

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

The Heresy of Consistent Preterism

By Doug Newell
of Wake Forest, North Carolina

Consistent Preterism is a belief that the return of Jesus Christ has already taken place and that all prophecy has been fulfilled. Proponents of this system will have you to believe that it is merely a slight difference of eschatological opinions; however, I contend that it is a dangerous, cancerous false doctrine that has dire consequence to the faith of some who may fall prey to its malicious teaching. It is a form of the same ancient heresy Paul warned Timothy about in II Timothy 2:15-18, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and**



Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" [Emphasis DPN] (II Tim. 2:15-18). Hymenaeus

and Philetus also taught that the future resurrection had already taken place just as modern consistent Preterism teaches today. Unfortunately, it does not stop with the resurrection, but to be consistent they teach that all prophecy is fulfilled. Any prophetic passage in all of Holy Scripture you can name, any future event in God's Word, has already taken place; everything to the point they teach we are now living in the new Heaven

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The Promise of Answered Prayer

By Paul Stepp
Indore, West Virginia



Something that we, as Christians, often talk about is how that God is a God Who hears prayers. We constantly remind ourselves and others about the need that we have for prayer unto God, and how our prayers are heard by a God that is able and willing to answer our prayers. The Lord Jesus Christ said in the Beatitudes, **"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"** (Matt. 7:7-8). This is a very familiar passage that concerns prayer; and probably all of us have heard this passage preached

on many times. Now I want us to think about prayer, and how God has given us a promise in regards to our prayers.

Specifically, what, let us think about, are some ways in which we must pray? The Lord has promised to answer our prayers, and this is something that we take great comfort in. But, He has also taught us the specifics about how, when, why, and where to pray. In other words, He has promised to hear our prayers, but He has also levied certain requirements upon us---which requirements and truths

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Whosoever Will

By Larry J. Killion
of Tacoma, Washington

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Let us pray that we might receive a blessing from this thought as we take it in context with the rest of the New Testament. God's Word does not contradict itself. The Bible clearly says that salvation is for those chosen of God from before the foundation of the world and at the same time it is also true that we may preach salvation freely to all the world and whosoever will, may come to Christ for salvation.

We trust that you have given some thought to the doctrine of the atonement of Christ. This preacher has done



some study on the atonement made by the Eternal Son of God according to the inspired Word of God. It is very evident from the Bible that the atonement of Christ was substitutionary in design. It was just and merciful in effect. It was redeeming in nature and infinite in its scope or power. We learn also from the Bible that Christ's atonement was particular in its extent or application. None can successfully refute these biblical facts.

Along with these wonderful truths about the atonement of Christ we also notice in God's Word that there are several Scriptures dealing with Jesus as

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Athletics: A Religion which Rivals that of Christ Jesus

By Nathaniel R. Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas



"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6).

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you" (Gal. 3:1)?

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (I Thess. 1:9).

"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (I Cor. 4:7).

We are fast approaching the season known as "Fall". With it comes several things: that changing of the color of the leaves, of which God said would not cease (Gen. 8:22); children &

adolescents returning to school. But there is something of which I am greatly concerned about in my own life, and that of the lives of the children of God: athletics as a religion which rivals that of Jesus Christ.

Permit me to present my case before you, before you set down this article. I want to speak to each and every one who professes to be a "Christian". That word is found three places in the Scriptures (Acts

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We need to recognize the truth that no amount of church attendance---
no amount of going through a form of worship in public can take the
place of the personal, private worship of God. -- Roy Mason

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

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Athletics:

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11:26; Acts 26:28; I Pet. 4:16). In Acts 11:26, "Christian" is first mentioned, and its meaning is "followers of Christ" or "Christ-like." Now I believe that this has to do with more than simply saying "I'm a Christian." This country is filled with people who call themselves "Christians," but in reality have never been washed in the blood of Christ, have never repented of their sins and never believed on Jesus as their substitute for sin's penalty. Rather, my dear reader, many more people have a 'sport' as their religion! And I declare unto you that these 'sports' have become a religion that is in direct confrontation with the religion of Christ Jesus my Lord and Savior.

Permit me to use the example of Football. Let me give you the average "devoted fans" schedule for the upcoming season of football (I know what it is because I speak from personal experience with a few exceptions). Upon Wednesday evening, prayer meetings will be skipped because they must go to the local 'middle school/junior high' football game. Thursday evening, Freshmen and Junior Varsity are playing while a College Football Game is being recorded at home. Friday night, Varsity Football has their game (which we all know is already a religion in and of itself in Texas). Then on Saturday, the average devoted fan will get up and watch College Game Day before the football games begin. All day Saturday will be spent in-front of the TV, watching different games. On the Lord's Day (Sunday), from 12:00 (noon) till 11:00 PM many so-called "Christians" will devote their time, energy, and outrages upon their television sets as they live vicariously through their idols (of which they will claim not to worship all the while having posters, jerseys and certain rituals they perform before each game ensuring their team will win). Upon arrival at work on Monday, discussion will be had all day about the past weekend's events and debates on bad calls, good calls, what one should have done, and so-on and so-forth. Further discussion will be had about the upcoming game on Monday night. Then when one arrives at home, dinner will be eaten; the children ushered off to bed, or permitted to stay up to watch the game. The normal fan will stay up over 3 hours to watch this game, but they would never sit for three hours listening to a sermon or reading their Bible. The following day, Tuesday, the Monday night game will be debated at work and the upcoming middle school/junior high game will be brought into the discussion. This will repeat itself ad-nauseous from August until the beginning of February. That is over six months; over six months! Every single day of the week for six months this

sport/religion will be spoken of by people and so-called "Christians".

Now let me ask you, so-called "Christians" and even you who really are "Christians": When is the last time that you spoke to someone or some people for every single day for six months about Jesus Christ? about the Scriptures? about salvation? about the Lord's kind of church, about the coming of the Lord? about your Sunday school lesson, or the sermon? When is the last time that was done? When is the last time that we ever, on a Monday said, "Hey, let me tell you about what we learned about at Church yesterday?" But we are so easily distracted, so easily able to talk about things that really do not matter. Many "Christians" are even distracted from the Lord's work by the ungodliness that is happening in Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Oval Office. We are so quick to talk about these things, but we seem to be tongue tied when it comes to what really matters: The BIBLE and preaching Christ, "But we preach Christ crucified..." (I Cor. 1:23).

Now let me ask you again, "Christian," when is the last time you have spent all day Saturday, in preparation for services on Sunday? When is the last time you spent all day in prayer that God might save your children, your neighbor, your friends, your wife, etc.? When is the last time you spent all day Saturday handing out tracts, going door-to-door witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ? Probably never, that's when! And yet you call yourself a "Christian," yet where is the "Christ-likeness"? Where is it? As we already quoted I Cor.4:7, "Who hath made thee to differ?" This implies that there is a difference between the saved and the lost. But where is the difference? For a child of God, there is a godly difference that will be, yea must be manifested and will do so in a godly way, and will not cause us to devote all of our time to chasing after the carnality of this world! Do not misunderstand me. I am not saying you are lost, that you are on your way to hell, but I am saying that you are not following Christ when you have devoted half of a year to a sport! We at the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, Kansas have worship services two days a week; four services a week (counting Sunday school). Yet if you are saved and you are going to or following football seven days a week for six months; one would be devoting around one hundred-eighty two days out of the year to a sport. If one attends church every Sunday and every Wednesday for one year they still only worship God one hundred-four days out of the year. That is nearly double the time spent with football as is spent worshipping God in and through His kind of Church!

Paul said of the church at Thessalonica in I Thess. 1:9, "...how ye [the Thessalonians] turned to God from

idols to serve the living and true God."

Now if one is saved, then there was a time when you did not worship the Lord God. And then after He saved you, you began to serve Him as opposed to those idols or false gods. But, even though many confess to have been turned, there are many "Christians" who spend more time at the altar of T.V. watching sports than they do worshipping Jesus Christ in His kind of a Church; there are more saints who spend more time on the internet with their fantasy football than they do reading God's love letter to His people (the Bible); and then after several years, these parents will wonder why their children know absolutely nothing about the Bible, nothing about Jesus, that they cannot name one single apostle, that their children know not one single Bible Doctrine, but they can name the starting quarterback for the University of Michigan football teams since they were six years old! My friend, we are in that day already! Is that not the case with many children today?

Let me put it to you in these terms: If a man spent seven days a week, speaking to a woman (who is not his wife) on the phone, at work, on the internet, learning things about her, missing time with his family to spend time with this woman, thinking about this woman all the time and yet claimed to 'love his wife,' would anyone honestly believe him? And yet that is what the majority of 'Christians' are doing today. They claim to love the Lord Jesus Christ, but they spend all their time with this sport or that sport! You answer me, "Whom Do You Love?" I declare unto you that if I came into the homes of many so-called "Christians" and took their Bibles, they would not even know it. However, if I removed their *Sports Illustrated Football Preview Edition*, or took their Internet away so they could not gamble on their Fantasy Football, or took their HD Television, or removed their College Football Sports Pack and NFL Sunday Ticket Package from their satellite provider, they would be up in arms! My dear friend, to whom is your love towards: Jesus or football? Let me quote Jesus Himself: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [money]" (Matt. 6:24).

I want to tell you that you cannot serve God and something else. Remember what Joshua said? "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Josh .24:15).

And what of Elijah who spoke to Israel prior to Jehovah manifesting

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Athletics:

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whom was God: **“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow Him. And the people answered him not a word”** (1 Kings 18:21).

“How long halt ye between two opinions?” If football is god then serve it; but if God is God, then serve Him, but you cannot have a mixture of the two. Now do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that Football is evil, that it is ungodly. I am saying that when a child of God devotes more time, more energy, more money, more knowledge to something than the Lord Jesus Christ, he has something between him and God. Satan knows your hearts. He knows how to distract your affection for the Lord. He knows how to divert your attention in subtle ways from following the Lord. We are not ignorant of the Devil's devices, wiles, and tricks. We are familiar with how he deceived Eve in the Garden (Gen.3:1-5). Read those Scriptures and note Satan's subtlety, his disguise, his lies so carefully covered with bits and pieces of truth to make it believable. But what happened? Adam and Eve died (spiritually) and the whole of the human race was plunged into sin and the only way to be redeemed is through the blood of the Son of God!

I am not calling for a complete boycott of all things athletic. What I am asking everyone that nameth the name of Christ is to **“examine yourselves”** (II Cor.13:5). I am asking you to compare your life with that of the Bible and see if there is anything in it if you have devoted your life to more than the cause of Christ. Can one honestly profess themselves to be a “Christian” when they never attend church? When they will spend over \$200.00/month for an NFL Sunday Ticket, but will rob God through tithes and offerings (Mal. 3:8)? Can a man call himself a “Christian” when he spends more time on the internet in Fantasy Football than he does in the house of God worshipping the Lord in **“Spirit and in truth”** (John 4:24)?

To you who are able to do this: **“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel”** (Gal.1:6). And I wonder: **“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”** (Gal. 3:1).

Beloved, we are fast approaching the day in which the Lord Jesus Christ shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and we who are saved shall go home to be with Him. There we shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. There we

shall give answer for our faithfulness or lack thereof. And I am afraid, that those 50,000 so-called “Christians” in every stadium on the Lord's Day will have to give answer as to why they were not in the Lord's House on the Lord's Day. I doubt seriously, if every person in a stadium on Sunday is saved. I believe rather that many of them ARE worshipping their god at that moment: carnal lusts. Perhaps football is not your rival to Christ. I chose it because it was mine. Every fall I must make a decision and I must ask God for help in it. Whatever it is that is between you and Christ, may you now lay aside that weight which does so easily beset you and follow on after the Lord (Heb. 12:1).

