which separates him widely from the Presbyterian. The Disciple parts company with the sprinkling Methodist and discards his emotional religion. The Episcopalian declares his belief in apostolic succession and cannot accept Presbyterian, Methodist, Disciple and Baptist pastors as ordained ministers. The Baptist believes that Jesus is the only Lord of the conscience and that the New Testament is the only law of Christianity. He tells the Catholic that his claims are monstrous and preposterous; he tells the Presbyterian that only believers are to be members of the church; he tells the Methodist that God is sovereign and His purposes are behind and above all; he tells the Disciple, **"With the heart man believeth,"** and not the head; he tells the Episcopalian that his church came from the Roman

Catholics and his exclusive claim for an ordained ministry is a vestige of papal succession heresy and is absurd. Not to mention more, these are radical differences which exist among these denominations irrespective of the communion question. If they partake of that ordinance with these divisions among them, they do so as Paul says, **"Not for the better but for the worse."** Open communion would be an unmitigated curse.

6. Restricted to the baptized.

(1) Only the apostles were present at the institution. Neither his mother nor brothers were present, for they were unbaptized. We know that some of these twelve apostles were former disciples of John and he baptized all those whom he received. We know that Jesus Himself was baptized, and can you believe that he used unbaptized persons as his apostles? The qualification of an apostle, as learned from the election of a successor to Judas was that he should have companied with Jesus and the eleven from the baptism of John.

(2) The supper comes after baptism.

The divine order is, (a) disciple; (b) baptize; (c) teach all the things commanded. The order is a part of that commission. You have as much right to put baptism before making disciples as you have to put communion before baptism. Hibbard, Methodist truly writes: "The reader will perceive that the argument is based entirely upon the order of the apostolic commission. It may be questioned by some whether the argument is genuine, and whether it is entitled to any considerable force. But suppose we assume an opposite ground? Suppose we say that the things commanded are important to be done, but the order observed in the commission is a subject of indifference. Now what will be the consequences of this position? What but total, irretrievable confusion? The apostles go forth, they are intent upon doing all that Christ commanded them, but the order of the duties is a subject of indifference. The consequence is that some are baptized before they are converted from heathenism; some receive the holy supper before either baptism or conversion; others are engaged in a course of instruction before they are disciplined; and the most incoherent and unsuitable practices everywhere prevail. Improper persons are baptized, or baptism is improperly delayed; the holy supper is approached before the candidate is duly prepared, and it is therefore desecrated, or it is unduly withheld from rightful communicants. Is not the prescribed order therefore in the administration of the ordinances, and

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the duties of the apostolic commission all-important? And thus we hold that Christ enjoined the order as well as the duties themselves; and, in this order of Christ, baptism precedes communion at the Lord's table.

(3) The practice of the apostles.

The first instance of the Lord's Supper being observed after its institution. **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"** (Acts 2:41-42).

The second instance of the Lord's Supper after its institution. **"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight"** (Acts 20:7).

(4) Every mention of baptism puts it immediately upon profession of faith and hence before the Lord's Supper.

The Samaritans believed Philip and were baptized at once (Acts 8:12). The eunuch believed Philip and was baptized immediately (Acts 8:36-39). Paul was baptized as soon as the scales fell from his eyes (Acts 9:18). The jailer was baptized the same hour of the night (Acts 16:33).

There is not a case in which there was time to celebrate the Lord's Supper before baptism. If we do not know from the New Testament that immersion was their baptism, then we do not know from the Bible that there is a God. If we do not know from the same source that immersion came before the supper, then we do not know that there were any believers or churches. I assert in the words of Jeter, "In all the oracles of God there is neither proof that the Lord's Supper was ever administered but within a church and to its baptized members." In what chapter and verse do you find your authority for an unbaptized person partaking of the Lord's

Supper? Do you believe that immersion only is baptism? Then you must be a restricted communionist, for you cannot show where an unbaptized person ever partook of the supper in the New Testament.

(5) That we are right in demanding baptism as a prerequisite to the supper is evident from the symbolism of the ordinances. Baptism symbolizes spiritual birth. Birth precedes nourishment. The Lord's Supper symbolizes spiritual nourishment, support. We are born once and baptized once. We are fed often, and have the Lord's Supper often. . . .

OBJECTIONS REMOVED

1. A Baptist wife cannot commune with her Pedo-baptist husband or vice versa. This objection is based upon an erroneous view of the purpose of the Lord's Supper. **"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (a participation) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion (a participation) of the body of Christ?"** (I Cor. 10:17). It is communion with Christ and never communion with friends or loved ones. You commune with them in your homes. A husband and wife are to show their love for each other in the home and day by day.

2. If we cannot partake of the communion together on earth, how can we in Heaven? This question would never be asked by one who has noted the time limit on the Lord's Supper. There will be no Lord's Supper in Heaven. Christ said it was to be kept **"until he come."**

3. The Baptists are a narrow folk because they do not commune with other denominations. We do commune with them in every legitimate way. We commune with them in gospel song, in earnest prayers, in enterprises of benevolence, in temperance reform and in moral welfare. Baptists contribute to hospitals and charitable objects like other people. They are just as liberal with their means and in their views as other people. I am sure they

Continued on page 444

Recurrent Church

Continued from page 443

are not less hospitable. Baptists invite all denominations to their tables and make no distinction in dispensing the hospitality of their homes. They invite all to *their* tables, but to the *Lord's* table they can invite only those whom he has invited, that is, baptized persons.

4. Restricted communion prevents Christian union. Why do not the denominations that believe in open communion unite as they are? When they have done so then it will be time to make this objection to the Baptists. I venture that the Methodists and Presbyterians are as far apart as they would be if the Baptists were open communionists.

5. Restricted communion keeps many out of the Baptist denomination. So does our requirement of a changed life. We could not surrender a principal to increase our membership. Furthermore, when those who incline toward the Baptists understand why restricted communion is practiced they will be drawn to us more readily and closely. Even outsiders who understand our position admire and commend us for our consistency. We are always glad to have accessions, but we are also anxious that they shall be right in belief and practice. Then, again, it does not seem that restricted communion is hurting us badly, for in the South, where Baptists are uniformly restricted communionists, we are growing faster than anywhere else in the world. God honors the people who honor His Word. We have no desire for a liberality that breaks a Bible commandment or changes a gospel order. We are content to be as broad as Jesus Christ.

It is submitted that Baptists are not responsible for existing divisions. Baptists have adhered to a uniform scriptural practice. The people who deviate from the course of the New Testament are responsible for the divisions.

Tomorrow's Trials

Continued from page 441

we awake on the morrow, and we cannot control those events with any certainty. We can plan—and it is not wrong to make plans—but our plans do not always come to pass. God's plans always do. The security for a child of God is not in knowing what a day may bring forth, but in knowing the God who does know and who causes all things to work together for good to them that love Him and who are the called according to His

purpose.

We can all think of things that change. People change in many unpredictable ways. Someone whom you call friend today may be your enemy tomorrow. Health, emotions, feelings, governments, and bank accounts all rise and fall from morning to evening, but all is subject to the will of God. The next few years may pass before us as a fleeting moment. This past season, and even this past year, have gone by us swiftly unrecoverable. In the days that lie ahead there will be battles, some defeats and some victories. We cannot predict what may come tomorrow, and we don't have to. We must rely on the everlasting, unchanging God to take us through our ever changing days in this life.

One of the most important truths to learn is that we do today's work today. Jesus stated: **"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"** (John 9:4). Today's work is for today, not tomorrow. We are not responsible for tomorrow's work until tomorrow. God has an ordered life for us to follow as He reveals His will unto us. **"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way"** (Ps. 37:23). **"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"** (Matt. 6:34). There is a work for today that must be done. People are going to stand before God one day and give an account for what they did with all their "todays" that God gave them. This is true for both the lost and the saved. There is a TODAY to the lost in which God commands that they repent of their sins and turn to Him for light and life. **"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"** (II Cor. 6:2). **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 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"** (Acts 17:30, 31). Lost person, today is the only day of which God speaks to you with regard to anything but everlasting torment and wrath. To children of God, there is also a command of God concerning TODAY. (Read Heb. 3:7-15). Beloved, hear and heed the voice of the Spirit

today. There is work to be done today in God's service. **"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light"** (Rom. 13:12).

Beloved, we do not know what a day shall bring forth. Today's sorrows may give way to tomorrow's joys. This day's victories may be followed by another day's defeats. Trials or triumphs may be tomorrow, we do not know. Nevertheless, our changing days do not change God. Let us note some saints whose lives changed from one day to the next.

1. JOB

Read Job 1:1-22. There is perhaps no single person who suffered so much in the course of one day and still retained his integrity before God as the prophet Job. Job's life was one of serving the Lord and living righteously before Him. Job was desirous for his children to follow in the paths of the Lord. In one day Job went from offering conscientious intercession on behalf of his children to sudden poverty and bereavement. Some things took place that caused Job's life to change form one day to the next. What a difference from one day to the next!

Read Job 2:1-10. Here we see the trials of Job's tomorrows. Job's circumstances and environment were changed. He faced changes that affected his own person in a very dramatic and unpleasant way. He faced changes and trials from outside his own family and from within.

2. JOSEPH

Read Genesis 37:1-27. We may have trials, triumphs, or both. We may even have triumphs in our trials! Note the trials which Joseph faced from one day to the next. Joseph's life was one of trials and triumphs. His trials did not end when his own brethren sold him as a slave into the hand of the Ishmaelites and he was taken into Egypt. Even though those of his own household and of other nations were foremost in his trials, God was with Joseph through it all. Read Genesis 45:1-11. God changed the trials of Joseph into triumphs! **"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).

3. SAMSON

Read Judges 16:1-21. We know that Samson lost his eyes, but before that he lost his vision spiritually. There are those who will press you and vex you from day to day continually in an attempt to make you sin, just as Delilah did Samson. In one day Samson went from being a victor to being defeated. With Samson, things changed from one day to the next.

We know that this truth is the same for all children of God. From one day to the next, David turned into an adulterous king. From one day to the next Daniel was cast into the lion's den. One certainty about tomorrow is that you don't know what will or will not happen. **"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that"** (James 4:13-15). Serving God today does not exempt us from tomorrow's trials. Yet, both our trials and our triumphs, whether they be today's or tomorrow's, ought to bring us close to the Lord. **"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever"** (Heb. 13:8). Though all the world may change, my Saviour changes not!

This truth was experienced by New Testament saints. From one day to the next, Peter, James and John went from being fishers of fish to being fishers of men. Ananias and Sapphira who were members of the church at Jerusalem and who lied to the Holy Spirit both died in one day! Paul changed from a church persecutor to an apostle in one day! If you are a child of God today, ONE DAY you were changed from a hell-bound sinner to a heaven-bound saint! As the man born blind stated, **"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see"** (John 9:25).

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:13-18). One day we will experience the reality of this Scripture, though we do not know when that day will be. That

Continued on page 445

The Wrath of Man

By Todd Bryant

Northport, Alabama

It is not uncommon to hear preachers speak on the wrath of God. That has, historically, been a subject that accompanied good gospel preaching. However, there is generally little said on the practical matter of “the wrath of man.” It is that which I will deal with in this article today.

“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (Jas. 1:20).

The verse before us today is found in the first chapter of the most practical book in the New Testament. James has just instructed us to be **“swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”** (Jas. 1:19). The subject of the wrath of man is directly related to speech. I am afraid that we often get James’ instructions reversed and we are slow to listen, swift to speak, and swift to wrath. James implies that we should be doing far more listening than we are speaking. I have heard many “compliments” given to a person because they always “spoke their mind.” Dear friends, that is no compliment. That shows a lack of spiritual maturity (Jam. 3:2). If we are ever to grow up out of infant Christianity into adulthood, we must get a hold on our proudest member—our tongue. It is with this member that friendships are lost, churches are split, witnesses are lost, and wounds opened that might never be completely healed.

Many think it is a matter of boldness to speak your mind on everything. That is not the case. Ecclesiastes 3:7 tells us that there is **“a time to keep silence.”** Oh how many times have we spoken up and ruined our opportunity God has given because we “spoke the truth” in anger and bitterness. It is this subject that we wish to elaborate on today. It is referred to in our text as **“the wrath of man”** and James was inspired to say it **“worketh not the righteousness of God.”** In modern terms we might say that speaking the truth with a bad attitude doesn’t accomplish anything as far as the work God has called us unto is concerned. We need to make sure that we strive to have a good attitude when we represent the Lord and our church. If you are a child of God, this should be constantly on your mind.

If **“the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God”** then religion is nothing to get angry over. If you are a child of God and you get angry over the things you believe, you are not doing God’s work. When you, as a child of God, are full of bitterness against those you should be trying to help, you are not doing the work of God. According to this verse, God



Todd Bryant

doesn’t bless work done out of anger. We are to love all men. You might say, “Well, God hates the workers of iniquity and I do too.” You are not God and have no right to hate anyone. Jesus said, in Matthew

5:44, **“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”** This is not an option, this is a commandment. You are to love those who don’t love you. “That’s not fair” one might say. “I treat people the way they deserve. I give them the love they earn from me.” Aren’t you glad God didn’t treat you the way you treat others?

James again was inspired to instruct us in James 3:17-18 that **“the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”** If you are looking to mature in your Christian walk, here’s a verse to challenge you. God’s gift to us begins pure. God doesn’t give imperfect gifts as man does. The walk of a child of God is to be full of peace and gentleness. We are to be easy to get along with. We are to be merciful. We are to treat all men well despite how they treat us. There can be no doubt that this isn’t easy for the flesh. However, it is still the commandment of God and should be kept.

Matthew 5:9 says, **“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”** It is one thing to call one’s self a Christian. It is quite another thing for somebody else to refer to someone as that. Do you have a desire to be called a child of God? Do you have a desire for people to see Jesus in your life? The Bible says you will be seen as such if you are a peacemaker. I have known many a person who I dreaded to see coming because I knew they caused turmoil every time I was around them. They were not very peaceable. The flesh leads us to be bitter and angry. The Spirit leads us to be peaceable and gentle. Do we sow the **“fruit of righteousness...in peace?”** Perhaps we should simply ask if we sow the fruit

of righteousness at all. It seems our Sovereign Grace Baptist people are so afraid that they might be called an Arminian that they leave off the things God has plainly instructed. One of these things is that we should be a good witness. We need to be striving daily to tell people the Good News. Our mouths ought to be full of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the gospel **“is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”** (Rom. 1:16). When we do sow this fruit of righteousness, it should be sown in peace. Two times the Good News is referred to as the **“gospel of peace”** (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15). When we witness, we are to do so in peace. When we instruct, we are to do so in peace. When we disagree, we are to do so in peace. Remember, **“the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”**

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (II Tim. 2:24,25). This verse is related to James 3:17-18. We must not strive. That is, we must not be brawlers or fighters. We must not be brawlers with our fists or with our mouths. I have witnessed a number of “fights” in which a punch was never thrown. We must be gentle. We must be able to teach people. You may say, “Well, I’m just not a good teacher.” You must learn to teach if you want to serve God. I don’t mean in a class at church, I mean to the people you see regularly in your daily routine. We must learn to have patience. Don’t be like the man who said, “Lord, grant me patience and grant it to me today please.” Patience is learned through trials. We must realize that everybody hasn’t been given the opportunity that we have to know the blessed truths that we do. Knowing that, however, should be a driving force that pushes us to get the truth out to people in a way that they can understand it. In this, I am not necessarily speaking about the lost (though they can be included to some degree). I am speaking of those who bear the fruits of regeneration, but have a lack of maturity in their Christian life especially in the area of theology. Lastly, we need to witness to people in hopes that God **“will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”** Do you witness to people just because God said to? Again, maybe the question should be “Do you witness to people?” You should witness because God told you to. However, you should also witness because you have a desire to see the person saved that you are speaking to. You need to love the

people you share the gospel with. Therefore, we must love everybody and act as though we do.

