

# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## A Historical Survey of Sovereign Grace

By Tom Ross

South Point, Ohio

No study of the doctrines of grace would be complete without briefly considering their history since the times of Christ and the apostles. Generally speaking, most Baptists historically believed and preached the doctrines of grace. In the twentieth century we have witnessed a major departure from the "faith once delivered" with reference to the doctrines of grace, which has subsequently led to doctrinal departures in other vital areas as well. Arminianism is the common bond which holds the ecumenical and charismatic movements together, and which eventually will lead its adherents back to the "Mother of harlots," the Roman Catholic Church.

### WHAT JESUS AND THE APOSTLES TAUGHT CONCERNING GRACE

Any person who reads the New Testament apart from a preconceived prejudice will undoubtedly come to the conclusion that Jesus and the Apostles believed, preached, and wrote about the doctrines of grace. These precious truths are exalted throughout the entire New



Tom Ross

Testament. In fact, the theme of the New Testament is grace. The very essence of the Gospel itself, is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, laid down His life, and shed His precious blood for helpless and unworthy sinners. Sinners are in time brought to spiritual life by the power of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of

*Continued on page 442*

## The Difference in The Old Gospel and The New Gospel

By Rolfe Barnard

(1904-1969)

Now my friends, I come to say that the Old Gospel of God's Grace is opposed to this "new gospel" of part grace and part man. The Old Gospel, which is the true Gospel of God, safeguarded some values, which this "new gospel" loses. Will you hear me carefully now? The "new gospel" that we have today by a certain universal redemption and universal divine saving



Rolfe Barnard

purpose compels itself to cheapen grace and to cheapen the cross of Christ, by denying that the Father and the Son are sovereign in salvation. This "new gospel" assures us that after God in Christ has done all that They can or will do, it depends finally on each man's own choice whether God's purpose to save him is realized or not.

Now my friends, this popular position has two unhappy results—this preaching that God has done His part and now He helplessly stands by while you decide whether or not His purpose shall be realized:

In the first place, this position compels us to misunderstand the significance of the gracious invitations of Christ in the Gospel. When we hear the invitations of these preachers who pervert the Gospel, they are not the expressions of the tender patience of a mighty Sovereign—they are the pathetic pleas of human desire. And so the enthroned Lord of glory under present-day preaching is suddenly changed into a weak, futile figure, knock-

*Continued on page 446*

*Continued on page 445*

## The Christian Voter's Guide

By Jeff Short

Mantachie, Mississippi

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

As Christian citizens, we sometimes wonder what the extent of our involvement with the civil government of our country should be. Usually, election time sparks a renewed interest in this issue. In this article I would like to consider especially one aspect of civil involvement—voting. Voting is one means by which we may be involved and help to elect leaders that will cause "the people" to "rejoice."

Our text makes it obvious that we have



Jeff Short

a certain interest in the government of our land. The people can be made to "rejoice" or "mourn" by those in authority. Our government can affect us positively or negatively. In fact, our leaders have a profound power to impact our lives morally, socially, and economically. They can affect us as citizens, as churches, and as families. The government can encroach on our

*Continued on page 446*

## Refuges of Lies

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941-2002)

**"Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place"** (Isa. 28:17).

Every man needs a refuge. He needs one from his conscience, from the power of sin within, from the power of Satan without, and from the wrath of God to come upon sinners. Almost every man has a refuge of some kind. He has something in which he has put his trust to comfort him.

The difficulty with most people is not so much that they have no



Milburn Cockrell

refuge, as that they have a false refuge. They trust in a hiding place, which will fail them in the hour of crisis and need. My text called these things "a refuge of lies." One day they will be ashamed of the vain hopes with which they have deluded themselves. Those who make lies their refuge are building upon the sand,

*Continued on page 452*

## Christ's Prayer for Believers

By Charles Spurgeon

(1834-1892)

**"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word"** (John 17:20).

In the very opening of this subject one feels inexpressibly delighted to see the wondrous love of our Savior towards His people. He here promises that He will intercede for every one of them before His Father's throne, and He declares that this intercession also rises for those who are yet uncalled, unconverted, and



Charles Spurgeon

unregenerated. Mark the depth of His affection, He spends all His time in continually interceding for His people. I marvel at the condescension of Jesus Christ, that His people's names are ever on His lips.

When we consider that, notwithstanding all His exceeding grace and affection towards them, they transgress and rebel, it appears wonderful that He should mention their names, or that He

*Continued on page 453*





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## A Historical Survey

*Continued from page 441*

the Word of God, drawn to saving faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and kept by the power of God.

The very first reference to the saving work of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew comes by way of announcement when the angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream: **"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"** (Matt. 1:21). The New Testament opens with a declaration that Jesus would actually secure salvation for His people, the elect whom the Father gave Him before the world began. The doctrine that Arminians hate the most, particular redemption, is set forth in the very first chapter of the New Testament!

Jesus believed that distinguishing grace was a sovereign act of God. In Matthew 11:25-27 we find Him praising the Father for sovereign grace: **"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,**

**because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."**

Perhaps the strongest testimony to the fact that Jesus believed the doctrines of grace is found in John, chapter 6 after Jesus had just fed the 5,000. The multitude was following Him because He had fed them, not because they had been spiritually attracted to Him. In response, Jesus tells them that He is the true bread from Heaven, sent by the Father to give life to those who believe. He then explains exactly why He came in verses 37-40: **"All that the Father giveth me (election) shall come to me (effectual calling); and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"** (cf. Job 23:13, 14; Dan. 4:35). **"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing (preservation of the saints), but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."** Jesus then explains that the natural man is incapable of coming to Him apart from the distinguishing, drawing power of God: **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:44).

A brief sampling of excerpts from the book of Acts and the epistles will suffice to prove that the followers of Christ believed in the sovereignty of God and the doctrines of grace. The salvation account of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus furnishes us with a striking illustration of God's grace in the effectual call. Saul hated the followers of the Lamb, and was on his way to persecute them. He was not seeking the Lord; he was seeking the destruction of the Lord's people when Jesus apprehended him, humbled him, and called him to salvation. It was not Saul who sought God and laid hold on Christ; it was God who sought Saul and Christ who laid hold on him, making him **"willing in the day of thy power"** (Ps. 110:3).

In Acts 13 Paul preached Christ to the Jews and Gentiles at Antioch. When the Jews rejected the message Paul turned to the Gentiles and Luke records their reaction in verse 48: **"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."** In no uncertain terms, saving faith is expressed as the result of God's election or ordination to eternal life.

The Apostle Paul, who wrote 14 books of the New Testament under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is often found expounding the doctrines of grace. Who can deny that Paul believed in the five points of sovereign grace in light of Romans, chapter 9 or Ephesians, chapter 1? Even a casual reading of these two chapters reveals that Paul did not attribute salvation to the free will or cooperation of the natural man, but to the immutable will of God and His eternal purpose of grace.

James refers to election in his epistle: **"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him"** (James 2:5).

Peter opens his first epistle by addressing the: **"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..."**, and later refers to believers in the following way: **"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"** (2:9).

John's first epistle is very practical in nature as he writes about the characteristics that should be evident in the life of one who has been born of God. Yet, in the midst of the most practical epistle of the New Testament, John declares: **"We love him, because he first loved us"** (4:19). John believed that the new birth was a work of God alone, and that God was the first cause of our salvation.

From a brief sampling of the New Testament it is quite evident that Jesus Christ and the apostles believed in what we refer to today as the doctrines of grace.

### SOVEREIGN GRACE THROUGH THE REFORMERS

Proving that the New Testament writers believed in the doctrines of grace was relatively simple because the proof came from an infallible authoritative source. Whenever we begin to read history that has been written by uninspired men, our task becomes more difficult because we must rely on men who were tainted with certain prejudices. Yet, history as a secondary source can be used to show that the doctrines, which we now preach and defend, are not new-fangled inventions. Most of what we today refer to as systematic theology has been formulated in response to error that was prevalent in any given period of time. The formation of the system we today call the doctrines of grace is no exception.

In the fifth century a man named Pelagius vehemently opposed the doctrines of God's sovereign grace. David Steele wrote:

"Pelagius denied that human nature had been corrupted by sin. He maintained that the only ill effects which the race had suffered as the result of

Adam's transgression was the bad example which he had set for mankind. According to Pelagius, every infant comes into the world in the same condition as Adam was before the fall. His leading principle was that man's will is absolutely free. Hence every one has the power, within himself, to believe the gospel as well as to perfectly keep the law of God."<sup>1</sup>

Augustine, the Catholic theologian of the fifth century, responded to the heresy of Pelagius and declared that man was totally depraved, and that the act of faith resulted, not from the sinner's free will, but from God's free grace which is given to the elect only. Augustine, who would today be scorned by Catholics, and who was no friend to Baptists, obviously believed some truth concerning the doctrines of grace.

After Augustine soundly refuted the errors of Pelagius, a new form of heresy arose within the Catholic Church, promoted by a man named Cassian. His system of theology is today referred to as semi-Pelagianism because he mixed what Augustine taught with what Pelagius taught. He acknowledged that Adam's sin extended to all mankind, and that his nature was corrupted by sin. But he also taught a system of universal grace for all men by teaching that the Holy Spirit worked on all men alike and that salvation was dependent upon the decision and response of man's free will. In reality, most of the people whom we would today label as Arminians, are in actuality semi-Pelagians.

The Protestant Reformers rejected the theories of Pelagius and Cassian, attributing salvation to the sovereign grace of God alone. J. I. Packer wrote:

"All the leading Protestant theologians of the first epoch of the Reformation, stood on precisely the same ground here. On other points, they had their differences; but in asserting the helplessness of man in sin, and the sovereignty of God in grace, they were entirely at one. . . Here was the crucial issue: whether God is the author, not merely of justification, but also of faith; whether, in the last analysis, Christianity is a religion of utter reliance on God for salvation and all things necessary to it, or of self-reliance and self-effort."<sup>2</sup>

Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Farel, and Wycliff all believed what we would today identify as the doctrines of grace. I believe that there were Baptist groups who believed the doctrines of grace before any of the Reformers, as I shall later prove. The thing that has often puzzled me about the Protestant Reformers is their insistence on defending what John Gill referred to as the "pillar of popery," infant baptism. All the Protestant reformers viewed baptism as a sacrament or a means of grace, which logically denies real sovereign grace by making it depend in some way upon an individual's baptism.

*Continued on page 443*

## A Historical Survey

*Continued from page 442*

The systematic forms of the five points of Arminianism and Calvinism did not come into being until the early 1600s. James Arminius was a Dutch seminary professor. In 1610, one year after his death, his followers issued five articles of faith based upon Arminius's teachings, which are today referred to as Arminianism. They presented the teachings as a formal protest to the State of Holland, insisting that the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism both needed to be changed. In 1618 the Synod of Dort assembled to examine the protests of the Arminians in the light of the Scriptures. In May of 1619 they came to the conclusion that the five points of Arminianism did not reconcile with the Holy Scriptures. They also issued a five point response refuting each of the five errors of Arminius. These five points are commonly referred to today as the five points of Calvinism or the doctrines of grace.

From the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century until the latter part of the nineteenth century the doctrines of grace were commonly held by all Protestants except for the Methodists. All the noted Protestant preachers were thorough Calvinists. In the Puritan era, John Owen, Steven Charnock, John Flavel, Thomas Brooks, Thomas Manton, and Thomas Boston, to name only a few, proclaimed these precious truths "upon the housetops." In America, Cotton and Increase Mather, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, B.B. Warfield, and John Murray were all Protestants who loved and cherished the precious truths of the doctrines of grace. Bancroft, the American historian, pronounced the Pilgrim Fathers as: "Calvinists in their faith according to the straightest system."<sup>3</sup>

It is sad, but true, that most Protestant denominations in our day have a Calvinistic creed and an Arminian clergy. To most, the doctrines of grace are unimportant and Arminianism is not even questioned. The mainline denominations have sold the truth for a "mess of ecumenical pottage." Protestants have always had the birthmarks of Rome, because they were conceived and have their origin by way of the "Mother of Harlots." In our day we see the daughters resembling more and more their mother, the Roman Catholic Church.

I would like to quote from the learned John Gill, a Baptist theologian of the 1700s who linked Arminianism and popery together, in his book *Cause of God and Truth*:

"The work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it; but

the author of this work was of the opinion, that the increase of popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation. This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed; and indeed, instead of lopping of the branches of popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, ARMINIANISM AND PELAGIANISM, THE VERY LIFE AND SOUL OF POPERY."<sup>4</sup>

### BAPTISTS AND THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

It is my firm conviction that the Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ established a New Testament Church during His earthly ministry consisting of saved people who were scripturally baptized. He promised that His kind of church would be perpetuated until the end of the age. I believe the Scriptures teach that the kind of church Jesus organized and authorized to carry out the great commission was in doctrine and practice what we would today identify as a Sovereign Grace Baptist Church. Until the latter part of the eighteenth century Baptist history was written mainly by our enemies. Up until the nineteenth century it was rare to see Baptist works published because, as a general rule, they were poor and persecuted by Catholics and Protestants alike. Yet believing that Jesus meant what He said: ". . . **I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it**" and ". . . **lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,**" it is the firm conviction of the writer that the Lord's churches have never identified with Rome, and they have upheld and supported the doctrines of grace as the "**pillar and ground of the truth**" through the centuries.

Much of the history of the ancient Baptists revolved around their opposition to the traditions and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, long before the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. The Novations of Italy, the Donatists of north Africa, the Bogomils and Paterines of Europe, the Albigenses and Waldenses of France, and the Anabaptists of Germany historically rejected infant baptism, sprinkling as a mode of baptism, the validity of Romish ordinances, baptismal regeneration, the

priestcraft, purgatory, worship of saints and idols, Mariolatry, and salvation by human merits. Consequently, historical accounts of their beliefs and practices have been recorded by their Romish persecutors. It is generally accepted by historians that these ancient Baptists accepted the Scriptures as their final authority for all faith and practice, and that salvation was the free gift of God. Because the five points of the doctrines of grace were not put into a concrete, systematic form until the sixteenth century, little is written prior to that time concerning those who believed the doctrines.

The renowned Catholic theologian, Augustine of Hippo, believed the doctrines of grace and fought fiercely against the errors of Pelagius in the fifth century. However, this same Augustine opposed the Donatists of North Africa because of their rejection of infant baptism and the idea of a pure local church being made up only of true believers. We read nowhere in the annals of history that Augustine opposed them concerning their views on depravity and election which implies that they were orthodox concerning their views on sovereign grace.

The ancient Albigenses of southern France are recorded as believing in sovereign grace as far back as the tenth century. Peter Allix, in his book entitled, *Remarks Upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses*, quotes a Friar Inquisitor who wrote concerning the heresies of the Albigenses in 1461:

"First, they say it is clear, that when God pardons sin, He doth it not with any respect to the merit of any man, but of mere grace; whence it follows evidently, that the remission of sins cannot be attributed to a man's confession of them; for if it were so, we must own that the remission is no longer a free gift, but that it is a recompense given by God to the merit of him that confesseth. Secondly, they say, if it be confession that procures a man the pardon of his sins, what will become of that passage in the third chapter of the Epistle to Titus, where it is expressly declared, that God hath saved us of His mercy, and not according to the works of righteousness that we have done? Or how shall we explain that in the ninth of the Romans, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but

of God that sheweth mercy: We know, that the first grace that God works in us is the remission of sins: now if this grace be absolutely the effect of the mercy of God, it cannot be the effect of confession, which by consequence is not necessary to salvation."<sup>5</sup>

The confession he refers to is the Romish practice of auricular confession.

The Paterines, who flourished in Italy and France from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, believed the doctrines of grace. W. A. Jarrell wrote concerning the Paterines:

"They were Baptists on the doctrine of election and appealed to the texts in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, employed by others also in proof of the doctrine of unconditional predestination."<sup>6</sup>

The Waldenses of France wrote the *Noble Lesson* in 1100 A.D. Two portions of the document are of great interest to Baptists. The following quotes are in S. Moreland's book, *The Churches of the Valley of Piemont*:

"Now after the Apostles, were certain Teachers, who taught the way of Jesus Christ our Saviour. And these are found even at this present day (referring to church perpetuity), But they are known to very few, who have a great desire to teach the way of Jesus Christ, But they are so persecuted, that they are able to do but little, so much are the false Christians blinded with error; and more than the rest they that are Pastors, for they persecute and hate those who are better than themselves, and let those live quietly who are false deceivers. . . And give us to hear that which He shall say to His Elect without delay; Come hither ye blessed of my Father, Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the World, Where you shall have Pleasure, Riches, and Honour. May it please the Lord, which formed the World, that we may be of the number of His Elect to dwell in His Court for ever. Praised be God. Amen."<sup>7</sup>

From these two quotes it appears that the ancient Waldenses believed in church perpetuity as well as the doctrine of election.