How about you? Are you saved? Then why won't you serve the Lord? I am not asking you to stop watching sports; but I am advocating that it is a religion in its own right when it interferes with worship and service to Jesus Christ. **“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity”** (II Tim. 2:19). God knows if you are His & if you are His, then you need to depart from following others and follow God. Let me close with the second verse of the hymn, *Nothing Between*, written by C. A. Tindley:

*Nothing between like worldly pleasure;
Habits of life, though harmless they seem,
Must not my heart from Him ever sever,
He is my all, there's nothing between.*



Whosoever Will

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the Saviour of all men. The Bible clearly teaches that God has a people that He elected to be saved. **“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will”** (Eph. 1:4-5).

God the Father gave those that He chose unto salvation to His Son, Jesus, and Jesus died, was buried and rose again the third day to redeem them that the Father gave to Him. **“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him... I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word... I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou**

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hast given me; for they are thine” (John 17:1-2, 6, 9).

These chosen of God (the elect) are found through out all the masses of humanity, both among the Jews and among the Gentiles. **“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”** (Tit. 2:11-14).

Jesus did not die for all men without exception; He died for all men without distinction **“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me”** (John 12:32). Christ did not provide a potential salvation for everyone in general, which may or may not work, but He actually secured salvation for His people in particular from out of the fallen race of mankind. **“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).

We believe that whosoever will, may come. But our text is not a general atonement verse. It teaches particular redemption. As the Holy Spirit blesses the ministries of the Lord's true churches, **“..let him that is A THIRST come.”** Who is that? It is not every individual without exception. No, it is those among us all who have been made thirsty or made willing. **“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth”** (Ps. 110:3).

You see, it is not just whosoEVER, but whosoever WILL and the only ones who ever WILL, are His people, when He makes them willing, the chosen of God. **“Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causet to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple”** (Ps. 65:4). No man left to himself in his

totally depraved condition and apart from the grace of God can or will come to Christ.

But some SHALL come because they are drawn by the power of God. **“But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not”** (Jn. 6:44). **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 6:36). **“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father”** (John 6:63-65). **“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”** (John 1:12-13).

Now, some try to argue against this wonderful truth with II Pet. 3:9: **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”** They say that the Lord is not willing that any should perish and we agree. But please notice who the “any” are in this verse. This is not a verse that teaches a universal salvation of all men without exception. This is a verse that teaches the absolute surety of salvation for “us-ward”. Who are these “us-ward”? The context makes that perfectly clear. They are not all men without exception.

They are those of us that are the beloved with pure minds. **“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance”** (II Pet. 3:1). They are the “ye” in all holy conversation and godliness. **“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness”**

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(II Pet. 3:11). They are the “we” who look for new heavens. **“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness”** (II Pet. 3:13). They are the “ye” who are without spot. **“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless”** (II Pet. 3:14). They are the “ye” who are steadfast in grace. **“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness”** (II Pet. 3:17). The context teaches with absolute clarity that the “any” whom God is not willing to perish is not all men without exception but the “us-ward” of His elective grace.

God has chosen a people and is calling them to salvation. **“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall”** (II Pet. 1:10). Would you be willing to come to Christ right now and receive Him as your personal Saviour? **“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”** (Rev. 22:17). AMEN.



Answered Prayer

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we must uphold, if we desire that our God would hear and answer our prayers according to our expectations. So, let us look at some of the keys to answered prayer.

Certainly God will hear our prayers, and certainly He will answer our prayers. But from our perspective, we don't usually consider our prayers to be answered unless the precise result that we expect is delivered to us. Sometimes God does answer us in the exact way in which we expect Him to answer our prayers. However, many times He does not do exactly as we had anticipated Him doing, and perhaps the anticipated result is not completely realized.

I want us to be sure to understand that there is more to prayer than a simple request and then a fulfilling of that request in the way in which we desire. A lot of folks today---even many supposed Christians---tend to treat our God as if He were a modern day drive-thru. They seem to think that they can just put in their requests unto God and then they can pull up to the window and have their requests fulfilled. These folks must not realize just how wonderful,

awesome, fearful and sovereign our God is! We must not come before Him on a whim! Nor should we take lightly the wonderful blessings of prayer!

It is true that God has promised to answer our prayers, but it is also true that He has given us instructions concerning our prayers. I think it would be good for us to look at some ways in which we can pray and consider our prayers to have been answered.

BE FAITHFUL

One of the first aspects of prayer which we usually consider is the necessity of faith in prayer. The Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples, **“Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”** (Matt. 21:21-22). The Lord wanted His disciples to believe in Him and to trust Him. He wanted them to have every confidence in his abilities to hear and answer their prayers. And I believe the Lord still expects the same attitude from us today.

We read in James 1:5-6: **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”** James also tells us in James 5:15, **“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”** If you notice, James, in all of these verses, speaks of prayers being answered as a result of faith. It wouldn't do us any good to pray to a God that we didn't believe could answer our prayers. And, any Christian that comes before the Throne of Grace without faith, is just as well off if he did not pray at all! Do not waver in your faith and confidence in God! Surely He can do anything that it is His will to do. Therefore, if we will pray unto Him and we will do so in faith, then we can trust that He will hear us and answer us.

In the Old Testament when Elijah brought the prophets of Baal together so that he could prove, in the sight of all Israel, that the Lord was God (see I Kings 18), we find that Baal could not even hear his followers. However, Elijah's God (and our God) not only heard Elijah, but He was also able to answer him.

When you look more closely at the Scriptures we have just read in the Book of James, you will notice that all of these things which are prayed for are things that it is right and proper and good for men to pray for. Now, we will talk some more about this later, but let me just say at this point that faith in prayer is

necessary, but to pray for something that is approved of God (such as wisdom or health in sickness or the forgiveness of sins) is also necessary in order to be sure of the promise of answered prayer.

KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

We read in I John 3:22: **“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”** God has placed certain requirements upon us as to what we should do. And God has placed certain restrictions upon us as to what we should not do. These are all included in His commandments unto us. When we abide by these commandments, then we can fully expect Him to hear our cries and answer our prayers.

David once said in Psalms 34:15, **“The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.”** The faithful and the righteous in this world are the ones that can expect to have their prayers answered. Surely, it would not do us much good to pray unto God---and expect Him to hear us and answer us---if we are willingly pursuing evil and contaminating ourselves with the sins of the world. Again we read in John 15:7, **“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”** Those folks that will love and obey and keep the Word of God, will, when they pray, have their prayers answered in such a way as they might expect.

You know, it is always a pleasure to consider the fact that the Son of God prayed while He was here on this earth. As you think about this, it becomes obvious that He always received what He prayed for, because what He prayed for was in perfect conjunction with the will and the purpose of God. He always did what His Father sent Him to do---He did not vary from His commandments or expectations in the slightest way. If we conform ourselves to God in that same manner, we have the same assurances of answered prayer as what the Son of God did when He walked this earth during His earthly ministry.

DO NOT ASK AMISS

Let's read what James has to say in James 4:1-3, **“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”** To me, this idea of asking amiss generally revolves around our fleshly desires. Sometimes we ask for things that we want, rather than for things that we need. This is a great problem in Christianity today. Christians today have a hard time distinguishing between their wants and their desires. We must

be sure of our petitions before we offer them up. It is nearly sacrilegious to make a request of our sovereign God that is centered on a want or some selfish desire. It's not as if we are wasting His time, but the principle is the same.

And, when we are faithful unto God; and when we are righteous in our doings; and when we keep His commandments; then, I believe, we will find that we will more and more, ask for those things that we ought to ask for. In other words, if we will conform ourselves unto God, then we will find out that the occasions that we “ask amiss” will be fewer and fewer.

ACCEPT HIS WILL

We read in I John 5:14-15, **“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”** This is hard for Christians to conform to as well. We are so accustomed to a religion that inserts man's will and his abilities at the top of our doctrines, that we have a difficult time subjecting our will to God's will, much less anyone else's will. However, to put it plainly, we do not always know best---but God does.

To me, this concept of submitting our will to the will of God is a part of the culmination of answered prayer. Surely, if we will grow and learn and behave ourselves in the Holy Spirit, then, inevitably, our will and our desires will be more and more in line with the will and desire of God Himself. Therefore, when we pray unto God---just as Jesus Christ did while He was here on this earth---our requests will be heard and answered, because they are the same desires that God Himself has!

Let's read Job 38:1-8, **“Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?”** These verses demonstrate to us the futility and the absolute absurdity of any man thinking that he knows more than God when he prays. And yet, that is the attitude of probably the vast majority of Christians today. Who are we to oppose the will and the desire of God? And yet, it we persist in asking amiss; or if we persist in asking for wants rather

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Reasons Why We Should Love and Study the Bible

By Grover Laird

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97).

Recently I found myself making a list of some of the blessings that come from reading the Bible. The list reached twenty and I knew that there were many more. I want to mention some of those. Maybe you would like to start where I leave off and make even a longer list.

Reading the Bible will bring---

I. The Peace Of God

The Bible speaking of the peace of God says that it **"passeth all understanding"** (Phil. 4:7). Nothing can take the place of the peace of God. It is surely this peace that comes from loving the Bible and reading it---**"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them"** (Ps. 119:165). Speaking of the wisdom that comes from the Bible the writer of Proverbs also spoke of this peace---**"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace"** (Prov. 3:17).

Spend time with the Bible and experience the peace of God.

II. Not Being Easily Offended

Being easily offended has caused untold trouble in our homes and our churches. Is there not something that we can do to cut down on this problem that causes so much heartbreak and tears? Yes there is. Notice again Psalms 119:165: **"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."**

Spend time with the Bible and experience freedom from being easily offended.

III. Live A Longer Life

There is a lot of money spent and efforts put forth trying to find a way to live longer. No doubt the cheapest and best way is to take off and enjoy some time each day meditating upon the Bible. Notice: **"My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee"** (Prov. 3:1-2). Also, **". . . the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased"** (Prov. 9:10-11).

Spend time with the Bible and live longer.

IV. Saves Us From Danger

There are many moral and physical dangers in this life that can cause us a lot of trouble. The Bible can help us to find a way around these---**"Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in**

keeping of them there is great reward" (Ps. 19:11).

Spend time with the Bible and escape the pitfalls of life.

V. The Joy Of The Lord

The Bible tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh. 8:10). It also tells us to **"rejoice in the Lord alway"** (Phil. 4:4). Meditating upon the Bible regularly will help us to do this---**"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart. . ."** (Jer. 15:16). The Psalmist also said, **"The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart. . ."** (Ps. 19:8).

Spend time with the Bible and experience the joy of the Lord.

VI. The Wisdom From God

Even the simple minded person can become wise by daily meditating upon the Bible---**". . . the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple"** (Ps. 19:7). A person who faithfully studies the Bible can become wiser than his enemies, his teachers, and even the older people who have learned much by experience---**"Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. . . I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. . . I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts"** (Ps. 119:98-100).

Spend time with the Bible and experience the wisdom of God.

A few of the other blessings that come to the person who meditates in the Bible day and night are Guidance (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 3:23), an Inheritance (Ps. 19:11; Acts 20:32), Help in overcoming sin (Ps. 119:11; 17:4), Help in fearing God and being humble (Deut. 17:18-20), Help in building our church (Acts 20:32), Comfort in hours of sorrow (Ps. 119:50,52,92), and getting our Faith increased (Rom. 10:17).

Why not take time to meditate in God's Word day and night and enjoy being a blessed person (Ps. 1-3)?

(The Revivalist Oct-Dec 2009).



GONE FOREVER NEVER TO RETURN

Look at your mailing label on the front page of this month's paper. If you see above your name "Expires 10/2009" then this will be your last issue. So don't miss an issue! Renew now so you won't miss all the articles in next month's Banner.

Answered Prayer

(Continued from page 184) ♦

than needs, it is not likely that God will consistently answer our prayers.

I know that God instructs us to be persistent in our prayers---we read about this in Luke 18:1-8: **"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"** Certainly this widow woman was persistent in her requests and her desires. But, we can see that her requests and desires were also just and needful.