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (I Tim. 2:8). We are to constantly lift up hands of prayer. We are to do this without wrath and doubting. When we gather for worship, it shouldn’t be out of wrath, but out of love. I have heard sermons preached that sounded like an old farmer driving a lazy mule after about 10 hours in the sun. In other words, I’ve heard sermons preached out of, what seemed like, anger. According to our text verse, this is not accomplishing the work of God. We shouldn’t “preach mad.” Our worship services should be filled with love—for our Savior, for His truth, for the membership, for the visitors, and for the lost.

People of God, we are not to be a wrathful people. It seems some people think it’s right to “lose your religion” while trying to defend it. How sad. We have the example of our Savior who was always full of love and was never a respecter of persons. He treated everybody with love as the law demands (Mat. 22:37-40). We, as Christians (and Baptists for that matter) need to be known as peacemakers. We need to be known as a people full of love. We should have a love for our Savior first and foremost which should be seen in our daily lives. We should have a love for the work that God has called us unto. We should have a love for the people God has called us to minister unto. As long as we are doing God’s work with wrath and anger in our heart, we aren’t doing God’s work.



Tomorrow's Trials

Continued from page 444

TODAY will be a day of total and final victory for children of God, when is **“brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory”** (I Cor. 15:54). Are you ready to be with the Lord forever? If He should come tonight, or if you should be taken from this world tonight, what would your answer be? Have you been serving the Lord today? **“Choose you this day whom ye will serve”** (Josh. 24:15).

We do not know what a day may bring forth, but God will still be God tomorrow. God’s Word will still be true tomorrow. Jesus will still be the only Saviour tomorrow. As for you, your life may be past before tomorrow’s sun ever shines. Will you not follow the Lord today?

Fall and Recovery

Continued from page 441

the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. Let us consider, first, the corruption and condemnation of man; and secondly, his gracious restoration to the favor of his offended God.

I. To find the cause of man's corruption and condemnation, we must go back to Eden. The eating of the "forbidden tree" was **"the offense of one,"** in consequence of which **"many are dead."** This was the "sin," the act of "disobedience," which "brought death into the world, and all our woe." It was the greatest ingratitude to the divine bounty, and the boldest rebellion against the divine sovereignty. The royalty of God was contemned; the riches of His goodness slighted; and His most desperate enemy preferred before Him, as if he were a wiser counselor than infinite wisdom. Thus man joined in league with Hell against Heaven; with demons of the bottomless pit against the almighty Maker and Benefactor; robbing God of the obedience due to His command and the glory due to His name; worshipping the creature instead of the Creator; and opening the door to pride, unbelief, enmity, and all the wicked and abominable passions. How is the "noble vine," which was planted "wholly a right seed," "turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine"!

Who can look for pure water from such a fountain? **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh."** All the faculties of the soul are corrupted by sin; the understanding dark; the will perverse; the affections carnal; the conscience full of shame, remorse, confusion, and mortal fear. Man is a hard-hearted and stiff-necked sinner; loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil; eating sin like bread, and drinking iniquity like water; holding fast deceit, and refusing to let it go. His heart is desperately wicked; full of pride, vanity, hypocrisy, covetousness, hatred of truth, and hostility to all that is good.

This depravity is universal. Among the natural children of Adam, there is no exemption from the original taint. **"The whole world lieth in wickedness."** "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags." The corruption may vary in the degrees of development, in different persons; but the elements are in all, and their nature is everywhere the same; the same in the blooming youth, and the withered sire; in the haughty prince,

MARK OF THE BEAST

Look at your name on the front page of this month's paper. If you see the mark 11-02, so detestable to a Baptist, wash it out by renewal of green-backs. If not your paper will stop next month. We are not able to credit. It is not a good plan.



and the humble peasant; in the strongest giant, and the feeblest invalid. The enemy has "come in like a flood." The deluge of sin has swept the world. From the highest to the lowest, there is no health or moral soundness. From the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, there is nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. The laws, and their violation, and the punishments everywhere invented for the suppression of vice, prove the universality of the evil. The bloody sacrifices, and various purifications, of the pagans, show the handwriting of remorse upon their consciences; proclaim their sense of guilt, and their dread of punishment. None of them are free from the fear which hath torment, whatever their efforts to overcome it, and however great their boldness in the service of sin and Satan. "Mene! Tekel!" is written on every human heart. "Wanting! wanting!" is inscribed on heathen fanes and altars; on the laws, customs, and institutions of every nation; and on the universal consciousness of mankind.

This inward corruption manifests itself in outward actions. "The tree is known by its fruit." As the smoke and sparks of the chimney show that there is fire within; so all the "filthy conversation" of men, and all "the unfruitful works of darkness" in which they delight, evidently indicate the pollution of the source whence they proceed. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The sinner's speech betrayeth him. "Evil speaking" proceeds from malice and envy. "Foolish talking and jesting" are evidence of impure and trifling thoughts. The mouth full of cursing and bitterness, the throat an open sepulcher, the poison of asps under the tongue, the feet swift to shed blood, destruction and misery in their paths, and the way of peace unknown to them, are the clearest and amplest demonstration that men "have gone out of the way," "have together become unprofitable." We see the bitter fruit of the same corruption in robbery, adultery, gluttony,

drunkenness, extortion, intolerance, persecution, apostasy, and every evil work—in all false religions; the Jew, obstinately adhering to the carnal ceremonies of an abrogated law; the Mohammedan, honoring an impostor, and receiving a lie for a revelation from God; the papist, worshipping images and relics, praying to departed saints, seeking absolution from sinful men, and trusting in the most absurd mummeries for salvation; the pagan, attributing divinity to the works of his own hands, adoring idols of wood and stone, sacrificing to malignant demons, casting his children into the fire or the flood as an offering to imaginary deities, and changing the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the beast and the worm.

"For these things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." They are under the sentence of the broken law; the malediction of eternal justice. "By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation." "He that believeth not is condemned already." "The wrath of God abideth on him." "Curst is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." "Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." "They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, shall reap the same." "Upon the wicked the Lord shall rain fire, and snares, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." "God is angry with the wicked every day; if he turn not he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and make it ready."

Who shall describe the misery of fallen man! His days, tho few, are full of evil. Trouble and sorrow press him forward to the tomb. All the world, except Noah and his family, are drowning in the deluge. A storm of fire and brimstone is fallen from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. The earth is opening her mouth to swallow up alive Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Wrath is coming upon "the beloved city," even "wrath unto the uttermost." The tender and delicate mother is devouring her darling infant. The sword of men is executing the vengeance of God. The earth is emptying its inhabitants into the bottomless pit. On every hand are "confused noises, and garments rolled in blood." Fire and sword fill the land with consternation and dismay. Amid the universal devastation wild shrieks and despairing groans fill the air. God of mercy! Is Thy ear heavy, that Thou canst not hear? or Thy arm shortened, that Thou canst not save? The heavens above are brass, and the earth beneath is iron; for Jehovah is pouring

His indignation upon His adversaries, and He will not pity or spare.

Verily, "the misery of man is great upon him"! Behold the wretched fallen creature! The pestilence pursues him. The leprosy cleaves to him. Consumption is wasting him. Inflammation is devouring his vitals. Burning fever has seized upon the very springs of life. The destroying angel has overtaken the sinner in his sins. The hand of God is upon him. The fires of wrath are kindling about him, drying up every well of comfort, and scorching all his hopes to ashes. Conscience is chastising him with scorpions. See how he writhes! Hear how he shrieks for help! Mark what agony and terror are in his soul, and on his brow! Death stares him in the face, and shakes at him his iron spear. He trembles, he turns pale, as a culprit at the bar, as a convict on the scaffold. He is condemned already. Conscience has pronounced the sentence. Anguish has taken hold upon him. Terrors gather in battle array about him. He looks back, and the storms of Sinai pursue him; forward, and hell is moved to meet him; above, and the heavens are on fire; beneath, and the world is burning. He listens, and the judgment trump is calling; again, and the brazen chariots of vengeance are thundering from afar; yet again, the sentence penetrates his soul with anguish unspeakable—"Depart! ye accurst! into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"

Thus, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." They are "dead in trespasses and sins," spiritually dead, and legally dead; dead by the mortal power of sin, and dead by the condemnatory sentence of the law; and helpless as sheep to the slaughter, they are driven fiercely on by the ministers of wrath to the all-devouring grave and the lake of fire!

But is there no mercy? Is there no means of salvation? Hark! amid all this prelude of wrath and ruin, comes a still small voice, saying: "Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

II. This brings us to our second topic, man's gracious recovery to the favor of his offended God.

I know not how to present to you this glorious work, better than by the following figure. Suppose a vast graveyard, surrounded by a lofty wall, with only one entrance, which is by a massive iron gate, and that is fast bolted. Within are thousands and millions of human beings, of all ages and classes, by one epidemic disease bending to the grave. The graves

Continued on page 447

Fall and Recovery

Continued from page 446

yawn to swallow them, and they must all perish. There is no balm to relieve, no physician there. Such is the condition of man as a sinner. All have sinned; and it is written, "The soul that sinneth shall die." But while the unhappy race lay in that dismal prison, Mercy came and stood at the gate, and wept over the melancholy scene, exclaiming—"Oh, that I might enter! I would bind up their wounds; I would relieve their sorrows; I would save their souls!" An embassy of angels, commissioned from the court of heaven to some other world, paused at the sight, and heaven forgave that pause. Seeing Mercy standing there, they cried:—"Mercy! canst thou not enter? Canst thou look upon that scene and not pity? Canst thou pity, and not relieve?" Mercy replied: "I can see!" and in her tears she added, "I can pity, but I can not relieve!" "Why canst thou not enter?" inquired the heavenly host. "Oh!" said Mercy, "Justice has barred the gate against me, and I must not—can not unbar it!" At this moment, Justice appeared, as if to watch the gate. The angels asked, "Why wilt thou not suffer Mercy to enter?" He sternly replied: "The law is broken, and it must be honored! Die they, or Justice must!" Then appeared a form among the angelic band like unto the Son of God. Addressing Himself to Justice, He said: "What are thy demands?" Justice replied: "My demands are rigid; I must have ignominy for their honor, sickness for their health, death for their life. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission!" "Justice," said the Son of God, "I accept thy terms! On me be this wrong! Let Mercy enter, and stay the carnival of death!" "What pledge dost thou give for the performance of these conditions?" "My word; my oath!" "When wilt thou perform them?" "Four thousand years hence, on the hill of Calvary, without the walls of Jerusalem." The bond was prepared, and signed and sealed in the presence of attendant angels. Justice was satisfied, the gate was opened, and Mercy entered, preaching salvation in the name of Jesus. The bond was committed to patriarchs and prophets. A long series of rites and ceremonies, sacrifices and obligations, was instituted to perpetuate the memory of that solemn deed. At the close of the four thousandth year, when Daniel's "seventy weeks" were accomplished, Justice and Mercy appeared on the hill of Calvary. "Where," said Justice, "is the Son of God?" "Behold him, answered Mercy,

"at the foot of the hill!" And there He came, bearing His own cross, and followed by His weeping church. Mercy retired, and stood aloof from the scene. Jesus ascended the hill like a lamb for the sacrifice. Justice presented the dreadful bond, saying, "This is the day on which this article must be canceled." The Redeemer took it. What did He do with it? Tear it to pieces, and scatter it to the winds? No! He nailed it to His cross, crying, "**It is finished!**" The victim ascended the altar. Justice called on Holy Fire to come down and consume the sacrifice. Holy Fire replied: "I come! I will consume the sacrifice, and then I will burn up the world!" It fell upon the Son of God, and rapidly consumed His humanity; but when it touched His deity, it expired. Then was there darkness over the whole land, and an earthquake shook the mountain; but the heavenly host broke forth in rapturous song—"Glory to God in the highest! on earth peace! good will to man!"

Thus grace has abounded, and the free gift has come upon all, and the gospel has gone forth proclaiming redemption to every creature. "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.**" By grace ye are loved, redeemed, and justified. By grace ye are called, converted, reconciled and sanctified. Salvation is wholly of grace. The plan, the process, the consummation are all of grace.

"Where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded." "Through the offense of one, many were dead." And as men multiplied, the offense abounded. The waters deluged the world, but could not wash away the dreadful stain. The fire fell from heaven, but could not burn out the accursed plague. The earth opened her mouth, but could not swallow up the monster sin. The law thundered forth its threat from the thick darkness on Sinai, but could not restrain, by all its terrors, the children of disobedience. Still the offense abounded, and multiplied as the sands on the seashore. It waxed bold, and pitched its tents on Calvary, and nailed the Lawgiver to a tree. But in that conflict sin received its mortal wound. The victim was the victor. He fell, but in His fall He crushed the foe. He died unto sin, but sin and death were crucified upon His cross. Where sin abounded to condemn, grace hath much more abounded to justify. Where sin abounded to corrupt, grace hath much more abounded to purify. Where sin abounded to harden, grace hath much more abounded to soften and subdue. Where sin abounded to

imprison men, grace hath much more abounded to proclaim liberty to the captives. Where sin abounded to break the law and dishonor the Lawgiver, grace hath much more abounded to repair the breach and efface the stain. Where sin abounded to consume the soul as with unquenchable fire and a gnawing worm, grace hath much more abounded to extinguish the flame and heal the wound. Grace hath abounded! It hath established its throne on the merit of the Redeemer's sufferings. It hath put on the crown, and laid hold of the golden scepter, and spoiled the dominion of the prince of darkness, and the gates of the great cemetery are thrown open, and there is the beating of a new life-pulse throughout its wretched population and immortality is walking among the tombs!

This abounding grace is manifested in the gift of Jesus Christ, by whose mediation our reconciliation and salvation are effected. With Him, believers are dead unto sin, and alive

unto God. Our sins were slain at His cross, and buried in His tomb. His resurrection hath opened our graves, and given us an assurance of immortality. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through him; for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

"The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Glory to God, for the death of His Son, by which this enmity is slain, and reconciliation is effected between the rebel and the law! This was the unspeakable gift that saved us from ruin; that wrestled with the storm, and turned it away from the devoted head of the sinner. Had all the angels of God attempted to stand between these two conflicting seas, they would have

Continued on page 448

The Rantings and Ravings of Brother Ritechus N. Dignation



FLIGHTY PREACHERS

Now what I'm about to say might make some folks mad, but only the ones who are guilty. My Grampa used to say, "If you throw a rock into a pack of dogs at night, the one that yelps is the one that got hit." So be careful if you yelp. You just might give yourself away.

I ain't never seen the beat as the number of preachers recently that change churches at the drop of the hat. Why, they don't even get moved in good before it's time to rent another U-Haul. I heard of one preacher that didn't even stay long enough at one church to get mail. They always "feel led" to go to another church every year or two. Apparently, God sure does change His mind a lot. Now I'm not say'in a man can't have a short ministry on certain church fields, but glory be, 10 churches in 12 years don't look impressive on the resamay.