A Waldensian confession dated 1532 A.D. states:

"All that have been, or shall be saved, were elected by God before all worlds. . . They who are saved cannot miss of salvation. . . Whosoever maintaineth freewill, wholly denieth predestination."<sup>8</sup>

A Waldensian confession dated 1655 A.D. states:

"God saves from corruption and damnation those whom He has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith or holiness He foresaw in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ Jesus, His Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reason of His own will and justice."<sup>9</sup>

The German and Dutch Anabaptists

*Continued on page 444*

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DWSS, Manila, Philippines	Sunday 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.	1494	16,000 AM



## A Historical Survey

*Continued from page 443*

believed in the doctrine of election, as I shall prove from three quotes from their most influential leaders. Denck wrote:

“Christ, the Lamb of God, has been from the beginning of the world a mediator between God and men, and will remain a mediator to the end. Of what men? Of you and me alone? Not so, but of all men who God has given to Him for a possession.”<sup>10</sup>

John Muller in 1525 wrote:

“Since faith in the free gift of God is not in every man’s possession, as the Scriptures show. . . It is born not of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God. . . No man cometh unto me except the Father draw him. The secret of God is like a treasure concealed in a field which no man can find unless the Spirit of the Lord reveal it to him.”<sup>11</sup>

Menno Simons, the Dutch Anabaptist, wrote:

“O Lord God, thou hast loved us with an eternal love. Thou hast chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be unblamable and holy before thee in love, not regarding what we find written by the faithful Paul concerning Esau, Pharaoh, and Israel. He has done all this on our behalf in order that we should give the honor to thy name, and not to ourselves. What do we miserable sinners have of which we may boast? What do we have that we have not received of thee?”<sup>12</sup>

After the invention of the printing press, the Protestant Reformation, and the translation of the Scriptures into English, the Baptists are shown historically to be staunch defenders of the doctrines of grace. The Particular Baptists in England were strong in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They derived the name “particular” from their strong stand on the doctrine of particular redemption, to distinguish them from those who believed in a general atonement. The London Confession of 1644, which was signed by William Kiffin and John Spilsbery, was decidedly Calvinistic. The third article reads:

“That God hath decreed in Himself touching all things, effectually to work and dispose them according to the counsel of His own will, to the glory of His Name. . . And touching His creature man, God had in Christ before the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of His will, foreordained some men to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of His grace, leaving the rest in their sin to their just condemnation to the praise of His Justice.”<sup>13</sup>

The Second London Confession printed in 1677 is even more Calvinistic. The ninth article on free will reads:

“Man by his fall into a state of sin hath

wholly lost all ability of Will, to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in Sin is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself; or to prepare himself thereunto.”<sup>14</sup>

The majority of Baptist writers and theologians in England were staunch proponents of sovereign grace. Benjamin Keach, Hanserd Knollys, John Bunyan, John Gill, John Brine, Abraham Booth, John Rippon, J.C. Philpot, and C. H. Spurgeon all held unashamedly to the five points of the doctrines of grace.

Because most Baptists in our day freely quote the writings of C. H. Spurgeon, I have taken the liberty to insert two quotes, which are taken from his autobiography under the chapter heading “A Defense of Calvinism”:

“What is the heresy of Rome, but the addition of something to the perfect merits of Jesus Christ—the bringing in of the works of the flesh, to assist in our justification? And what is the heresy of Arminianism but the addition of something to the work of the Redeemer? Every heresy, if brought to the touchstone, will discover itself here. I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having once believed in Jesus. Such a gospel I abhor.”<sup>15</sup>

Spurgeon concludes his chapter on “A Defense of Calvinism” by saying:

“I ask the man who dares to say that Calvinism is a licentious religion, what he thinks of the character of Augustine, or Calvin, or Whitefield, who in successive ages were the great exponents of the system of grace; or what will he say of the Puritans, whose works are full of them? Had a man been an Arminian in those days, he would have been accounted the vilest heretic breathing, but now we are looked upon as the heretics, and they as the orthodox. We have gone back to the old school; we can trace our descent from the apostles. It is that vein of free-grace, running through the sermonizing of Baptists, which has saved us as a denomination. Were it not for that, we

should not stand where we are today. We can run a golden line up to Jesus Christ Himself, through a holy succession of mighty fathers, who all held these glorious truths; and we can ask concerning them, “Where will you find holier and better men in the world?”<sup>16</sup>

It amazes me that men like the late John R. Rice who was editor of *The Sword of the Lord*, would print “edited” sermons by Spurgeon in his Arminian periodical! It would do Baptist preachers in our day well to read some of the Baptist writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who were strong sovereign grace men.

In America the doctrines of grace had almost universal acceptance among Baptists until the latter part of the 1800s. In *Asplund’s Register of Baptist Churches* in 1792, he records that 92 percent of all American Baptists believed in the doctrines of grace. I believe the reason for the dismal descent into the pit of Arminianism came as a result of the influences of John Wesley, Charles G. Finney, and Dwight L. Moody. These three men, who were not even Baptists, conducted several evangelistic campaigns in America, which produced massive outward results. Their success, however, was tainted with unorthodox theology, which continues to be a detriment to Baptists to this day. Because results were produced, the idea that the end justifies the means began to be more important to Baptists than right doctrine.

The doctrinal stance of Baptists has shifted so dramatically in the 1900s, to the extent that if you believe and preach the doctrines of grace, you are considered a heretic rather than an earnest contender for the faith once delivered. In our day, the Arminian influence of men like John R. Rice, Jack Hyles, and Curtis Hudson is rampant. As a result, Baptist churches have become doctrinally weak, which always leads to the easy reception of error.

To illustrate what I am saying, in many Bible colleges and institutes, the writings and methods of Charles G. Finney are promoted as being sound and scriptural. Noel Smith, an influential preacher in the Bible Baptist Fellowship, and teacher at the Bible Baptist College in Springfield, Missouri once made the following statement:

“Knowing God as I do through the revelation He has given me of Himself in His Word, when I am told that God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, I know it means that the Triune God has done, is doing, always will do, all that the Triune God can do to save every man, woman, and child on this earth. If it doesn’t mean that, then tell me I pray you, what does it mean? What is hell? It is an infinite negation. It is infinite chaos. And it is more than that. I tell you, and I say it with profound reverence, hell is a ghastly

monument to the failure of the Triune God to save the multitudes who are there. I say it reverently, I say it with every nerve in my body tense; sinners go to hell because God Almighty Himself cannot save them! He did all He could. He failed.”<sup>17</sup>

When you consider that young preachers are being influenced by this type of teaching, it is little wonder why the Baptists are no longer distinguished for having a strong doctrinal foundation.

American Baptist history is filled with testimonies proving that the doctrines of grace were considered scriptural and orthodox. The first Baptist church in America was started in 1638 in Newport, R. I., by John Clark who stated:

“Election is the decree of God, of His free love, grace, and mercy, choosing some men to faith, holiness and eternal life, for the praise of His glorious mercy.”<sup>18</sup>

Obadiah Holmes, a contemporary of John Clark who lived from 1607 to 1682, said:

“Those destined to be saved are, to be sure, those whom God chooses to save, His elect, for He knows who are His. . . , and because man does not save himself, he cannot cause himself to be lost. All that are in the covenant of grace shall never fall away or perish.”<sup>19</sup>

The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742) states:

“Although God knoweth whatsoever may, or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass on certain conditions. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to Eternal Life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation to the praise of His glorious justice.”<sup>20</sup>

Adoniram Judson, the first American missionary to Burma wrote the following in his Burman creed:

“God, who pitied the sinful race of man, sent His only beloved Son into the world to save from sin and hell, who also sends the Holy Spirit to enable those to become disciples who were chosen before the world was and given to the Son, we worship.”<sup>21</sup>

Francis Wayland (1796-1865) who was a distinguished Baptist pastor, writer, and educator wrote the following:

“My mind at one time rebelled against the doctrine of election. It seemed to me like partiality. I now perceived that I had no claim whatever on God, but that if I were lost it was altogether my own fault, and that if I was saved, it must be purely a deed of unmerited grace. I saw that this very doctrine was my only hope of salvation, for if God had not sought me, I should never have sought him.”<sup>22</sup>

W. B. Johnson, the first president of the

*Continued on page 445*

## A Historical Survey

Continued from page 444

Southern Baptist Convention from 1845-1850 said: "The denomination to which I have the honor to belong holds. . . the sovereignty of God in the provision and application of the plan of salvation."<sup>23</sup>

J. R. Graves, the staunch Landmark Baptist of the last century made the following remarks in the *Great Carrollton Debate*:

"He (Christ) did not contract for the lost angels, nor for all men. He only took hold of the seed of Abraham, not of Adam. . . If He had taken hold of the nature of the lost angels, they would all have been saved. If of the seed of Adam, all men would have been saved, and Universalism would have been the true doctrine. But he contracted as surety, Mediator, only for the seed of Abraham—the elect of mankind. . . I know this is death to Arminianism, the natural religion of all natural men. They want to believe that they elect themselves, and then Christ takes them into His Covenant. . . Infidels may wrest this hard doctrine, more fully developed by Paul than any other Apostle, to their own destruction, but a host of the best and clearest minds that have ever lived on earth have advocated it—as Augustine, Calvin, etc., and Knox, Henry—and it is crystallized in the creeds of Presbyterians, Episcopalians, as well as Baptists. We see here no universal Atonement or Redemption."<sup>24</sup>

I have just given a sampling of the voices in American Baptist history who proclaimed the doctrines of grace. Time does not permit me to quote Isaac Backus, Basil Manly, J. P. Boyce, R. B. C. Howell, Richard Fuller, J. L. Dagg, J. M. Pendleton, A. H. Strong, B. H. Carroll, J. B. Moody, and J. B. Gambrell. Men who were firm defenders of the doctrines of grace. I have proven that opposition to the doctrines of grace is in reality an opposition to Scripture, reason, and historical orthodoxy.

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(Editor's Note: This article is a chapter taken from Bro. Ross' book entitled, *Abandoned Truth—The Doctrines of Grace*. This book is "A study of the Truth, NOW ABANDONED, Concerning God's Sovereign Grace in the Salvation of Men." This book sets forth the Scriptural and historical truth concerning the beloved truth of sovereign grace. This book is currently out of print, but the author is working to get it reprinted. If you would like to order a book pre-publication, or desire more information, you may write to the author:

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## The Difference

Continued from page 441

ing at the human heart, which He is powerless to open. My friends, this is a shameful dishonor to the Sovereign Christ of the New Testament.

In the second place, this "new gospel" as it is preached forces us to deny our dependence upon God; when it comes to vital decisions, it takes us out of God's hands. It tells us that after all, we are the

master of our fate, and the captain of our souls. And it so undermines the very foundation of our relationship with our Maker. No wonder the converts of today are so often both irreverent and irreligious.

The Old Gospel speaks very differently in expounding man's need of Christ; the Old Gospel stresses something almost ignored today. That something is that sinners cannot obey the Gospel any more than they can obey the law, apart from renewal of heart. On the other hand, declaring Christ's power to save, the Old Gospel proclaims Him as the Author and chief agent of conversion. It preaches Him as coming by His Spirit as the Gospel goes forth to renew men's hearts and draw them to Himself. Thus, the Old Gospel, while stressing that faith is man's duty, stresses also that faith is not in man's power. God must give what He commands. Ephesians 2:8 says, "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.**"

Hebrews 12:2 says: "**Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. . .**"

Thus the Old Gospel announces not merely that men must come to Christ for salvation, but the Old Gospel also announces that men cannot come unless God draws them. John 6:44 says, "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. . .**"

John 14:6 says, "**Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.**"

John 3:27 says, "**John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven.**"

Thus, my friends, the Old Gospel does what desperately needs to be done; it labors to overthrow self-confidence, it labors to convince sinners that salvation is altogether out of their hands, and to shut sinners up to a self-despairing dependence on the glorious grace of a Sovereign Saviour, not only for their righteousness, but for their faith, too. Thus the Old Gospel doesn't talk about deciding for Christ, as we hear today. For this business of deciding for Christ suggests voting a person into office. It suggests an act in which the candidate plays no part, beyond offering himself for election. Everything is settled by the voter's independent choice. I wish people would believe me when I tell you that we do not vote God's Son into office as our Saviour! Nor does our Saviour remain passive while preachers campaign on His behalf.

My friends, coming to Christ, resting on Christ and turning from sin in full surrender to Christ is far different from deciding for Christ as your Saviour. Those who pervert the Gospel beg people to accept Jesus as their Saviour, and they will be saved. That is a lie out of Hell, because it is not in the Bible. If a person does not surrender to Jesus Christ as your Lord to rule and reign over you—why!—You are

not saved! We also hear these words spoken by preachers who pervert the Gospel: "Now sinners, God has done His part—the Devil wants you, and Christ wants you, and you have the deciding vote." But, my friends, that is a lie out of Hell! Christ didn't just offer Himself for office. He is working now, He is on a throne now ruling and reigning as Prophet, Priest, and King. He does not stand by while we try to get people to decide for Him as the Gospel is proclaimed.

He comes in the Spirit actively to draw men to Himself, and thus we preachers say that He is a Saviour for sinners. The Father and the Spirit draw sinners to Christ. Salvation is of the Lord. Thank God it is all in Christ. And to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" And this is the question of questions. The Old Gospel replies, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." And then, somebody says, "What does that mean?" The Old Gospel replies, "It means knowing one's self to be a sinner and Christ who died for sinners. It means to abandon all self-righteousness and self-confidence, and cast yourself wholly upon Christ for pardon and peace. It means exchanging one's natural enmity and rebellion against God for a spirit of grateful submission to the will of Christ, through the renewing of one's heart by the Holy Ghost. It means God taking a sinner and making him a new creature in Christ."

The next question, how am I to go about believing on Christ and repenting? Brother Barnard, you say I have no natural ability to do these things? I didn't say that—God says that! If I have no ability to do these things, how am I to go about believing on Christ and repenting? If you say I must—and I can't—how can it come to pass? To that perplexing question, and yet true one, the Old Gospel answers, "Listen, sinner friend, look to Christ. Quit looking to yourself; quit listening to your old bent and feeble will; look to Christ, seek the Lord, beg for mercy." I Samuel 2:8 says, "**He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory. . .**"

Isaiah 45:22 says, "**Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.**"

Isaiah 55:6 says, "**Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.**"

Jeremiah 29:13 says, "**And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.**"

Cry to Christ, just as you are, cast yourself on His mercy, ask Him to give you a new heart, working in you true repentance and faith. Ask Christ to take away your evil heart of unbelief and to write His law in your heart. Draw near to Him, watching, praying, reading, and hearing His Word. And continue to seek

Continued on page 446



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**The Difference**

Continued from page 445

the Lord till He speaks peace to you.

God Almighty has to perform a miracle in you and reveal Christ in you, for you to have eternal life.

John 17:3 says, **“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”**

Luke 10:22 says, **“All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.”**

Our Lord Jesus Christ is not passively waiting, but is actively working to bring His chosen people to faith. The preaching of the “new gospel” is called bringing men to Christ, as if only men moved while Christ stands still. The true Gospel is the coming of Christ to men. As the Gospel is preached, and Christ is set before men’s eyes, the mighty Saviour, Whom the Gospel proclaims busy—“Praise God”—doing His work through the Word. Not standing by, but visiting sinners with salvation, awakening them to faith and drawing them in mercy to Himself. Thank God, we don’t have to use all these methods of the flesh to get somebody to decide to accept Christ! We just have to proclaim Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost! We don’t have to look at those poor sinners and know that it all depends on them. But we know that as we preach Christ, He is standing by, He is working, He is dealing with men. He is opening blind eyes and bless God, He is drawing sinners to Himself. Oh, how glorious it is to proclaim Christ Who came into the world to save sinners! Praise His Holy Name!

Luke 5:32 says, **“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”**

Galatians 1:6-9 says, **“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”**

**The Christian Voter's**

Continued from page 441

freedoms through expansive government, complex regulations, and burdensome taxes, or we may enjoy more liberty with a small, limited government that stays within its proper jurisdiction.

In America, we have a representative republic. The magistrates are elected to office by the citizenry of this country. This means that every adult citizen has the privilege of voting in elections. In light of our text, it would be foolish not to vote because of apathy or irresponsibility.

Perhaps, some do not make use of this privilege because voting can seem to be such an overwhelming endeavor. There are so many candidates and offices and it is hard to find reliable information. We can simplify things somewhat when we consider that each voter elects roughly about sixteen key candidates to public office on the national, state, and local levels combined. The overall number may vary given a person’s exact location, e.g. if a person lives outside of an incorporated city, he will not vote for a mayor, city councilman, etc.

We can elect five candidates on the national level—a president, a vice president, two senators, and a congressman. We can elect about five candidates on the state level—a governor, a lieutenant governor, an attorney general, a senator, and one or more representatives. Depending on the place of residence, we may elect about six candidates on the local level—a mayor, a city councilman, a city attorney, the school board, a county supervisor, and a sheriff.

These are the key public office holders that we may vote for. We elect them and

pay their salaries with our taxes. They are supposed to be servants of the public and representative of their constituency. They should especially represent us morally.

When we consider the number of offices that we are responsible for, it is not such a large task to be informed of this small number of people. This brings us to the question of how we are to determine a candidate’s suitability for office. Is there some reliable guide by which we can make determinations of how fit a candidate is for the office he seeks? Yes, there is such a guide; the Bible is the best Christian voter’s guide.

Let us now look into our guide and see if we can find help for the voting dilemma. Let us consider two main questions and as we proceed, I will also try to address some common questions and difficulties we meet with as Christians trying to vote with a clear conscience.

**I. In the first place, how may we determine a candidate’s suitability for office?** Certainly, we seek more than just opinion in this matter. What does the Bible have to say about qualifications for government leaders? Or perhaps we might ask, *“Should a Christian even vote at all or even be concerned with politics?”* We probably all share a degree of disgust with politics on all levels. Does that mean we should just stay away from the whole issue? What does the Bible have to say on this matter?

Moses prepared the people of Israel for the time when they would occupy the land of Canaan. He instructed them, **“Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment”** (Deu. 16:18).

Moses taught the people that they would be responsible for choosing their civil officers. Their form of government made the people responsible to make their own judges and officers.

This was not always the case in Israel’s varied history, nor is it the case in all the world today. In some countries, the citizens cannot elect their officials in free elections. So, I suppose that Christians in those countries do not have to face this issue of voting. However, in the United States, we still can vote and we should. Considering our text, it would be foolish, at best, not to vote. If all Christians would quit voting, our country would move from a moral decline to a free-fall.

When Israel was self-governed, they were responsible to choose their leaders. Along with this charge, they were also given guidelines as to the type of men they should choose. There are two primary texts that bear on this subject, from which, we will note *seven marks of qualified candidates*. There are actually many verses that seem to speak to us on this subject, but we will stick with the two primary passages in Exodus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 1:13.