So, along with being persistent, our prayers should be in accordance with, and subject to, the will of God. We read about this in Mark 14:35-36, 39-41, **"And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. . . And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."** In prayer, as in all things, the Lord Jesus Christ is our ultimate and best example. And, even as He submitted Himself to the will of God---and this is not a show of weakness, but rather, this is proof of subjection and obedience---even so, we should submit ourselves to the will of God, even in our prayers.

HAVE A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

I suppose that to have a clear conscience is important in all of our service unto God. But, especially, we must be careful to cleanse our hearts and minds when we come into the presence of the Great King! We read in Mark 11:24-26, **"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when**

ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

These verses mention the need for faith and belief in God. But, these verses also emphasize our need to forgive one another. How many church members do you know that will hold grudges against others---even against other brothers and sisters in Christ? And, how many churches do you know, where you can plainly see the animosity or lack of kindness between brothers and sisters in Christ? I have had folks tell me that they cannot get along with this preacher or with this brother or with this sister. Don't you think that these thoughts and attitudes will impede the prayers of the saints of God? Ought we to not just frankly forgive our brothers and sisters? And, if not, then how can we expect our Father to forgive us our own sins? Are you and I pure enough that we condemn others of their sins against us, and expect that we have no sins for which God or man might have to forgive us?

I think that we do God and our brothers and sisters a disservice if we do not forgive one another, and seek to come before God with pure hearts, and with pure motivations. It is then, when we have sanctified our hearts and minds, and when we have cast out the distractions and the sins and the grudges of the flesh---it is then that we can come before God in prayer, and expect that He will hear us and answer us according to our desires.

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Finally, let's read what Jesus Christ had to say to His disciples in John 16:24. **"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."** While the Lord Jesus was here on this earth, His disciples did not pray in the name of Jesus Christ. But, since He has ascended into Heaven, and is, even now, on the right hand of God interceding on our behalf, it now behooves us to pray unto God in the name of Jesus Christ.

All of these other things that we have mentioned are very important. It is important that we have faith in God's power, that we obey God that we do not ask amiss, that we accept His will, and that we have a clear conscience. But, all of these things would not do us any good, if it were not for the fact that Jesus Christ has made the way clear for us! He has opened the very doors of Heaven, into the presence of God the Father. Now, we can come before Him and offer up our thanksgiving and praises; and we can come before Him and present our prayers and our supplications.

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Answered Prayer

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I think that it does us all good, every time we pray, to remind ourselves that prayer is a blessing and a privilege--- and prayer is only granted to us through and by our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is quite appropriate, that, when we pray, we announce unto God and to others that we are praying in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

It is true that God promises to answer our prayers. When we pray to God, we have an invincible and sovereign God that we pray to. What a wonder and a comfort it is to have our God to pray unto! There is no other God like Him! Those of us that are saved are beneficiaries of the blessing of prayer--- and we ought not to take this blessing for granted.

Think about this also: It is a blessing that God doesn't always give us what we want in exactly the way we desire it. He knows better than we what we need. I am glad that He does, and I am glad that when I don't pray for what I should or in the manner that I should, He still hears, and He answers my prayers in the way that they should be answered so that, ultimately, only His name is glorified. We read in Romans 8:26-27, **"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."**

Remember, if we pray according to the will of God, and if we do these other things that we have mentioned, our prayers most certainly will be answered and they will be answered in precisely the way that we expect them to be answered. However, when we don't pray in a way that reflects all of these things that we have talked about, our prayers are still heard and answered, but perhaps we don't receive what we anticipate, because we haven't observed all of the requirements of prayer. Only when our expectations are totally in line with God's expectations, can we expect our prayers to be answered according to our expectations. Don't let us be quick to speak against God when we don't get exactly what we request. The problem is not with Him, it is with us. And the answer that we receive is exactly the answer that we should receive. And, the answer that we receive is exactly what we should have been praying for all along--- that God's will be done.



Mini-Edition by Joseph Harris

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Why God Doesn't Always Meet Needs

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The promises of provision from God for His children are numerous and wonderful. God provides our every heartbeat, the food we eat and even luxuries that we could essentially do without. He is a great God and every time in every way, always and without fail, supplies our basic needs, ensuring that no child of His goes without the necessities of life. That last sentence is very comforting, yet sometimes, basic needs of life are not always supplied for the child of God.

If you believe God always and without hesitation, supplies every basic need at all times for all His children without discrimination, then you have been watching too much TBN, or at least the wrong programs on TBN. As a general truth, God does supply our needs and even some desires. Some like to say that God will always supply our needs, not our greeds. Sounds spiritual.

Need is determined by God, not man. That which we think we need and that which God KNOWS we need, may not match. Does this include even basic needs such as food, water, clothing, sleep and health? YES!

Consider Job.

There was a time in his life when his greatest need seemed to be good physical health. His body was covered in boils, which brought fever, meaning he was in severe pain. One boil can cause great discomfort. Imagine not being able to sit, turn, or relax without extreme pain. Yet, God did not immediately heal him. And remember, Job had no idea why all this was happening. At the time, he was not aware of the dialogue between God and Satan found at the beginning of the book. Though Job was LATER healed and blessed, God's divine plan for Job at the time was to glorify Him through suffering. God's divine call for Job overruled any healing or prosperity for the moment.

Consider Lazarus the beggar in Luke 16.

One thousand years earlier, David said he had never seen the righteous forsaken or His (God's) seed begging for bread. Yet notice, Lazarus was God's child, but he was lacking (1) good health, for he was full of sores (vs. 20), (2) he also lacked money for he was a beggar, and (3) he was lacking food, for he was eating crumbs from a table. If only poor Lazarus could

have just heard Benny Hinn or Kenneth Copeland preach, he would have been well and wealthy . . . if he had enough faith. Or just maybe God's calling for him was to glorify God through adversity. Abraham did say Lazarus received **"evil things"** in life, verse 25.

Consider the great Apostle Paul.

If anyone was in the will of God, and super spiritual, it was this rabbi from Tarsus who was changed on the Damascus road. He was even the one who said God would supply all need. By the way, he wrote this from prison. You would think his greatest need was being released so he could be free to preach the gospel. Strangely enough, Paul gives a list of several needs of his that were not met, all while in service for God.

In II Corinthians 11:27, he mentions being **"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness."** This verse specifically states Paul had need of sleep, good health, food, water, shelter, and clothes, yet these basic needs were not met. Why? God's specific calling for Paul was that he endure these needs and glorify God through his suffering. And notice Paul wasn't complaining, he was glorifying God.

This little nugget of truth, glorifying God through suffering, is ignored and denied because it goes against the flesh. If the modern day prosperity crowd preached this, offerings would bottom out tomorrow. You will not hear this message from these purveyors of prosperity whose sole purpose in life is to latch on to your loot. These "Profits" will continue to beguile the masses (even in Baptist churches, imagine that) while padding their pocketbooks. God help them on the Day of Judgment and may God help us to glorify Him through whatever calling He has given to each of us individually.

Culturally Accepted, Scripturally Rejected

Interpretations of Scripture are wide and varied. That which is as "plain as the nose on your face" to one person, is sometimes impossible to see by another person. Personally, I know the world would be a much better place if everyone just saw things my way. I know I would be happy. But now let's come back to reality. Background, training, environment, bias and spirituality affect understanding, perception and interpretation.

Concerning interpretation of the Bible, known formally as Hermeneutics, perception, based on presupposition is important. If the Bible is not viewed as being an independent authority, it has no authority. In other words, doctrine cannot be interpreted culturally. If current human culture is the basis of the final understanding of a passage, then the meaning of the passage changes as culture changes. This type of Bible interpretation

is known as cultural relativism. This view teaches that specific commands in Scripture are not as authoritative as the actual principle found in the command. The command becomes "culturally bound" or only good for the culture of the people to whom it was originally written, so only the principle is what lives on and can be used.

(1) This is how abortion, otherwise known as the senseless slaughter of innocent babies, can be justified. In other words, when Jesus said, **"Thou shalt do no murder"**, the real principle, which transcends the prohibition on murder, is the principle of respecting another human life, which would only be a fully formed human outside the womb. With this line of reasoning, it would be disrespectful to the mother, and a violation of her rights, to remove her option of choice. Did you get that logic? To remove her choice of whether or not to murder, is to disrespect her and after all, that is really what this whole **"Thou shalt not murder"** thing is about, in principle. This interpretation allows murder, since the higher prohibition is against disrespect. So to remove choice from the mother is to disrespect her, but removing life from the baby is not disrespecting the baby. The times, they are-a-changing and though murder today is culturally acceptable, it is still scripturally rejected.

(2) Homosexuality is becoming culturally acceptable more and more as society becomes de-sensitized to this abnormality. Men do not fit with men physically or emotionally. Women do not fit with women physically or emotionally. Though the Bible does have something to say about homosexuality, people do not want to hear the truth. Both the Old and New Testaments condemn it plainly, but an interpretation based on a higher principle says that infidelity in a relationship is wrong, not homosexuality itself, regardless if the relationship is heterosexual or homosexual. In other words, fidelity in a monogamous homosexual union would be acceptable today, though it was unacceptable in Paul's day in Hebrew culture. After all, today homosexuals are accepted as evidenced by their being elected to public office, being allowed to adopt children, and in some states, are given a marriage license. It's culturally acceptable, but still scripturally rejected.

(3) The trend to license and ordain women in a preaching and teaching ministry is becoming more prevalent today, based upon an interpretation of cultural relativism. In other words, the old male dominated culture of the Hebrews suppressed women, but modern 21st century culture liberates women, so the principle of equality must prevail. By the way, equality is not the issue; God ordained authority is the issue. The Bible once again has prescriptive words

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to follow. Paul in the inspired Scriptures stated, **“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression”** (I Tim. 2:11-14). God established the authority of the man over the woman through the priority of creation, and the fact that the man was not deceived in the temptation. In giving qualifications for the pastor, the inspired Scriptures also state that the bishop is to be **“...the husband of one wife...”** as found three verses later in I Timothy 3:2. It is impossible for any woman to be the husband of a wife (see number 2 above).

It is true that there are women in the Bible through whom God spoke a word of prophecy, such as Miriam the sister of Moses, (Exodus 15:20) Deborah, (Judges 4-5) Huldah the wife of Shallum, (II Kings 22:14,) the four daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8-9), and Anna (Luke 2:36), but they did not preach or teach in the temple or the church in the official capacity of an office. Plus, in Exodus 15:20, Miriam, a woman is seen leading women, not men. The truth of this consistent practice throughout the Bible is stated plainly in I Cor. 14:34, **“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.”** We’ve come a long way, baby. Women are now being elevated to positions of authority over men in churches. Many women today are licensed to preach and ordained to pastor churches, even in some Southern Baptist churches and the Black National Baptist Convention. Unfortunately, this practice will eventually come to pass in missionary Baptist churches (BMA missionary Baptist churches) and Independent Baptist Churches. Never say never, in today’s Laodicean style age. It is becoming more and more culturally acceptable, but is still scripturally rejected.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Moral Young Man

“And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17).

This event happened during our Lord’s journey from Perea to Jerusalem, just after raising Lazarus and about two weeks before the crucifixion. It is recorded also in Matthew’s Gospel (19:16-22) and in Luke’s Gospel (18:18-23).

This was a very critical time in this young man’s life. He had the privilege of conversing face to face with the Lord from Heaven. By a flood of earnest emotions he was lifted to the very feet of the Savior. But his springtime of opportunity passed without receiving the seed of the Word, which would have sprung up into eternal life and fruitfulness, so he passed into the desolate winter of a hopeless future.