I watched a program one time on TV that gave a top 10 list of reasons why people sell houses and move often. Well, here's my list for every pulpit committee, of the top 7 tip offs that your new pastor may

not be stay'in with you long enough to catch a cold.

Seven Ways to Know Your New Pastor May Not Be Staying Very Long

1. His second vehicle is a U-Haul truck.

2. His graduating seminary class voted him "Most Mobile."

3. His picture is in the world book of records for pastoring in the most states, and you're number 49.

4. He has more road maps than sermons in his sermon file.

5. His nickname in the local Baptist association is "Hot Wheels."

6. He keeps an open account with U-Haul.

7. When he moves on the field, all he brings is a motor home.

Anybody can accept a church, but not all have the wherewithal it takes, to stay in times of adversity, discouragement and dry spells. Hang in there, preacher. Do all you can, depend on God, and He'll see you through. Why you might even make it into your third year.

Brother Ritechus N. Dignation

Fall and Recovery

Continued from page 447

been swept to the gulf of destruction. "The blood of bulls and goats, on Jewish altars slain," could not take away sin, could not pacify the conscience. But Christ, the gift of divine grace, "Paschal Lamb by God appointed," a "sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they," bore our sins and carried our sorrows, and obtained for us the boon of eternal redemption. He met the fury of the tempest, and the floods went over His head; but His offering was an offering of peace, calming the storms and the waves, magnifying the law, glorifying its Author, and rescuing its violator from the wrath and ruin. Justice hath laid down his sword at the foot of the cross, and amity is restored between heaven and earth.

Hither, O ye guilty! come and cast away your weapons of rebellion! Come with your bad principles and wicked actions; your unbelief, and enmity, and pride; and throw them off at the Redeemer's feet! God is here waiting to be gracious. He will receive you; He will cast all your sins behind His back, into the depths of the sea; and they shall be remembered against you no more forever. By Heaven's "unspeakable gift," by Christ's invaluable atonement, by the free, infinite grace of the Father and Son, we persuade you, we beseech you, we entreat you, **"be ye reconciled to God!"**

It is by the work of the Holy Spirit with us that we obtain a personal interest in the work wrought on Calvary for us. If our sins are canceled, they are also crucified. If we are reconciled in Christ, we fight against our God no more. This is the fruit of faith. **"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."** May the Lord inspire in every one of us that saving principle!

But those who have been restored to the divine favor may sometimes be cast down and dejected. They have passed through the sea, and sung praises on the shore of deliverance; but there is yet between them and Canaan "a waste howling wilderness," a long and weary pilgrimage, hostile nations, fiery serpents, scarcity of good, and the river of Jordan. Fears within and fightings without, they may grow discouraged, and yield to temptation and murmur against God, and desire to return to Egypt. But fear not, thou worm Jacob! Reconciled by the death of Christ; much more, being reconciled, thou shalt be saved by His life. His death was the price of our redemption; His life insures liberty to

the believer. If by His death He brought you through the Red Sea in the night, by His life He can lead you through the river Jordan in the day. If by His death He delivered you from the iron furnace in Egypt, by His life He can save you from all perils of the wilderness. If by His death He conquered Pharaoh, the chief foe, by His life He can subdue Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. "We shall be saved by his life." Because He liveth, we shall live also. **"Be of good cheer!"** The work is finished; the ransom is effected; the kingdom of Heaven is open to all believers. **"Lift up your heads and rejoice," "ye prisoners of hope!"** There is no debt unpaid, no devil unconquered, no enemy within your hearts that has not received a mortal wound! **"Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"**

Life and Character

Continued from page 441

feelings; the loftiest genius with the humility of a child. His actions

*"Are as gentle
As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as
rough,
His royal blood enshafed, as the rud'st wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to the vale."*

We can never separate his genius from his character, so meek, yet stern; from his appearance so gravely commanding, so spiritually severe; from his law, 'girt with dark thunder and embroidered fires.' A penetrating writer has said, "The true university of these days is a collection of books" but the greatness of Moses will appear when we remember that he had few or no books. Homer and Hesiod had not yet touched their harps and sung their immortal strains; and Heroditus, the father of historians, was yet unborn. The polish of Greece and the chivalry of Rome were shrouded in the dark bosom of the future, or shining in the twilight of Egypt. While all the earth was covered with the ebon pall of night the eruptive flashes of the great mind of Moses, like those of Aetna, threw a blaze of light on all around him, and have invited the attention of all these centuries.

I may say of the writings of Moses what the great oriental scholar, sir William Jones, said of the Bible, They contain more sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and purer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all other books,

except other portions of the Bible, in whatever age or language they may have been written. As John the Baptist was the harbinger of Jesus, so Moses was the forerunner of all the people, etc. His writings were the foundation stones of that wonderful temple which is called the Bible. His name will ever stand first in that

*"Most wondrous book! bright candle of the
Lord!*

Star of eternity! the only star

By which the bark of man could navigate

The sea of life and gain the coast of bliss

Securely."

The name of Moses occupies a conspicuous place in the history of the ages. Much of his life was passed, and many of his mighty works were performed in Egypt; and it would be natural for us to look to that land of letters and civilization for some mention of him. In this we are not disappointed. The Egyptian Manetho, who wrote B. C. 300, says the leader of the Jews in the Exodus "was a priest at first named Osarhiph, but when he was gone over to these people his name was changed, and he was called Moses." Louginus, the secretary to Queen Zenobia, of Palmyra, a celebrated critic and rhetorician, so learned that he was called a "walking library," says, "Moses, the law-giver was no ordinary man." Lyimarchus and Strabo also give him honorable mention; Eupolimus celebrates him as being the first wise man, and the inventor of letters.

No man can reasonably doubt that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch. It is a significant fact that many who once questioned this, upon careful investigation, have so fully expressed themselves in favor of his authorship. The learned Hase declared, "It cannot be denied that the purity of language, the eloquence of style, and the poetic imagery discovered in Genesis, betray the hand of Moses, and that the age of David presupposes the existence of the Mosaic writings." Michaelis, whose name is equal to a host, thus writes: "That Moses is the author of the five books usually called his, is the common opinion of Christian and Jew; and I regard it as not only perfectly correct, but as certain as anything which can be known, respecting the composition of any ancient book." Rosenmuller, in one brief and beautiful sentence, has summed up the whole argument: "All antiquity, Christian and Jewish, assigns the Pentateuch to Moses as its author, for reasons which are either drawn from the work itself or which rest on other appropriate testimonies." We will consider Moses as

THE POET.

The poetry of Moses is linked with

the songs of Heaven. The saints on high sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that can tell in words the effect of music upon the soul? This man leads us at once to the very edge of the infinite, and allows us to look into the awful abyss. The sentence of Longinus, that Moses was a most sublime writer, has but been echoed by every critic from his day till the present time.

The book of Genesis is a prose poem from beginning to end. The author is boundless in his thought; he launches in upon an

*"Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth
and height,
And time, and place are lost."*

He sails over the dark waters of Chaos, and walks upon the archway of the skies. Inspired by the Spirit of God, he dares things before unattempted, and in brief but unequalled words he accomplishes his task. A bright star, no less effulgent than the stars of the firmament which he describes in such matchless terms, had arisen upon the dreary wilderness of Time. With more than a diamond brightness of Canopus he does, and will continue to cast, his heavenly light far into the region of eternity. In the modified language of another, his words were the music of sweet sounds and anon the roar of the elements. Thoughts bubble up and pour themselves forth like springs in a gushing fountain, which murmur and leap awhile amid mountain rocks, then run smooth and clear through green and flowery valleys, until at length, swollen into mighty rivers, they roll onward to the ocean.

Who has not read his psalm of praise upon the banks of the sea when God had delivered the children of Israel? And there is that soul-subduing prayer uttered for all ages: **"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."** Much of his last address to his beloved, but erring Israel, took the lyric form:

*"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak;
And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.
My doctrine shall drop as the rain;
My speech shall distill as the dew;
As the small rain upon the tender herb,
And as the shower upon the grass;
Because I will publish the name of the Lord,
Ascribe ye greatness to our God."*

It is with something like awe that I turn from these Lyrics to the drama of Job which critics say was written by Moses. I know not how to express my opinion of this book better than in the sublime words of Carlyle. "I call

Continued on page 449

Outlines for Country Preachers by a Country Preacher

Sermon Outlines by Milburn Cockrell

CHRIST WEeping OVER JERUSALEM

Luke 19:28-48

In this passage we have a sevenfold revelation of the character of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. HIS WISDOM (v. 30).

1. He knew where the donkey was tied. Distance is nothing to God.
2. He speaks like one to whom all things are naked and open—the One who knew things unseen as well as the seen.
3. His knowledge was boundless (Matt. 12:25; John 2:25; 6:64).
4. Such knowledge is the peculiar attribute of God.

II. HIS POWER (vv. 31-34).

1. All the apology they were to give the owner was, “The Lord hath need of Him” (Lk. 19:31). This was an unbroken colt.
2. Christ must have known the men to whom the disciples were sent.
3. No one can resist God calling for what is His own (Ps. 50:10).
4. He has dominion over all creatures and may use them when and as He pleases.
5. He has need of our time, talents, and treasures.

III. HIS HUMILITY (vv. 35-36).

1. Christ might have called for a cherubim, but He chose to ride a donkey.
2. Nothing is said of a bit and bridle. His gentle voice was all that was needed.
3. This fulfilled prophecy (Zech. 9:9).
4. This event is in all four gospels, which is not the case with the birth, temptation, transfiguration, nor the Gethsemane experience.
5. The King of glory sitting on a borrowed donkey. What humility!!

IV. HIS ROYAL DIGNITY (vv. 37-38).

1. Here is a King who was bedless and penniless.
2. “Peace in heaven”—peace about to be re-established between earth and heaven.
3. Note three degrees of loyalty. Some shouted, others cast branches, and some used their clothes.
4. He is the King, but is soon to be a rejected King.
5. The Messiah’s reign will be one of universal peace.
6. “Hosanna” translates “Save us now we beseech thee” (Ps. 118:25-26).

V. HIS COMPASSION (v. 41).

1. If we had the eyes of compassion of Jesus, we would many times weep at what others rejoice in.
2. The past, present, and future of the city rose up before His eyes. He wept not for Rome, Memphis, Athens, etc., but for Jerusalem.
3. The Greek means with a loud cry. This is stronger than John 11:35. Not the tears of weakness, but of the compassion of God.
4. Not for Himself, His mock trial, or unrighteous sentence of death.
5. None knows as He, the worth of the soul and the misery of Hell.
6. What about the city in our own hearts? What does He see there?

VI. HIS FAITHFULNESS (vv. 42-46).

1. This was the end of the 483 years of Daniel 9:24-26. “On this day.” Christ was their peace now and forever.
2. He foretold the siege of Jerusalem by Titus and the Roman legions in A.D. 70. This was 40 years before the event.
3. No nation, or city, or person can prosper who rejects Jesus Christ. He is faithful to punish those who reject Him.

VII. HIS INFLUENCE (vv. 47-48).

1. To some He was a savior of death unto death; to others a Savior of life unto life. The sun, which melts wax, will harden clay.
2. It literally reads, “All the people hung on Him to hear,” or “for the people, to a man, were hanging on every word.”
3. They came to hear Jesus, not to be entertained.

CONCLUSION.

1. What think you of Christ? Do you hear what He says?
2. Do you see Him as your crucified Savior?

Life and Character

Continued from page 448

that book,” says he, “apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest

things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reign in it. A noble book; all men’s book! It is our first, oldest statement

of the never-ending problem, —man’s destiny, and God’s ways with him in the earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody, and repose of reconciliation. There is the

seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So true every way; true eye sight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual! The horse, —‘hast thou clothed his neck with thunder’ —he ‘laughs at the shaking of the spear!’ Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind, —so soft, and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.”

From what I have said you are not to suppose that the historical writings of Moses are ornate or rhetorical; indeed they are quite otherwise. “His language may be called,” says an observing critic, “the mere transparent window through which the ‘immeasurable calm’ —the blue of immensity—looks in. Certainly it is the least figurative of all the Scripture styles. Its simplicity is deeper than that of age’s unmoved narratives; it is rather that of infancy, telling some dreadful tale in an undertone, and with upcast looks of awe. It is as if Moses, at the feet of that simulacrum of Deity which he saw on the Mount, had become a child; as if the glory, which might have maddened others, had only sunk him down into the ark of bulrushes again. And, from that hour, dropping all the learning of the Egyptians, the mystic folds of which he had wrapped around him, he is content to be the mere instrument in the Divine hand, and becomes, that meekest man—a boy repeating with quivering voice and heart the lesson his father has taught him. Hence the Fall is recorded without a word of comment or regret; the sight of an ocean world starts up but one expression which looks like a metaphor—the ‘windows of heaven’; the journey of Abraham going forth, not knowing whither he went, in search of a far country—the most momentous journey in the history of man—is told as succinctly and quietly, as are afterwards the delinquencies of Er and Judah; through a naked narrative, bursts the deep pathos involved in the story of Joseph; and how telescopic, in its clear calmness, his view of the Ten Plagues, sweeping in their course between the Nile of raging blood and the cry which proclaimed the findings of that fearful morning, when there was not a house but there was one dead—the whole a dread circle of desolation, mourning, and woe. And even when he brings us in sight of Sinai—the proud point in his life—the centre of his system—the scene, too, of his sublime agony,

Continued on page 452

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

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Please tell me the identity of the creatures in Revelation 9 which come out of the bottomless pit? Are they symbols, real locusts, or demons? -- Mississippi



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“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power” (Rev. 9:3). I have read several different commentaries upon this passage of Scripture and there are a variety of interpretations. It is little wonder why people are confused when it comes to interpreting the Book of Revelation. There is a religious smorgasbord of error in print.

After reading the chapter carefully I have come to the conclusion that these creatures are real locusts indwelt by demonic beings who are led by Satan. They are different from ordinary locusts in that they are forbidden to eat any green thing and they have a leader (Prov. 30:27). Rather, their chief responsibility is to torment the reprobate for a period of 5 months during the Tribulation Period. The locusts will have the shape of horses, the teeth of lions, and tails like those of scorpions with stinging power. The inspired writer does not say these beings are like locusts, but rather that they are locusts and he goes on to describe them in great detail. I am sure there are many who scoff at a literal interpretation of this passage. However, the 10 plagues of Egypt were quite extraordinary and unbelievable, yet they are literal. I have no trouble believing that Satan has a horde of demonic beings now dwelling in the infernal underworld called the bottomless pit awaiting the day when they can unleash their destructive fury upon the reprobate of the earth.

I agree with the comments of J. B. Smith who wrote concerning this passage: “That demons could possess locusts should occasion no difficulty when we recall that upon a former occasion they ‘entered into the swine’ (Luke 8:33). . .Angels have power to appear in visible forms at will, only,

however, in accordance with their mission as directed by an overruling providence. In Daniel both good and evil spirits are mentioned as functioning in behalf of men. And similarly in Revelation, good angels appear in various forms. So why not the evil? Here they assume the unusual forms indicated. Later they have the appearance of frogs (16:13). . .There can be no doubt but that their outward forms will strike the eye as here described. The detailed resemblances are given in order to enable the reader to visualize their incarnate forms with exactness. . .Thus runs the sevenfold description of the hideous forms in which these demonic spirits incarnate themselves. Their very appearance will no doubt, strike terror to the stoutest heart. Further comment appears unnecessary. To believe what is written is here as always the best ‘key of knowledge’.” (pp. 143-145).