After Israel was delivered from Egypt, they had grown to a very large multitude. Moses was the chief magistrate of the civil government of the nation. He was the only judge, and the people would come to him for judgment from morning until night. Moses’ father-in-law was concerned that Moses was going to wear himself out and the people too. He wisely advised that lesser judges should be chosen to help in governing the people.

Jethro also told him what types of men were fit to be civil officers. **“Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens”** (Exo. 18:21). The first qualification mentioned is that they should be **“able men.”** **“Able”** refers to strength and especially strength of character. This speaks of men of ability, integrity, virtue, and courage. These must be men who will act from principle, even in the face of opposition.

He next says that these men should **“fear God.”** They must have a reverence for God and His Word. They would not be atheist or agnostic. They would not advocate the removal of God’s Word from all public life, nor would they advocate the transcendence of man’s law to God’s law. They must **“fear God”** for **“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction”** (Pro. 1:7).

Next, they should be **“men of truth.”** They should love truth and hate falsehood. They should not be perpetual prevaricators or supporters of those who are. They must love truth and seek it even

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Continued on page 447

## Outlines for Country Preachers by a Country Preacher

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### THE BURNT BIBLE

Jeremiah 36:1-32

The Book of God, like the people of God, has in every age suffered persecution. It has been tortured and torn, ripped and ridiculed, burned and buried, but it has quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, stopped the mouths of lions, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Here we see Jehoiakim burning the Bible, but God gave it a resurrection in a mightier form.

#### I. THE MESSAGE GIVEN (vv. 1-10).

- The Bible is a record of God's revelation to man (vv. 1-2, 4).
  - The Bible is not the prophet's words, nor the scribe's letter, but God's revelation (II Pet. 1:21).
  - See also Acts 1:16; 28:25; Heb. 3:7.
- God commanded the writing of this roll (v. 2).
  - It was God's will that the sayings of the ancient prophets be a lamp to all ages.
  - The roll was written that it might be preserved and cherished as a lasting possession.
  - That they might be reread by those who already heard them.
  - That they might be studied carefully and compared together.
- The Bible is a record of God's wrath against sin and a denunciation of judgment to come (v. 2).
  - It teaches that punishment follows sin.
  - It warns of punishment of sin beforehand that men may know that caprice and anger have no part in inflicting them, but that they are a settled order of an inviolable law.
  - Prophecies of evil are sent on purpose that sinners may repent so that they be not fulfilled (v. 3).
- It is to be declared to all (vv. 6-10).

#### II. THE MESSAGE HEARD (vv. 11-19).

- What a privilege to hear such words of faithful warning mingled with Divine forbearance and mercy!
- Some seriously considered what they heard. Baruch repeated Jeremiah's sermon publicly in the house of the Lord on the fast day (v. 10).
  - Worship and the Word go together.
  - Baruch said no more than what was written.
- People told others of the good sermon (vv. 11-13).
- Baruch is sent for to repeat his sermon (vv. 14-15). Divine truth is important to all classes of people—people and princes.
- The princes were much affected with the Word that was read to them (v. 16). They heard the reading of the whole book. Would it be wrong to read in church the great sermons of others?
- They inquired as to the authority of the message (vv. 17-18). The importance and responsibility of hearing God's Word and giving heed to it is seen here.

#### III. THE MESSAGE REJECTED (vv. 20-25).

- Jehoiakim was put on the throne by the king of Egypt. He was covetous, cruel, tyrannous, lawless, heartless, and senseless. He had neither valour or virtue.
- As it was read, the king cut it up and threw it into the fire of his winter house, till he destroyed the whole of it (v. 23).
  - He would not be told of his faults. He would not heed the words of the prophet for himself and the kingdom. He wanted no one else to read or hear it.
  - Though he was the king he had no authority over the inspired words of this prophecy.
  - It was brutally violent. He would have done the same to Jeremiah and Baruch if he could have found them.
  - It was complete—all the roll was burned. The rejection of one part of the truth will lead to the rejection of the whole of it.
- He heard only three or four leaves read. He would not hear the whole. Did any man ever destroy the Bible who knew it wholly?
- See here the enmity of the carnal mind against the Bible (John 3:19-20). We

may marvel at the patience of God that He bears with such indignities done to Him!

- The paper, or preacher, may be easily cut in pieces, but not so with the message (Isa. 40:8; Matt. 24:35). It was not the roll book that the king had to do, but with the God of the book.

#### IV. THE MESSAGE RENEWED (vv. 27-32).

- It is vain to attempt to hinder the declaration of God's truth. (We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.)
  - If one roll is burnt another can be written. If one prophet is killed another can be raised up. (Noah broke the tables.)
  - Truth is eternal. It will survive all enmity. He who is against it plays a losing game (II Cor. 13:8).
  - Were all Bibles and manuscripts destroyed, it would still abide in Heaven (Ps. 119:89) and in the hearts of true believers (Heb. 8:10).
- The Word of God can neither be bound or burned (II Tim. 2:9). You do not alter truth by neglecting it, or abrogate a Divine decree by disbelieving it (Rom. 3:3).
- The burning of the roll was to the king's loss.
  - It contained the only available prescription for the healing of the distresses of himself and his kingdom.
  - The Bible is for the good of the worse men. Their rejection is only to their loss (vv. 29-31).
- No man is done with God's Word when he rejects and destroys it. It will judge him (John 12:48). A man might as well expect to change the weather by breaking the barometer, as to relieve his soul by rejecting God's message.
- Rejection increases criminality and increases punishment (v. 32).

#### CONCLUSION.

- Many seek to destroy the Bible. Some are indifferent that theologians use their penknives. Scientists and Philosophers are forever cutting. Sin is worst of all. To trample its teaching under foot by lip and life is as bad as to burn it!
- The way to escape the threatenings of the Word is to obey it and yield to the discipline of Christ.

### The Christian Voter's

Continued from page 446

when it is not convenient.

These should also be men "**hating covetousness.**" They should not be greedy for unjust gain. They should not seek to use their office for enriching themselves or their friends. They would also not allow others to use the government for getting unjust gain through frivolous lawsuits and massive redistribution of wealth programs. These four qualifications are given in this passage.

We find three additional qualifications in Deuteronomy 1:13: "**Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.**" In this passage, Moses referred to the time in Exodus 18 when, forty years prior, Jethro counseled him to have other judges to help him. Notice that Moses told Israel they were to "**take,**" or choose, the men fit for these offices, and he would "**make them rulers over you.**"

The fifth mark of those fit for office is they should be "**wise men.**" This means they should be skillful and intelligent. This speaks of a natural ability and a wisdom that is gained through experience. No fools need apply.

Next, they should be "**understanding**" men. This does not refer to some sappy sentimentalism, rather they should be

able to deal wisely and discern. They must be able to make proper moral and ethical decisions. By the nature of their position they must make tough decisions, decide on legislation, etc. A fit candidate should be able to give a definite answer concerning issues such as abortion, sodomite marriages, etc.

The seventh qualification given is that they should be "**known among your tribes.**" This indicates that these men had proven themselves among the people. They have a track record in their homes, church, community, and business. These would not be novices, but men who have earned respect in other spheres of life and labor. This probably eliminates the carpetbagger from consideration for office.

Though these verses deal with the nation of Israel, *the passages are relevant for us today.* The authority for all civil government comes from God, whether in Israel, Rome, or the United States. God defines the purpose and responsibility of the government. Regardless of whether they acknowledge Him or not, they will be held accountable by God for how they fulfilled their responsibility.

Consider the passage in Romans 13:1-6. There we have the purpose of the civil government defined and the Apostle was talking about the Roman government at that time. If we compare this and other New Testament passages with Old

Continued on page 448



## The Christian Voter's

Continued from page 447

Testament passages related to Israel, we find that the purpose of the government is the same. We can safely conclude that if the civil government authority is the same, the purpose is the same, and the jurisdiction is the same, then the qualifications for officers in the government are also the same. Therefore, we must use these guidelines to determine the suitability of candidates today and tomorrow in the US as well as any other country.

### II. Secondly, we must consider another important question on this subject: Should Christians vote for a woman for public office?

A woman holding public office is an accepted fact in our day. We do not even hear this subject being debated in the public arena. For most, it is not even a consideration. In fact, probably few Christians even think about it or seriously consider whether this is acceptable by Scripture.

In America, this has been a reality since the 19th century. Susanna Medora Salter was the first woman in the history of this country to be elected to a public office. She was elected mayor of Argonia, KS in 1887. Different women had run for office before this time, but she was the first to win an election and hold a public office. Since that time, we have been used to women as mayors, governors, senators, representatives, judges, and eventually even president.

For conscientious Christians, voting for a woman can be a dilemma when it appears that a woman is the most fit candidate for the office. We cannot deny that this is the case at different times. A woman may be running unopposed or she may just simply be the most conservative and moral candidate by far. However, this question must be brought first of all to the Scripture. Before we even consider a woman's qualifications, i.e. her ability, wisdom, integrity, moral and spiritual condition, we must find out if a woman can hold public office according to God's Word. If she is not permitted by the Word, her suitability for office is irrelevant. If she is permitted, then we

must determine her suitability by Scripture just as we would for a man.

The answer to this question in brief is that *the Bible does not permit women to bear rule over men in any sphere*. They are not permitted to rule over the man in the home, in the church, or in the public arena. It is not a question of her abilities, nor is it a question of history where a woman has held a public office and done well, or even where women have done good things for the country by their office. When the question is put to the Scriptures alone, the position of authority over men is not given to women by God.

Let us now consider some reasons for this conclusion from the Word. If we go back to the qualification passages referenced earlier, we can see that these verses have men in view. The word "men" in these verses is gender specific, meaning the male gender as opposed to the female gender. The context will also bear this out that men were to be selected for positions of civil leadership.

Women holding public office would also violate the doctrine of headship taught throughout the Bible—from beginning to end. The order of authority given by God is God-Christ-man-woman (I Cor. 11:3). We have no authority to change the chain of command established in ante-antiquity by the eternal God. This order is seen in the first three chapters of Genesis, the second chapter of I Timothy, Ephesians chapter five, and other passages. This order is never overturned by any precept in the Bible.

Paul taught Timothy that women should "learn in silence with all subjection" and they should not "teach," neither should they "usurp authority over the man" (I Tim. 2:11-12). He went on to support this saying, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (I Tim. 2:13). He goes right back to the beginning and sets forth the order not to be violated: "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (I Cor. 11:8-9).

We have been so conditioned by our society of humanist/feminist rebellion against God that to say these things is shocking. However, the question is not one to be determined by our feelings, opinions, preferences, etc. The question is rather: What does God require? The Bible tells us plainly that God requires men to take leadership in all spheres. He requires men to be men, not the whining, whimpering, in touch with his inner child or feminine side, feminized pretty boy of our day. Biblical manliness has been lost today in a quagmire of touchy-feely, spineless manhood that is subject to political sensitivity and correctness. The question that should perplex us is where are the men, the real men?

We do not deny that women have been in positions of authority over men at different times in history, and even in

Bible times. This fact should not surprise us, for men, women, and children have been violating God's Word since Adam and Eve did so in the Garden of Eden. In the Bible when women were ruling over men, rather than condoning or commending it, the words are plain that it was an error and even a curse. We have this lament in Isaiah 3:12, "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." This was a sad situation, even an error. It was also a judgment against the men of that day who abdicated their God given responsibility.

Notice also that *ambition for public office was unknown to the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31*. In this chapter, we have the inspired description of a godly and virtuous woman. It is a beautiful description of biblical womanhood.

An examination of this chapter reveals, "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land" (Pro. 31:23). In ancient times, "the gates" was the place where the elders and judges would sit and conduct official public business. It would be similar to speak of the courthouse, capitol building, town hall, or some other municipal building where the affairs of civil government are handled. It was this woman's "husband" who was known and sat "among the elders of the land." She had no thought or desire of taking his place.

The virtuous woman is the central focus of this passage, and we see that her interests and work were centered in her home (v. 27). She was industrious (vv. 13, 16-19). She worked to feed her household (vv. 14-15). She labored to clothe her household (vv. 21-22). She performed important community service (v. 20). She excelled in her God-given opportunity so much that her works praised "her in the gates" (Pro. 31:31), but she never sat there in a public office.

She was a manifold blessing to others, using well her opportunity as a wife and mother (v. 26). Her husband dealt with matters of civil government and was blessed to have her as his most trusted counselor (vv. 11-12). This woman is styled as one who "feareth the LORD" (Pro. 31:30). She was not misguided by seeking the deceitful favor or vain beauty of a powerful "public woman." Additionally, the virtuous woman is not unfulfilled or unproductive and unhappy because she is not contributing to society in a meaningful way by living her life as a man. On the contrary, she is strong and honorable (v. 25), wise and kind (v. 26), happy and fulfilled (v. 25), well respected and honored (vv. 28-31). This woman was not trying to find herself; rather she found God and great joy in serving Him and others through her home.

I am sure that by this time, someone is

ready to protest, "But, what about Deborah?" The conventional wisdom is that she was a judge in Israel and certainly, this must be an argument for women holding public office. Let us now consider Deborah and see if her case is such that would commend the practice of women running for and holding offices in the civil government.

What we know of Deborah, we read in Judges Chapters 4 and 5. At this period of time, Israel was in a state of civil confusion. They were passing in and out of enemy occupation. The "judges" that Israel had at this time were more military leaders than they were judicial bench sitters. These men were warriors who led the people into battle and delivered them from the strong hands of their enemies. This forms the context for when Deborah came on the scene.

We are introduced to Deborah in the fourth chapter of Judges. "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judg. 4:4-5). We learn that she was "a prophetess" and that "she judged Israel." The Hebrew word *shaphat* is here rendered "judged." *Shaphat* is a verb that means primarily to judge or decide. The word itself in its primary meaning and usage does not necessarily indicate judging in an official sense. The word refers to a third party who sits over two parties at odds with one another, hears their side of the story or complaints, and then gives a judgment or a decision. The word does not require that this is an authoritative or official judgment.

We may think of it this way. A man has two neighbors who have a squabble over something and they both respect and trust this man. So, they both come and spread the matter before him and he gives them his opinion (judgment) in the matter. His opinion is not legally binding because he is not acting in any official capacity, but he has judged his neighbors. Just so, the language of the verses in Judges 4 does not require that she was an official judge in Israel.

The context of these two chapters in Judges is actually against the idea that she was a judge in the official sense as Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, etc. During Deborah's time, there was a man named Barak who was the leader of Israel. Consider the heroes mentioned in Hebrews 11. Not all judges are mentioned, but the writer does say, "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets" (Heb. 11:32). He mentions four judges from the book of Judges in a group—Gedeon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah. It is not Deborah

### MARK OF THE BEAST

Look at your name on the front page of this month's paper. If you see the mark 11-04, so detestable to a Baptist, wash it out by renewal of greenbacks. If not your paper will stop next month. We are not able to credit. It is not a good plan.





## The Christian Voter's

*Continued from page 448*

that is foisted to the spotlight here but Barak, who led Israel to victory at the time when Deborah was a prophetess.

We come to the fifth chapter and read, **"Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day"** (Judg. 5:1). Deborah and Barak sang a song of victory after Israel was delivered from victory. This was a song of praise to God for His mercy and deliverance in battle. This song also contains some words that do not support the idea that Deborah was an official judge.

By her own declaration, Deborah **"arose a mother in Israel"** (Judg. 5:7). It is significant that she called herself a mother and not a father. The father is the head of the home and the Hebrews knew that very well. She considered herself a mother who has a very important role in the home but it is supportive and subordinate to the father. This is consistent with her being a **"prophetess."**

She spoke of, but did not number herself among, **"the governors of Israel"** (Judg. 5:9). These governors were lawgivers and the term refers to the elders and rulers of the tribes. This reinforces the idea that the judges of this period were more military leaders than civil magistrates. Deborah was outside of this group.

The roles of Deborah and Barak at this time were spoken of clearly in Judges 5:12: **"Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam."** Deborah was called on to **"awake"** and **"utter a song."** Barak was called on to **"arise . . . and lead."** Barak was the official judge and Deborah's role was supportive.

A casual reading of verse 13 may suggest to us that Deborah was bearing rule in some way. **"Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty"** (Judg. 5:13). Does the last phrase of this verse teach that Deborah had dominion, or was a public office holder? First of all, we must remember that this song was sang by both Deborah and Barak (Judg. 5:1). So, it is not clear that Deborah speaks this personally of herself. Secondly, in light of the context, this passage refers to their victory in battle.

I am not saying that Deborah had no role; she certainly did have a role. She was a prophetess. She encouraged Barak to go up to battle saying, **"the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand"** (Judg. 4:14). We also find that another woman had a hand in Israel's deliverance. Her name was Jael. It was by her hand that the mighty Sisera was slain (Judg. 4:21-22).

What we understand about Deborah is that she was a prophetess. She was more like Miriam who was a leader of women in her day (Exo. 15:20-21). Miriam's role was supportive and when she tried to lead men (Aaron), she was punished (Num. 12:10, 14-15). We have no such stain on Deborah's record though. She was a godly woman and the people of Israel sought her wisdom. This is a commendation of her and a condemnation of the low state of the men of Israel at this time. She was not appointed a civil judge over Israel and her case is certainly not an argument for going against plain Scripture and having women rulers.

**Conclusion** – Let us now take up a few final considerations. The guidelines we have considered from the Bible admittedly set a very high standard. *Does this high standard for civil magistrates make it impossible for us to vote at all?* I think we have to realize that no man will ever meet these standards perfectly. This does not mean that we should just forget these guidelines and vote for anyone we want. There were obviously men in Israel made judges by the people and Moses. So, they must have reasonably conformed to the standard. We should not lower the bar to accommodate men of low degree, but we should demand a high standard for those that we will elect and pay their salary. We should seek men for office who have a reasonable conformance to this standard.