GENERAL FACTS ABOUT HIM

First, he was a **“young man”** we learn from Matthew’s account (19:20). To the best of my knowledge, this is the only interview that Christ ever had with a young man during His earthly ministry. Of this young man’s birth and name we know nothing. Some have conjectured that he was Lazarus of Bethany, but I doubt this was the case. I feel sure that he was a handsome boy with red cheeks, bright eyes, physical fitness, a promising future, and the freshness of young life. Here is a man in the bloom of youth not hopelessly chained by long-cherished habits of sin.

Second, he was a young man occupying a high position in society. Luke tells us he was **“certain ruler”** (18:18). Just what is meant by this statement is not certain. It may mean he was the head man of a synagogue, or maybe that he was a civil magistrate of some city. Others hold it means he was a member of the great national council, the Sanhedrin. We can be sure from this statement that he had an unblemished character and promising talents, for the Jews would allow no one such a position without these qualifications.

Third, he was rich. Verse 22 of Mark 10 says: **“...he had great possessions.”** Being a young man the various kinds of wealth may have come by inheritance. This boy had been bred in the lap of luxury. Wealth often pampers pride and makes fools of the best of men, causing them to consider themselves superior to common humanity. But let it be remembered that it is important that rich men seek eternal

life as much as a poor man.

Fourth, he came running to Christ: **“...there came one running...”** (Mark 10:17). This running was a sign of eagerness and haste to overtake Christ as He was leaving the city and to converse with Him. From his question, it appears he was running to Christ to know the way to obtain eternal life. This was done without concern about what the people might say. He did not ask for a private conference like Nicodemus, but he came to Christ **“in the way,”** in the midst of a company of people on a public road. He had an honest desire for eternal life. Nothing is so important, and nothing demands so much effort and haste on his part.

Fifth, this nameless man not only came running to Christ, but he also **“kneeled to him”** (Mark 10:17). This was a token of profound respect and earnest supplication---a rich man bowing before a poor and despised man! His actions are sincere and honest, as he is not accused of tempting Christ like the Pharisees (Mark 10:2). He bowed the knee as if he intended to bow the soul to Him. He kneels where men ought to kneel, at the feet of the incarnate God. Noble young man! How many excellent things he did!

Sixth, he speaks respectfully to Christ: **“Good Master,”** meaning “most excellent teacher.” Like Nicodemus, he believed Christ as **“a teacher come from God”** (John 3:2). He could say as did another: **“Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly”** (Luke 20:21).

Seventh, he was by nature an Arminian as are all men: **“Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”** He had been taught that he could be saved by doing good by his former religious teachers. The question is that of Pharisaism. It does not confess any inability or weakness with respect to good, but it rather assumes full power and seeks guidance only in the selection of a course of conduct. The idea of doing something in order to gain eternal life had full possession of the young man’s mind. He seeks not grace, but reward for his own virtue. But to arrogate to himself the ability to win eternal life by his good works was sacrilege, to defile the gift with polluted hands, to do despite to the Spirit of grace!

Here is an honest, though erroneous,

and self-righteous seeker after eternal life. I can see in him a mixture of sincerity and self-deception. He was no Sadducee---no liberal. He believed there was a hereafter---eternal life in another world. The immortality of the soul was an article of his creed. He is to be commended for his concern for eternal life. He felt he lacked something, but he knew not what. So he went to the right Person for help. If we would learn how to be saved we must ask the Great Teacher; we must inquire in the school of Christ.

JESUS SPEAKS TO HIM

“Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God” (Mark 10:18). Christ takes care not to say, “I am not good.” At other times He calls Himself the **“good shepherd”** (John 10:11). Our Lord declines being classed with other “good masters.” In a manner of speaking Christ said, “You call me a good teacher and ask me what good you can do. Do you understand the word “good”? Do you know where you must look for a true idea of goodness? Why do you give Me a title not due to any mere man? Why do you call Me good, unless you own Me to be God, for God alone is absolutely good. Why call Me good unless you own Me to be God?” Christ by these words attests His own divinity. He is seeking to cause this young man to lift his eyes to Perfect Goodness. In directing him to God, Christ is directing him to Himself.

Jesus Christ was no antinomian. He was not afraid to use the moral law of God to show this young man the impossibility of obtaining eternal life by law-keeping. **“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother”** (Mark 10:19).

Christ does not recite the commandments in the exact order in which they are found in Exodus chapter 20, nor does He recite all ten of them. The ones recited concern the second table and prescribe the duty of man to man. Those of the first table are omitted because they would not furnish so decisive a test for self-examination. A man may imagine he loves God, but he cannot imagine he loves his neighbor if he defrauds him or bears false witness against him.

THE YOUNG MAN’S BOLD ANSWER

“And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth” (Mark 10:20). This is not a hypocritical profession, but an honest expression of the young man’s belief that he had actually kept the law. He was sadly mistaken on this point. He had an extremely superficial and inadequate conception of the meaning and extent of the law. The law requires perfect and perpetual obedience, and it extends to the thoughts, affections, and disposition, as well as outward obedience. Ignorance

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of the extent and spirituality of the Divine law caused him to think himself in a better condition than he really was (Rom. 7:9, 14). He had not observed the commandments with full conviction that God alone is good.

According to Matthew's account, the ruler added: "**What lack I yet?**" (Matt. 19:20). This young man knew there was something missing in his life. His conscience required something more to pacify it. If he were deficient on any point he wanted Christ to point it out, and point it out Jesus Christ certainly did!

ONE WANTING THING

Christ realized this man had never seen himself as a lost sinner before God. He never intended to teach this young man that he could be saved by keeping the commandments. No one was ever saved in that manner, not in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. Christ meant to convict him of guilt which he did not feel, to use the law to show him he was a law-breaker and bound for Hell. Looking with calm, earnest, loving eyes into His listener's face, He adds: "**One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me**" (Mark 10:21).

No modern soul winner would tell a sinner what Jesus did, for if he did he would have very few converts. There is no easy believism in these words. There is no Roman Road stuff so common in modern evangelism. Most personal workers of today see no need of using the moral law of God to convict the sinner as Jesus Christ did here. The Lord told this young man about the moral law of God and its requirement, but He did not tell him about God's four spiritual laws to salvation. Christ did not hand this boy a decision card and tell him to join the church of his choice. In fact Jesus Christ allowed this man to go away unsaved before He would lower the moral law or compromise the gospel of grace.

Christ told this ruler that he must be in complete subjection to God's law. He must prefer heavenly treasures to earthly riches. He must dispose of what he had in this world for the honor of God and the good of his fellowman. Our Savior by these words put His finger upon the idol of this young man's heart. This boy was guilty of "**covetousness, which is idolatry**" (Col. 3:5). Christ required him to abandon what He knew to be his idol--to give up what was keeping him out of the kingdom of God.

This ruler loved his riches more than the good God! The boast of keeping all the commandments was idle chatter. In fact, he had not even kept the first

two commandments of the ten. He was not willing to lay all he had at the feet of Him Who was the Author of the commandments. His money was his god and he was an idolater! The thing lacking was the love of God which constrains to self-sacrifice. His outward obedience to the letter of the law was utterly worthless. How tragic to trade gold for God and mammon for the Master! A golden coffin is a poor compensation for a damned soul!

Hope dies away on the face of this young man, his countenance falls, pale deflection is visible on his brow. He could not bear to give up his riches with no hope of compensation in this present life, save in Heaven to come. He had no desire to sacrifice self-will and to become a close and constant follower of Christ. Pride dreaded the wound and covetousness dreaded poverty. His actions now declare to all his own heart is incapable of obedience.

"**And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions**" (Mark 10:22). His mind is made up. He rises from his knees, uttering no word, and turns his back upon Christ. Sorrow is depicted on his face and he departs "**grieved**." His jeweled robe seems too precious to scatter to the poor. Drawing it around him, he "**went away**." I see him as he begins to walk faster and faster as the crowd gazes upon him. He goes away from Christ and never came back again so far as we know. This was the saddest journey he ever took, for he retained mammon and forsook the Master! His hope of eternal life was crushed by what he thought was an impossible condition of obtaining it. He refused to meet the conditions---he could not stand the test!

"**And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God**" (Mark 10:23-25).

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS UPON THIS MAN

1. This young man was better informed than some in his day and our day. He believed in the hereafter. He believed he possessed a nature which would survive the wreck of the body. He believed his mortal body would soon pass away, and that his immortal soul was rapidly passing from time to eternity. How this shames modern soul sleepers! He was a better theologian than the cultists of today!

2. This ruler did not believe in universal salvation. He saw a connection between conduct and consequence,

character and destiny. If we deny this connection, we admit not only that there are no rewards for virtue, but that Christ was a false witness before God. This boy felt he could never get eternal life by adopting a certain creed or cherishing certain sentimental feelings. He believed he needed to do something more. We may well learn a lesson here. Unless our faith and feelings are made into acts and habits they are worthless. "**If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him**" (I John 2:29).

3. This man was truly anxious about his soul, an honest inquirer, a promising case. He would give up much, but not all. His heavenly desire was a mere breathing of earthly selfishness. He was convicted, but not converted. He was not far from the kingdom of God, then he stepped back into the darkness of a selfish life, preferring the things which are seen to the things which are unseen. He turned away from the demands of Christ into the path of sin and death. Beware sinner! One idol cherished in the heart may ruin a man's soul.

It is said that Jesus never fails to save a person who wants to be saved, but here is a case where He did not save a person anxious about his soul. Our Lord did not believe that you could lead any sinner to repentance and faith in five minutes. Men must not only be anxious about their soul; they must be willing to be saved in the good-old-gospel way. Some are not willing to come God's way. They reject God's message and go their way to Hell. Their blood is upon their own head that do so.

4. Here was a person who was terribly rich in possessions, virtue, and earnest enquiry. At the same time he was terribly poor in self-knowledge, in love for God, and in heavenly treasures. "**There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches**" (Prov. 13:7). This poor boy was weighed in the balances and found wanting!

5. Many who call Jesus "**good Master**," seem to have serious thoughts about eternal life, and profess obedience to Him, but they do not understand the holiness of the Divine character, the spirituality and extent of the law, the evil of sin, and their need of the Redeemer's blood, righteousness, and regenerating Spirit. Multitudes in the world today are in this condition. They are just like this rich young ruler.

6. This boy would have been better off had he obeyed Christ (Acts 4:34-35). The Lord became poor for our sake (II Cor. 8:9). Had he sold his possessions and used them for God's glory, he could have filled houses with comfort, made a thousand widows to sing and little orphans to shout, clothed thousands who had naked bodies, and sent the gospel throughout the land. Then he could have

followed Jesus without any distractions. Then he could have treasures in Heaven. He would have been loved and blessed by thousands until this day. In all probability the Roman invaders took away his wealth and his life in a few years from this time!

7. The demands of Christian discipleship are very severe. You must sacrifice selfishness for God's glory and man's good, for not until self-will is sacrificed can Christ be followed. You must prefer heavenly treasures to riches in this world. You must love God supremely and daily bear your cross---live for His glory---give up all for Christ (Phil. 3:8)! You must have a holy contempt for every thing in comparison to Him, much more what is in competition with Him. You must observe His statutes and keep His laws. Without sharing Christ's lot, we cannot share His inheritance. "**. . . if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together**" (Rom. 8:17). "**If we suffer, we shall also reign with him**" (II Tim. 2:12).

8. If you get nothing else out of this discourse, please remember that you must love God supremely. This is the whole duty of man; this is the important thing. It is more important than external religious observances and moral goodness. Without supreme love for God your religion and morality is worthless and wretched, a cloud without water, a star wandering from its orbit without light, law, and liberty, rushing boundlessly to ruin and everlasting torment.

"**One thing thou lackest.**" Do you lack supreme love for God? You may not have been outwardly wicked, but deep down you have not loved God with all your heart, mind, and strength. You have not served Him or lived for His glory as you should. You have lived for yourself, your own gratification. The "**God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified**" (Dan. 5:23). You have not repented of secret sins. You have not received Christ as your Savior. You have not taken up your cross and followed Him. You have made yourself your own savior and turned your back upon the real Savior! In truth you must cry: "God, help me! It is so with me."