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Symbolic language is found throughout Scripture. One example can be found in Revelation 1:20. The seven churches in Asia are symbolized by seven candlesticks (lampstands), and the angels (ministers) of these churches are symbolized by stars. There are many things in prophecy, however, which are not symbolized. In most cases where symbolism is used the context reveals the use of symbolic language.

Numerous theories are advanced about the creatures in Revelation 9. They run all the way from the creatures representing Mohammed’s attack against saints to false preachers who are led by unsaved neo-orthodox seminary professors. But Mohammed’s attack was against saints, not against unbelievers. False preachers and neo-orthodoxy seminary professors deceive those not saved but do not seek to be

instruments of torment upon them. The creature in Revelation 9 brings torment upon those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads (v. 4).

I believe the creatures are supernatural demonic creatures who torment the ungodly with a fearful type of torment previously unknown to man. These creatures are to torment the unsaved inhabitants of the earth for a period of five months. These demonic creatures are designed to inflict terrible torment upon earth-dwellers, torment which makes them want to die, but they will not have their desire—they cannot die!

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I believe the falling star in verse one is none other than Satan being cast out of Heaven by God as seen in Isaiah 14:12 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Luke 10:18. According to Revelation 9:1, Satan is given the key to the bottomless pit where these terrible creatures are imprisoned. The bottomless pit is not what we think of as hell but a place where fallen angels or demons are held at this present time, see II Peter 2:4 and Jude verse six.

These scorpion like creatures are not literal locusts but they will be a scourge to torment people five months. That they are not literal locusts is clear from the warning in verse four that they will not hurt the green vegetation which normal locusts do. They also have a king over them. Verse eleven and Proverbs 30:27 say locusts have no king or leader over them. They are forbidden to hurt the sealed Jews, Rev. 7:1-3.

They are used by God to torment God-haters on the earth who will not submit to the authority of God until He forces them to. The description of these creatures adds to the horror of the judgment.

It is most likely that these are now

invisible demonic creatures, probably the fallen angels, that will take on animal like bodies which Satan uses to try to imitate heavenly living creatures as mentioned in Revelation 4:7. Satan is the great imitator of God trying to be God. These horrible looking creatures give us a glimpse of what Satan and his followers are really like. The name of their leader means destroyer, Abaddon and Apollyon.

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Each of the trumpets describe a judgment that is to come upon the earth. The effect of each one appears to have greater destruction than the preceding trumpet. This is the fifth trumpet and the first woe. A great and devastating judgment that is to fall upon this earth and all those who do not have the seal of God in their foreheads.

The star that is said to fall from Heaven is an angel that is given the authority to open the bottomless pit. This is the same pit that Satan is to be put in for a thousand years (Rev. 20:3). The same word is translated deep in Luke 8:31 where the unclean spirit besought Jesus not to command them to go into. The angel will let loose what appears to be a special supernatural creature to bring about judgment. I believe that this is to be taken literally. That these are demons, which God has caused to take on this special form in order to carry out His judgment. They are given instruction as to what they were to do and what they were not to do (verse 4-5). In verse eleven, we see that their king “. . . is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.” Both of these names mean “destroyer” (Strong). I believe that this destroyer is Satan and that a sovereign God is using Satan and his angels to fulfill His will.

DAVID O'NEAL



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How do you reconcile the sovereignty of God with the responsibility of man? -- New Mexico



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I believe as, I think it was Spurgeon who said, not a direct quote, "we do not have to reconcile God's sovereignty and man's responsibility because they were never enemies." God's sovereignty makes man responsible. God has the authority to demand that His creation obey and serve Him. The creature is always subject to its creator.

God demands of man perfection (Matt. 5:48). God demanding perfection and man being depraved is unable to ever be perfect. God provides the means and method of man becoming perfect in Jesus Christ (Col. 1:28; Heb. 10:12-14; Col. 4:12).

God demands all men to repent and then He gives repentance to those He chooses but all are still responsible to repent of their sins to God. He demands man to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ and then gives faith to those He chooses, but all men are still required to give allegiance to Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The very fact that God is Lord of all makes man responsible to God (Phil. 2:10-11).

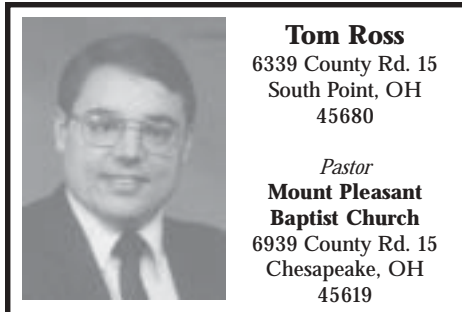
GARNER SMITH

sacred Book that are difficult to comprehend by finite, sinful, human intellect. However, the Bible is a book that must be received as it is written by spiritual faith, not mere human intellect or rationale.

In my estimation, the very best verse to reconcile these two teachings is found in Deuteronomy 29:29 which states: "**The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.**" The sovereign decrees of God and His eternal counsel belong exclusively to Him. He knows who the elect are, where they are, and when they will be called to salvation. He knows every event will take place in the realm of history. Things that are revealed in Scripture are for men to obey in their entirety. There are commands in Scripture calling for men to repent, believe the Gospel, and to preach the Gospel. All men are responsible and accountable to God to obey what He has revealed. It does not matter if they cannot reconcile His commands with the teaching of His sovereignty.

Arminians and hyper-Calvinists alike are extremists concerning this question and others like it. It is vital that we maintain a healthy balance between embracing the doctrines of grace and sovereignty with our responsibility to obey all the teachings of Scripture.

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It was C. H. Spurgeon who once said: "There is no need to reconcile friends, only enemies" when asked about reconciling the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Both doctrines are clearly revealed and woven throughout the sacred pages of inspired Scripture. Therefore, both doctrines must be received and believed by every honest Bible student. There are many things within the cover of the



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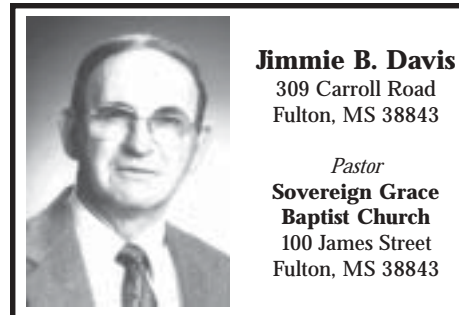
The only problem in reconciling the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man is in our own understanding. So often the question is asked, How can a sinner be responsible to believe in Christ when it is not in his ability to repent and turn to God? How can he be responsible for doing what he is unable to do? The Bible very clearly teaches that God is sovereign in all

things, and that He holds men responsible for their actions.

It must have been God's will that sin should enter the world, otherwise Adam would not have sinned. God had already chosen His Son as the sin offering before the creation of the world. Sin was in God's purpose, yet every man is responsible for each act of sin. The natural man is responsible to fear and serve God and, as a sinner, to repent and believe in His Son. In his natural state, he is both unable to fear God or to believe the gospel concerning the Son of God (John 5:40; 6:44). The sinner is condemned because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18). His inability does not destroy his responsibility.

Man is said to be dead in sins and by nature the children of wrath. Walking according to the way of this world, ". . . **according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience**" (Eph. 2:2). It is man's moral and spiritual inability which keeps him from coming to Christ. He has no desire or willingness to serve God or to respond to the gospel message, yet he is not without a natural ability. Lost men have the same natural ability to love God as they have to hate Him. The same ability to believe, that they have to disbelieve. The same ability to obey the law of God, as they have to disobey. Man was endowed with rationality and with a conscience that is able to distinguish between good and evil (Gen. 3:22). It is their failure to use the ability that God has given them that makes them responsible. The depravity of the heart does not destroy man's accountability to God.

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It would be a terrible mistake on our part to deny the absolute sovereignty of God or the responsibility of man. Both doctrines

run side by side in Holy Writ. The Bible declares that, "**Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places**" (Ps. 135:6). It also states that, ". . . **he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained**" (Acts 17:31). It is a dangerous thing to teach one of these doctrines while denying the other.

King Nebuchadnezzar was made to recognize the sovereignty of God and said, "**And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?**" (Dan. 4:35). When one truly believes in the sovereignty of God there is no problem in seeing Him on the throne working all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11). The control of all things is essential to absolute sovereignty.

God can hold man accountable for his actions because He is not responsible for man's sins or the inability to do anything about being saved from the penalty of sin. God's sovereignty does not make Him responsible for our sinful nature. God created Adam in a state of innocence. He did not remain in this state of innocence, but sinned and died spiritually. Since Adam is the federal head of the human race, all his posterity inherited his corrupt and sinful nature brought about through his fall (Rom. 5:17-19).

By His sovereign grace God saves a multitude of the human race which no man can number. He has a perfect right to bring all of His children before the Bema Seat of Christ for the judgment of our works with regard to rewards. He has the same right to bring the unregenerate before The Great White Throne where they will be judged before being banished from His presence. No one can ever successfully charge God of being unrighteous in holding us to personal accountability (Rom. 9:14-23).

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Life and Character

Continued from page 449

for then did he not exceedingly fear and quake? –his description is no more than the bare transcript of its terrors.” Yet his language is not bald or common place. “His manner of speech,” as Lord Bacon said of the king, “was indeed prince-like, flowing as from a fountain, and yet streaming and branching itself into nature’s order, full of facility and felicity, imitating none, and inimitable by any.” Perhaps rare Ben Johnson has more fully expressed it: No man ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness in what he uttered.”

With the hand of a Master, Moses writes his history. Briefly describing in a few bold pen pictures the creation of the world and its emerging from chaos, man comes forward in the order of events. He was made in the image and likeness of his God, elevated a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor. Often in our eagerness to prove that man is a sinner and that he has come short of God’s glory, we forget the royal blood of Heaven flows in his veins. “You have heard,” says a celebrated and eloquent writer free from all bias but that of genius, Chrysostom’s celebrated saying in reference to the Shekinah, or ark of testimony, visible revelation of God among the Hebrews: ‘The true Shekinah is man.’ Yes, it is even so! This is no vain phrase; it is veritably so. The essence of our being is a breath of Heaven. This body, this life of ours, these faculties, are they not all a vesture for that unnamed? We touch Heaven when we lay our hand on a human being. We are the miracle of miracles. This is scientific fact. God’s creation—it is the Almighty God’s.”

Says some observer all history is a series of biographies. The lives of individuals are rapidly traced by our author, and their destiny linked not only with his people but with the renovated centuries. In this manner, sometimes smoothly flowing as a river, and then with the rush of the mighty torrent, are we carried forward to the death of this man of God.

Almost every point in the Mosaic narrative has been called in question; yet after the most rigid examination not one error has been shown. It has stood the test and braved the storms of the thousand years. The learned Adrein Balbi when he made the following remark said no more than the facts will substantiate: “No monument either historical or

astronomical, has yet been able to prove the books of Moses false! but, on the contrary, with these books agree, in the most remarkable manner, the results obtained by the most learned philologues and the profoundest geometricians.” If we turn to Egypt there are miracles in stone. The very brick the children of Israel made, with the names of the cities they built, have been discovered. Only lately one of the Pharoahs, and the princess who adopted Moses, have been exhumed, and their mummies are now on exhibition. Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed by the wrath of Heaven, have given their testimony. Leut. Lynch, in his ample exploration made on the Dead Sea, says, “The inference from the Bible that this entire chasm was a plain sunk and ‘overwhelmed’ by the wrath of God, seems to be sustained by the extraordinary character of our surroundings.” Again he says, “Upon ourselves the result is a decided one. We entered upon this sea with conflicting opinions. One of

the party was skeptical, and another, I think a professed unbeliever of the Mosaic account. After twenty-two days of investigation, if I am not mistaken, we are unanimous in the conviction of the truth of the scriptural account of the destruction of the cities of the plain. I record with diffidence, the conclusions we have reached, simply as a protest against the shallow deductions of would-be unbelievers.” Even now the tidings have just come over the waters of a wonderful discovery on the banks of the Tigris. The records of the world before the flood, buried by Xisuthrus, and those of two of the most ancient cities of Chaldaee have been brought to light by the learned *savant*, Hermuza Rassam. The tradition of the Fall and of the Deluge are handed down by every nation of earth. Thus the most learned research of modern times only goes to confirm the oldest records of the world.

(To be continued)



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.

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GOVERNMENT APPEALS COURT RULING DECLARING MARRIAGE DEFINITION INVALID

OTTAWA, Ontario (EP)—The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) recently applauded the federal government of Canada for its decision to appeal the Ontario Divisional Court ruling that declares the definition of marriage as heterosexual invalid.

The Ontario Divisional Court is the first court in the world to rule that the definition of marriage offends human rights,” said Janet Epp Buckingham, general legal counsel for the EFC. “It would have been cavalier for the federal government not to appeal the Ontario ruling. In October 2001, the British Columbia Supreme Court refused to redefine marriage and ruled that the federal government cannot alter the heterosexual recognition of marriage.”

The Ontario Divisional Court ruled on July 12 that the common law definition of marriage as “the lawful and voluntary union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others” is constitutionally invalid and inoperative. The ruling was suspended for a period of 24 months to allow the Parliament of Canada and

regional governments to legislate on this issue. In 2000, the Canadian Parliament revised several laws that distinguished heterosexual couples from homosexual couples, but the definition of marriage was not changed at that time. Federal Justice Minister Martin Cauchon plans to appeal the Ontario decision to the Supreme Court if necessary. “At present, there is no consensus, either from the courts or among Canadians, on whether or how the laws require change,” Cauchon told Reuter News Agency. “The government believes it is the responsible course to seek further clarity on these issues.”

The British Columbia ruling has been appealed and will be heard by the Court of Appeal in February 2003.

Homosexual activists said that the decision was just, and they are appealing to other Canadians to speak out on the issue. One tactic activists are trying is to appeal to people’s pocketbooks. An extended appeal process for the Ontario ruling could take up to five or six years ad “millions” of taxpayer dollars, they claim.

The EFC is part of the Inter-Faith Coalition on Marriage and the Family, a group that intervened in both the Ontario and British Columbia marriage cases.

“Our affiliated denominations and churches are deeply disturbed at the prospect of marriage being unilaterally re-defined by the courts,” aid Buckingham. “For centuries, religious communities have been celebrating and nurturing marriage. For religious communities marriage is a sacred institution and cannot be redefined. It is by its very nature the union of a man and a woman.”

GOVERNMENT FINDS THAT COHABITING IS LESS STABLE THAN TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

ATLANTA (EP)—A study by the federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) found that couples who live together are less likely to stay together than are couples who marry. The report, “Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the United States,” said that by the age of 30, three-quarters of women in the U.S. have been married, and about half have cohabited outside of marriage.

The finding, based on interviews conducted in 1995 with nearly 11,000 women between the ages of 15 and 44, focused on both individual and community factors associated with long-term marriages, divorce, and separation. The study also looked at conditions associated with cohabitation, and the impact that such a lifestyle has on marital stability.

Dr. Ed Sondick, director of CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics, said that the analysis went “beyond the basic ‘bookends’ of marriage and divorce to look more closely at how the issue of cohabitation impacts the life of a relationship.