*Using the Bible as the Christian voter's guide does eliminate some candidates from consideration.* The amoral humanists, for example, would be eliminated. These are the evolutionists, feminists, sodomites, abortionists, etc. The Christian could not vote for such candidates according to their voting guide—the Bible.

We may also eliminate any woman from our consideration, because they are not permitted by the Bible to hold public offices. This certainly does not equate all women with amoral humanists. In fact, this does not take into account their morals or abilities at all. We cannot help elect them simply because the Bible forbids women from ruling over men.

At this point, *the pickin's are beginning to look mighty slim.* There are only a few candidates that we could vote for, if this is going to be our policy. I certainly agree that our current selection is whittled down greatly. The lack of suitable candidates is a situation that is not helped by Christians who will not vote for a reasonable candidate when he does run. Usually, we will not vote for him because we think there is no way he can win. He will not be backed by the liberal media or morally bankrupt politicians already in office. He will not gain widespread popularity among the special interest groups that seem to be driving our modern public thought and he will be at a distinct disadvantage financially. We

figure this would just be a wasted vote.

This brings us to consider *the common philosophy of the day.* There are two prevailing thoughts about voting in our day that we hear repeatedly. For all practical purposes in our day, we have a two party system in this country. And, it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell them apart. So, we really only see two candidates in the race for an office. Essentially, in these two, we have the bad and the worse. We have the candidate that we do not want and the candidate that we really do not want.

The first common thought is this: To vote for a candidate other than the two mainliners is to vote for the candidate that we really do not want. In other words, say the two mainliners are candidates A and B. We are not thrilled with candidate A, but we are terrified at the thought of having candidate B. The common thought is that to vote for a candidate C, who is not a member of the main two parties, is really a vote for candidate B—our worst nightmare.

I cannot understand this logic. As an individual citizen, I have one vote. If I cast that one vote for candidate C, then I voted for C and not A or B. When the votes are tabulated, my vote is put in the column for candidate C and not B. I suppose that we are assuming that we are taking a vote away from candidate A and thereby giving candidate B a better chance of winning.

What does God require of us as Christian citizens? Are we responsible to become pollsters, political strategists, or statisticians? Are we to calculate the odds and try to play them? Are we in some way responsible for what everyone else does and therefore we have to try to counteract their vote with ours? This is all a hopeless game that we cannot win. We are responsible to God for our thoughts and actions. We are responsible to take His Word as the final rule of all faith and practice. We are responsible to follow His Word and to have a clear conscience before Him. When we vote for a candidate, we are voting for that candidate and not for someone else.

The next common thought is also based on the presupposition that only one of the two main party candidates has any hope of winning. We reason that since only one of the two main candidates has any chance at winning, we have to pick the lesser of two evils to keep the worst candidate from being elected. This logic admits that we are not voting for a suitable candidate. In order to mollify our conscience, we reason, "The man is going to get in office that God puts there anyway, so I'll just pick the lesser of two evils and hope everything turns out all right." We justify voting for an unsuitable candidate by appealing to the sovereignty of God. When we boil it all down, we just vote for whomever we want because of the party and our belief in the greatest

economic benefit through them. So, we basically choose our candidate based on some personal preference—whatever pet issue we have—and then figure everything is all right because of God's sovereignty.

This whole line of thinking ends with God's sovereignty, when God's sovereignty should be at the beginning of our thoughts. Let me explain what I mean by that. God is absolutely sovereign and **"doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth"** (Dan. 4:35). He reigns in the affairs of men and even in the civil governments of the nations. We are told that God **"changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings"** (Dan. 2:21). **"For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another"** (Psa. 75:6-7).

Beginning with a proper view of God's almighty power, we have no need to play games or strategize. Through faith, we may look to Him and follow His Word to vote for qualified men and leave the disposing of the whole matter in His hands (Pro. 16:33). We may take our stand with the Apostle Paul who said, **"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men"** (Acts 24:16). Let us vote for a suitable candidate with a clear conscience and where we cannot vote with a clear conscience, let us refrain from voting and **"mourn"** unto the Lord that He will work for us that we may rejoice **"When the righteous are in authority."**

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

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## 1. What should a Christian look for in a church to unite with? — Mississippi



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This is a question which I don't want to answer hastily. I want to bring out several points. These aren't necessarily meant to be in the order of importance. However, all of the following things are things that I consider to be important.

First of all, a prospective church should have been properly established. The only example we have in God's Word for church establishment is for churches to establish churches. "Free lance" churches have not followed God's pattern and therefore aren't linked with the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without proper authority, a church has no commission and will not be part of the Bride of Christ. This is not to say that there might not be some saved members. However, being in the Bride is a reward to be given to faithful churches of the Lord.

Next, a church should believe the Bible is the complete inspired Word of God. It is to be our final rule of faith and practice.

A church should also be missionary. We, as the Lord's churches, are commanded to spread the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, baptize converts and teach them. The Lord's churches understand that God uses the Gospel to call His elect out of darkness into the light of truth.

A church should believe that God alone is the Author of salvation. This would include an understanding of the doctrines of Grace.

A church should be looking for the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any church who believes Jesus has already come or doesn't see the possibility of Him returning at any moment has major problems which will result from these heretical teachings.

A church should be hospitable. Christian people should be warm toward visitors and each other.

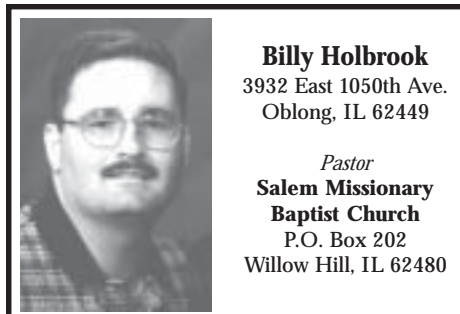
A church should be a place to learn. If the members aren't growing in Christ, something is wrong.

A church shouldn't be involved in entertainment, but, in worship and edification of the saints.

Though there are many things we

could mention in addition to these things, the first two points should actually cover everything. In fact, if Christian people are interested in the Word of God and following it alone, all things will be right. However, problems occur when we interject our own preconceived opinions into the final authority of the Word of God.

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This is a very broad question that really needs a lot of thought. There are so many things that we could talk about in looking for a church to unite with. First, there is the doctrine of the church that you need to consider. Does it seek to preach the Word of God? All kinds of different "churches" will say that they believe the Bible but the only way that you can be sure that the place you are considering of uniting with *really* believes the Bible or not is if you know what the Bible has to say. So first, make sure that you are a person who is willing to believe **"thus saith the Lord"** no matter what. For if that is not you, then you will never unite with the kind of church that is a Bible preaching church. Or if you do, then you will only bring a bad spirit into the church. You need to be settled and committed to believe what God has to say about salvation, grace, baptism, Christian living and the church. There is not enough room to talk about what the Bible has to say about these things.

There is also the issue of not just what a church preaches, but what a church practices. A lot of churches may say they believe the doctrines of God's Word, but do not practice them at all. There ought to be a consistency in what they say they believe and what they practice.

I believe that some of the others answering these questions may deal more in detail with the doctrines of a church, at least I hope they will. I want to briefly deal with the spirit of a church. There are a lot of churches who seem to believe the doctrines of God's Word but they have a bad spirit about them. They are not among those who **"speak the truth in**

**love."** They seem to emphasize doctrinal teachings and to underemphasize the spirit by which we are to hold them. I would think that a person needs to consider if the church they are considering uniting with is a body of believers that have love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and temperance. They should have a desire not only to claim the truth of the doctrine of the church but a desire to be one of the Lord's churches in practice and in spirit—a church that contends for the faith and is not contentious about it.

There is just so much to look for in a church, and things that everybody would like to see in each church. I think that in considering a church, you don't need to forget that each church is a body and that each church has a personality. Every church is different no matter if they believe the same doctrines. Each church may vary in the way they handle matters, and may vary in some practices. We do wrong to compare one church to another church but we need to compare each church with God's Word.

Also, there is the issue of holiness in a church. Some seem to only hold to doctrinal issues but are very liberal when it comes to practical issues of every day life. I would be careful of joining a church that was liberal in either way. Be careful of churches who have "issues." When you have gone somewhere for a few weeks and you notice that a certain issue always seems to come up, then you may be detecting a bad spirit.

I'm afraid that because there are so many things that we could mention that I haven't been very direct with any. But let me close with this. You need to diligently pray about where God would have you to go. If you are looking for a church then first make sure that you are looking for God and that you are close to Him. Because (I may get in trouble here with some) God may very well add you to a church that you may not necessarily have chosen for yourself. There may be a little bit of a bad spirit in that church when you join but God may help use you to bring in a good spirit for which a good pastor would be very thankful. A church may be a little bit weak on some doctrinal issues, but if you are strong, then again, any good pastor who believes and preaches God's Word would be blessed by your presence. The best way to find the right church to join? Pray, seek God, knock, pray and seek God some more, and

be sure that God is adding you to that church and that you aren't joining for any other reason.

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This is a very good question that deserves a more extensive answer than what will be provided here, nonetheless I will try to present what I believe are the most important things to seek in a church to unite with. The four things I will mention are based on the fact that the church is the **"body of Christ"** (I Cor. 12:27).

First, look for the headship of Christ in the church. By this, I do not mean just the doctrine of the headship of Christ, but the real thing. Colossians 1:18 says, **"He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."** Christ must have the preeminence in the church. The church's chief, and indeed only purpose, is to glorify God in Christ. Look for a church whose focus is God-ward and whose ministry is Christ-centered.

In addition, note that with reference to Christ, the church is not an authoritative body but a submissive one. Christ is the church's Head and Master. All authority in heaven and in earth belongs to Him (Matt. 28:18), and He did not relinquish one bit of His authority to the church. The church has the right to submit to His Lordship, love, and obey Him as a wife to her husband.

Second, look for the love of Christ in the church. **"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love"** (John 15:9). This is what Christ said was an identifying mark of His disciples in John 13:35: **"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."** Look for a church that is hospitable to the poor and needy as well as one whose members take care of one another. **"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction"** (James 1:27). **"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart"** (Acts 2:44-46).

Third, look for the humility of Christ

*Continued on page 452*



# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

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## 2. Does Psalms 38 (especially verses 3-11) mean that David had a sexually transmitted disease? — Alabama



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I have to admit that when I first read the question, my first thought was, "What in the world...?" Then as I turned to Psalm 38 and read it while thinking about the question, I then understood that it was a legitimate question. I'm not for sure that I can say that I believe that David had a sexually transmitted disease or not. However, I have come to the conclusion that he did have some kind of disease. Psalm 41:8 says, "**An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.**" I believe that David did have some sort of disease that had him bedfast for a certain time. Also, I believe that David knew that this disease had come upon him because of God's anger. He said in verse 3 of chapter 38, "**There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger.**"

I hope to state what I think in only a few words. As I read Psalm 38, I do see however, more than just a physical torment that David was in. I see a spiritual one as well. David says in verse 2, "**For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.**" I don't think that God literally shot David with arrows but David saw himself as God's target for chastisement. In verse 1 he said, "**O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.**" So what all the details of David's suffering may be we need to realize that it was a form of chastisement from God because of his foolishness as he stated in verse 5. I see David not just suffering in body but also in soul as he states in verse 4, "**For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.**" If God gives us a disease of some kind because of our sin, it is to work on us on the inside so that we will hate and despise our sin and be brought to repentance.

How much of this is speaking about an internal disease and how much is speaking of an external one I am not for sure. In verse 10 he says, "**My heart panteth**", so are we to take that to mean that David had heart problems as well? He also says, "**as for the light of mine**

**eyes, it also is gone from me.**" So, are we to take it to mean that he had seeing problems also? To sum it up, I see more of an inward agonizing over his sin in the chastisement of God upon him rather than a physical one. Though I do see that he very well could have had some kind of a physical disease.

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I do not believe that this passage of Scripture has anything to do with sexually transmitted diseases. It is clear that this passage is dealing with destructive effects of sin in the life of a believer, but there is nothing here saying that any sexually transmitted disease was involved.

The four verses that I assume are of concern are Psalm 38:3 "**There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin,**" 38:5 "**My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness,**" 38:7 "**For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh,**" and 38:11 "**My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.**"

In verses three and five I find nothing that would imply David had a sexually transmitted disease. In verses seven and eleven there might some concern with the phrase "**my loins are filled with a loathsome disease,**" and the phrase "**My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore.**" But consider the following observations:

First, according to Strong's Hebrew Dictionary the word "**loins**" means "properly, fatness, i.e. by implication (literally) the loin (as the seat of the leaf fat) or (generally) the viscera." There are untold thousands of diseases that could infect here besides sexually transmitted diseases.

Second, the word "**sore**" in verse eleven is almost always translated "**plague**" in the Bible. There is absolutely no way of knowing for sure what this plague was.

Third, the word "**lovers**" might refer to David's wives, but that still does not

mean he had a sexually transmitted disease, especially since his friends and his kinsmen also avoided him for the same disease. Simply said, the folks who were normally close to David did not want to be close anymore because of His plague.

Fourth, the language in these verses tells us only that David was in a poor condition, and we are also told about some of his symptoms in that condition. However, no doctor would diagnose David with anything based on the small amount of information that we have here.

Fifth, it is very possible that David was using figures here to describe his spiritual condition rather than his physical anyway. Reading the whole context of these Scriptures seems to imply this very thing.

Sixth, even if David is describing a physical disease, how are we supposed to know how the disease was transmitted?

Finally, did sexually transmitted diseases even exist back then? I know very little about them. Still, I hope something here helps answer this question.

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This question brings up something I have never considered. I suppose it is possible that God chastened David in this way. However, I tend to think David was relating some physical sicknesses to soul sickness. His relationship with God had, because of his sin, been greatly weakened. Of course, his salvation was never lost. That doesn't mean he didn't lose the enjoyment of his salvation. It seems by this point, he had lost many a nights sleep as a result of his sin. Because of the sleep loss, his physical body seemed to be deteriorating to some degree.

David's state shows the unfortunate place that sin will bring us. This is the reason that we, as children of God, must "**abstain from all appearance of evil**" (1 Ths. 5:22). We must guard ourselves against the devil and his demonic "helpers" in everything that we do. One look toward Bathsheba is all it took for the "man after God's own heart" to fall

into sin. By the time he wrote this Psalm, we see his sickly state. The physical sickness was merely a result of the soul sickness. We can see similar examples of other saints whose sin began with something we might consider minor. However, they too could tell the story of a sick soul as David has outlined here.

I'm not sure we, as a people, spend enough time studying these Old Testament passages as we ought to. They are in God's Holy Word for our benefit—sometimes as an example to follow and sometimes as an example not to follow. Whichever the case may be, we should heed whatever lesson God has for us. However, we must actually get into these wonderful verses in order to glean these truths.

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In Psalms 38, we find David describing some sort of physical affliction in great detail. I must admit that I have never read this from the perspective that it could have been a sexually transmitted disease. I am not qualified to answer this question from a medical standpoint. I am sure that someone could read into this passage the symptoms of a sexually transmitted disease. However, I am not convinced that he is talking about a sexually transmitted disease.

Don't miss the point of this Psalm. It describes a man who is broken in heart, mind, and body over his sin. David is expressing godly sorrow over the sin that had infected his life. He is openly confessing his sin and asking for forgiveness. His earnest desire is to be restored to God's fellowship so he can enjoy His presence, power, and protection once again.

What a lesson there is for us all in this Psalm! When sin infects our lives, it separates us from the fellowship of God as well as from His blessings (Isa. 59:1-2; Jer. 5:25). Oh, that we might be honest with our God and seek His face with our whole heart! Then and only then will we enjoy the peace that passes all understanding as well as the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory (Isa. 26:2-3; Psa. 16:7-11). The way of the transgressor is hard, but the man that confesses and forsakes his sin will have mercy (Pro. 28:13).

TOM ROSS





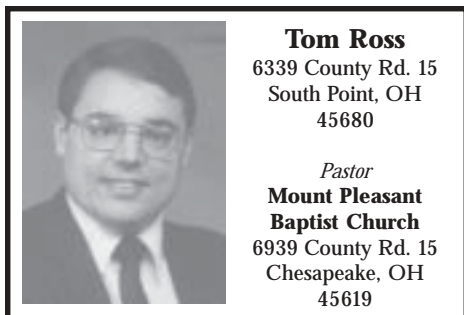
## Forum #1

in the church. In Matthew 11:28-29 Christ says, **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."** If the **"Almighty"**, the **"Alpha and Omega"**, and the **"beginning and the ending"** (Rev. 1:8) humbled himself and was **"meek and lowly"**, then how much more should we who are fallible men be humble. No pastor or church should behave as if they are above others, nor as if they have a monopoly on all truth, but they should both humbly, yet with all authority, preach the Word of God to those who come to worship with them. The church should be a place where the weary may come and find refuge in God's Word among God's people.

Fourth, look for the teachings of Christ in the church. The doctrine that Christ taught in His "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew chapters five through seven is a demonstration of what you should expect to find in the church today. The church, of course, bears the responsibility of declaring the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), but the Sermon on the Mount is special because it altogether reveals the nature and purpose of Bible doctrine. If a church is wrong here, it won't matter what else they believe, even if what they believe is true. The teachings of Christ are fundamental. They are life and spirit, food and water, perfect and pure, and vital for the existence of the church.

There are many more things that could be said about this subject, but I hope that this will at least give some direction in what to look for in a church to unite with.

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This is a very broad and general question that could be answered in volumes. However, my aim is to give some simple and concise scriptural guidelines that will aid believers in their quest to find a church that honors the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. First and foremost, seek out a church that preaches the true Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 2:1-5; 15:1-4; Gal. 1:3-12). If the preaching of Christ crucified, buried, and risen again is not preeminent in the ministry of the church, it is worth nothing. I believe for a church to be scriptural they must be

actively engaged in the Great Commission of preaching the Gospel, baptizing believers into the body, and teaching them to observe all things as outlined by Christ in Matthew 28:18-20. A church that does not have a passion for the Gospel of Christ and the souls of men has the death rattle in its throat.