If you would have eternal life you must be willing to do with yourself and your possessions whatever God requires. Resign absolute ownership to Him and see your self a steward of the Lord's property. Deny yourself of whatever is inconsistent with duty to God and His people. Have such a supreme regard for the character of God and the interest of others that your private interests are kept in the background. You say, "I can't do this? I have no desire to do this?" This is true. You can never do it, or even desire to do it, until you are born again. Apart from regeneration by the Holy Spirit and the reception of a new nature, no man

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can be saved or possess eternal life.

One time a white slave owner asked a black slave on his farm how to be saved. The old Negro replied, "Master, you have to get in the pigpen." This angered the slave owner and he went his way. However, the convicting power of the Holy Spirit would not allow him to have any peace. Finally, the owner returned to the old black man and said, "I am ready to get in the pigpen." The old black man said, "You don't really have to get in the pigpen, Master. You just have to be willing." To be saved one must be willing to be anything or to give up anything that he may win Christ. The apostle wrote: "**Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ**" (Phil. 3:8).



When and How to Worship God

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

It is to be feared that there are many people who attend some sort of religious services with the feeling that this constitutes a sufficient worship for them---at least enough to keep them out of hell. Such persons have no personal, private worship of God at all. The truth is, they didn't worship God when they went to church. They didn't pray and perhaps sat like a knot on a log during the singing. If it was a ritualistic church they attended, then they may have chanted their responses, like a parrot repeating something, but there was nothing that came from the heart.



We need to recognize the truth that no amount of church attendance---no amount of going through a form of worship in public can take the place of the personal, private worship of God. People may attend public worship to see and be seen, but when they worship God in secret, then such is done with no expectation of the notice or praise of men. The regularity and the fervency of our private devotions really tells the story as to our real spiritual state and condition. There---in private, our real selves are manifested without any pretense of camouflage.

EXAMPLES IN THE BIBLE

Let us take note of some of the examples

of private worship, prayer and devotion as given in the Bible. Let us first consider JESUS. Read Mark 1:32-39. There we read that after a strenuous day, Jesus rose up "**a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place to pray.**" If Jesus, the Son of God thus needed prayer and communion with the Father, what about US?

Then we have the example of David who said, "**In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee**" (Ps. 5:3). He had time in the early morning for prayer. Again he said, "Morning, noon and night will I pray unto thee." There is indicated a threefold devotional period for each day. Daniel knelt before his window, which opened toward Jerusalem, and prayed three times a day, when this practice jeopardized his life. Cornelius (Acts 10:1-6) was a man who worshipped the true God according to the light he had, and the Lord took note and furnished him with more light. We could go on and on citing Bible examples of men and women who devoutly worshipped God in the secrecy of their own personal lives. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees who paraded their worship so as to be praised of men. He told them to enter into the private place and pray, and told them that God seeing their secret worship would "**reward them openly.**"

WHEN TO BEGIN REGULAR PERSONAL WORSHIP

The time to start definite worship habits is immediately upon CONVERSION. We believe that God will give every saved person the impulse to worship. The spirit of adoption given one causes him to look up and say, "**Abba Father.**" A newly converted person by failing to adopt a regular time and place of personal devotion, is liable to become loose and lax about worship, and this always means backsliding.

WHEN SHOULD ONE PRAY AND WORSHIP GOD?

Upon awakening in the morning is a good time. It is a good time to ask guidance, help and strength for the day. Before going to sleep at night is another good time. That gives time for expressing thanks to God for the blessings of the day. Then as special need arises all through the day. As things arise that should be prayed about, pray right then---don't put it off until later. The nature of one's work---their surroundings and circumstances will to some extent determine the opportunity to pray and worship, but most any person can find time to commune with God through the day. You will keep out of wrong places, wrong company, wrong habits, wrong speech if you pray and worship God all through the day. Likewise you will carry a sense of God's presence that you will otherwise know nothing about.

Right habits of personal worship will do away with 95 percent of the backsliding. Backsliding is the product of spiritual neglect.



The Prayer of Faith

By John Linton

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

One great secret of prevailing prayer is to mark the distinction between what we might call "ordinary prayer" and "the prayer of faith." The difference is that in ordinary prayer we want a thing enough to ask for it, but the prayer of faith wants a thing enough to not only ask for it but to keep on asking until either the answer is received or the assurance comes that the answer is on the way. Ordinary faith believes God can do what is asked. Prevailing faith believes God will do what is asked. In a word, ordinary praying asks, the prayer of faith asks and takes. And as S. D. Gordon has said, "In prayer do less asking and more taking."

We shall state our subject under three headings: What is the Prayer of Faith? What does it accomplish? How may we obtain Prevailing Faith?

WHAT IS THE PRAYER OF FAITH?

Well, what is faith itself? J. C. Conant has pointed out that there are two kinds of faith---natural and spiritual faith. There are two pairs of eyes---natural and spiritual eyes. There are two classes of facts---natural and spiritual facts.

Natural faith---all have it. You can trust a chair when you sit on it. You trust the pillar box with a letter. Our modern business is run upon a basis of faith. Natural faith looks through natural eyes at natural facts and acting upon them, natural faith becomes a reality.

Spiritual faith---Christians only have it. Spiritual faith looks through spiritual eyes, perceives spiritual facts unseen to the natural eyes, and acting upon them spiritual faith becomes a reality. It is not a human capacity, it is a divine gift. It is not inherent, it is imparted. It cannot be worked up. It must be sent down. Faith comes from God, the Giver of every good gift.

What is the basis of faith? Faith must have evidence to support it, whether natural or spiritual. The basis of natural faith is the strength of the chair, the stability of the Canadian Government is behind the pillar-box. In business the basis of faith is the moral integrity and financial assets of the customer. And spiritual faith must have a sufficient foundation. Faith is reasonable. It deals with facts, but they are spiritual facts not evident to the natural man. Faith is "**the evidence of things not seen.**"

I want to mention some things that do not constitute a sufficient basis for the prayer of faith. It is not outward circumstances and appearances. These things we can see, and sight is the very

opposite of faith. It is when sight brings no helpful vision that there is a first-class chance to exercise faith. The darker the outlook, the greater the difficulty, the more impossible the situation, the more opportune the time for faith. A certain engineering firm advertised in these words:

*"Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?
Got any mountains you can't tunnel
through?"*

*We specialize in the wholly impossible,
We do the things that no one can do."*

And that is exactly the realm in which faith works---in the realm of the wholly impossible. Man's extremity is faith's opportunity. Child of God, have you set your heart on asking something from God? Be sure that you have sufficient ground beneath your feet when you present your prayer to God and expect an answer. Do not look to outward appearances for confirmation of faith. Believe God despite appearances. He is far greater than appearances, and is Lord over circumstance.

The basis of faith is not in feelings. Feeling is no more the basis of faith for the Christian than for the unsaved. No man is saved because he feels saved, but because he believes he is saved. He may be saved without feeling it. Faith has nothing to do with feeling. So it is with a Christian praying the prayer of faith. A pastor has asked on Saturday night for the salvation of a soul on the Lord's Day following. He has received the assurance from God that some soul will be saved. His faith is on wings. His feelings are exhilarated. But next morning he awakes with a big headache. It is pouring rain outside. He knows there will be only a handful in church. Where are his feelings? In the cellar. Where is God? On His throne! Feelings are as changeable as the wind. They have nothing whatsoever to do with God's faithfulness. Faith can believe God in spite of feelings.

Moreover, *the basis of faith is not signs.* We say, God gave Gideon a sign to enable him to exercise faith. That is the very thing a sign does not do. God has sometimes condescended to give his unbelieving people signs but signs are not a help to faith. They are a hindrance to faith. They are a concession to unbelief. Gideon received God's assurance of victory. It was not enough for him. He wanted a sign---something he could see and feel. He looked for confirmation of faith in the natural realm. It is not found there. Jesus said to Thomas, "**Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed**" (John 20:29). A sign is something we can see, and there is no faith where there is a sign.

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. In what ways can a church member help their church to grow?

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I Corinthians 3:6-9 declares: **"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."**

Paul was instrumental in sowing the Gospel seed in the city of Corinth where God had declared that He had much people (Acts 18:7-11). God's elect were called and justified by the grace of God. The believers were then baptized and organized into a New Testament Church. Apollos followed after and watered the church that had been planted. God was in sovereign control of growing and adding to the church at Corinth as I Corinthians 12:18 states: **"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."**

This is a wonderful example how a New Testament church grows. The good seed of the Word of God is sown on all four types of hearts (See Matt. 13:1-23, the Parable of the Sower). The seed of the Gospel falls on ground already prepared by the Sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. God is pleased to bring spiritual life to a sinner who is translated out of darkness into God's marvellous light. Through the Spirit's enlightening grace (I Cor. 2:10-14) and the watering of the Word (Eph. 5:26) that soul grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) is cultivated in their life and they bring forth fruit with patience (Luke 8:15).

A church's spiritual and numerical growth ultimately depends on the sovereign grace of God as He is pleased to work with a body that is committed to carrying out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). Every church member should be sowing the good seed of the Gospel among every type of ground within their sphere of influence and throughout the community in which they live. Every Baptist church member should be dedicated to sowing the Gospel seed and inviting folks to church through

all lawful means (personal witnessing, the printed page, distribution of sound tracts) all the while depending upon God to give the increase.

It should also be noted that it is very important that Baptist church members have a testimony that shines for the glory of God. To be an effective witness of the power of God's grace, church members must live in such a manner that demonstrates to others that the Lord has done a marvellous work of transformation and holiness in them (Col. 1:10-14; I Pet. 2:9-12). II Timothy 2:19-22 states: **"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow after righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."** May God grant us all grace to obey these verses so that we may be vessels used for His glory.

Be faithful to present your body as a living sacrifice every day (Rom. 12:1-2). Take advantage of every opportunity to share the Gospel and be a witness on a day to day basis (Psa. 96:1-8). Live a life marked by walking with God in the light of His holiness (I John 1:3-7). Do nothing to defile or harm the Lord's church by what you say or do (I Cor. 3:16-17). Pray for God to save sinners. Pray that God will give your Pastor wisdom and grace to preach the truth. These are all things that church members can do to put their church in a position for God to bless with spiritual and numerical growth. I strongly urge you to take the time to look up all the Scriptures cited above. Read them, meditate upon them, and put them into practice.

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I Thessalonians 1:1-10, is most likely

one of the best passages of Scripture to start with concerning the growth of membership in a local assembly. Basically we are instructed by God that we are to work not only in sounding out the gospel by preaching, witnessing, living a godly life before others, but by the obedience of the individual members to God and His Word.

The reward of God's people (in time) depends on their obedience (every day service) to Him. Prayer is answered by God to those that pray in line with the will of God, for why would He answer any prayer that is consumed upon the lust of the flesh? Therefore prayer is the next step **"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight"** (I John 3:22). Is not the growth of the Lord's Churches, in this day and age, of great delight and blessing? Growth of a Church, spiritual or in numbers, is seen when the whole assembly is... **"pleasing in His sight."**

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Romans 12:5: **So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.**

I Corinthians 12:21-25: **And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.**

Ephesians 4:25: **Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.**

Hebrews 10:25: **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.**

A very simple, straightforward answer that really needs no further explanation would be to simply be there. I've often been tempted to just not show up some Lord's Day morning and let the

congregation wonder where the pastor was. There are some valid reasons for not being in church when the regular meetings are scheduled, but... When that social gathering, that family get together or some other activity (God forbid it should be a NFL football game) draw you away from the corporate worship, what does it tacitly say? It says that those earthly associations mean more to you than the family of God, and even God Himself.

A pastor friend of mine once very aptly pointed out that when you skip the corporate worship you are being inconsiderate of your fellow church members. The verses we have used for a text clearly declare the mutual dependence of the members, even if you don't have a big visible role to play.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). How much **"love one to another"** do we show to each other - or to the watching world - when we demonstrate that we'd rather be somewhere else? How much exhorting and encouraging do we do for our brothers and sisters in Christ when we are not faithful?