The study found that the likelihood of a first marriage ending in separation or divorce within five years is 20 percent, while the probability of a pre-marital cohabitation ending in a breakup within five years is 49 percent. After 10 years, those figures rise to 33 percent and 62 percent, respectively.

According to the study, the probability that a divorced woman would marry within five years of her divorce was 54 percent (58 percent for white women, 44 percent for Hispanic women, and 32 percent for black women). However, there was a 23 percent probability that a second marriage would end in divorce after five years, and a 39 percent likelihood that it would end after ten years.

The study also found that there has been a significant decline in divorce and remarriage among women since the 1950s (65 percent in the 1950s, 50 percent in 1995).

Factors for women that contribute to a lasting marriage include: a woman’s age at the time she first married; whether she was raised in an intact home with a mother and father; whether religion plays a major role in her life; and whether she

Continued on page 453

The Bible & Newspaper

Continued from page 452

has a higher family income or lives in a community with a high median family income as well as low male unemployment and low poverty.

MAINLINE DENOMINATIONS STUMBLE OVER SCRIPTURE AS THEY SEEK TO DEAL WITH HOMOSEXUAL ONSLAUGHT

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—A report from the Culture and Family Institute (CFI) says that the issue of homosexuality is wreaking havoc in several mainline Protestant denominations. Wrote Al Dobras in the group's online C and F Report, "Recent church developments show that many clergymen are unwilling to apply their own doctrine to resolve this issue, and homosexuality continues to threaten the survival of several Christian denominations."

While both Old and New Testament Scripture make it clear that the homosexual lifestyle is unacceptable to God, and thousands of years of biblical history condemns sodomy as sinful as well as criminal, many church leaders today, noted Dobras, "seem to hold the view that homosexual behavior is a new phenomenon that requires extensive study before any judgment is made regarding its moral righteousness."

In 1998, recalled Dobras, the Worldwide Anglican Communion (to which the American Episcopal Church belongs), meeting in Lambeth, England, passed a resolution reaffirming the Anglican Church's historic tenet that "upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union," and rejects "homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture. . . ." The resolution declared that the church "cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same-sex unions, nor the ordination of those involved in such unions."

The resolution was criticized and scorned by scores of Anglican bishops both in the United Kingdom and the U.S., prompting the Archbishop of Canterbury to call a series of meetings among the bishops to resolve the conflict.

After three years of discussions and meeting, the bishops issued a final report on the matter, writing that their "conversations" had "revealed and clarified the following points of disagreement: We were not able to reach a common mind regarding a single pattern of holy living for homosexual people. We have different perceptions of the relationship of the authority of Scripture to that of Reason and Tradition, and contemporary experience. We approach and interpret particular Scriptural passages in different ways."

Those differences in approach and interpretation led the bishops to sidestep

the issue of the sinfulness of homosexuality and agree only that "promiscuity and every kind of abusive sexual behavior [are] plainly contrary to the Christian way."

This left the clear implication that, as long as homosexual relationships are not promiscuous or abusive, they must not be "contrary to the Christian way."

Dobras wrote that the issue of ordaining homosexuals has been a contentious one at the annual assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Noted Dobras, "In both 1998 and 2002, the church defeated attempts by 'gay' advocates to eliminate the 'fidelity and chastity' provision in the church's Book of Order, which calls for church officers to 'live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness.'"

Despite the fact that established church law (not to mention Scripture) condemns homosexuality, the Presbyterian Church's Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity and Purity has come up with a plan to guide its work over the next few years, during which it will discuss (in its own words), "whether gay and lesbian Presbyterians should be admitted to ordained leadership."

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has also found it necessary to study how it will deal with homosexuality. Dobras recalled that in August 2001 the ELCA "avoided making a definitive decision on homosexual ordination during its quadrennial session, but passed a resolution that called for the issue to be studied and an action plan developed for the 2005 Assembly. The resolution kept in place an ordinance requiring homosexuals to vow celibacy in order to be eligible for the ordained ministry."

One ELCA congregation, however, didn't wait for its leadership to finish its study, but made up its own mind, calling an open lesbian to serve in its pulpit. Dobras wrote that "Anita Hill was ordained in an April 2001 ceremony that violated denominational rules. Nevertheless, Hill is still serving a church in St. Paul, Minnesota, and offered a proposal during last year's assembly that would have lifted the ban on ordination of non-celibate homosexuals immediately. The proposal was defeated."

While the United Methodist Church has repeatedly reaffirmed its teaching that homosexuality runs counter to a Christian lifestyle, and while it has continued to prohibit the ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals," Dobras said that the prohibitions have not deterred the appointment of several open homosexuals to the pulpit, nor have they stopped the widespread practice of performing homosexual commitment ceremonies."

NORTH KOREA TOPS LIST AS

WORLD'S WORST PERSECUTOR OF CHRISTIANS

SANTA ANA, Calif. (EP)—For the first time, North Korea replaced Saudi Arabia as the country where Christians are most severely persecuted, according to the "World Watch List" released recently by Open Doors. The semi-annual World Watch List ranks countries according to the level of persecution individuals and groups face for following Jesus Christ.

For years, Saudi Arabia has held the top spot on the list. The desert kingdom, which sees itself as the guardian of Islam and its sacred cities of Mecca and Medina, requires all its citizens to be Muslims. A Saudi who converts to another religion faces the death penalty for apostasy.

The evidence of severe oppression in North Korea has confirmed what many observers have believed for years, that the communist dictatorship of Kim Jong II stops at nothing to eradicate all belief systems other than the worship of Kim himself and his deceased father, Kim II Sung. Both father and son have made every attempt to purge the land of Christians.

Nevertheless, the church has survived in North Korea. Christian refugees escaping North Korea's devastating famine have told of small house churches in rural areas that rarely number more than 10 individuals, often including only family members for security precautions. One refugee told of how a house church of 20 to 30 people simply disappeared in 2000.

"For as many years as Open Doors has published its World Watch List, Saudi Arabia has had the dubious label of being ranked as the most difficult country in the world in which to be a Christian," said Terry Madison, president of Open Doors USA. "Arrest by the religious police, torture, imprisonment, deportation for foreign worker and death for nationals who convert to Christianity has led to Saudi Arabia's number one ranking as the most repressive country."

Madison said that despite the cruel treatment afforded to Christians in North Korea, "indications are that the Church in North Korea continues to grow despite the best efforts of the government to destroy the Church."

Ranked third on the list is the Southeast Asian nation of Laos, where government authorities have accused Christians of causing religious division. Officials make every effort to tightly control Christian activities, including holding indoctrination classes to re-educate believers.

Vietnam, Turkmenistan, Maldives, Bhutan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Somalia round out the top ten, listed in order of their ranking. Six of the top ten countries are governed by Islamic regimes. One—Bhutan—is predominately Buddhist, and three—Laos, Vietnam and

Turkmenistan—are communist-ruled.

Included on the list, from 11 to 25, are Iran, China, Sudan (government controlled areas), Myanmar (Burma), Egypt, Azerbaijan, Nigeria (North), Yemen, Comoros, Columbia, Cuba, Uzbekistan, Qatar, Brunei, and Morocco. China has, perhaps the world's largest population of Christians, numbering between 60-90 million with an estimated 10,000 to 25,000 conversions a day.

Rounding out the list to 50 are Tunisia, Iraq, Russian Federation (the Muslim republics of Chechnya, Kabardino, Balkaria and Dagestan), Libya, Tajikistan, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Djibouti, Turkey, Mexico (State of Chiapas), United Arab Emirates, Nepal, Kurdistan, Oman, Mauritania, Algeria, Malaysia, Syria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Kenya (Northeast) and Belarus.

The Open Doors World Watch List is distributed twice a year, and is based on evaluations and testimonies obtained by Open Doors indigenous contacts, field workers, and from actual persecuted Christians.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY INVESTMENT GROUP AT WAR WITH WAL-MART OVER SOFT PORN DISPLAY

WINTER PARK, Fla. (EP)—One of the nation's leading family-friendly investment groups, which offers mutual funds based on moral responsibility, has initiated a national campaign to expose what it says is Wal-Mart's "anti-family promotion of pornography." Arthur Ally, president of the investment group Timothy Plan, said that Wal-Mart has refused to remove displays of objectionable magazines like *Cosmopolitan* from high-traffic areas in its stores, or even to "hood" smutty covers at checkouts where they can be seen by children. Ally described *Cosmopolitan* as one of the "most blatantly aggressive soft-core pornographic magazines in America." He said that keeping the objectionable magazines out in the open puts "Wal-Mart's professed reputation as a family-oriented store" at risk.

Ally initiated the campaign after repeatedly asking executives at Wal-Mart's corporate head-quarters to take some action so that objectionable magazine covers, like those featured on *Cosmopolitan*, weren't assaulting shoppers and their families as they checked out purchases at their local Wal-Mart stores. Ally was concerned because his company offered Wal-Mart stock as part of its family-friendly mutual funds.

Ally explained in one letter to the corporation, "My request was not that Wal-Mart stop selling such magazines—this is not about censorship—but simply to remove them from areas where every man, woman, and child that goes through your stores will have them staring them

Continued on page 454

The Bible & Newspaper

Continued from page 453
in the face.”

Ally initially sent a letter to Wal-Mart president Lee Scott to complain about the offensive magazines after Ally and his wife saw a display of them as they were checking out of their neighborhood Wal-Mart store. “We simply could not believe our eyes,” Ally wrote to Scott. “Up to that point we were pleased to invest in Wal-Mart stock and offer it to our clients because of your company’s reputation of being a family-friendly organization.”

That was the first of four letters from Ally requesting Wal-Mart do something to protect its customers from the offensive displays. Ally received four responses from Wal-Mart corporate managers, but none from Scott himself. The final response came from Don S. Harris, Wal-Mart’s executive vice president of general merchandise, who wrote that “it’s our intention to continue merchandizing magazines in the same manner that we currently do.”

Ally said that Wal-Mart’s position on the magazines is incongruous with its stated refusal to stock music CDs that are offensive enough to require parental guidance stickers, as well as its prohibition of the sale of “mature-rated” video games to customers under 17 years of age.

Timothy Plan began its action by divesting itself of 9,200 shares of Wal-Mart stock held in the company’s large mid-cap growth fund. The company announced its action to a national network of 4,000 Christian financial planners and to Timothy Plan’s more than 10,000 shareholders. The Timothy Plan also added Wal-Mart to its list of companies screened out of the company’s mutual funds because of involvement in marketing pornography.

Ally, who launched the Timothy Plan in 1994 with a single mutual fund, says the company is now the “largest pro-life, pro-family, biblically based mutual fund group” in the nation.

He said Wal-Mart joins a list of companies—like Time Warner, Abercrombie and Fitch, and other publicly held entertainment companies—that the Timothy Plan screen out because of their involvement “in the moral decline of our culture, through their involvement in abortion, pornography, or active promotion of the homosexual agenda.” Out of a total of over 8,000 publicly traded stocks, the company has placed some 450 companies on its prohibited list.

Ally said that he is also soliciting help in his campaign from such pro-family groups as Focus on the Family, the American Family Association, and Concerned Women for America—organizations which represent millions of Americans concerned about moral decline.

HOUSE DEFEATS FREE SPEECH LEGISLATION FOR CHURCHES

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—The House of Representatives defeated a bill Oct. 2 that would have allowed churches and other religious institutions to use their pulpits for partisan political causes without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status. A 1954 IRS ruling bans churches from direct political involvement, including the endorsement of candidates.

Before the vote, Rep. Wally Herger (R-Calif.) argued for passage of the Houses of Worship Political Speech Protection Act (H. R. 2357), saying, “Our nation’s pastors, priests, rabbis, and clerics should be free to express their political opinions just as any other American. We should be doing everything we can to promote freedom of speech.”

But Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Calif.) argued against the bill, saying that it would “erode the separation of church and state, a bedrock value of our nation.”

Conservative leaders argued that Congress missed an opportunity to stand up for free speech. Colby May, a senior counsel with the conservative group American Center for Law and Justice, told the Cybercast News Service (CNS) that the vote means it will remain “risky for religious leaders to speak out on the moral and political issues of the day from the pulpit because of the unfair and unconstitutional restrictions of the Internal Revenue Service.”

The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), said he would continue “the fight to restore freedom of speech to houses of worship, “adding that “we must not allow [the IRS] to have this kind of chilling effect on America’s churches. . . I believe this is a battle that can be won, and will be won.”

BOOK OFFERS ‘PORTRAIT’ OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—The Family Research Council (FRC), a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit organization that works to strengthen traditional family values, has released a new book on the state of the American family. Entitled *The Family Portrait*, the book is a compilation of data, research, and public opinion on marriage and the family unit that the FRC hopes will be an important resource for pro-family activists and policymakers.

FRC president Ken Conner pointed out that the “traditional family unit is under attack as never before from the media and liberal public education, and through the general moral decline of society. If concerned Americans know more about the problem and the state of the family, they will be better prepared to defend the family.”

“The evidence is overwhelming that a family built on the foundation of marriage remains the best possible environment for raising healthy, stable, well-adjusted

children,” Connor told the *Washington Times*.

He explained that there is a distinct contradiction between what the majority of Americans believe about family values and how they respond in real life. “The overwhelming majority of Americans have a very high view of marriage and understand the importance of marriage, yet the failure rate of marriage is at an all-time high,” Connor told *Focus on the Family*.

The *Family Portrait* demonstrates that the marriage rate in the U.S. has shrunk by almost half over the last 50 years, and that Americans, on average, are marrying later in life. Research found in the book also shows that while Americans indicate they would like to have more children, they are actually having fewer. As to the sanctity of marriage, research finds that 52 percent of Americans think “living together” is morally acceptable.

Other research found in the book shows that between 1960 and 1995, the percentage of children living with both of their biological parents dropped dramatically, but then leveled off. Also, teen birth rates rose into the 1990s, but have fallen steadily since, and births by unmarried women as a whole rose during the same period, but leveled after the mid-90s.

While some will question the book’s validity since it comes from a conservative source, Bridget Maher, the FRC policy analyst who gathered data for the book over a two-year period, said her statistics were taken from solid scientific reports. “I really just grabbed the sources that are out there,” Maher told *Focus on the Family*. She said that much of the data came from the Census Bureau, the National Center for Health Statistics, and peer-reviewed professional journals.

Maher, said that the book’s research on marriage, adoption, child care, unwed parenthood, cohabitation, divorce, single-parent families, stepfamilies, and teen family issues offers a “full picture” of the views and behaviors of Americans on the family.

FRC hopes *The Family Portrait* will give conservative activists and policymakers the resources they need to affect changes in public policy that will benefit families. For example, statistics found in the book demonstrate that government funding of institutional daycare does not line up with the preference of the majority of parents. According to Charmaine Crouse Yost of the University of Virginia, working mothers prefer grandparents or other relatives to fill childcare needs, and their second choice is for the father and mother to care for the children themselves through work shift arrangements.

Nonetheless, the government still subsidizes professional child care through the Dependent Care Tax Credit, even though it is the choice of last resort for

most parents, said Allan Carlson, who serves as FRC’s Distinguished Fellow for Family Policy Studies. Carlson pointed out that while government isn’t responsible for the values or spiritual context of public policies, it does hold the power to change policies so that they positively reflect the crucial roles that marriage, children, and family play in a healthy society.