2. Seek out a church that believes all of Scripture is divinely inspired, inerrant, and the final authority for all faith and practice (II Tim. 3:16-17). If the holy Book is not revered and regarded as the ultimate source for all spiritual truth (Pro. 30:5-6), a church cannot be considered scriptural. Seek out a church that respects the Book, obeys its commands, and fears the Almighty (Ecc. 12:13-14; Isa. 66:2).

3. Seek out a church where the membership evidences a genuine love for the Lord Jesus Christ and is committed to following His teachings, commands, and example (John 8:31-32; 12:26; 14:15; 15:14). A church may be doctrinally correct, but be void of sincere love for the Lord Jesus Christ. We have a warning from Christ Himself, that where there is no love for the Lord a church is in danger of losing the presence and authority of Christ (Rev. 2:1-5).

4. Seek out a church that keeps the ordinances as they were originally delivered (I Cor. 11:1-2; Jude 3). The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper must be kept, protected, and observed in their pure and primitive form. Never join a church that receives alien baptism in any form or practices open communion. If a church is in error regarding these two fundamental ordinances, they will hold to several other errors as well.

5. Seek out a church that is balanced in its teaching of the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:19-28). A church that believes the doctrines of grace will have members that live humble and gracious lives (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:7-15; 3:8). There must be the proper balance between doctrine and practice. Paul's epistles always stress right doctrine coupled with application by way of a godly life. What we believe is demonstrated by the way we live. We must manifest that we believe the truth by walking in the light of God's Word and applying Scripture in a practical manner (Pro. 4—READ IT). The doctrines of grace (Soteriology), church truth (Ecclesiology), Eschatology, Christology, Pneumatology, Theology, and all the other "ologies" are essential, but so is the practical application manifested by obedience, faithfulness, and godly living. When a church has a right balance between its doctrine and practice, it will be faithful to practice church discipline when the need arises to protect the purity of the body (I Cor. 5).

6. Seek out a church where the members are united together by the Spirit

in a bond of love and truth, with the mind of Christ (Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 2:1-6). This spirit of unity will be demonstrated by love for Christ, one another, and for the pastor who is charged with leading and feeding the flock. Where love, truth, and unity abide in a church there will be spiritual peace, prosperity, and the power of God (I Thess. 5:11-15). Never join a church that is consistently known for fussing, feuding, arguing, and a mean spirit among the membership. Christ has left a church like that.

7. Seek out a church that believes in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ as evidenced by their watching, working, worshipping, and praying (Mark 13:32-37; Rom. 13:11-14). Where this spirit of anticipation of the coming of the Lord is evident, there will be purity (I John 3:1-4), faithfulness (Heb. 10:23-25), and righteous living (Titus 2:12-15). The early churches believed Christ could come back at any time. They were often found praying in one accord which in turn empowered them to be faithful to Christ's cause no matter what the circumstances (Acts 4:23-33).

Oh, that God will enable all our Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Independent Baptist churches to cultivate and maintain the characteristics outlined above that honor our lovely Lord. May we never be caught up in the gimmicks, gadgets, and programs of men that would draw us away from the simplicity that is in Christ (II Cor. 11:2-3). Our aim should always be to glorify God, edify one another, speak the truth in love, and seek the salvation of the lost as long as the Lord gives us breath! **"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones"** (Isa. 57:15).

TOM ROSS

## Refuges of Lies

*Continued from page 441*

and the building will fall when the storm comes, and bury the builder in the ruins of it. Those who make any thing their refuge but Christ shall find that the water will overflow it, and every shelter but the ark was over-topped and overthrown by the water of the deluge.

In Isaiah's time the men of Israel knew that judgment was coming upon sin and sinners. They knew that they needed a hiding place from coming judgment, and they made lies their refuge. Isaiah, God's messenger, was sent to proclaim: **"The hail shall sweep away your false refuge, the refuge of lies."** Even so I come to you today to deliver this same message to those of you who have a refuge of lies.

**"The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies."**

### HOW TO DETECT A REFUGE OF LIES

There is a way to tell a true refuge from a false one. There are four tests that will commend themselves to the reason and common sense of every person. Here is how to know a refuge that will save from a refuge that will ruin. Ask yourself four questions: Does your refuge meet the highest demands of your own conscience? Does it make you a better man or woman? Will it stand the test of the dying hour? Will it stand the test of the Judgment Day? To this I might add a fifth: Does it stand the test of the Word of God?

### REFUGES OF LIES EXAMINED AND EXPOSED

Now I want to apply these questions to some things, which people trust in for salvation. Then we can see if you trust in a refuge of truth or a refuge of lies, a refuge from Heaven or of men.

### THE REFUGE OF MORALITY

Many people make morality a refuge. Morality is a wonderful thing, a thing greatly to be desired in these days of immorality. But morality does not save a lost soul. To trust it for one's own salvation is to make lies a refuge. To say I do not feel the need of a Savior and I am trusting in my good life to gain God's acceptance is to delude yourself with a refuge of lies. There is no true morality outside of knowing Christ as Savior.

Let us apply the test. Does your morality meet the highest demands of your conscience? Are you as good as God? Would you want your friends to know your thoughts, then what about God? If you compare yourself with others, you may make a good showing. But when you measure yourself by the standards of God, how far short you fall! If you could save yourself, then why did Jesus Christ die?

Is your morality making you a better man or woman? At first you may say: "Yes, it most certainly does." But can you honestly say you are growing more kind, more gentle, more self-sacrificing, more thoughtful of others, more considerate, more humble, more prayerful? If you are honest, you must admit you are growing harder, more censorious, more selfish, more inconsiderate of others, more proud, and more bitter.

Will morality meet the test of the dying hour? When you are ready to leave this world, will it do then? Will it do in the presence of the holy God? No, it will not. At that point all your morality will leave you as your soul draws near eternity. You will then see that it is fig-leaf aprons, nothing but a refuge of lies.

Will it stand the test of God's Word at the judgment? The Bible says: **"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight"** (Rom. 3:20). Isaiah 64:6 reads: **"All our**

*Continued on page 453*



## Refuges of Lies

*Continued from page 452*

**righteousnesses are as filthy rags.** Romans 3:10 declares: **“There is none righteous, no, not one.”** All have sinned and all need a Savior. Throw away this refuge of lies, and your trust in your own morality to save you.

### THE REFUGE OF OTHER PEOPLE'S BADNESS

While some trust in their own goodness, others trust in other people's badness. They say: “Well, I am just as good as other folks. I am as good or better than a lot of professing Christians.” These people are always talking about the hypocrites in the church.

But let me apply the test. Will trusting in other people's badness satisfy the highest demand of your conscience? Does it really satisfy your conscience to know that you are as good in the flesh as some church members? Did you ever stop to consider that you and the hypocrites could be going to the same place? If these things can satisfy your conscience you have a very bad one.

Does believing what you do make you a better man or woman? Show me a person who is always dwelling upon the badness of other people, and I will show you a man or woman that is bad themselves. Show me a woman who is suspicious of other women, and I will show you a woman that cannot be trusted. Show me a man who is always talking about the faults of Christians, and I will show you a man that is rotten to the core.

When you come to die, will it give you comfort to know and talk about the faults of others? Will you be ready to face God, knowing you are as good as the hypocrite in the church or will you want more than this?

Will trusting the faults of others do when you stand at the judgment when the books are opened? The Bible says: **“So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God”** (Rom. 14:12). Not an account of somebody else. In the judgment day you will forget everybody but yourself. In that day the sins of others will vanish from your mind. Can you not see that trusting in other people's badness is a refuge of lies, a house built upon the sinking sand of time? Throw away this refuge of lies!

### THE REFUGE OF RELIGION

Religion is a refuge of lies. Religion never saved anybody. Trusting in religion is one thing; trusting in a personal Christ is another. Religion cannot save you. No religion, Baptist, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or Mohammedan can redeem your soul. You may be a Baptist, a Presbyterian, a Methodist, an Episcopalian, or a member of the Church of Christ and yet perish in your sins.

Some people believe that because they go to church on Sunday, read prayer-books, say prayers regularly, read the

Bible, are baptized, have been confirmed or united with some church, take the sacrament every Sunday, that they are saved by doing these things. If this is your refuge, you are lost.

Does religion satisfy your conscience? Does it satisfy your conscience to say: “I go to church; I read the Bible; I have been baptized and confirmed?” Does it give you peace within? If it does, why are you uncertain about your future standing with God? Did not Judas do some of these things? Was he saved? Did religion save Nicodemus, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius, or the Pharisee? If it did not, then how is it going to save you?

Will religion make you a better man? It is true that some religion will do this to some degree. This I do not deny. But it is a well-known fact that many who go to church, who are baptized, who pray and read the Bible, are as dishonest as any man living. Many religious people are thieves and drunkards, liars and adulterers. Such religion will not save; it will damn a man with a deeper damnation.

Will religion do to die by? I knew a man who said his would do to live by, but not to die by. But if religion will not do to die by, it will not do to live by. When men come to die they will want more than religion; they will want assurance of salvation from all their sins.

Will religion stand the test of God's Word on the Judgment Day? In Matthew 7:22 Jesus Christ said: **“Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?”** That is, they have been religious. Jesus will say to them: **“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”** If you are trusting in your religion, you have only a refuge of lies. Throw it away.

### THE REFUGE OF INFIDELITY

When you ask some about their spiritual standing before God, they say: “I do not believe the Bible is the Word of God. I do not believe in Jesus Christ. I am not a believer in God at all. Call me an infidel if you must, but I am no Christian.” He seeks to comfort himself with his infidelity.

Let me give his refuge the test. Does infidelity meet the demands of your conscience? If there is no God, then where did this planet come from? Why do you have guilty feelings in your breast? How do you know there is no Heaven or Hell? What if you are wrong?

Does infidelity make you a better person? I know of no one who is a better man because of his infidelity. Infidelity has driven many to suicide; it has driven many to a shipwrecked life without any purpose. Infidelity undermines character; it robs men and women of purity. It makes clerks and cashiers unsafe.

Will your infidelity stand the test of the dying hour? There are many cases upon record of great infidels who de-

clared that it did not. Many cried out in horror at the prospect of a Christless eternity.

Will it stand the test of the Judgment Day when the Bible is opened and men are judged out of it? When God asks you about your sins, will you say: “Oh, I was an infidel; I did not believe in the Bible.” You will never do this. You will come to see that you have trusted a refuge of lies. The Bible declares: **“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”** (Ps. 14:1). Throw away your infidelity.

### THE REFUGE OF UNIVERSALISM

Another refuge of lies is universalism. Some people say: “I believe in a God of love; I believe God is too good to damn anybody to Hell. We are all His children; He will treat us all the same.”

Let me make the test. Does universalism satisfy the demands of your conscience? Can you honestly say: “I am doing wrong. God does not care. He loves me too much. He gave His Son to die for me, but I will just go on trampling God's law underfoot.” Does that satisfy your conscience? Then you have a mighty mean conscience.

Is your universalism making you a better man or woman? If you are honest, you must admit that it makes you grow careless, grow worldly, grow sinful, grow indifferent, etc.

Is universalism going to stand the test of the Bible at the judgment? It will most assuredly not. It is a belief contrary to the doctrines of Christ and the apostles. Those who believe and teach such foolishness and call it an eternal hope are guilty of telling an infernal lie. They trust in a refuge of lies. The Bible makes it plain that some will go to Hell. **“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God”** (Ps. 9:17). Throw away this refuge of lies before it is eternally too late.

### THE POET'S SUMMARY

‘Twas not the church that saved my soul,

Not yet my life so free from sin;

‘Twas Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God,  
He rescued me, He took me in.

‘Twas not my works that saved my soul,

Nor yet my zeal, my prayers, my tears,

‘Twas Jesus Christ, the Son of God,  
He bore my sins, He calmed my fears.

‘Twas not the law that saved my soul,  
Nor yet the deeds of virtue done;

‘Twas Jesus Christ, the gift of God,  
He bled, He died, my soul He won.

Oh, hallelujah, praise His name!

‘Twas Jesus Christ who made me whole;

He rescued me from sin and shame,  
He bled, He died, He saved my soul.

### THE TRUE REFUGE

Well, then, is there any refuge? Yes,

there is. Jesus Christ is a safe refuge, a true refuge. He will meet the demand of conscience. When conscience accuses me of sin, I say: “Jesus paid my debt. . . All the debt I owe. . . Sin had left a crimson stain. . . He washed it white as snow.” He was made sin for me. He bore my sins upon the tree of the cross in His own body.

Jesus Christ will make you a better man or woman. Jesus Christ will transform your life, your outward and inward life. He will meet the test of the dying hour. He takes away the fear of death. He causes those who trust Him to say to the summons of death: **“I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand”** (II Tim. 4:6). He will stand the test of God's judgment and the Word of God.

I can say with Moses of old: **“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms”** (Deut. 33:27). I can say with the psalmist: **“I will say of the LORD, he is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in him will I trust”** (Ps. 91:2).

When the storms of life begin to break over my helpless head; when earthly foundations and hopes quake and tremble; when the winds of adversity blow with increasing velocity and the roar of the tempest strikes fear to my quivering soul, I turn to Jesus Christ as a refuge. He becomes a fortress, a high tower of safety, a city of refuge, an unshakable temple in which the calm of faith and childlike trust replaces the howling of life's gales and bitter winds.

Years ago Charles Wesley said: “Other refuge have I none, Hangs my helpless soul on Thee. Thou, O Christ art all I want; More than all in Thee I find; Plenteous grace with Thee is found, Grace to cover all my sins.”

## Christ's Prayer

*Continued from page 441*

should regard their persons. But when we remember that, day by day, in that land where there is no night, He who stands before His Father's throne bears perpetually on His breast their names deeply cut in the precious jewels and stones of the breastplate, and always with outspread hands pleads for them, we cannot but admire His love for them, and feel a deep veneration for that grace which makes Him declare, **“For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.”**

You must note here also the peculiar knowledge which our Savior, Jesus Christ, has of all His people, as well as His particular love for them; for He says He prays for those who are yet uncalled. Now, none of us who have faith in God,

*Continued on page 454*

## Christ's Prayer

*Continued from page 453*

none of those called and led to believe in Jesus, are unknown to Him. He knows His redeemed as well in one condition as another. He knows which of two drunkards shall turn and become one of His family. There are none so sunk in the depths of sin and wickedness that, if they are His by the covenant of His grace, do not even now share in His intercession. He knows His beloved when there is no visible mark by which to know them. He discerns His sheep when, to other people, they seem like wolves or goats. He recognizes His family when they are black as the tents of Kedar, and He knows they shall be fair as the curtains of Solomon. He knows His children when they do not know themselves to be His, when they fancy they are lost beyond rescue, or when they foolishly conceive that they can save themselves. Yea, and when all hope fails them, when it seems that the Lord does not know them, and the gospel does not know them, when no Christian knows them, and the minister can give them no comfort, Christ knows them even then, for still it is written, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world; those who have not yet believed; but who, shall believe through the word of those who are already called."

Another thought before we pass to the subject; for we like to suggest, a few of these thoughts just to start with, as they are in the text. The other thought is this: mark how Jesus loves all His people with the same affection. He could not pray for those few who, in His lifetime, had believed on Him without suddenly (to speak after the manner of men,) recollecting that these were but a handful; and, therefore, He stirs Himself up, and says, "My Father, **'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;'**" as much as to say, "these are not my especial favourites because they are converted so early; I do not love these better than others, I pray for those also who shall yet be called. I pray as much for one of my people as for another." It is well said by the apostle Paul, "**there is no difference;**" and verily, beloved, there is no difference in the affection of God towards His children. There is an elect out of the elect, I will acknowledge, as to gifts and standing, and as to the labor they may accomplish in this world; but there is no election out of the elect as for a deeper extent of love. They are all loved alike; they are all written in the same book of eternal love and life. They were all purchased with the selfsame precious blood of the Savior. One was not purchased with His foot, another with His hand, but all with His very heart's blood. They are all justified with the same righteousness, all sanctified by the same

Spirit, and they shall all enter the same heaven. They are all saved by the same grace, loved by the same love, heirs of the same inheritance; and Jesus Christ puts them all together when He says, "**Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.**"

I. Let us now proceed to the text, and the first thing we learn from it is this, that **GOD LOVES HIS PEOPLE BEFORE THEY BELIEVE ON HIM.**

Jesus Christ would never pray for those whom He did not love. He is no hypocrite in His prayers; some people are. Many prayers are not worth buying; indeed, they are not worth taking gratis; they are no prayers at all. I have heard some pray for their brethren in the ministry, and at the same time, they do not act with them, or for them. We have seen many bow the knee in prayer for such-and-such a person, and when they rise, their knees are unbent, but their hands are raised to strike the very person for whom they were praying. We have too many hypocritical prayers that are good for nothing. We might roll many into a parcel, and nobody would pick them up in the streets, they are worse than useless, they are absolutely wicked. For a man to bend his knees, and utter the hypocritical language of affection before God which he never feels in his heart, is little short of blaspheming God.

We must have very light thoughts of God when we try to deceive Him, with such prayers as these; but Jesus Christ never prayed a deceitful prayer. If He intercedes for any, He loves them; if He pleads for any, He has chosen them; if He asks His Father that they may be blessed, we are sure that He asks it from His heart. Christ's prayers all come from His inmost soul. You never hear Him mentioning any one's name before the throne whom He does not really love with an eternal affection. Hence, then, if Jesus Christ prayed for His people before they were called, and before they believed; and if His intercession implies love, He must have loved His people before they believed on Him.