Everybody has a part to play. Everybody has a gift. Due to too many heart attacks, this writer can no longer even sing out in congregational singing, much less lead the song service. But, OH what an encouragement it is when that brother or sister in the next pew can - and does - sing out!

Let's put a few practical illustrations together. Have you handed out a gospel tract lately? Have you invited your neighbor to church? Have you witnessed to the **"great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee"** (Mark 5:19)? **"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so"** (Ps. 107:2). Witnessing is not "the pastor's job"!

When visitors come, do you make sure they are greeted and shown love? That's not "the pastor's job." Are the facilities clean and well kept? That's not "the pastor's job" either. **"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness"** (Ps. 84:10). If I, as a stranger, visited the church of which you are a member this next Lord's day, would I feel I wanted to come back next week?

RAY BENNETT



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. According to the Bible what is the future of a nation that turns from God or denies His existence?

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Psalm 9:17 declares: **"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."**

Psalm 10:4, 15-16 state: **"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts...Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none. The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land."**

Jeremiah 8:9-13 reveals: **"The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them? Therefore will I give their wives unto other, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them."**

The verses cited above are sufficient to prove that God will judge the nation that forgets Him and denies His existence. It is sad, but true that our beloved America is presently under the judgment of God for our personal and national sins. Our society has been inundated with the false religious tenets of secular humanism (No God, no final authority or absolute truth, no accountability to God, evolution, abortion on demand, exaltation of human philosophy over sacred truth, etc). There is a growing hostility for the Word of God, absolute truth, faith, and those who stand for righteousness. September 11th, 2001 was a call that went unheeded by America. We are now suffering spiritually, physically, economically, politically, and socially as

a nation. Unless a remarkable spiritual awakening and revival occurs in our land I fear that we are already on the broad road that leads to destruction. We need to repent and ask God to heal our souls and our land as II Chronicles 7:14 instructs: **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."**

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I suppose that the question asked is really in reference to **"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance"** (Ps. 33:12). Think of the opposite, no blessings to a nation whose God is not the Lord. No nation is exempt from this, not even Israel. Look at the history of Israel and you will see times of dependence on God mixed with great blessings poured upon God's great nation.

America, as we American Patriots view it, is a great nation. The only problem is very few, if any, of our elected officials are obedient children of God. Our great nation as a whole is not obedient to God. **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Prov. 14:34).

What is the future of a nation that turns from God or denies His existence? **"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"** (Isa. 2:4). As the Word of God declares Christ will judge the nations according to their faithfulness to Him and to His people and favored nation. **"For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted"** (Isa. 60:12). Indeed this would seem to be the demise of America. That being said, America has yet to fully disassociate itself with Israel, and there are yet many of God's people and Churches still operating faithfully to the Lord this very day and will be till the rapture, after that

we still see God's people serving Him and faithful.

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"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. 136, 26 times). It is too involved for this venue, but this mercy is extended to His elect. To those described in this question, including those who have professed to be God's people, there is a limit. We would in vain attempt to number the references to God's wrath being poured out on the disobedient. **"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience"** (Eph. 5:6).

There is an obvious difference, at least in the timing, of how God's wrath is poured out on the nations of disobedience and/or on His own people. We have only to look at Babylon for instance as compared to Israel, but we must also remember that National Israel, even today, stands as a type, a picture of God's preservation, protection, and yes, punishment on His own chosen people. Make no mistake! God disciplines His own people in time. He will deal with spiritual Egypt and Babylon at the "Great White Throne of Judgment."

But in more direct answer to the question, read Leviticus 26:14-31. God has set five cycles of discipline for the nation that professes to be His people but turns from God. Israel experienced them all. The USA may be well along the same path. The fifth cycle of discipline (vv. 27-36) is loss of national entity.

RAY BENNETT



Prayer of Faith

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What, then, is the basis of faith? It is two things taken together, not one without the other. It is the naked Word of God applied to the believer's heart by the Spirit of God. When the Holy Spirit of God takes a promise from the Word, presses it upon your heart, leads you to plead that promise before God, imparts to you faith to believe God has heard and has answered or will answer that prayer, then you are praying the prayer of faith. Jude speaks of **"praying in the Holy Ghost."** He is referring to prayer inspired by, directed by, and energized by the Holy Spirit. The prayer of faith is a divinely given intuitive knowledge

that God has granted your request. Whenever He burdens you to pray for a certain person or a certain thing, and imparts to you the faith to believe, that is the only sufficient and all-sufficient basis for faith. Someone may ask, "How can we distinguish between the prompting of the Spirit and the mere human desire?" I cannot tell you. Praying in the Spirit is not an explanation. It is an experience. One cannot explain it, but he can know it. You cannot pray on explanations, but praise God! you can pray on the experience. It is sufficient to say that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that our prayer is of God. Moreover, we can test it by the Word. There is no prompting by the Spirit of God in the realm of prevailing prayer that is not in harmony with the revelation of the Word. Our definition of the prayer of faith is this: The Holy Spirit moving us to ask and to receive from God what we have Scriptural evidence to believe He means to give.

WHAT DOES THE PRAYER OF FAITH ACCOMPLISH?

IT IS HEARD. Not all so-called prayer is heard. We speak of our prayers not being answered. Beloved, often they are not even heard. **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."** **"Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."** I am afraid that much of the vain repetitions of Christians that is called "prayer" is not heard. The same old prayer night after night, when we are half asleep and tired, our thoughts often far away from God---that kind of praying I am not sure God will hear. But the prayer of faith He always hears.

IT IS ANSWERED. The prayer of faith is always answered. The answer depends upon God's faithfulness to His Word, and bless God! there is no peradventure about that.

THE ANSWER IS RECEIVED. The prayer of faith prays through until the answer comes and we know we have the petition that we desired of Him. A little boy ran home from Sunday school one afternoon and, bursting into the house, cried out, "Mamma, I have got a book." "Where is it?" "I haven't got it." A gentleman addressing the school that afternoon had asked a question. Willie had answered it and had received from the visitor the assurance that that day he would mail to him as a reward for his cleverness a book. "Mamma, I have got a book." "Where is it?" "I haven't got it." But he knew it was on the way. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Let me mention some triumphs of the prayer of faith. When the late A. C. Dixon commenced his ministry in Spurgeon's Tabernacle, after he had won the confidence of the people he told them

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this story: A student for the ministry working his way through college decided to stay out for a year and preach because of a shortage of funds. He took the pastorate of a country church. There was one church in the village and a meeting-place on the country road five miles distant. When he had been there three months and had nine months of his pastorate to go, one day on his knees in prayer it was borne in upon his heart by the Holy Spirit that he should ask and receive from God during his pastorate there 100 people converted and baptized. Not one less and not one more. He waited until he knew that the assurance was of God. He began to work and preach with that in mind. Souls were converted. Believers were baptized, and when he came to the last day of his ministry, ninety-four people had been received into the membership of that church on profession of faith and baptism. He was walking out to the country appointment to hold final service. Baptism had been arranged for and five candidates had applied making ninety-nine. As he walked along the road he lifted his heart in prayer to God something like this: "Heavenly Father, I thank Thee that thou didst put it into my heart to believe for 100 conversions and baptisms. I thank Thee that many more than 100 have been saved, but I asked for 100 converted and baptized. Although at this late hour I cannot see where the last one is to come from, I believe Thee and I thank Thee now again for 100 souls converted and baptized and I promise Thee this afternoon that I will tell this story for the glory of Thy name as long as I live." With that he came to the church. The first person to address him was a young married man. He said, "Sir, could I be baptized?" The student said "Are you a Christian?" He replied, "God saved me last Sunday while you were preaching in the church." The student's heart was overflowing with joy. Just to test the man he said, "It is late for examination and arrangement for baptismal robes. What shall we do about that?" The man answered, "My wife is one of the five waiting down at the creek to be baptized. I would prefer to be baptized in my Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes." And he was. And that day God gave that student one hundred people converted and baptized. Not one more and not one less. Dixon then said: "My friends, I know that story is true, because I had the honour of being that young student."

A student for the ministry in McMaster University read that story in *The Christian Herald*. God laid the message of it upon his own heart. He was in his first year and had no pastorate, but had been asked to preach at a country church the next Sunday thirty miles

away. He was praying about that service when God gave him the assurance that he would have a soul saved on the coming Sunday night. He believed God and decided to burn his boats and commit himself to God's faithfulness. He wrote a letter to the deacons of the church, telling them what God had promised to do, asking them to believe also for at least one soul. On the Sunday night in that church the student had not been preaching five minutes when a person sitting in the front seat burst into tears. The student hurried through with his simple sermon and then said, "How many people here are ready to turn from sin and yield to God?" Nine men and women rose to their feet. One of them was the worst woman in the village. The deacons at the close thought she could not be saved. Her life however, was completely revolutionized. She was baptized a year later in the waters of Lake Ontario, before the whole village, and is today a faithful Christian and member of that church. The writer knows that story is true. He had the honour of being that student.

An evangelistic pastor went to help a church in evangelistic meetings. After preaching four days without results he became burdened, and in prayer before God received the assurance that that evening someone would be saved. Good news is hard to keep. On the way down to church with the deacons with whom he was being entertained he asked the deacon if he believed the truth of this passage: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them." The deacon said he did. "Let us both pray then that God will save someone tonight and believe that God will do it." The deacon consented. After preaching the sermon and making the appeal, there was no response. The congregation was dismissed. The preacher and the deacon walked home together. The deacon said, "We did not get anyone tonight, did we?" "How do you know, deacon," said the preacher. "Well, no one raised their hand." "We did not ask for that. We asked and believed that God would save a soul." The deacon was puzzled. Finally he said, "If God does not save someone tonight, we shall ask Him for two tomorrow night to make up for it." The preacher quietly replied, "Brother B-----, God gave the assurance this morning that at least one soul would be saved tonight. We may not hear tonight of God having done so, but we may hear tomorrow or during the meeting; but even if we don't God is faithful, and when you and I reach the glory and ask the Saviour if He saved someone tonight He will tell us that He did." By this time they had reached the deacons' house. The door was opened by his wife. Her face was bathed in tears. She said, "I thought you would never come. Our son, Arthur, was at the service tonight. God convicted

him of sin. He is in his room all broken up. He wants to be a Christian." The deacon stood speechless. He finally said, "Shall I ask Mr. ----- to lead him to the Saviour?" His wife replied "No, Arthur is crying and says, 'I want my daddy to lead me to Jesus!'" God was dealing with that godly deacon, trying to show him in His own wondrous and tender way that "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

HOW DO WE OBTAIN PREVAILING FAITH?

Since this kind of faith is not worked up but sent down how may we obtain it?

GIVE UP YOUR OWN FAITH AND TAKE THE FAITH OF GOD. Stop trying to work up faith by gritting your teeth, setting your will and saying, "I will try to believe." Stop trying to have faith in your own faith. You are as helpless to believe as you are to love or to overcome, or to do any act in the new life apart from Divine grace. Die to your own faith as you die to your own righteousness and look up and claim the faith of Jesus Christ.

USE THE FAITH GOD HAS ALREADY GIVEN YOU. You have faith, or you could not be a Christian. Use your little faith and it will increase by use. Plant a few grains of it and you will find it will grow and multiply. George Mueller said when he began his ministry it was as hard to believe for a pound as it was forty years later to believe for one thousand pounds. He was like the Thessalonians to whom Paul wrote, "**Your faith groweth exceedingly.**"

NOURISH YOUR FAITH BY KNOWLEDGE. "**Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.**" The more we get to know God, the easier it is to believe Him, and to know God let us read the Word of God wherein His will is revealed and by which He speaks to our soul. (*Evangelical Christian*, 1928).