COMMISSION LISTS WORST VIOLATORS OF RELIGIOUS RIGHTS, SUGGESTS THAT U.S. SHOULD TAKE ACTION

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, an independent federal agency advising the Bush Administration and Congress, recommended that Secretary of State Colin Powell designate several nations “countries of particular concern” (CPCs) under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

CPCs are those countries which the Secretary of State finds to have engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom. The commission’s list, released Sept. 30, includes Burma (Myanmar), the North Korea, India, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Pakistan, Communist China, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, and Vietnam.

Once a country is designated a CPC, the President is supposed to take specified actions against the nations which restrict religious freedom. Such measures can range from a diplomatic demarche to economic sanctions or a waiver of action.

“The designation of countries of particular concern is one of the most important human rights acts taken by any U.S. administration,” said Commission Chair Felice D. Gaer. “The IRFA requires the U.S. to oppose these egregious and systematic violations, whether the government itself commits them or tolerates them. We hope to see actions commensurate with the severity of these abuses.”

The Commission also created a Watch List of countries—Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Uzbekistan—where grave violations of religious freedom have occurred.

Despite the commission’s recommendations over several years that Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, and Laos be designated as CPCs, the State Department has failed to name them. For the first time since its creation in 1998, the commission urged Powell to designate India, Pakistan, and Vietnam as CPCs. The Secretary designated Burma, China, Iran, Iraq, and Sudan as CPCs in 1999 and 2000, adding North Korea in 2001 following a Commission recommendation.

The Commission found that in China, severe violations have actually increased in the past year. The Chinese government has intensified its violent campaign of repression against evangelical Christians,

Continued on page 455

The Bible & Newspaper

Continued from page 454

Roman Catholics, Uighur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and groups—such as the Falun Gong—that have been labeled “evil cults.” This campaign has included imprisonment, torture, and other forms of ill treatment.

In India, the government has tolerated severe violence against religious minorities. In 2002, at least 1,000 Muslims were killed and more than 100,000 forced to flee their homes as a result of violence by Hindu mobs in Gujarat State after 58 Hindus were killed on a train in Godhra. India’s National Human Rights Commission found substantial evidence of premeditation by members of Hindu extremist groups; complicity by Gujarat State government officials; and police abuse in the face of these violent attacks on Muslims, in which many persons were shot, stabbed, raped, mutilated or burned to death. Christians, too, were victims in Gujarat. Many churches were also destroyed.

Although the state government took some steps to prevent further violence, it has failed to hold key violators accountable. The federal government did not take preventive action to impose direct control in Gujarat. And “fear. . . is still a palpable reality” for the displaced riot victims, the Commission stated.

In its research, the Commission concluded that Pakistan has failed adequately to protect religious minorities from sectarian violence. Discriminatory religious legislation, including the blasphemy and anti-Ahmadi laws, helps create an atmosphere of religious intolerance. Attacks against members of the Shi’ite minority by organized groups of Suni militants continue. Blasphemy charges, often false, result in lengthy detention and sometimes violence, including fatal attacks, against religious minority members as well as Muslims. This year has seen an upsurge in attacks targeting Pakistan’s Christian minority. American journalist Daniel Pearl was forced to “confess” his religion as Jewish before being beheaded by Islamic extremist.

Although the government took some steps, it has not brought to justice those responsible for recent attacks. Despite the proposed madrassah reform law, too many religious schools provide ideological training and motivation to those who take part in violence targeting religious minorities in Pakistan and elsewhere.

As noted in past years by the State Department, religious freedom “does not exist” in Saudi Arabia. The government vigorously prohibits all forms of public religious expression other than the government’s interpretation and presentation of Sunni Islam. Last year,

numerous foreign Christian workers were detained, arrested, tortured, and subsequently deported. Shi’a clerics and religious scholars are detained and imprisoned for their religious views, which differ from those of the government. The Saudi government’s severe violations of religious freedom include torture and cruel and degrading treatment or punishment; prolonged detention without charges; and flagrant denials of the right to liberty and security of the person, including coercive measures directed against women and the extended jurisdiction of the religious police, who exercise their vague powers in ways that violate others’ religious freedom.

The government of Vietnam continues repressive policies toward all religions and their followers. A Commission delegation that visited Vietnam in March 2002 found that religious dissidents remain under house arrest or are imprisoned, including Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly, who was detained after submitting testimony to the Commission last year. In addition, government officials continue to suppress organized religious activities and to harass leaders and followers of unregistered religious organizations, as well as clergy members of officially recognized religious groups.

The Commission also is very concerned about violations of religious freedom engaged in or tolerated by the government of Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Uzbekistan. Because the governments of these countries have not taken effective steps to halt repression and/or violence against religious believers, nor, in most cases, to punish those responsible, the Commission determined to place them on a new “Watch List.”

GLEANINGS HERE AND THERE

VANINO, Russia (EP)—A Baptist church in Vanino, Russia will not be liquidated as punishment for failing to register as a religious organization with the government. On Aug. 28, a local court ruled that it would not call for the liquidation of the assets of the Vanino Independent Baptist church. Church member Inna Vaulina told Keston News Service that the court ruling was influenced by the precedent set in an earlier case this year between the city of Moscow and the Salvation Army, which found in favor of the Salvation Army. The justice department still has the chance to appeal the ruling, but Vaulina said that Russian law is on the side of the Baptists.

NORTH ATTLEBORO, Mass. (EP)—Not everyone is hopping on the “Left Behind” bandwagon. In fact, one author is convinced the popular Christian book series about the rapture and beyond is an un-Christian tool which is leading people in the wrong direction. Lisa Ruby claims that her book, *God’s Wrath on Left*

Behind, “lays out—through clear biblical examples and critical examination—a compelling argument that the best-selling novels are virtual propaganda tools teeming with anti-Christian gospel, anti-Christian messages, and radical New Age teachings,” according to a press release promoting the book. “The Left Behind series is a promotion of Satan’s broad road leading to destruction in the guise of ‘tribulation-style’ Christianity,” said Ruby. “Cloaked under the label of ‘entertainment,’ the fact is that careful view of the Left Behind books reveals a frightening hidden agenda that is sending harmful messages to millions of readers.”

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. (EP)—Florida’s Okaloosa County School Board has turned down a request by two parents to remove the Pledge of Allegiance from the district’s classrooms. The parents, Marcel and Stephney Aigret, a divorced couple who are also Army veterans, said they were motivated by the June ruling of the 9th U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals in California. They urged the board to banish the pledge on grounds that the phrase “under God” violates their children’s rights of free speech and religion under the First Amendment. Stephney Aigret explained that she prays to an American Indian goddess and that her children are not taught to believe only in a Judeo-Christian god. A crowd of about 150 people opposing the couple shouted “under God” and held up signs bearing crosses and flags during the board meeting. The board denied the couple’s request, but school superintendent Don Gaetz explained that the district is required to follow the law allowing a student to abstain from the pledge if he has written permission from a parent or guardian. “The Pledge of Allegiance is not a public prayer,” he said. “It is the first expression of patriotism a child learns.”

SULLIGENT, Ala. (EP)—Irene Box Anderson of Sulligent, Ala. has taught the first and second-grade Sunday school class at First Baptist Church in Sulligent, Ala. for more than 43 years without missing a Sunday, the Associated Baptist Press (ABP) reported. The 73-year-old Anderson said that working in Sunday school is “just such a blessing to me. It seems like I miss a meal if I don’t attend. I just have to get to church on time.” Anderson is so dedicated to her ministry that in 1977 she talked her doctors into rescheduling a surgery she needed just so she could make it to church to teach her class. “I don’t do it to show off, and it’s not a duty,” she insisted. “I just love the Lord, and I do it with the love of my heart.”

BEIJING, China (EP)—Members of “house” churches in China have been disappearing in recent months, claim religious activists. Around 70 Christians

have either disappeared or been arrested since June. The Christians are members of churches that operate illegally according to Chinese law, which requires all religious organizations to follow its strict guidelines. Those religions that don’t are banned, persecuted, or labeled “cults” and “harmful sects.” This summer’s crack down on covert Christians occurred because leaders in China’s communist party are preparing for an important national congress in the fall. The leaders allegedly want to stop any political or religious demonstrations from happening during the congress. Many of the arrested Christians were taken from their homes in violent search-and-seizure operations run by China’s Ministry of Public Security and the Bureau of Religious Affairs.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—A group of 110 U. S. congressmen and senators have received the Family Research Council’s (FRC) annual “True Blue” award. The award honors members of the House and Senate who FRC says have demonstrated leadership and dedication in “defense of family, faith, and freedom.” A total of 91 representatives won the award, all Republicans except for Democrats Ralph Hall (Texas) and Ronnie Shows (Miss.) and Independent Virgil Goode (Va.). On the Senate side, all 19 recipients were Republicans. (For a complete listing, visit www.frc.org/get/lh02j1.cfm.) The Washington, D.C.-based pro-family watchdog group graded lawmakers on how they voted on legislation relative to crucial family issues like marriage and abstinence, parental notification and consent for abortion, child pornography and obscenity, partial-birth abortion, and school choice.

HONOLULU (EP)—New officers joining the Honolulu police department will no longer be required to appeal to God when they are sworn in. The Honolulu Star Bulletin reported that following a complaint by Hawaiian Citizens for Separation of Church and State (HCSCS), the Honolulu police department dropped the phrase “so help me God” from the oath officers are required to take when joining the department. HCSCS president Mitch Kahle had filed a complaint arguing that the oath represented an unconstitutional religious test. The department announced that from now on it will use an oath, printed in the state constitution, that does not include any reference to God. In addition, Kahle asked the Honolulu fire department to stop using a safety guide that includes a fireman’s prayer.

MINSK, Belarus (EP)—An oppressive law against religious freedom has been approved by the parliament of Belarus. Keston News Service reports that the Belarusian parliament’s upper house

Continued on page 456

The Bible & Newspaper

Continued from page 455

approved a revised law on religious freedom that would strip unregistered religious groups of nearly all their rights. Of the 52 members of the upper house, 42 voted in favor of the law. According to Keston, the new law bans registered religious groups from publishing religious material, meeting regularly in private homes, having foreign leadership, or running educational institutions. Belarus president, Aleksandr Lukashenko, reportedly had three days to sign the bill after passage.

The United States is now the world's fifth-largest Spanish-speaking nation. Nearly 59% of America's foreign-born Hispanics are from Mexico. Fifteen percent were born in Central America, 11.4 % came from South America, and 10% were born in Cuba. (Straight Talk, June 27, 2002)

The cost of the bureaucracy running the welfare programs is rising more than twice as fast as the number of people on the welfare rolls. (Straight Talk, June 27, 2002)

Since 1946, the cost of running Congress has soared by more than 3,000 percent, while the consumer price index has risen only 500 percent. (Straight Talk, June 27, 2002)

The IRS has 82,000 employees and costs U.S. taxpayers \$9 billion a year. (Straight Talk, June 27, 2002)

THE "COLD WAR" IS OVER?

According to the Intelligence Digest, about 70% of the former Soviet defense industry is still intact in Russia, with an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 defense plants

with 5 to 8 million employees. (Straight Talk, June 27, 2002).

As many as 500,000 illegals are buying fake Social Security cards, driver's licenses and birth certificates every year. They're using these fake documents to get millions of dollars worth of Social Security payments, welfare, jobs and other American taxpayer-financed benefits. And strong evidence has been uncovered of illegals using fake documents to register and vote in our elections. (Straight Talk, Sept. 5, 2002)

The U. S. trade deficit with Mexico is at an all-time high and the gap with Japan soared. The deficit with Japan is up 30%. (Straight Talk, Sept. 5, 2002)

Some U. S. government thieves are proposing a 74.5 mile tunnel between Alaska and Siberia. (ED. NOTE: Big enough for Russian tanks and armored vehicles to pass through?) (Straight Talk, Sept. 5, 2002)

New York State Assembly man Harvey Weisenberg, from Long Island got legislation calling for the placement of an American flag in every New York State classroom. Weisenberg, a former teacher and principal, said: "Schools have an academic obligation to teach citizenship and instill pride in our country. It is appropriate and important that our national symbol, the very emblem of freedom, be displayed in every classroom." Weisenberg is encouraging businesses, community organizations and individuals to buy the flags, particularly for schools in their particular communities. (Straight Talk, Sept. 5, 2002)

AIDS is now the leading cause of death for Americans of all races and sexual predilections aged 25-44. (Straight Talk, Sept. 5, 2002)

his shopping habits and people skills in every day life situations. This is where the real man and his character (or lack of it) will be revealed. Consider the following scenes in the average store that can reveal good or bad character traits:

(1) When taking a buggy through the check out, does he stick to the maximum item limit in the express lane, or try to bulldoze his way through an express lane with a buggy of 50 items, ignoring the 20 item limit? *Character Trait-Obeys rules. If he ignores the sign, it means he doesn't obey rules and submit to authority. Will he follow God's rules and submit to His authority?*

(2) When taking groceries or other items to his car in the parking lot, does he go out of the way to place his cart in the shopping cart return rack, or "do what everybody else does" and leave it by his car? *Character Trait-Goes the second mile. If so, then he will probably work hard and not be slack in his ministry work as your pastor.*

(3) When walking down an aisle in the store, does he stop and pick up stray items on the floor and put them back on the shelf or out of the way of traffic? *Character Trait-Consideration and a good stewardship. He is considering the safety of other shoppers and helping the store keep items from being destroyed and shop worn.*

(4) Is he courteous with other shoppers and workers in the store, including the checkout person? *Character Trait-Grace and compassion. If he is rude, pushy, arrogant and impatient, then he lacks graciousness and compassion and will probably give his church members the same treatment.*

(5) Does he park in the handicap spot, because "after all, it's empty"? *Character trait-Sensitivity. This one speaks for itself. If he is insensitive to the needs of others, placing his needs first. Need I say more?*

Actually, these standards would apply in calling a pastor, hiring an employee in business, or looking for a husband or wife. Be careful. You never know who may be watching you in public.

tuned in to reality and scriptural principles. You just can't improve on God's way.

Recently, I was in a store in our town and was talking to a young mother with a child about the age of my son, then 5 months old. She asked if he went to daycare and I said no, Mom kept him at home. With a genuine sadness in her eyes and voice, she remarked how she wished she could do that. I do not know her situation. She may have been a single Mom or the other working half in her house. I felt deeply for her.

When Scripture says that the young women should be keepers at home, it's for a reason. If there is not a keeper at home, then the home will not be kept. And I'm not talking about house work. It's all about the heart, not physical chores. The Mom is the heart of the home and she provides stability and security for children in the home. Before any of our children were born, my wife and I committed to her being at home with the children full time, at least until they began to go to school. It was difficult financially, but the right choice and we would not change a thing if we had to do it all over. God blesses decisions made according to His Word.

Too often, Christians swallow the lie of the career Mom who "has" to work outside the home, while leaving the children in day care or with individuals. Mom, if you have children, THEY are your CAREER, and motherhood is not just a "good" thing: it's the highest calling in the world for every woman God blesses with children. My wife went back to teaching in a Christian school after our daughter started school (she was a "career woman with a M.Ed.) Then, we founded a Christian school where she was administrator. It existed for one year. When news came that my wife was expecting, we closed the school after one year (now she homeschools) so she could pursue her higher calling back at home. That cut us back to my income only. Well, shades of Hezekiah, our financial picture has improved to an ever better status now, with my income only, than when we had her income also, last year. Let me say it one more time: GOD BLESSES WHEN YOU FOLLOW HIS PLAN.