This will very easily appear to you to be a doctrine of truth if we consider the Scriptures at large. Some men will talk against it as a wonderfully wicked doctrine; I refer to those who believe in creature merit, and who imagine that we are "made children of God" by some act of our own. But I think no sincere and earnest student of Scripture will ever believe that God commences to love His people when they begin to love Him. Such a thought, would be utterly inconsistent with the nature of God. Do you not know that God is an eternal, self-existent Being, that to say He loves *now*, is, in fact, to say He always did love, since with God there is no past, and can be no future? What we call past, present, and future, He wraps up in one eternal NOW. And if you say

that He loves you *now*, you thereby say that He loved you yesterday, He loved you in the past eternity, and He will love you for ever; for now with God is past, present, and future. Those who talk of God's beginning to love His people know not "**what they say, nor whereof they affirm.**" They might speak of man beginning to love; they might speak of angels beginning to love; but of God we never can, since He, without beginning, had a deathless love in His heart; He has an affection which has no source except in Himself, He could not begin, for He is without beginning of years, and without end of days. From everlasting to everlasting He is God; and from everlasting to everlasting His mercies extend to His people.

That is an argument, I think, that none can answer—that God loved His wandering people, not only because Christ intercedes for uncalled ones, but because, from the very nature of God, He must have loved them for ever if He loves them at all. But we do not need this proof that God loved His people before they believed. Go ye to Calvary, and ye shall see the greatest proof. Did my Savior die for me because I believed on him? No; I was not then in existence; I was not even formed, "**and curiously wrought: in the lowest parts of the earth.**" Could the Savior then have died because I had faith when I myself was not in existence? Could that have been the origin of the Savior's love towards me? Oh, no! my Savior died for me long before I believed.

"But," say you, "He foresaw that you would have faith, and therefore He loved you." What did He foresee about my faith? Did He foresee that I should get that faith myself, and that I should believe on Him of myself? No, my friends, Christ could not foresee that, because no Christian man wilt ever say that faith came of itself without the gift, and without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. I have met with a great many, and talked about the matter, but I never knew one who could put his hand on his heart, and say, "I believed in Jesus without the assistance of the Holy Spirit." I have seen many dying men, and asked them this question, and never did I meet, with such an one. *God foresaw that He would give you faith, and therefore loved you* — is not that absolutely absurd? It is as much as to say, I foresee I shall give a beggar a shilling when I go out of this place, and, therefore, because I foresee that gift, I love him, or you foresee that you will give something tonight towards the relief of faithful gospel ministers, and, therefore, you will then love God's ministers, because you foresee you wilt give them something. My gift is not the cause of my benevolence, but my benevolence is the cause of my giving it. God does not love His people because they have faith; He loved them long before. Faith is the gift of God. Does my natural father love me because he fed me,

and because he clothed me? Nay, he clothed and fed me because he loved me, but his love was prior to his gift. His gifts did not draw his love to me, because he loved me before he gave them.

And if any man says, "God loves me because I can do this or that for Him," he talks nonsense. God cannot love me because of what He has given me Himself. You may say, "He loves me because I love Him," but God gave you that love. God does not love you because you are so holy; but you are holy because God loves you, and your holiness is God's gift. In the very beginning, when this great universe lay in the mind of God, like unborn forests in the acorn cup; long ere the echoes waked the solitudes; before the mountains were brought forth; and long ere the light flashed through the sky, God loved His chosen creatures. Before there was creatureship, when the ether was not fanned by the angel's wing; when space itself had not an existence; when there was nothing save God alone; even then, in that loneliness of Deity, and in that deep quiet and profundity, His bowels moved with love for His chosen. Their names were written on His heart, and then were they dear to His soul. Jesus loved His people before the foundation of the world, even from eternity. He purchased me with His blood. He let His heart run out in one deep gaping wound for me long ere I loved Him. Yea, when He first came to me, did I not spurn Him? When He knocked at the door, and asked for entrance, did I not drive Him away, and do despite to His grace? Ah! I can remember that I full often did, until at last by His effectual grace He said, "I must, I will come in," and then He turned my heart, and made me love Him. But even until now, I should have resisted Him had it not been for His grace. Well, then, since He purchased me when I was dead in sins, does it not follow as a consequence necessary and logical, that He must have loved me? And, hence, the Savior said, "**Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me, through their word.**"

II. The second thing we learn from the text is **THE USE OF A GOSPEL MINISTRY.**

Captious and caviling persons will object, "You say that God loves His people, and therefore they will be saved, then what is the good of your preaching?" *What is the good of your preaching?* When I say that God loves a multitude that no man can number, a countless host of the race of men, do you ask me what is the good of preaching? What is the good of preaching! To fetch these diamonds of the Lord out of the dunghill, to go down to the depths, as the diver does, to fetch up God's pearls from the place where they are lying. *What is the good of preaching?* To cut down the good corn, and gather it into the garner. What is the good of

*Continued on page 455*



## Christ's Prayer

*Continued from page 454*

preaching? To fetch out God's elect from the ruins of the fall, and make them stand on the rock Christ Jesus, and see their standing sure.

Ah, ye who ask what is the good of preaching, because God has ordained some to salvation, we ask you whether it would not be a most foolish thing to say, because there is to be a harvest, what is the good of sowing? There is to be a harvest, what is the use of reaping? The very reason why we do sow and reap is, because we feel assured there is to be a harvest. And if, indeed, I believed there was not a number who must be saved, I could not go into a pulpit again. Only once make me think that no one is certain to be saved, and I do not, care to preach. But now I know that a countless number must be saved, I am confident that Christ, "shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days." I know that, if there is much to dispirit me in my ministry, and I see but little of its effects, yet He shall keep all whom the Father has given to Him: and this makes me preach. I come into this chapel to-night with the assurance that God has some child of His, in this place, not yet called; and I feel confident that He will call someone by the use of the ministry, so why not by me? I know there are not a few souls whom God has given me through my ministry, not only hundreds, but thousands. I have seen some hundreds of those who profess to have been brought to God through my preaching at Park Street, and elsewhere, and with that confidence I must go on. I know that Jesus must have a "seed." His people must increase, and it is the very purpose of the ministry to seek them out, and bring them into God's fold. Our Savior tells us the use of the ministry is that they may "believe on me through their word."

There is one peculiarity about this. Christ says, "They shall believe on me through their word." Have you never heard people call out about running after men? They say, "You are all running after such-and-such a man." What then, would you have them run after a woman? You say, "The people go after one particular man." Whom else shall they go after? Some persons say, "We went to such-and-such a place and the people there love their minister too much." That would be very dreadful, but it is not so. As for ministers being in danger of being ruined by too much love, it very seldom falls to their lot. Very generally, they get quite as many kicks as anything else; and if they do get too much love in any particular place, they get too much of the reverse somewhere else. If we get a little sweet, somebody else is sure to put in much that is bitter.

Is it not singular that Christ should say, "They shall believe on me through their

word?" Now, do God's people believe on Christ through the word of the ministry? We know that our faith does not rest on the word of man, but on the Word of God. We do not rest on any man, yet it is through "their word"; that is, through the word of the apostles, and through the word of every faithful minister.

I take it that *the gospel is the minister's own word, when he speaks from experience.* What is in the Bible is God's Word; what God speaks to me by experience becomes my word as well as God's. And it is then "their word" when ministers come into the pulpit with God's Word in their hearts.

I think a minister is not only called to preach what he finds in the Bible—the mere naked doctrine—but what he has experienced in his own heart, what he has tasted, and felt, and handled. If he does this, he will be greatly in danger of being called an egotist. Very likely he will use too many "I's." Well, he cannot preach John Smith's experience, or anybody else's experience, he can only preach his own, and then he will have to say "I." But if he does not preach experimentally what he has himself felt, it will not be through his word. When we speak that which we know, and testify that which we have seen and felt, if we say we know the Savior will pardon sinners because he has pardoned us, then it is not only God's Word, but it is also our word. If I say to a child of God, "Go, and cast thy burden on the Lord, and thou wilt find relief, for I have done, so," then it is not only God's Word, but my word.

When he has proved the Savior's Word by experience, then it becomes the minister's word, *as also when he has it manifested to him by the Holy Spirit.* Some people say that these manifestations are all nonsense. I have heard many object to applied texts. Such men do not understand much about the real law of piety, or else they would see texts manifested to them at one time which they had never seen before. I know many of my ministering brethren who now testify that they have sometimes taken a text, and tried to break it. They have smitten it with a sledge-hammer; but they could not get an atom off it; and they have had to throw it aside. But another time, my friends, when that same text comes before us, though, it seemed hard as granite when we took it up in our hands before, it now crumbles and breaks in pieces. Why? Because God's Holy Spirit shines upon it now, and He did not do so before. And we might have continued hitting it till we broke the head of our hammer, and not a scrap would have come off it; but the Holy Spirit's manifestation revealed the text, and most texts are to be learnt so.

It is not often by sitting down in deep thought that we get at the meaning; it is by leaving it until, in some hallowed hour of high spiritual intercourse, we get into

the very secret chamber where the meaning of the text lies. In some solemn moment, we dive down into the very depths where the meaning of the text is hidden. God teaches us the meaning, and then it becomes our word. It is ours by application, and we believe, my brethren, that sinners will be converted to God, not only by preaching the gospel we find in the Bible, but by preaching the gospel we find in our hearts, "known and read of all men." Let us then come into our pulpits with this determination (I speak to my brethren in the ministry), that, by the help of God, we will bring our own experience to bear upon it. We will sometimes talk of ourselves, and not be ashamed of it, for whatever the Lord our God saith unto us, not only in His Word, but by experience, and by His Spirit, that will we speak to the people.

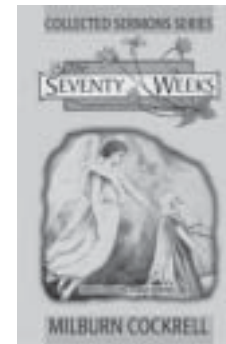
These two points I have mentioned—first, God loves His people before they have faith; and, secondly, the ministry has its use in bringing men to faith by "their word."

III. Now, thirdly, notwithstanding this, **GOD IS SUPERIOR TO THE MINISTRY, AND DOES NOT REQUIRE IT.** If He chose, He could do without His ministers.

I have told you that ministers are necessary, in the present state of things, to bring men to the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may have faith in Him. But when I said they were necessary, I spoke as men speak. With God, ministers are not necessary. He could do without them. I thought to-day, as I walked along, "God could do without me." I thought of many men who are preaching, and I thought, "God could do without them; take them all away, and God could do without them." I thought of some members of my Church, very dear to me, who seem to be pillars of it, and I thought, "What could I do without them?" And then the thought came across my mind, "God could do without them." The people of God would still be saved just as well without them, if God so pleased. God is enough in Himself, without the addition of any one of His preachers. When He made angels, it was not because He needed them. He could have accomplished His will without the wing of a flaming seraph, and without the voice of a glorious cherub. When He made the stars, it was not because He needed them. He was light Himself, without the light of sun, moon, or stars. When He made man, it was not because He needed man; it was because He would make him, and for no other reason. There was no necessity for it. He would be the same eternal God were all His creatures dead; and if He were to blot out those lines of wisdom and grace written in the universe, He would be just as glorious and great as ever. And God can do without His servants in the gospel ministry; but this being a dispensation of means, He is not a God acting without means.

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God does not do without them, though He could if He would. God elected His people without ministers; He did not need any ministers to help Him, in that. He redeemed His people without ministers. What great divine could have helped Christ to redeem His people? Yea, more, He can, if He pleases, call His people without ministers; for we know how some have become the subjects of grace by the reading of the Word, without the assistance of the ministry; and some in the Sabbath-school have received the words of eternal life. This should make our pride subside at once. I know it is a great honor, and should comfort us much to know that God is making use of us; but He could, if He pleased, well enough accomplish His ends and purposes without you and without me. If tomorrow we were laid in our coffins, and if our people should go out weeping because their pastors were dead, God has other men whom He could raise up; or if He did not choose to raise other men up, He could attain His ends without us. And possibly there is a time coming when gospel ministers shall not be wanted, when men shall need no man to say to his brother, "Know the Lord," for all shall know Him, from, the least even to the greatest. There are happy days coming when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; when there shall be no need of the messengers upon the mountains to publish the glad tidings of salvation; when the sunshine of the Lord shall supplant our poor farthing rushlight, and when Jesus shall "come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him;" and we shall have too much to do to stand and admire Him, without standing up to preach to men

*Continued on page 456*

## Christ's Prayer

*Continued from page 455*

concerning Him who is present in their midst.

IV. But, then, our fourth point is, that **GOD WILL NEVER DO WITHOUT HIS MINISTERS SO LONG AS THIS DISPENSATION LASTS**, because Jesus Christ said, **"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."** Hence, it follows, that there always will be, so long as this dispensation lasts, a people who are to be gathered, and ministers to gather them in. As long as there are unsaved and unconverted persons who are the elect of God, there will be some ministers to preach to them. As long as ever there are those who are under conviction of sin, He will have some who will proclaim the message of pardon. Christ says in the text, **"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."**

Someone may object, and say, "Yes, but 'their word' signifies the word of the apostles." Then another might ask, "Are you the successors of the apostles?" There has been a vast deal of talk in these days about "the successors of the apostles." We have people who pretend to be the successors of the apostles. There are the Roman Catholics. But, I think, if Peter and Paul were to come and see those who claim to be their successors, they would think there was a mighty difference between themselves and them. By way of parable, suppose the Virgin Mary, Peter, and Paul, should come one Sunday, and go to a certain cathedral. Well, when they entered, the Virgin heard them singing together to her honor, and praise, and glory; she jogged Peter, and said, "What are these people after? They are worshipping me. My Son said to me, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' He never worshipped me; let us turn out of this." They stopped a little longer, and they heard one of them say that the apostle Peter was the head of the church; and his successor, the Pope, was therefore the head. Peter jogged the Virgin Mary, and said, "What a lie that is! I was never head of the church at all. Did I not fall into sin? I the head of the church! A pretty head I was." Soon afterwards, Paul heard them, preaching justification by works. "Come out," said he; "there is no gospel here. I preached justification by faith without works, and they are preaching justification by works." And so, upon that, they all three of them went out. By-and-by, they came to a place where they heard the people singing "Glory, honor, praise, and power, be unto the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne;" and they heard them speak of those who were "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." "Ah," said Peter, "this is the right place, and here I will stay."

These are the successors of the apostles who are like the apostles. Are those the successors of the apostles who take our money from us by force to pay for their religion? Are those the successors of the apostles who go to Brother So-and-so's house, and take away his table, and his spoon, and his candlestick, to pay rates for a religion in which he does not believe? I have never read about a church-rate in Corinth, or about the apostle Paul upon some man in Jerusalem. Such men successors of the apostles? They may be in godliness; for holy men are sometimes very much mistaken; but I say again, those who are like the apostles are their successors—not men who are ashamed to speak to anybody else, because they think they are above them—not those who cannot speak plain words. Have we not some ministers, to understand whom, you need to take a dictionary always to chapel with you? Do you call them the successors of the apostles? Your judgments answer, "No." A downright honest man, who speaks what can be understood, who declares God's gospel in unmeasured terms, as God would have him speak it, He is a successor of the apostles; and it is through **"their word"** (the apostles' word, and the word of the successors of the apostles,) that men are to be saved.

Now, my dear brothers and sisters, having directed your attention to the fact that we are quite sure God will always have a ministry, and always use it; and since a ministry, under God, is necessary, though He could do without them, what should we do for them? I will tell you what some people say—*starve them*. I do not say it is so here, or with my people; but it is so in many country villages. Unfortunately, there are many farmers who could afford to give much to the cause of God, who, while their servant Betty sits in the gallery, and pays her shilling a quarter for her pew, the master only pays a shilling a quarter, too. But Christ's ministers give themselves to the work because they feel they must preach; and they would rather preach on dry bread than be silent.

I can assure you, if any one of our dear friends stood in the position I have occupied for a single year, when you come to cast up your income, if you felt any benevolence, you would have very little left; indeed, you would have nothing left, if you listened to the claims made upon you.

Now, one other thought. If God sends ministers into the world to preach His gospel, how ill does it become us to hurt them! "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." I have always felt very careful about touching a child of God. You know that there is nothing that puts a man so much on his mettle as to touch his children. I have seen a father calm and placid, and very gentle—someone has touched his children, the father flashed into his face at once. Do

what you like, touch his property, or his house, and he may be vexed; but touch his child, and then his fury comes up at once; he cannot stand that. Oh, my friends, a heavy responsibility rests on the heads of some, even of God's people, if you view it in that light. Touch God's people! touch God's chosen! touch God's favorites! touch God's darlings! Oh, let us take heed! We had better suffer one to pass who professes to be a child of God, and is not, than that we should treat harshly or unkindly any of these who really are His. And, I think, if there is any difference in the case of gospel ministers, this has a special force. We should, above all, seek not to injure their character by spreading evil reports against them. They will have enough of that from the wicked world; but we had need be tender of them, and plant a hedge around them to protect them in every way. They are the standard-bearers of Christendom, and if the standard-bearer falls, what a disgrace it brings on everything! We ought to stand by them, pray for them, plead with God for them, that He will hold up their hands.

I have been talking about the gospel ministry. What is it to do? Is it to bring men to faith in Christ? Now, I am tonight to attempt to do it before I leave this place; yes, and, by God's help, so I will.