Editor's Note: We see how that "the worst woman in the village" was thought not saved and was not baptized until a year later upon "living" a changed life. This is an old practice that few if any churches today still enforce.



Does Redemption Change A Sinner?

By T. T. Martin
(1862 - 1939)

While God Saves Sinners Without Character, The Sinner Does Not Remain Without Character, For God Develops Character

(Continued from August issue)

While the Saviour saves without character, and irrespective of character, God the Father does not leave them without character, but develops in them the right kind of a character. The man redeemed, saved, without character, does not remain without character.

"**And such were some of you**" (I Cor. 6:11), but they did not remain such characters, ---but "**sanctified. . . called to be saints**" (I Cor. 1:2).

God's plan with men, then, is to save irrespective of character, and then develop in the redeemed, saved man a character that shall "**be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ**" (I Pet. 1:7).

First, by purifying the motive of the life. Character is not formed by deeds, but by the motives prompting the deeds. Two men flag the night express train on two railroads; the deeds are the same, but one flags the train that he may warn, and save the lives of the people, because a bridge has been destroyed; the other flags the train that he may rob it. While the deeds are the same, the character of the deeds is different, and that difference is in the motive prompting the deed, and that motive affects, moulds the character of the one who performs the deed.

No deed is right in the sight of God that



is not performed from the motive of love (I Cor. 13:1-3); hence, no character can be right in the sight of God if the deeds that formed that character were not prompted by the motive of love. All deeds performed from simply the motive of duty, or from the desire to be saved (to go Heaven after this life) or from fear of Hell, are, in the sight of God, unworthy deeds, and the characters formed by such deeds are unworthy characters. And the Saviour defines clearly what love is:

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

This explains why God says: "**They that are in the flesh cannot please God**" (Rom. 8:8).

Their motive is wrong and they cannot have the right motive, because they have not been "**forgiven most.**" Hence all characters are wrong in the sight of God that were formed by deeds whose prompting motive was a simple sense of duty, a desire to be saved, to go to Heaven,

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or from fear of Hell. And all who have such a character are lost, have never been redeemed, are not real Christians.

Second, God develops character in the redeemed. His real children, by chastisements. Our earthly fathers "verily for a few days chastened us as seemed right to them; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:10-11).

Third, God moulds the character of the redeemed by afflictions, burdens, sorrows, etc. **"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"** (II Cor. 4:17).

"Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4).

The shallow conception of God's plan with men that makes it His ultimate purpose simply to save men, leaves the life of the redeemed man here on earth an unsolved riddle, often an inexplicable tragedy. The heartaches, the disasters, the burdens, the afflictions, the sorrows--what of all these, when God assures us that **"all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"** (Rom. 8:28), if the ultimate purpose is simply salvation? **"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver"** (Mal. 3:3). The silver has been mined, digged from the earth, but there is dross in it. The redeemed have been redeemed from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), have had the spirit sent into their hearts (**"because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"** Gal. 4:6); but there are defects from heredity, and environment. The purifying process, the development of character, comes, not in order to be saved, but after we are saved, because we are saved.

With God as the Father of the redeemed, many of the afflictions and sorrows of real Christians can be accounted for as chastisements; many of the severe, heavy afflictions in the lives of real Christians can be accounted for in this way. **"Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth"** (Heb. 12:5-6). Scourging is severe, yet God says it is for **"every son."**

But there are many, many trials, afflictions, burdens, sorrows, which cannot be explained by chastisements;

for chastisements are for willful sins of God's children: **"If his children forsake my law. . . then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes"** (Ps. 89:30-32).

In the lives of many of the redeemed who are living obedient lives there are some of the most severe trials and afflictions. If God is their Father and loves them, what can these severe trials and afflictions mean?

"One adequate support

For the calamities of mortal life

Exists, one only, ---an assured belief

That the procession of our fate, However

Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a being

Of infinite benevolence and power,

Whose everlasting purposes embrace

All accidents, converting them into good."

WORDSWORTH

God Himself hath said, **"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"** (Rom. 8:28).

Had God said, "Some things," what confusion would have come to many of God's children. What enigmas would many things in the lives of many of the redeemed have been! But when God said **"All things,"** He placed a key in the hands of every redeemed man, every real child of His, with which to unlock the door of every mystery; that every trial, every disaster, every accident, every burden, every humiliation, every disappointment, every affliction, every sorrow, ---**"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose";** ---**"that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"** (I Pet. 1:7).

Muscles are developed by trials; minds are developed by trials; God's redeemed people are developed by trials. To murmur against one's trials after being redeemed, means to murmur against being developed for one's eternal destiny. To give the muscles no trials, means for the body never to be developed; to give the mind no trials, means for the mind never to be developed; to give the redeemed man no trials, means for his character never to be developed. Two children are born into the world. The father and mother of one decide that he shall never be required to do any unpleasant things; that he shall never have any hardships. The father and mother of the other decide to give their child every unpleasant thing to do, every hardship and burden to bear; that will best develop him in body and mind. Often the redeemed plead with their Father in Heaven to give them only pleasant things, and He, the All-wise, All-powerful, in love gives them---trials.

The trials of life for the redeemed are so various. If the muscles have only one trial the body will never be fully

developed. The muscles need various trials. If the mind has only one trial, it will never be fully developed. If the mind studies only one thing, it will never be trained, developed, educated. If the soul has only one kind of trial, it will never be developed. **"Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations"** (James 1:2 R.V. Margin, "trials").

But the redeemed, the children of God, often complain that their trials are so hard. Easy trials do not develop. The one who takes only light exercises for his muscles will never be fully developed physically. The boy who works the easy examples and skips the hard ones, will never be an educated man; he will be only a hewer of wood and drawer of water." It takes hard trials to develop the body properly. It takes hard trials of the mind to develop it properly. It takes hard trials to develop the soul properly; **"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire"** (I Pet. 1:7).

He who asks for only easy trials of his muscles, asks to remain undeveloped physically; he who asks for easy trials of his mind, asks to remain undeveloped mentally; he who asks, yearns, to have no hard trials spiritually, yearns to remain undeveloped in real character, in his spiritual nature. The hard trials are the ones that develop. And the more one's muscles have been developed, the harder should be the trials for those muscles; the more one's mind is developed, the harder should be the trials for the mind; the more the redeemed man's spiritual nature is developed, the harder his trials will be.

That would be an unwise educator who, after training the pupil's mind up through geometry, would then put him back to studying the simple branches of mathematics, instead of taking him on into higher mathematics. Likewise the Heavenly Father does not, after partly developing the redeemed. His children, by hard trials, return them to lives of easy trials, but He reads them into yet harder trials. Take Elijah as an example (see F. B. Meyer's *Elijah*). He is sent to pronounce God's sentence against Ahab (I Kings 17:1); he is then sent into obscurity (17:2-3), he is left dependent on the ravens for food (17:4-6); he sees the brook dry up, his only hope for water, for life (17:7); he is submitted to the humiliation of being supported by a poor widow (17:8-9); God delays answering his prayer (17:17-22); God requires him to expose himself to danger by showing himself to Ahab (18:1); he is led to face popular religious error, and in doing so is left to stand alone (18:19-38); God delays answer to his prayer till he prays seven times (18:42-45); he suffers the further humiliation of Elisha being anointed prophet in his room (19:15-16); he is taken up by a whirlwind to Heaven (II Kings 2:11).

A study of these trials will show that they were all hard trials, and that they increased in severity. God tells us that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are (James 5:17); but by trials, hardships, burdens, God developed him into one of the noblest characters of all ages. God's redeemed people may expect, then, trials through their lives, and that the trials shall be increasingly severe, as they advance in the Christian life.

Often God's children are discouraged because they cannot see any purpose in their trials. But God assures us that there is a purpose. The child cannot understand the purpose of the lessons at school, but the father has the purpose. Elijah, possibly filled with apprehension, sitting by the drying brook Cherith, did not see any purpose, but God, Who makes all things work together for good to His people, had the purpose and accomplished it in the development of Elijah's character; and so, as F. B. Meyer has so aptly put it, the redeemed, sitting by the drying brook of health, of property, of reputation, of family happiness, may not see the purpose, but the Heavenly Father will work, in His plan for each, every trial into the warp or woof of each life. The Saviour said to Peter, **"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter"** (John 13:7).

"Behind our life the Weaver stands

And works His wondrous will:

We leave it all in His wise hands

And trust His perfect skill.

Should mystery enshroud His plan,

And our short sight be dim,

We will not try the whole to scan,

But leave each thread to Him."

Who knows the defects, the weaknesses, of each character? Only God. Who knows what each character ought to be? Only God. Who knows how to develop each character properly? Only God. Who is able to so shape the circumstances of each life as to properly develop each character? Only God. And he has promised that He will. **"We know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"** (Rom. 8:28); **"that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"** (I Pet. 1:7). This is the only explanation of the many harassments of life.

God has revealed that the standard by which character is measured is patience or endurance. "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4).

If there were no harassments, no afflictions, no burdens, no sorrows, no disappointments, no sufferings, there could be no patience, endurance;

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and if there were no patience, no endurance, there could be no maturity and completeness of character. As to what trials are needed, and are best in each case, only God can decide. In our dim-sightedness we think that many things are mistakes in God's plans, and that He cannot bring good out of them; but He will.

A boy was born with a badly deformed foot. When he was eight years of age his father had two surgeons to operate and try to straighten the foot, but they failed. After a second operation the foot was placed in a brace which was worn for months. But the foot remained as badly deformed as ever. The surgeons then informed the father that the foot could never be straightened. The father studied the deformed foot for many days, and then had a strange-looking box made with screws, felt taps and iron rods in different parts of it. He had the surgeons to operate again on the boy's foot, cutting the muscles and tendons in different places. The foot was then placed in the strange box; a screw was turned till the felt tap pressed against the foot at one place, almost breaking the bones; then another screw and felt tap were brought to bear on another deformed part of the foot, straightening the foot and almost breaking the bones in that part of the foot; then the iron rod was used to straighten another part. For months the boy's foot was kept in that box. The suffering, day and night for months, was indescribable. The child would weep for hours, the pain being all but unbearable; and when the father would come home the child would beg piteously for the box to be taken off and to be left a cripple. The father, mingling his tears with the tears of the suffering child, would turn the screws tighter than before, and the child would shriek in fearful agony. During those weeks and months of suffering he looked upon his father as being harsh and cruel and without love for him.

Finally the father loosened all the screws and said, "Son, stand up," and for the first time in his life the boy stood erect. Often has that son, now a gray-haired man, stood over the grave of that father, long since dead, and bedewed the grave with his tears, and thanked God that he had a father who was true enough to continue the suffering until the terrible deformity was corrected. The father may have turned the screws one thread too much, but the Father in Heaven makes no mistakes, and far beyond the grave many of the redeemed will praise Him, when they understand, for the sufferings and afflictions and burdens they were led to endure here.

"Choose for us, Lord, nor let our weak preferring Cheat us of good Thou hast for us designed."

*Choose for us, Lord; Thy wisdom is unerring,
And we are fools and blind."*

With the reader this may seem mere theory; he may feel that it cannot explain all the seemingly unfathomable mystery of suffering in the lives of many of the redeemed, the real children of God. Let the reader consider two things; first, that as a juror, he would not form a judgment till all the evidence had been placed before the jury. God's purpose in each case, and what God actually accomplishes in each case, in the development of character, --these have not yet been placed before the jury; but, backed up by many fulfilled prophecies, by the character of Jesus Christ, by His resurrection, by what He has accomplished in the world, we have God's solemn assurance that He will yet place this evidence before the jury.

Second, let the reader remember that with God character counts more than comfort. What father would prefer his son to be a brutal, ignorant pugilist, enjoying food and drink, physical life--to a useful, noble, highly educated, refined, learned son who could "listen in the orange groves of Verona to the sweet vows of Juliet, or to the blind bard's harp as he strikes the chords but seldom struck harmonious with the morning stars, or to the music of the spheres as they hymn His praises around their Creator's throne"? Far more than the earthly father would choose the later for his son, does the Heavenly Father value the soul and its development above that of the body.