I challenge you, working Mom, turn it over to God and take back the control and influence of your children. Some daycares may boast of "quality care," but NO ONE else will love your children and care for them with the quality which YOU provide. YOU are God's designated "quality care provider." Do it for God and your children.

Mini Edition

By Joseph Harris
Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist College, Laurel, Mississippi



HOW TO HIRE A PREACHER

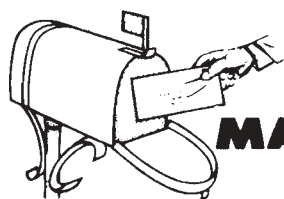
When it comes to "hiring" a preacher, certain qualifications usually come to mind. Education, experience, and family status are just a few of the criteria used to measure the candidate. Some people are concerned with age: he may be too young or he may be too old. Still, others don't want a boring, teaching preacher, but a dynamic, flamboyant pulpiteer.

I have decided, with all seriousness,

that a lot of churches miss the boat when calling a pastor. The premise of *Mini Edition* is that good common sense, guided by Scripture is always the best rule of thumb in every situation. Churches could learn a thing or two about calling a pastor if they would just put aside the resume and references of the candidates and consider another avenue. Instead of sending a pulpit committee to hear the preacher in his own church, where he will always be on good behavior, let the committee, instead, follow him around town for a day and observe

ARE YOU A STAY AT HOME MOM? (For ladies only)

Here's a Mini Edition that's sure to get some response (though it certainly won't be the first time, or the last). Are you a stay at home Mom? A new "official" university report was just released this past week with results that come as no surprise to common sense thinkers. Babies who are kept at home by Mom for their first year perform better academically after beginning school. Like I said, no surprise for those who are already



FROM THE MAILBOX

Dear Brother Cockrell,

This letter may be somewhat unusual in that I write to you about an article that appeared in another paper. I do so because I doubt that my "brickbat" would be published if directed toward the other paper. I have said to myself repeatedly that I will "forbear," but in spite of that resolve, I find myself repeatedly writing this letter in my mind. So I put "pen to paper" in hope of clearing my conscience in this matter. I do not intend a lengthy rebuttal, but just wish to make a few observations from memory that may be of interest to some Brethren. I am referring to the recent article entitled **THE ONLY SCRIPTURAL CHURCHES ON EARTH ARE SELF CONSTITUTED**. The article has for its authors a Baptist layman and the Editor of the paper in which it appeared. I point out that one of the men is a "layman" only because I think all ought to be reminded that this Brother who labors as a pastor holds such liberal views of Scripture as to enable him to reject ordination and to teach that New Testament Churches did not set men apart from the ministry—that is they did not ordain them. In my opinion, his evident liberalism should be a warning to all readers.

In the main the piece in question was a collection of quotations from various dead Baptists. Some were obviously taken out of context while two or more, if I remember rightly, could be cited in support of the Biblical or church-succession view of true Church origins. Others were doubtful as to the original author's intent. I began reading the article with great interest as I expected some "new light" from the Scriptures on the subject. I almost held my breath waiting a month for the second installment, but alas, no Scriptural support for this new theory was forthcoming. Only one Scripture was cited as support for this new-light view! We were given Matthew 18:20. This verse says, "**For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,**" and is a wonderful promise, but hardly a proof that **THE ONLY SCRIPTURAL CHURCHES ON EARTH ARE SELF CONSTITUTED!** As a matter of fact, the paragraph in which this verse is found has as its subject the discipline of wayward Church members! The author was obliged by his error to omit a proper exegesis of the passage and omitted to explain anything about "in my name" having to do with possessing the authority of Christ. I can only suppose he would have us believe that merely uttering "the name" of Christ is sufficient to be meeting with

Christ's authority.

Brethren, we have clear New Testament evidence that true Churches were organized by men who had been ordained by Christ or by other Churches. But I looked in vain in the article for even one Scripture which he dared put forth in support of the spontaneous combustion theory of Church origins. He seemed to want us to believe that there is something magical or spiritual or Scriptural in a group of people covenanting together and that this somehow constitutes them into a Church. But where is there anything in the Bible about self-constitution? And where is there even a passing reference to this idea of a group of people "covenanting together?"

These two men, to my knowledge, have yet to tell us whether baptism requires church authority or preacher authority, but their theory seems to me to say that at least some of the old Campbellite congregations are true churches for they were self-constituted by people who were baptized by Baptist preachers. So, it seems to me, that they have bestirred themselves in their literary kitchens, but have served us up only another dish of "Baptist barnacles without Biblical basis," if I may quote the learned Editor.

—e-mail

Slow Growth

Continued from page 441

back to the sacrifices and ceremonial observances of the Old Testament, failing to appreciate the liberty of the New Testament.

There is clearly seen two different stages of spiritual growth in this passage. There is childhood and manhood. While it takes about 20 years for a child to become a man in the kingdom of nature, this is not the rule of Heaven. Spiritual growth comes from yielding your all to God. This can be done in a few years or many years. Certainly there is a riper maturity, which comes with the experience of the years. But even a young believer can become a full-grown man in a brief space of time.

TOO MANY BABY CHRISTIANS

Sad to say, but too many believers remain in a state of spiritual childhood all their days. They learn only a small portion of the Bible, and they never advance beyond the stage of being fed. They never arrive at the stage of feeling led to teach others. They make little effort to enter into the fuller and deeper truths of the Word. Such persons never get off of the mild diet. They are redeemed and justified, as to their position in Christ, but they are ignorant of the abundant life and spiritual maturity. These

people cannot discern good and evil in the world, good and evil in deportment, or good and evil in doctrine. They always need help, instead of being help. They are unwilling to make the sacrifice required for spiritual progress.

Why do some believers remain in a sickly infancy all their lives? There are two primary reasons. First, many belong to churches which constantly serve them a skim milk diet. Their mental powers get very little exercise. Their churches are given over to social events and denominational programs. There is very little preaching and teaching of the Word of God in their churches. Like in the days of Josiah, the men of God have lost the book of God in the house of God.

Second, the fault lies with the individual himself. He has a Bible and should read and study it often. The person who is too lazy to search the Scriptures daily has not entered into the full meaning of the gospel and its blessings. He is in a feeble and sickly state. He has not yielded himself to the discipline which Bible study demands and deserved. This results in biblical illiteracy and a lack of spiritual advancement. This should not be so of any believer. God expects each Christian to be as eminent in spiritual growth as it is possible for Christ to make him.

Having just pointed out one of the results of failing to grow spiritually (biblical illiteracy), I want to go on to list a number of other things. Many things can hinder spiritual advancement, but I can only list a few.

LOSS OF ASSURANCE

In II Peter, chapter 1, verses 4 to 7, we are commanded to add to our faith various Christian virtues. Those who do this have the assurance that they are really and truly saved by the grace of God. I say this for Peter goes on to write: "**for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall**" (II Pet. 8-10).

Those who experience spiritual growth will not be barren and unfruitful in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (v. 8). They come to know Christ by following Him (Phil. 3:9-10; Col. 1:10). As we grow in grace, we become more Christ-like, and our saving knowledge of Him becomes more intimate and certain.

Failure to add to your faith results

in two things. First, there is some degree of blindness. We might call this dim-sighted, for he cannot see afar off. He is blind to the importance of developing Christian character by the world, the flesh, and the Devil. He does not see the invisible glories of the other world (Isa. 33:17) nor the reward promised to the faithful (Heb. 11:26).

Second, the person who does not add to his faith may doubt that he has real saving faith. He cannot be absolutely certain he has been once for all purged from his old sins by the blood of Jesus. Spiritual growth gives assurance of salvation, for only the dead never grow. He who cultivates the virtues of II Peter 1:5-7 has no need to question his calling and election, for he can be sure of it. The slothful, sleepy, sloppy Christian can never have the assurance of salvation.

LOSS OF JOY

By committing gross sins, David lost the joy of salvation and stunned his spiritual progress. He did not lose his salvation, but he did lose the joy of it. This is why he prayed: "**Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee**" (Ps. 51:12-13).

There is great joy in salvation. "**Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation**" (Isa. 12:3; cf. I Pet. 1:8). This joy comes from knowing we are no longer condemned but justified freely in Christ Jesus. There is joy in our consciousness of sonship. It is a great joy to know when Jesus comes again we shall have bodies like the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

While salvation cannot be lost, the joy of salvation can be lost due to sins in our lives. When the believer forsakes the Holy Spirit and goes after evil things, he loses the joy of his salvation. Then he neglects the Bible, another source of joy. He begins to miss church services. This robs him of some more of the joy he ought to have. He slights prayer, which brings joy. This creates a distance between God and his soul. Hence the joy salvation is forfeited.

When the joy of salvation is lost, spiritual growth is at a stand-still. We cannot teach the unsaved the ways of God, and our testimony before men is ruined. If we are ever going to be happy and useful, our joy must be restored. This joy is the source of our spiritual strength (Neh. 8:10), and when we forfeit it we become weak and sickly. We can recover this joy of our salvation only by repentance and reformation. Sins must be confessed and forsaken (Prov. 28:13).

Continued on page 458

Slow Growth

Continued from page 457

LOSS OF REWARDS

The Bible teaches rewards for faithful service to Jesus Christ. Psalm 58:11 says: **"Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth"** (Ps. 58:11). **"...and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor"** (I Cor. 3:8). These rewards are to be given at the return of Christ (I Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4; Rev. 22:12) and enjoyed in the millennium (Luke 19:12-17) and throughout eternity (II Cor. 4:17-18; Rev. 22:5).

Unfaithful service and limited spiritual growth will result in loss of rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. False teachers can beguile you of your rewards (Col. 2:18). II John 8 declares: **"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."** The fulness of Christ in spiritual growth assures of a full reward. There is a possibility of losing some crowns: **"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown"** (Rev. 3:11).

LOSS OF BLESSINGS

"Showers of blessing" are promised to the Lord's obedient people (Ezek. 34:26). Many of these blessings are conditioned on our obedience (Deut. 12:15; Lev. 26:3-13; Isa. 61:7-11; Mal. 3:8-10; Luke 6:22; 11:28) and spiritual advancement. Those who experience constant spiritual growth enjoy many blessings from the Lord. Those who are content to remain in infancy miss many things which they ought to enjoy.

Unconfessed sins in the life of a believer withhold the Lord's blessings: **"Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you"** (Jer. 5:25). In the case of Israel Jehovah withheld the former and latter rains (Jer. 3:3; 5:24) because of the sins of Israel. Disobedience deprives us of many blessings we could receive and makes the Heavens seem as brass. Those who remain in spiritual childhood are living below their privileges.

LOSS OF FIRST LOVE

It is possible for a Christian or a church to lose its first love. Christ said to the members of the church at Ephesus: **"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thy hast left thy first love"** (Rev. 2:4). Our first love is love for Christ. Those who grow slowly do not enjoy the sweet fellowship with Christ they should have. As the years pass they

seem to love Christ less, instead of more. How fervent and intense was their love for Christ when they were first saved! How eager they were to attend church and hear His Word! How they enjoyed prayer and giving to Christ! The first days after conversion was a time of primeval paradise of the soul, the golden age of Christian experience! But something went wrong.

A number of things can cause us to lose our first love. I shall list only a few. There is the fear of man (Prov. 29:25), an unforgiving spirit (Mark 11:25-26), harboring unclean thoughts and desires (Prov. 24:9), and refusing to confess sins (I John 1:8-10). When one leaves off the first works (Rev. 2:5) this results in a loss of love for Jesus Christ. This produces a miserable spiritual condition. Such a person can expect to experience a sharp scourging process and many tears. This plight can only be remedied by repentance and reformation. **"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent"** (Rev. 2:5).

LOSS OF OPPORTUNITIES

Every child of God is given in this world opportunities of serving Christ and others (Matt. 25:31-46). There is a sowing time, and the sheaves we look for can never be ours, unless we make use of every golden opportunity. An opportunity is a small moment, the critical minute, on which every good work so much depends. How we need to redeem the time and take advantage of every opportunity of serving Christ and Christians!

We would think a man a fool who would gather daisies and dandelions, when he might have also gathered roses and violets. We would count a man off in the head who would pick up pebbles and shells when he had the opportunity of picking up pearls and diamonds. We would remark to such a person: "You silly, stupid man! You have despised great treasures." But what shall we say to ourselves if we occupy ourselves with worldly vanities when we could have won a starry crown and golden sheaves? How spiritually deranged is the man who seeks only to lay up treasures on earth and few in Heaven? Our Lord said: **"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor**

steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-20).

How foolish many children of God are in this world! We grasp for pleasures and profits and crown life with the fading wreath of human gain, while we let slip a thousand opportunities of laying up treasures in Heaven. God calls us to duty and holds out crowns of reward in vain to lazy Christians. These lost opportunities will be at our bedside when we come to die. They will follow us to the Judgment Seat of Christ and cast a shadow behind us upon the sea of glass. Think of wood, hay, and stubble instead of gold, silver, and precious stones (I Cor. 3:10-15).

A REPROACH TO THE CHURCH OF GOD

Every true believer should be an active church member. If Christ loves the church enough to die for it (Eph. 5:25), we should love Him enough to live for Him in His church. But how lazy and immature some church members are! When it comes to serving Christ in His church they are "good for nothing." They cause problems to the whole assembly, for when **"one member suffers, all the members suffer with it"** (I Cor. 12:26). Spiritual dwarfs hinder and hamper the great work of the church, and these baby Christians are stumbling blocks to the unsaved. Their lives tend to defile and destroy the temple of God (I Cor. 3:16-17).

Unfaithful church members are unstable in all their ways and incline to go after false teachers (Eph. 4:14). Often they become involved in immorality and bring shame upon the whole church before the unconverted world. This can result in being excluded from the fellowship of the church (I Cor. 5:1-13). What could be worse than for a Christian to be severed from the body of Jesus Christ and out of the bride? Only a public confession of sin can get such a person restored to full fellowship in the church.

ASHAMED BEFORE CHRIST

In I John 2:28 it is written: **"And now little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."** John speaks of the great truth of the second coming of Christ and our accountability to Him. Christ is coming back at the rapture to judge the works of believers and give out rewards (Rev. 2:23; 22:12). It behooves all who are in union with Christ by faith to abide in Him. To abide in Christ is to live in constant fellowship and to grow up in Him in all things. It means to keep His Word

and His ordinances. Those who do this can go in confidence to the Judgment Seat of Christ: **"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world"** (I John 4:17). These will hear the "Well done" of the Master.

Those believers who do not grow to maturity, those who are content with a skim milk diet, shall be ashamed and alarmed before the righteous Judge (Jas. 5:9). The Greek in I John 2:28 implies they will shrink back from Jesus Christ, for they were not thinking about Heaven or serving Him when He returned. There would be no need to warn of the danger of being ashamed before Him if it were not possible for this to happen in the case of some. If Jesus Christ appeared today, would you have confidence? Could you meet Him in love without embarrassment? Oh, to be longing and looking for His coming, to spring forward with keen eyes and outstretched arms, to welcome in all confidence Him whom we love!