Now, a word or two very briefly to two or three characters. First, there is a man sitting here tonight, who says he is "no worse than others;" and who believes he shall enter heaven as well as any other person. He says, "I do not see why any man should set himself above me." My mission from heaven is, under the Holy Spirit, to knock your works down, and bring you to faith in Jesus Christ. Remember that it is written in Scripture, **"By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."** You cannot get to heaven by your works. You might as well seek to mount the stars on a tread wheel as to go to heaven by works; for, as you get up a step, you will always come down as low as before. If you cannot be perfect, God will not save you by works. If you could truly say, "I never committed a sin in all my life, and never had a wicked thought, and never shall have," possibly then you might be saved by works, but since that is impossible, if you trust in the law, and hang yourself upon it, you shall find it will break by your weight. You stand on a sandy foundation; and when the wind blows, and the storm rises, you will be led to see it is a refuge of lies, that your confidence was ill founded, that your works were bad at the bottom after all, and that, though you fancied you were righteous, you were deceiving yourself and others, and must suffer the sentence of the wicked.

Someone among you may say, "I know that I am a very great sinner, but then I intend to reform, I shall turn to Christ, and then I shall be saved." You intend to reform, do you? So did the damned in hell

once. You intend to reform, so doubtless did Judas, when he went and cast down the money in the temple but instead of his reformation being good, he went out and hanged himself. You intend to reform, your intention is like a bubble blown by the mouth of a child, which shall soon be broken in the air. You intend to reform, your reformation is like the smoke of a chimney, which the wind shall sweep away. Suppose you do reform, and you really get better, you think Jesus Christ will save you, and so you will get to heaven between the two. Have you never heard the old proverb, "Between two stools he came to the ground?" Verily, I tell you, that if you trust in two things, you will be lost. Works cannot help you. Any man who trusts so much as a single hair's breadth to his works, is a lost soul. He who trusts to the least atom of works, though it be so small that he himself cannot discern it, will be lost. It must be,

*"Nothing in my hand I bring;*

*Simply to thy cross I cling;"*

or else a man must be lost; for it is no use his trusting partly in works, and partly to the Savior. You must feel, "I am quite stripped of everything." I love to find out those who have not, got anything good at all about them.

Some like to find something good in men before they preach to them, but I like to find men who think there is nothing good in them, and then to preach God's sovereign mercy to them. You who have any good of your own, throw it away. You who have nothing, come to Christ. I advise you, who think you are good, not to say you are so when you are before God. If you were in a hospital, and wanted to be attended to, what would you do? Would you write over your bed, or tell your doctor you were not so bad after all? You would be rather inclined to appear worse than you really were. See if you can describe yourself worse than you really are. You may say, "That is wicked advice." No, it is not, because I am quite sure you cannot do it. Go and write bad characters against yourselves tonight. I speak to you who know this is true, and not to you who are deceiving yourselves with your own righteousness. You who now feel your need of a Savior, exaggerate that feeling before God, if it be possible. He who felt himself the most guilty of all sinners said, **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."** If there is anyone here tonight who thinks himself **"the chief of sinners,"** I have called him, and God has called him. I wish he would act like a man I once saw in the County Court, when I was sitting there. He said, "Make way! Make way! His honor has called me." And he elbowed his way up, because the judge had called him. God says, **"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your**

*Continued on page 460*



# THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

## SUPREME COURT TO HEAR TEN COMMANDMENTS CASE

(EP) – The U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 12 agreed to hear two cases involving display of the Ten Commandments, a decision expected to clear up, once and for all, whether posting the Decalogue on government property is constitutional.

Currently, four federal circuit courts and one state supreme court have OK'd displays of the Commandments, while three federal circuit courts have held that such displays are unconstitutional.

By taking the cases, the Supreme Court will weigh in on the issue for the first time since 1980, when it banned posting of the Commandments in public schools.

"The decision to review a case involving the display of the Ten Commandments is long overdue," said Mat Staver, president and chief counsel of Liberty Counsel, which is representing a party in one of the cases. "The lower courts are hopelessly in confusion over the constitutionality of governmental displays of the Ten Commandments."

The case in which Liberty Counsel is involved is a Kentucky decision out of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that involves the display of the Ten Commandments together with other historical documents — such as the Bill of Rights and the Magna Carta — in school buildings in Harlan County, Ky., and in courthouses in McCreary and Pulaski County, Ky. The appeals court said displays there were unconstitutional.

The other case is out of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, where the court said public display of a Commandments monument was constitutional.

Rena Lindevaldsen, co-counsel with Staver on the Kentucky case, said justices will hear the argument that the Kentucky displays are historical, not religious.

"(The courthouses) changed the display to be contextual," Lindevaldsen said, "but the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court decision that said, 'It's tainted. You originally had just the Ten Commandments, and that's a bad thing. You changed it to try to correct the problem, but it doesn't matter because it's tainted, and your purpose was improper. You can't display the Commandments.'"

Attorneys, she added, think that issue presents "an interesting question" for the court to review.

Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) Chief Counsel Ben Bull agreed, saying that "we've said all along that it's just a matter of time before the Supreme Court takes up a Ten

Commandments case."

"The Alliance Defense Fund will vigorously support this litigation with amicus briefs, funding and other support," he said. "ADF will continue to fight these outrageous attempts to remove all traces of our religious history from the public square."

The Texas case — filed by a homeless atheist who claimed to be offended by the monument, which was donated to the state by the Fraternal Order of Eagles in 1961 — will be argued by state Attorney General Greg Abbott. He said today that the way the 6-foot granite monument is displayed on the Capitol grounds — alongside other historically significant monuments and memorials — should, without question, pass constitutional muster.

"In the very chamber where our arguments will take place there is a carving of Moses holding the Ten Commandments," Abbott noted. "Likewise, the Ten Commandments monument on the (Texas) Capitol grounds is a constitutional recognition of the historic significance the Ten Commandments have played in the development of our shared moral and legal codes."

Just how justices will rule, of course, is anybody's guess. In addition to recently refusing to hear an appeal from ousted Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore on getting his job back, the Court in 2001 refused to rule on the constitutionality of a display at the city building in Elkhart, Ind.

At the time, however, three conservative justices — Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Justice Antonin Scalia and Justice Clarence Thomas — said Elkhart was merely trying to reflect the significant cultural, historical and legal role of the commandments, and had every right to do so.

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## LIBERAL WATCH-DOG GROUP OPPOSES CHURCH VOTER-REGISTRATION DRIVES

(EP) – A well-organized spy network is fanning out to infiltrate what it thinks are some of the most dangerous places in Johnson County, Kan. The group isn't worried about terror cells or gang lairs. It's worried about church worship services.

Mainstream Coalition, a watch-dog organization for issues relating to separation of church and state in Kansas and Missouri, sent nearly 100 volunteers to almost 100 churches across Johnson County on a Sunday morning in July. The volunteers' mission: Go to the worship services, look and listen for any violations of federal rules governing

church involvement in political endorsements, and report back to the coalition. The coalition provided a checklist of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules for tax-exempt organizations and an evaluation form, which the volunteers filled out and mailed back in pre-stamped envelopes. The results so far: Churches aren't breaking the rules.

IRS rules state that pastors are not allowed to endorse specific political candidates from the pulpit by name, but they are allowed privately to endorse candidates. They may also promote voter-registration from the pulpit and distribute voter-guides in church, as long as the guides include information about all the candidates.

Mr. Jerry Johnston came up with the idea for a voter-registration drive in May. The senior pastor of the 3,000-member, non-denominational First Family Church in Overland Park, Kan., says he was dejected when the Kansas House voted against a state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Mr. Johnston networked with other Kansas pastors to launch an effort to encourage Christians to vote: "The church is called to be salt and light. I don't know why so many of us don't vote."

The registration drive has two goals: Get church-goers to vote, and educate voters about candidates' stances on issues. Pastors use pulpit-time to plug voter-registration, and they give their congregations voter-guides with candidate platforms. The effort has quickly caught on — Mr. Johnston says several thousand church-goers have registered to vote since the drive began.

Those thousands of new registrations caught the attention of Mainstream Coalition, prompting the group to organize church monitoring efforts and openly oppose the drive. Executive Director Caroline McKnight says the coalition is primarily concerned about the pastors' involvement in the effort: "If it had been church members organizing it, we frankly wouldn't have cared." The involvement of pastors is problematic, Ms. McKnight contends, because of IRS rules that regulate the political activities of churches with tax-exempt status.

Mr. Johnston says his church and the churches involved in the voter-registration drive abide by the government's rules. He says he has promoted voter-registration during church on many occasions, but that he has never endorsed a particular candidate: "I don't know any pastors in the group who would stand in the pulpit and endorse a specific candidate by name."

Ms. McKnight says Mainstream Coalition does not have evidence of any pastors endorsing a candidate by name, but says church leaders often imply their endorsement of certain candidates: "Ministers can make a message so transparent."

Ministers' messages should be transparent, according to Mr. Johnston: "We preach the biblical position on issues, and if folks vote according to their Christian faith, they'll often naturally vote for certain candidates."

Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline recently entered the fray, leading a seminar

with an IRS representative last month to outline federal guidelines regarding churches and political activity. Mr. Kline told The Associated Press he didn't want churches or clergy to be intimidated into silence. Kline's spokesman Whitney Watson says the state has never received a formal complaint about inappropriate political activity in a church.

Nevertheless, Ms. McKnight says Mainstream Coalition volunteers will keep monitoring church services. She says volunteers will be sent to churches in every denomination represented in the county. The clandestine campaign is in response to the voter-registration drive that 150 Kansas pastors are promoting in their churches. Ms. McKnight says that effort runs "perilously close" to blurring the line between church and state. The ministers say they aren't breaking the law, and that Mainstream Coalition uses scare tactics to try to prevent churches from mobilizing voter opposition to political agendas the coalition endorses.

Mr. Kline also pointed out that Mainstream Coalition, which claims to be non-partisan, formed a non-tax-exempt political action committee to promote a platform and endorse candidates by name. The coalition's platform includes: opposing a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, supporting embryonic stem cell research, promoting exclusively teaching evolutionary theory in public school science classes, and opposing faith-based initiatives.

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## PRO-HOMOSEXUAL GROUP RATES 'GAY-FRIENDLINESS' OF STATES

(EP) – The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has issued a report card, rating each state in the union on their school policies for gay, lesbian and transgender students. Only eight states and the District of Columbia received passing grades for policies that cater to homosexual, bisexual and transgender students.

The other forty-two states received sharp criticism from the group for not doing enough. Kevin Jennings, GLSEN's executive director said, "Our nation's policymakers have failed to give schools the policies and programmatic support they need to change environments where bullying and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity are the rule and not the exception."

New Jersey came in first among the states that received favorable ratings from GLSEN, scoring 95 points, followed by Minnesota with 91 points. Washington, D.C., Vermont and California were the other states in the top five. The other states receiving a passing grade were Connecticut, Wisconsin, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The group issued the report in time for the fall's elections, saying, "As the nation prepares for this fall's campaign season, it is time for the local, state and national candidates — incumbents and challengers alike — to articulate their commitment and legislative plans to address the violence, bias and harassment so pervasive in America's

Continued on page 458

## Bible & The Newspaper

*Continued from page 457*

schools.”

Some states were happy to receive a failing grade. Peter LaBarbera, executive director of the Illinois Family Institute, said, “We have no problem with the idea of protecting children from abuse. You can protect all children from abuse without enacting pro-gay policies. But what GLSEN does is use efforts to stop bullying as a Trojan horse to promote their real agenda, which is to teach the acceptance of homosexuality and transgenderism in schools.”

In the fall of 2003, after the Massachusetts Judicial Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriages, GLSEN immediately had a marriage curriculum guide for teachers. The group also offers homosexual-friendly books and training seminars for teachers.

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### PRIVATE LIVES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS DEBATED IN SOUTH CAROLINA

(EP) – If teachers are supposed to be role models for children, certain people aren’t fit for the job, according to Republicans in South Carolina. The state’s GOP platform says that openly gay men and women should not be allowed to teach in public schools. Jim DeMint, a Republican third-term congressman running for Senate in the state, recently added another group to the list of poor role models: pregnant women with live-in boyfriends. DeMint said he agreed with the party’s stance on homosexuals in the classroom, and when a local newspaper challenged his comments, he replied: “I would have given the same answer when asked if a single woman, who was pregnant and living with her boyfriend, should be hired to teach my third-grade children. I just think the moral decisions are different with a teacher.” Log Cabin Republicans, a homosexual Republican group, called for an immediate apology from DeMint, and Democratic opponent Inez Tenenbaum called his comments “un-American.” DeMint did apologize for singling out unwed mothers, but stands by his comments about homosexuals in the classroom.

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### EXPERTS UNCOVER MASS GRAVE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN IRAQ

(EP) – Forensic experts digging for evidence against Saddam Hussein in Iraq have made a grisly discovery: A mass grave full of women and children, many shot in the back of the head. Among the dead are women who were pregnant, and a boy still clutching his ball. U.S. Investigator Greg Kehoe said workers have already removed more than 120 bodies from the site. The bodies are believed to be those of hundreds of Kurds killed by Saddam’s regime in a deadly campaign in 1987 and 1988. “These bodies were just pushed in,” Mr. Kehoe said. “It was all women and children. No men. All these people were executed with small arms fire... (It) includes pregnant woman.” There are about 40 known

mass graves in Iraq, according to AFP, containing possibly tens of thousands of bodies dumped by Saddam’s ghastly regime.

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### FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT FAILS IN HOUSE VOTE

(EP) – The U.S. House of Representatives on Sept. 30 failed to pass the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA), officially titled the Marriage Protection Amendment.

On a vote of 227-186, with 20 not voting, a majority of congressmen sided with the legislation, designed to send to the states a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as solely the union one man and one woman. But the bill required a two-thirds vote in favor to pass — something it failed to receive.

Both Houses of Congress have now refused to give citizens an opportunity to vote the issue on a state-by-state basis as part of the process of approving a constitutional amendment.

Focus on the Family Action Chairman Dr. James Dobson expressed his frustration at the vote:

“We are profoundly disappointed by the news that the House of Representatives has rejected a constitutional amendment to preserve the institution of marriage. In July, the Senate also failed to protect the family from the un-elected and unaccountable judiciary, which is determined to experiment with this bedrock of civilization.

“Why does this disregard for our most basic social unit surprise us? For more than 30 years, both Republicans and Democrats in Congress chose to tax families raising children at a higher rate than those couples simply cohabiting, and have revealed a peculiar disregard for the welfare of American families.”

Amanda Izsak, federal issues analyst at Focus on the Family Action, said she wasn’t surprised at the vote, and that there is a plus side of sorts.

“I think we can be pleased that the House took up the vote before November,” she said. “We never expected to get the full two-thirds on the first go-round, but this certainly shows promise.”

Marriage has been an election issue for a while now, Izsak added, and today’s vote makes it an even stronger one.

“All of the members of the U.S. House are up for election on November 2,” Izsak said, “and I’m confident that voters are going to remember this vote. Now they know where each member of Congress stands — and they know whether their representatives did, in fact, represent them.”

The amendment got the support of many Republicans, including President Bush.

“Marriage is the foundation of society and should not be redefined by a few activist judges and local officials,” Bush said, in a statement calling on all members of Congress to support the amendment.

During debate on the amendment, House Majority Leader Tom Delay echoed the president, but also said those who support the Marriage Protection Amendment are

saddened that there is a need for this amendment at all.

“The definition of marriage seems to us, and the vast majority of the American people, as a matter of common sense and social reality,” DeLay said. “We would prefer to live in a society where such debates were unnecessary. Unfortunately we do not. The question of the future of marriage in America has been forced on us by activist judges trying to legislate from the bench.”

Opponents said the measure “attacked” homosexuals. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., an openly homosexual member of Congress, drew applause from some in the House gallery for his diatribe calling the measure “an undemocratic effort” conducted by those who find homosexual “love” distasteful.

“At its core,” Frank said, “what it does is to say that no state, by whatever process it chooses, may find that two women, being willing to commit themselves to each other legally, as well as emotionally, is a good thing and not a bad thing . . . Please do not impose your views on the people of Massachusetts.”

But Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind., countered with a homespun but effective argument of his own.

“I have no distaste for love, and neither is it my desire to impose views, or attack any individual, or anyone in a relationship in America,” Pence said. “I’m from south of Highway 40 in Indiana, but I do know the difference between defending and attacking. The truth is, as legal scholars and millions of Americans know, the institution of marriage is under attack by activist judges . . . A constitutional amendment is the only way we can express the will of three out of four — or more — Americans who desire to continue to have this fundamental institution of marriage defined as it has been through out the millennia.”

Senate-watchers expect amendment backers will try again, by introducing a new measure in January.

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### ARKANSAS TRIAL RESUMES OVER GAY FOSTER BAN

(EP) – The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has brought a lawsuit against the state of Arkansas, challenging its ban on homosexual foster parents. The trial resumed in Little Rock, Ark., in October.

Psychologist George Rekers testified that foster children are better off living in a traditional home with a heterosexual mother and father, and that the life of a child in foster care is stressful enough without the additional burden of adapting to homosexual foster parents.

“That kind of family structure provides some unique benefits that foster children in particular need” because of their higher levels of mental and behavioral problems, Rekers said, according to the Associated Press.

Lawyers for the ACLU attacked Rekers’ credibility based on the fact that he is a conservative Christian. Attorneys pointed out that the University of South Carolina professor is an ordained Southern Baptist minister who has written extensively on

Christian parenting, including books titled “Shaping Your Child’s Sexual Identity” and “Growing Up Straight.”

Rekers also acknowledged under questioning that he believes the Bible is the infallible word of God, that he believes homosexuality is sin and that he believe God views homosexuality as sin.

“Much of his views are based not on science, but on his personal religious ideology,” lawyer Leslie Cooper of the ACLU’s Lesbian and Gay Rights Project told Pulaski County Circuit Judge Tim Fox, who is presiding over the non-jury trial.

“There’s no evidence that he’s brought his personal views into his testimony,” countered Kathy L. Hall, a lawyer for the state Department of Human Services.

The state Child Welfare Review Board, which administers DHS’ foster care and adoptions programs, imposed a ban in 1999 that bars foster children from being placed with families where gay adults are present.