*If he should come today
And find my hands so full
Of future plans however fair
In which my Savior has no share,
What would He say?*

*If he should come today
And find my love so cold,
My faith so very weak and dim
I had not even looked for Him,
What would He say?*

*If He should come today
And find I had not told
One soul about my heavenly Friend,
Whose blessing all my way attend,
What would He say?*

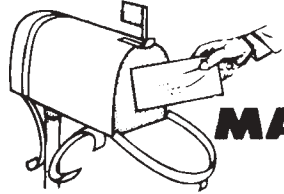
*If he should come today
Would I be glad—or so sad?
Remembering he had died for all the elect,
And none, through me, had heard His call,
What would He say?*

*If I really trust Him shall I ever fret?
If I do expect Him, can I e'er forget?
If by faith I see Him shall I doubt His aid?
If I really love Him, can I be afraid?*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a Fellowship Meeting at the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Northport, Alabama on December 7, 2002. Times are 10:00 a.m., lunch at 12 noon and the last speaker at 2:00 p.m. Speakers are to be Elders Raymond Spann, Steve Martin and Doyal Thomas. All are invited to come.

PERSONAL LETTERS
FROM
THE
MAILBOX
ABOUT THE EDITOR



Gentlemen:

Hard to realize that Bro. Cockrell has passed away and with the Lord. He will be greatly missed.

Received the October issue of *The Berea Baptist Banner*, with article by Curtis Pugh about Bro. Cockrell's life—The Triumph of Faith by Bro. Cockrell, Palms and Willows by Bro. Cockrell, "He Being Dead Yet Speaketh" by Bro. Cockrell and The Sins of the Tribulation by Bro. Cockrell also, personal letters by Elder Massie, Wayne, WV and C. D. S. speaks well of God's servant.

The articles on Scriptural Growth the last few months by Bro. Cockrell have been so good, (and Outline on Philipians).

I've read his book on Death—have looked forward to the book on Salvation and Prophecy.

I pray that the Lord will bless Bro. Cockrell's family, the church, and the paper and raise up another servant who will stand for *the truth* like Bro. Cockrell has over the years.

—Colorado

Please do all possible to keep the Banner going. We really NEED IT! Thank you so much. You are in our prayers.

—Maine

To Berea Baptist Church,

We are saddened to hear of the passing of your pastor and our dear brother, Elder Milburn Cockrell. He is with the Lord now and at everlasting peace. Bro. Cockrell was a champion for the doctrines of grace and a tireless servant of the Lord.

We didn't hear of the news until this Sunday morning (9-22-02). No pastor called me so I didn't know. We are keeping the church and Bro. Cockrell's family in our prayers. The *Berea Baptist Banner* is a legacy to the Lord and Bro. Cockrell.

We have learned so much about the Lord through the *Banner* over the years. Once again, we will keep you in our prayers.

—Texas

Brethren,

We are still praying God's comfort upon all of you. Certainly a warrior for the faith has gone on. Our Lord only can fill his shoes and He can. Pray it is His will. One thing for certain, men of great faith pass on, but His dear churches will be here until He comes for all His saints.

God bless you folks in your every second and step.

—North Carolina

Dear Brethren,

It is with great sadness that we at Sovereign Grace Baptist Church have to write this letter. Word cannot express the feelings we have concerning the loss of Brother Milburn. Heaven has gained a great warrior of faith (Jude 3); and I know there are many here that have received encouragement through the messages and articles he preached and wrote through the years.

We are concerned now that Brother Milburn was taken from us, as to how many Baptist preachers and churches may waver on issues that they didn't when he was here with us. It is always a comfort to know that if you believe a truth or truths that many do not, that a man such as Brother Milburn was there to support you.

Brother Milburn was preaching at Big Creek Baptist Church in December of '88 and the Lord brought me forth to make a public confession of Jesus Christ. He was preaching from Ps. 78:41, "Limiting the Holy One of Israel." When you all were over at South Point, Ohio, I would stop in to see him if I had a delivery in that area. Brother Milburn would always take time to talk with me.

We at Sovereign Grace Baptist Church are praying for your comfort, as well as a pastor who fears God, and loves Jesus Christ as Brother Milburn did. Without the power of God, it would be impossible for any man to fill Brother Milburn's "shoes." God blessed him with such knowledge and ability, that he will always be known by those of us that knew him as one of the greatest Baptists of our day and time.

May God comfort and strengthen you (II Cor. 1:3) at this time of mourning, and may He bless His church there, so that it will be here when Jesus calls us out (I Thess. 4:13-18).

—North Carolina

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and from the members of the . . . Baptist Church.

It is with sad hearts, but joyful hearts, I write this letter. We have lost a great defender of our faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

I met Brother Cockrell back around 1980 when he was pastor at Berea Baptist Church in South Point, Ohio. He was the moderator for my ordination service in 1982. I can remember the joyful times we had in fellowship around the Word of God. He was always helpful to me in the ministry as a mentor and as a friend.

I always remember that humble, but loving spirit he always exemplified when I visited him in his study at the bookstore. He would always recommend me books that would help me to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

I remember the love and fervor for the truth when he preached the holy Word of God. Yet his chief goal in life was to preach the truth as it is in the Scriptures. He could get his point across flawlessly, yet in a way

that touched the hearts of his hearers.

He not only loved his work in the ministry, but he loved young preachers. He always wanted to help them in the truth by sound doctrine and good books.

Not only was he a great preacher, but a great family man who loved his wife and children and was always concerned about their spiritual well-being.

But more than anything else he was my friend that never gave up on me when I was going through deep waters in my ministry. A true friend loves at all times and he was one.

I am thankful that the church at Westbrook had the privilege of having him preach a meeting for us. We were greatly blest.

Bro. Cockrell fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith and the time of his departure was at hand. Now he has gone on home to be with his Lord and hear that well done thou good and faithful servant.

I know for one that his faithful life, and loving ministry will be an encouragement for me in the remaining years of my Christian ministry here on the earth.

May God be with the church there and may the Lord give you his man to continue that great work there.

A sinner saved and kept by sovereign grace.

—Indiana

Dear Brother,

My heart is crying as I write. I am in pain because I was not able to thank the man who, unknowingly to him, helped me understand the doctrines of grace.

I was a young pastor then, an arminian at that. I hated the very mention of election, atonement and depravity. Then one day, I came across a worn out copy of the *Berea Baptist Banner*, a copy evidently sent by Berea Baptist Church to a pastor friend of mine. I hungered for more. So I asked for more old copies (which obviously were left unread). That was the start of a journey from arminianism to Biblicism. That happened almost 8 years ago. And as I look back, I praise God for using your father to lead me to the truth.

I thought of writing him about my journey, but unfortunately, I never got around to it. Then, about a couple of days ago, I heard that Bro. Milburn passed away. I sincerely regretted not writing him when he was still alive. My testimony could have brightened his day in a little way.

My prayers are for you. I hope you will continue the fight begun by your father. I will surely miss his words of wisdom. But I am confident that he is very happy where he is now. I think of him as an inspiration now that he is gone. I promise to myself that I will stand on the truth as preached by your father.

Again, thank you.

—Philippines

The Lord's Church at Mantachie,

I am deeply saddened to hear of Pastor's passing. It is truly a great day for him to go into the presence of the LORD in glory, yet it is a great loss for us here still on this earth. I continue to lift prayers for you all, and will so. This world has taken a blow at this loss. My heart and spirit is with you all.

I would like just a brief moment to tell you something of what Pastor meant to me. Of course I only knew Pastor through letters, his tapes and the BBB, and that just for the last couple of years. He did not look upon me as an outcast, hated and rejected as most do. I could feel his compassion and genuine concern for not only me, but all of us here of like faith. He showed us the true love of Christ. I looked upon Pastor Cockrell as my Pastor, Teacher, and Friend. As he taught, God uses means and one of God's means was Pastor in my life. Through his teaching I have grown into having an overwhelming desire to learn to be a blameless man before God and man, and as I hope in and wait on the return of the Lord Jesus, to purify myself of all filthiness of the flesh by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. I guess what I am saying is that the experience of knowing Pastor Cockrell has changed a lot in me. There was places in my heart that was locked up, that I could not find ways to open. God used him to show me, and how to reach in and give up to the Lord. God has given me a spiritual awakening to personal holiness that I knew about, but not how to attain to, through Pastor's teaching.

I will truly miss my Brother, and look forward to meeting him for the first time face to face where we will all worship our Savior.

I thank you all so very much there in the Lord's Church for all that you have provided me and others here. I thank God for you all and your labors of love toward us prisoners. We have been such great sinners in our past and just what we needed was someone to show us that we mattered. From all of us here, Thank you all!!!

—Washington

To the family and church members of Berea Baptist Church,

It is with great sorrow that I write you in expressing the loss of a great and faithful man called of God, Elder Milburn Cockrell. Please allow me to express my deepest heartfelt sympathy for your loss (Sis. Cockrell and children). Elder Cockrell was greatly loved, admired and respected by all of us here at McNeil Island Correctional Center, who experienced the joy of his ministry. There is joy in knowing that this faithful servant who labored tirelessly is with our glorious Lord, set to receive his crown of righteousness. I never knew the full richness of God's glorious gospel until I was introduced to Elder Cockrell's ministry. It is with abounding joy and thanks to our Savior and King, Jesus Christ that I express my hope and desire to continue to support the ministry Elder Cockrell began, and the work the Berea Baptist Church continues.

THE FAMILY OF ELDER MILBURN COCKRELL

would like to express our appreciation for all the flowers, food, phone calls, cards, love offerings, and visits during our loss. Your prayers and support we shall always cherish.

To Elders Roy Mitchell, Bill Mitchell, and Jimmie B. Davis for your comforting words.

To the host of fellow-ministers and friends who traveled many miles to share our grief.

To Bro. Roy Dennison and Linda Stanley for an excellent job with the music.

To the EMTs for your tireless efforts and to Steven McNeece and McNeece-Morris Funeral Home for a loving job well done.

To everyone who attended the visitation and funeral service, your presence was greatly appreciated.

And to our many neighbors and friends, from both near and afar, for your love and support when we needed it the most.

God bless each of you.

Sheron and Family

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 8-31-2002 to 9-30-2002

Beginning Balance	\$696.43
RECEIPTS	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	75.00
Berea B. C., West Point, TN	165.00
.....	540.00
TOTAL	1,236.43
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	1027.00
Postage	6.50
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,033.05
.....	203.38
Bank charge	- 10.00
BALANCE	\$193.38

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$613.32
RECEIPTS	
Total	613.32
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	200.00
Total Expenditures	200.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$413.32

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 8-31-2002 to 9-30-2002

Beginning Balance	\$3,683.72
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RECEIPTS:

A. D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B.C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	29.04
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	1,700.00
Berea B. C., Westpoint, TN	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	30.00
Bethesda B. C., Tarpon Springs, FL	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	125.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	50.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL	25.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	20.00
Faith B. C., Clarksville, TN	100.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL	50.00
Faith M. B. C., Powhatan, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Gerald Price, Johnson City, TN	25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. M., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Harold E. Flynn, Craigs ville, WV	50.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winton-Salem, NC	100.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL	25.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	25.00
Landmark S. G. B. C., Ft. Worth, TX	50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Letson Farrell, Long Beach, MS	120.00

Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Paul A. Otis, Flemington, NJ	38.00
Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM	25.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	50.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	100.00
Scriptural B. C., Mesa, AZ	50.00
Solid Rock B. C., Kenedy, TX	20.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	100.00
Timothy Willett, Pflugerville, TX	20.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	200.00
Subscriptions	166.00
Dividing Checks	225.00
Sub Total	\$5,388.04
TOTAL	\$9,071.76

EXPENDITURES:

Wages	2,375.00
Printing	540.50
Postage	1,113.26
FICA taxes	181.70
Dividing checks	225.00
Total Expenditures	4,435.46
.....	4,636.30
Bank reversal	19.68
.....	4,655.98
Bank charge July & August	-41.98
ENDING BALANCE	\$4,614.00

Funnybone

"... A time to laugh..." (Eccl. 3:4).

After church the other Sunday little Jimmie Johnson told Pastor Brown, "When I grow up and get a job, I'm going to give you some money."

"Well, thank you," the pastor replied, "but why?"

Jimmie answered, "Because my daddy says you're the poorest preacher we've ever had."

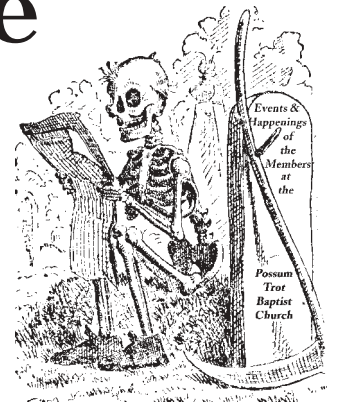
Sister Johnson invited a number of people from the Possum Trot Baptist Church home for Sunday dinner. She turned to little Jimmie and said, "Would you like to ask the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," Jimmie replied.

"Just say what you hear mommy say," sister Johnson answered.

Little Jimmie bowed his head and said, "Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

Little Jimmie Johnson and his older sister sat together in church on Sunday morning, seeing their parents were home with the "flu."



Jimmie giggled and talked loud during the service.

Finally, his big sister had had enough. She looked at him and said, "You are not suppose to act this way in church."

"Why? Who is going to stop me?" Jimmie answered.

His older sister pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two big men standing at the back door? They're hushers."

Pastor Brown's youngest daughter asked him, "Daddy, did you see the stork when he dumped me out of the suitcase?"

The good pastor thought a moment and then said, "No, I did not, but I did get his bill in the mail."

Personal Letters

Continued from page 459

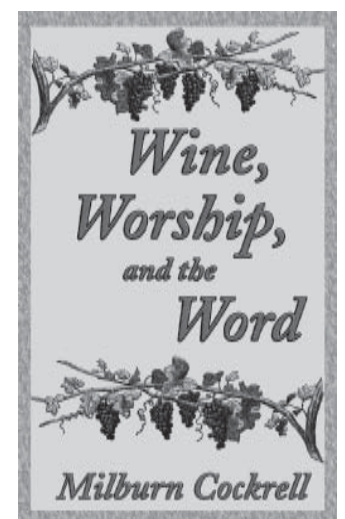
Please know that we love you with a pure love, and pray that God would indeed raise up a man to continue the work Elder Cockrell began. May God give each one of you grace and strength in the work of the ministry.

P.S. I would like to continue my financial support as this ministry alone has helped me to grow in the knowledge of God's Word.

—Washington



Prepublication Notice



Retail price will be \$6.95 plus \$2.50 P/H, but on 5 or more the price is \$3.50 each plus postage.

Coming in the next issue . . .

Rethinking the Atonement by T. P. Simmons
The Limits of Intercessory Prayer by Milburn Cockrell
The Life and Character of Moses Part 2 by John T. Christian

INDEX

Bible and the Newspaper	p. 452
Christ Weeping Over Jerusalem (sermon outline)	p. 449
Forum	pp. 450 - 451
From the Mailbox	pp. 457, 459
Funnybone	p. 460
Mini Edition	p. 456
Rantings and Ravings of Brother Ritechus N. Dignation	p. 447
Slow Growth by Milburn Cockrell	p. 441
The Fall and Recovery of Man by Christmas Evans	p. 441
The Life and Character of Moses Part 1 by John T. Christian	p. 441
The Recurrent Church Ordinances by George McDaniel	p. 441
The Wrath of Man by Todd Bryant	p. 445
Tomorrow's Trials or Triumphs by Timothy Hille	p. 441