Rekers testified that studies show homosexual partnerships are less stable and more short-lived than heterosexual marriages. He said children living with gay foster parents also face a risk of cruelty and ridicule from their peers.

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### U.S. EXPLAINS CONFRONTATION WITH SAUDIS OVER RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

(EP) – Religious-freedom experts working with the U.S. government have long known Saudi Arabia was one of the world’s worst persecutors of Christians. Driving home that the country also persecutes its own Muslim population is what finally pushed U.S. officials to do something about it.

In the year before the State Department last month added Saudi Arabia to its official list of persecuting countries, staff members from the department’s religious-freedom office visited the kingdom five times—more than any other country they examined in the world. Relations with the United States’ largest oil supplier are historically white-gloved, and many in the diplomatic corps long hoped for private improvement on church-faith matters without a public confrontation.

“I came on board knowing Saudi Arabia had to be a high priority on this job,” said John Hanford, who in 2002 became the State Department’s ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom. When meetings with the foreign minister and other top Saudi officials yielded little improvement, he could then show his colleagues it was time the United States did more than quietly catalog abuses year after year. “On the central issue of restricting religious freedom in such a wholesale fashion, there has not been progress,” Hanford said.

But it was the extent of oppressive measures against other Muslims, especially Shiites, which experts learned on their visits was even worse than expected. According to Hanford, “It’s the Muslims who wind up in jail.” That’s a point he emphasized when rolling out

*Continued on page 459*



## Bible & The Newspaper

Continued from page 458

State's 2004 religious-freedom report Sept. 15: "The sort of issues which concerned us most, frankly, had to do with the treatment of Muslims in Saudi Arabia. The Shia Muslims suffer the most."

Saudi Arabia's strict interpretation of Sunni Islam, widely known as Wahhabism, derives from the name of its 18th-century founder, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, who formed an alliance with tribal leader Muhammad al-Saud around 1750 when the Saudi kingdom was established. In modern times, oil income has funded the spread of Wahhabi ideology in schools and mosques. Wahhabis generally view non-Wahhabi Muslims as un-Islamic, so other Sunnis, Shiites, and Sufis suffer economic and political discrimination and restrictions on worship.

Shiites make up about 10 percent of the Saudi population. According to this year's U.S. religious-freedom report, Saudi authorities shut down Shiite mosques built without government permission. Shiites are poorly represented in government too: Only two serve on the country's 120-member consultative council, and none as cabinet ministers. Nor does Shiite testimony in court carry as much weight as that of Sunnis.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) reports that authorities have arrested several Shiite clerics and religious scholars without charge, and beaten some while in custody. Imams who have criticized the government's policies or its Islamic interpretations have suffered the same treatment. Many non-Wahhabi Muslims are detained on trumped-up charges of sorcery or witchcraft, considered by the ruling elite one of the worst forms of polytheism.

Non-Muslims, of course, have it even worse. The kingdom prohibits any public worship, and those who wear religious symbols risk a scuffle with the religious police. Evangelizing Muslims is illegal, and Muslims who convert to another religion may be tried for apostasy and executed. According to the State Department's 2004 report, authorities tried a schoolteacher for apostasy, but last March handed down a conviction of blasphemy with a three-year sentence and 300 lashes.

In theory, non-Muslims may worship in private, but Saudi Arabia offers scant guidelines on how many may gather without attracting the displeasure of the Mutawwa'in, the religious police. Many Christians congregate freely, said Hanford, but do so in secret, meeting in padded basements or huddling by the dozens around a single Bible. In practice, the religious police do disrupt worship services at whim.

One example is Indian Christian Brian O'Connor. Just hours before Hanford added Saudi Arabia to the U.S. list of egregious persecutors on Sept. 15, a Saudi court charged him with possession of alcohol, pornography, and preaching Christianity. Compass News

reported that Brian O'Connor first heard the charges six months after his arrest, when the Mutawwa'in reportedly hung him upside down and whipped him with electrical cables. So far the court has not issued a verdict.

Such restrictions were a major reason that the United States decided to class Saudi Arabia as a "country of particular concern" in September, a branding reserved for only the most egregious state persecutors in the world. Those named—eight countries altogether this year—become eligible for U.S. sanctions.

For religious-freedom advocates, State's designating Saudi Arabia was long overdue. "Better late than never, at this point," said Dwight Bashir, a senior policy analyst with USCIRF. USCIRF recommended the Saudis for the list five years in a row, getting results only the fifth time around.

Why the designation this year? Bashir said pressure from his own commission and from Congress began building when State dawdled on announcing this year's worst persecutors. Eighteen months had lapsed since officials made the last designations. For the State Department, says Bashir, examining terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia in May and November last year also have been eye-opening. As the two countries cooperate in the war on terror, U.S. officials are seeing firsthand the extent to which Saudi Arabia both encourages and exports extremist Islam. And ultimately, in a post-9/11 world, the U.S. diplomats could no longer ignore the nexus between radical Islam and terrorism.

But the United States also softened its rebuke against its largest Middle East ally by noting some reforms. Authorities have continued their National Dialogue with Muslims of all stripes, which includes men and women, and fired imams who preach violence. The Middle East Media Research Institute found a report 11 days after the State Department's citation that Saudi authorities are planning new training for the religious police in English, psychology, and how to handle the public. But without major reforms, no one expects sensitivity training to improve religious tolerance.

By law, the State Department has between 90 and 180 days to determine what measures to take against the eight religious-freedom violators it named (the other seven are Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Vietnam). Sanctions against the Saudis, however, are unlikely, says Paul Marshall, senior fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom.

"They have been resisting for quite a while labeling them a country of particular concern," he said. "My guess is that the U.S. will think putting them on the list will be enough and wait to see how that works." Nor in the short term does Marshall see the Saudis implementing reforms that would annoy their most virulent Wahhabi clergy. After the designation, Saudi officials went out of their way to condemn themselves with their defense. The chief of the kingdom's religious police said non-Muslims may worship as much as they wish but must keep

it private: "We will not allow them to publicly practice their religion in this country," he said.

Nonetheless, USCIRF will want the United States to ratchet up the pressure immediately. Among their policy recommendations, commissioners want U.S. officials to push for dissolving the Mutawwa'in, allowing in clergy of other religions, and releasing prisoners detained for religious violations. That may read like a wish list, but for longtime religious-freedom advocates, coming this far after U.S. silence on Saudi violations still seems like a dream.

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### THOUSANDS TURN OUT FOR "STAND FOR MARRIAGE" RALLY IN IOWA

(EP) – Thousands of people attended a rally in Sioux City, Iowa on Oct. 10. During the "Take a Stand for Marriage" rally Dobson talked about same-sex marriage and judicial activism. He said that 70 percent of voters have shown at the polls that they don't want the government to allow same-sex marriages. "Now judges are telling us they want to redefine the definition of marriage. We say not in our lifetime," Dobson told the crowd. Dobson said the attack on marriage in the United States has prompted him to tour the nation for a variety of speaking engagements. Dobson said he had not delivered a speech in Iowa since 1975.

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### LOUISIANA OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVES SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BAN

(EP) – Louisiana voters overwhelmingly approved a state constitutional amendment on Sept. 18 banning same-sex marriages and civil unions. The amendment won approval with 79 percent of the vote.

Evangelical Christians were credited, in part, with the amendment's passage. Christian activists had had conducted an intense grassroots lobbying campaign for the amendment, which had been expected to pass easily.

"It's gratifying to see the people of Louisiana had an opportunity, as distinguished from judges, having the final say on the issue of whether traditional marriage will continue to be the fundamental institution in our state," Darrell White, a retired state judge and consultant for Louisiana Family Forum, which pushed for the amendment, told AP.

Louisiana already has a law stating that marriage can be only between a man and woman, but supporters of the amendment want to protect that law in the Constitution. The amendment also would prohibit state officials and courts from recognizing out-of-state marriages and civil unions between homosexuals.

Homosexual activist groups have vowed to challenge the election results.

Similar amendments to ban same-sex marriage are on ballots in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon and Utah. Petitions in Ohio are still being verified.

#### BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

##### Financial Report

9-1-2004 to 9-30-2004

Beginning Balance .....	\$51.19
RECEIPTS:	
Berea M.B. C., Westport, TN .....	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	2,100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	225.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Everson, WA .....	700.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	200.00
.....	3,275.00
TOTAL .....	3,326.19
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time .....	715.00
Tapes .....	202.33
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	917.33
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,408.86

#### CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance .....	\$531.52
RECEIPTS:	
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	2,000.00
Total .....	2,531.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT .....	200.00
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,331.52

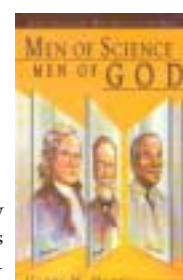
#### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

##### Financial Report

9-1-2004 to 9-30-2004

Beginning Balance .....	\$-92.72
RECEIPTS:	
Arthur D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV .....	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL .....	56.11
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	1,100.00
Berea B. C. Bookstore, Mantachie, MS .....	720.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Berea M. B.C., Mansfield, OH .....	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westport, TN .....	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV .....	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	225.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL .....	100.00
Central Ave. B. C., Tampa, FL .....	25.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	20.00
Faith M. B. C., Clarksville, TN .....	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	25.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL .....	50.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	240.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	90.00
Grace M. B. M., Marion, IL .....	25.00
J. L. Sadler, Alford, FL .....	70.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL .....	50.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	200.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA .....	150.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM .....	200.00
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
Ocoona M. B. C., Keokee, VA .....	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	75.00
South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA .....	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS .....	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH .....	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL .....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC .....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	200.00
Wendell Beall, Cedarville, WV .....	300.00
West Milton B. C., West Milton, OH .....	100.00
Subscriptions .....	317.00
Anon. ....	660.00
Dividing Checks .....	840.30
Sub Total .....	\$7,928.41
TOTAL .....	\$7,835.69
EXPENDITURES:	
Wages .....	3,920.00
Postage .....	783.38
FICA taxes .....	281.53
Dividing checks .....	389.50
Total Expenditures .....	5,374.41
.....	2,461.28
Bank charge .....	-17.05
ENDING DEFICIT .....	\$2,444.23

**Men of Science Men  
of God**  
by  
**Henry M. Morris**  
**\$7.99**



Because of the evolutionary dogma that dominates America's teaching institutions, most people are unaware that many of the world's greatest scientists were Christians and ardent creationists who believed the Book of Genesis. This book presents the facts.





## WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

### Secure Our National Security



As a retired member of the U. S. Coast Guard, who saw active duty in W. W. II, I am still deeply concerned about protecting our nation.

Currently supported by a controlled media, many of those running for political office are expressing concern for our national defense by stressing that some nation in North Africa—many thousands of miles from *our* coasts—*may* be trying to develop Weapons of Mass Destruction, such as nuclear bombs.

This alleged concern may be “politically correct,” but it is sadly and vitally misplaced! Even if one of these politically targeted African nations should develop nuclear weapons, they have no viable means to hit our country with them!

A major, if not the most important concern for *our* National Security should be the occupation of U. S. Territory and Military Facilities in the Isthmus of Panama; occupation by a nation which not only has a stock pile of W.M.D., it has the means to hit every city in mainland U.S.A. with them! Their military leaders have expressed hostility for the U.S., and indicated a belief that war against the U.S.A. is inevitable. As our Commander-in-Chief has established a precedent for “pre-emptive” warfare, they will probably feel morally and tactically justified in doing the same to our nation.

The nation that I am referring to is Red China (“People’s Republic” is an obvious, deliberately misleading facade). Communist China is a dictatorship.

Although Red China is a real, major threat to our National Security, for some strange reason mentioning this threat is a “politically in-correct” taboo!

China has been awarded, de facto, “Most Favored Nation” status in regard to exports into the U.S.A. Obvious hypocrisy was to label this status as “Normal Trade Relations.” Major manufacturing resources are currently being “outsourced” to Red China. In World War I and World War II it was the U.S.A.’s capability to mass produce that turned the tide against Germany. Our plants, (which had been used to manufacture civilian goods on large scales at comparatively low cost) were converted to manufacturing planes, tanks, military vehicles, ships and many other such war materials. “Outsourcing” our manufacturing capability to other nations, particularly to Red China, is a major threat to our National Security.

OUR Canal in the Isthmus of Panama is vital to our commercial interests and particularly vital to our “National

Defense.” The terms of the “Treaty” under which President Carter surrendered *our* Canal was the Panamanian version—not the version to which our Senate, in accord with the Constitution, had given the President their “Advice and Consent.” The surrender of OUR Canal is unconstitutional and therefore void. OUR Canal is now under the control of the Red Chinese. By a designed “accident,” they can now close the Canal at a vital time.

OUR Zone in the Isthmus of Panama is U.S. Territory, bought and paid for as was Louisiana and Alaska! This surrender of our territory is clearly unconstitutional. Red China can now launch missiles from bases in *our* Zone, a threat to the entire mainland U.S.A.!

OUR Military Bases in the Zone are U.S. Property, which cannot be legally relinquished without an Act of Congress. Those bases can now be exploited by Red China—a threat to our National Security, as these bases were (and still are) vital to our defenses against any attack originating from “South of the Border.”

We can be instrumental in making the Red China threat, military and otherwise, a substantial issue in the current political campaign—if we will use the means available to us.

Letters to the Editor, “Newsletters,” the Internet, group discussions, the pulpit, political rallies conducted by contenders for office, letters to those asking for campaign funds, political party questionnaires, are the means at our disposal; means that we should employ to establish OUR National Security!

Putting up a fight in Political Combat NOW could prevent *devastating* losses in eventual Military Combat LATER.

(I served as Chief Advisor on our Canal for the National Security Center, a Non-Governmental Organization. As such, I wrote numerous stories and newspaper articles. I also wrote two books, “*The PANAMA CANAL TREATIES SWINDLE: Consent to*

*Disaster*”; and “*DEATH KNELL Of The PANAMA CANAL?*”—both introduced by Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.)

## Christ's Prayer

*Continued from page 456*

**sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.** Say, “Stand back, for God calls me, and I will come.” Sinner, it is Jesus thou must rely on, and it is not thyself. It is nothing that thou hast, or canst have; it is nothing that thou dost, or canst do; thou canst be saved by Jesus Christ alone. Have faith in Him, and rely on the Savior. Dost thou feel thy need of a Savior? Then come and cast thyself upon Him. Leave off being anything, and let Christ be everything. Leave off doing, and let Him do. Say, —

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,*

*On Christ's kind arms I fall*

*He is my strength and righteousness,*

*My Jesus and my all.”*

If any be awakened tonight by my words, I have not done it, nor has the sinner done it; but to God’s praise be it spoken; and to His name be all the glory.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Conferences and Special Meetings

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Paducah, KY and Pastor Jerry Asberry will be hosting their annual Thanksgiving Conference Monday through Thursday November 22-25, 2004. The conference will begin with the Monday evening service, will continue with morning, afternoon, and evening services on Tuesday and Wednesday, and conclude with the morning service on Thursday. Meals will be provided at the church building for those who attend. The church is providing lodging for all out of town guests at the Pear Tree Inn of Paducah, KY. You may call the hotel at 1-800-325-0720 to make a reservation before November 8th. Tell them you are with the “Faith Missionary Baptist Church Thanksgiving Conference” and everything will be taken care of. For further information, contact Pastor Jerry Asberry at 270-554-4411, or you may call the church phone at 270-554-2305. You may also

contact the pastor via email at [jasberry@apex.net](mailto:jasberry@apex.net).

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The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS and Pastor Ray Sexton will be hosting a Bible conference Friday through Sunday, December 3-5. The preachers for the meeting will be Bros. Daniel Pope, David O’Neal, Arthur Blevins, Larry Wilson, Jack Dupelchain, and others. For more information, contact Pastor Sexton at the church phone number, 620-845-2461,

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The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Northport, AL and Pastor Todd Bryant will be hosting a fellowship meeting on Saturday December 11th. The meeting will begin at 10:00 am with Bros. Doyal Thomas and Steve Martin preaching. Lunch will be served at the church building. In the afternoon service, Bros. Jeff Short and Troy McGahan will be preaching. For more information, contact Pastor Bryant at 205-333-8449, or via email at [toddbr Bryant@juno.com](mailto:toddbr Bryant@juno.com).

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### Churches in Need of a Pastor

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

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The Unity Missionary Baptist Church of Paron, AR is currently in need of a pastor. Any interested preacher that is strong in the doctrines of God’s sovereign grace and not currently pastoring may contact Anthony Johnson at 501-594-5218 for more information.

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The Calvary Baptist Church of Ashland, KY is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders should send resume and church covenant to the church: Calvary Baptist Church, P. O. Box 60, Ashland, KY 41101; or contact Mike Sherman at home at 606-928-0306, at work at 740-532-4223, or at mobile number 606-923-9443.

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### Miscellaneous

The Berea Baptist Bookstore is now online. We do not yet have all available titles listed, but we are continuously working to update the sections we have. Visit us at [www.bereabaptistchurch.org](http://www.bereabaptistchurch.org) and click on the bookstore link.

Also, we have past issues of **The Berea Baptist Banner** available in PDF format. Just click on the *Banner* link and select *past issues*.

## INDEX

<i>A Historical Survey of Sovereign Grace</i> by Tom Ross .....	p. 441
Bible and the Newspaper .....	p. 457
<i>Christ's Prayer for Believers</i> by Milburn Cockrell .....	p. 441
Forum .....	pp. 450 - 451
<i>Refuges of Lies</i> by Milburn Cockrell .....	p. 441
<i>The Burnt Bible</i> by Milburn Cockrell (Sermon Outline) .....	p. 447
<i>The Christian Voter's Guide</i> by Jeff Short .....	p. 441
<i>The Difference in the Old Gospel and the New Gospel</i> by Rolfe Barnard .....	p. 441
<i>World Scene: Secure our National Security</i> by G. Russell Evans .....	p. 460