Could God's redeemed people only learn that perfection of character comes only through suffering, that as certain as God is true, a blessing will come from every sorrow, every burden, every affliction, every pang, every heartache!

"The ills we see--

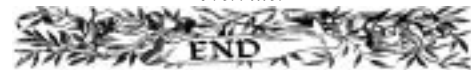
The mystery of sorrow deep and long,

The dark enigmas of permitted wrong,

Have all one key--

This strange, sad world is but our Father's school;

All chance and change His love shall grandly overrule."



A Trillion Here, a Trillion There

By Mark W. Hendrickson

(EP News)--About 50 years ago, Sen. Everett Dirksen (R-IL) uttered his famous quip, "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking about real money."

Today, we're talking about a trillion here, a trillion there—a thousand-fold increase in the scale of government spending, part of which is attributable to the shrunken purchasing power of the dollar due to inflation, and part to the unrelenting expansion of government.

"Trillion" is an easy word to say. It rolls effortlessly off the tongue. This is unfortunate, because the ease with which we talk about trillions of dollars can keep us from grasping how enormous this sum is. Let this sink in: If you had been spending a million dollars a day, 365 days per year, how far back in time would you have to go to have spent your first trillion? Since the founding of our republic in the 1780s? Farther. Since Columbus stumbled upon the New World? Farther still. Since the birth of Christ? Nope, not yet. 2009 years of spending a million dollars a day wouldn't even bring you three-quarters of the way to your first trillion.

Our country's GDP is in the range of \$13-14 trillion. The private sector, from which all the financing for government must come, totals around \$10 trillion. As the 2008 "Financial Report of the United States Government" informed us, the private sector was already on the hook for \$65 trillion of government liabilities before Barack Obama became president. At a normal growth rate of three percent per year (far above our current growth rate), GDP would increase by around \$400 billion this year, generating less than one percent of the wealth needed to pay for those government liabilities (to say nothing of the trillions of personal and corporate debt that Americans owe).

Tragically, at the very time that Uncle Sam needs to be put on a severe fiscal diet, Team Obama is embarking on a gluttonous government spending orgy. On top of \$3 trillion of spending in this year's regular budget, Obama added \$787 billion in his miscalculated "stimulus" package. He wants over \$600 billion more as a "down payment" on universal health care, which translates into more trillions in spending in ensuing years to actually achieve that goal. In addition, \$3 trillion has already been allocated under the TARP plan—a down payment on what TARP inspector general Neil Barofsky says eventually may total \$23.7 trillion to rescue our bankrupt financial system.

The simple fact is that our \$10-trillion private sector cannot afford this spending splurge. Our economic future, both near-term and long-term, is being scuttled.

Near-term the biggest threat comes from taxes. The only way to increase consumption today (and whatever government taxes will quickly be consumed) is to devour more of the wealth that has already been produced, namely, consuming capital and transferring assets from those that have them to those who want them (i.e., a socialistic redistribution of wealth). Since capital is our economic seed grain, there will be less business formation, employment, and production in the coming months.

Incidentally, the more the economy shrinks under the burden of new taxes, the lower government tax revenues will fall, and the sooner Social Security and Medicare programs will have their

day of reckoning; so, the intermediate-term looks bleak, too.

Let me explain in another way how tax increases will harm us: If a cap-and-trade tax is adopted by the Senate and does what its proponents want it to do (i.e., dramatically raise the price of energy), the current shrinking of the private sector will accelerate. Since virtually everything we consume requires energy to produce and transport, prices in general will rise. That means that most Americans (everyone except the rich) will be able to afford fewer purchases, resulting in less production and fewer jobs. (Speaking of fewer jobs, if Obama's healthcare reforms are passed and taxes are raised on businesses to help pay for them, that can't help but reduce employment, too.)

If taxes will damage the short-term, borrowing money to pay for all these new spending programs will *maul* the long-term. Massive borrowing would increase the tax burden on Americans far into the future. Many of those who will bear that burden aren't old enough to vote yet, or haven't even been born. That's taxation without representation if there ever was such a thing.

The third possible source of funds for these trillions and trillions of spending plans is to simply have the Fed create trillions of new dollars. Sooner or later, whether in the near term or long term, such a massive inflation of the supply of dollars would depreciate if not destroy the greenback.

In a hyperinflation scenario, savings would be vaporized, markets would be discombobulated, food shortages and economic chaos would ensue, and martial law might supplant our Constitution. We would be reduced to poor serfs under the supervision of some latter-day Caesar or committee of Caesars.

This is the grim future we are facing if government continues to spend trillions and trillions of dollars. We are on a collision course with fiscal disaster.

"Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave" (Job 21:7, 13).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Buffalo Valley Baptist Church will host their annual Bible Conference, the weekend of October 23-25.

The church would like to invite and encourage everyone within driving distance to attend and enjoy the great preaching and fellowship.

Starting time will be 7:00 Friday night and 10:00 Saturday and Sunday mornings.

You may contact pastor Pruitt at e-mail, johnpruitt@frontiernet.net, or phone, 304-587-2451 if you need directions or hotel reservations.

Faithful Women

By Raymond Bennett
of Ithaca, New York

“Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” (Luke 24:1-12).

Oh, the love of faithful women! We have noticed a number of beautiful points about these women as we have followed our Lord on His last circuit from Galilee, round about through Jericho and back through Bethany and on into Jerusalem for His last Passover. We have observed the quiet, behind the scenes role these faithful woman played in their following with Jesus, seen by their frequent mention in Scripture. We are mindful here of I Peter 3:2: **“While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear”** (here meaning reverence and respect).

Let us pause here to briefly mention a few faithful women, women whom even we as men - leaders in the church - might do well to emulate.

There was Peter's mother-in-law, who lay sick, but Jesus touched her. **“And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and**

immediately she arose and ministered unto them” (Luke 4:38-39). Whether she followed Jesus beyond that incident we are not told, but in response to Jesus' touch she **“ministered unto them.”** It is safe to assume that whenever Jesus and His disciples were in that area she made it a point to minister to them, a needed ministry which made it easier for Jesus and His disciples to conduct their ministry. We must never forget the “household” needs, meal preparation, cleaning, laundry, and such like, needs which take time and energy away from the ministry. Remember these things in regard to our missionaries and in some cases your pastor.

There was the Samaritan woman, trapped in the pattern of sinful life that she had lived. But Jesus touched her. Touched by Jesus, she became a faithful witness for Jesus in that city. She, also, probably did not literally, physically follow Jesus, but it is safe to assume that her home was always open to Jesus whenever He passed through Samaria. I wonder how many “house church” meetings were held in her house.

There was the woman with the **“issue of blood”** who had spent her living on the physicians without results. But Jesus touched her, and as the song says, “she left there healed and whole.” We never hear of her again but who can doubt that she, whose faith had driven her to such embarrassing extremes, was not ever after a faithful follower of Jesus. If not with the itinerant ministry yet another home which was always open for Jesus, open for rest, for a meal, and above all for worship.

There was Mary, the mother of Jesus. She, who had been touched by the Holy Ghost before any of these other women. The woman who had carried the Holy Infant in her womb and in her arms, who had watched Him grow into manhood. She was the first to actively demonstrate faith in the miracle working power of Jesus there at Cana. She is frequently in the crowd that followed Jesus, she is there at the cross, and she is here at the tomb.

There was Martha and Mary, Mary who loved to sit at His feet to worship and be taught, Mary who anointed His feet with perfume and her own tears. She cared not for the scorn of the disciples but openly worshiped, even with tears. How dry the eyes of twenty-first century worshipers, caring not for the hell which Jesus suffered in their stead but taking salvation for granted!

There was the unidentified woman who, uninvited, entered Simon's house to anoint Jesus' feet with her tears and His body with expensive ointment, caring nothing for the embarrassment or rebuke from the pharisaical crowd. (Luke 7:37-38) Though she is not identified, many Bible teachers, like this one, think she may have been Mary Magdalene. Whoever she was, Jesus had touched her.

Who will doubt that she was a faithful follower of Jesus?

Finally there was Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils. **“He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils”** (Mark 16:9). The obvious love (not sex) between Jesus and Mary Magdalene surely shows that she was perhaps the most faithful follower of them all.

No doubt these women did not travel with Jesus in the manner of the twelve. They doubtlessly had home responsibilities. But as we just observed, their homes were always open for Jesus. With the possible exception of Martha, they were satisfied in the position of humble and faithful service which they

filled. And they were honored by the Lord for that service! Like Daniel, some 470 years before, they had “Purposed in their hearts” to be the faithful, humble, obedient servants which they were. These women did not seek leadership roles or glory! They simply and quietly served and worshiped, and for it they became invaluable to our Lord and His little band.

Notice how twice Jesus rebuked those who rebuked the women!

Oh, what a beautiful picture of the “Bride of Christ”! Let us be quiet, humble, faithful, unobtrusive, brave and busy servants for our Lord.



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.

POLL: CONSERVATIVES OUTNUMBER LIBERALS

(EP News)--Gallup recently reported new polling data that shows 40 percent of respondents identified themselves as “conservative” or “very conservative.” That's the highest percentage since 2004. Only 21 percent said they were “liberal” or “very liberal.” The number of self-identified conservatives increased in all 50 states, even though a majority of people still say they belong to the Democratic Party in 30 of those states. “Despite the Democratic Party's political strength — seen in its majority representation in Congress and in state houses across the country — more Americans consider themselves conservative than liberal,” said Gallup's analysis.

DEMOCRATS DISAGREE ON ABORTION COVERAGE

(EP News)--On Aug. 10, pro-abortion U.S. Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., acknowledged that the federal health-care overhaul would include abortion. “Abortion will be covered as a benefit by one or more of the health-care plans available to Americans, and I think it should be,” she said at a town hall meeting. But the next day, Lofgren's fellow Democrats touted the opposite position. “There's nothing in the bill that talks about Planned Parenthood,” claimed Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo. “There is not one dime for any abortions. There is nothing in the bill that mandates any kind of abortion coverage.” A key U.S. House committee voted down an amendment in early August that would have prohibited taxpayer dollars from paying for abortions under health-care reform. The measure, offered by Reps. Bart Stupak, D-Mich., and Joseph Pitts, R-Pa., failed on a 27-31 vote.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAIMS CENSORSHIP AFTER CALLING HEALTH CARE “DEMOCRAT PLAN”

(EP News)--U.S. Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, claims letters to his constituents were censored by Democrats through the Franking Commission. The commission regulates mailings sent by lawmakers to their constituents. The government pays the bill. Democratic leadership has been shutting down communications between Republican lawmakers and their constituents over a chart showing the massive bureaucracy that would be created under the current proposal. In his letter, King called the bill a “Democrat” health-care plan. He said Democrats wanted the word “Democrat” changed to “majority.” Even after King changed the wording to “government-run health care plan,” the Franking Commission objected to the mailing.

AMERICANS ARE CLEAR: WE DO NOT TRUST “OBAMACARE”

(EP News)--As news rolls in of Americans participating in town hall meetings in record numbers, a recent Rasmussen poll shows that support for President Obama's health care plan is waning quickly. Just 42 percent of Americans currently support the President's plan, while 53 percent oppose it. “As details about abortion funding, rationing of care, higher costs and less access to health care surface, Americans are expressing their distrust of a government-run system. Average Americans who have never been politically involved before are coming out in droves. They fear that their government officials, who have spent trillions on pet projects like obscene art and luxury planes, now plan to hijack control

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of our health care. "The message is clear: We don't trust Obama or Congress -- especially with our health care," stated Concerned Women for America's President Wendy Wright.

NEW HIRE AT DOJ TO HANDLE LGBT ISSUES

(EP News)--The Department of Justice has hired gay-identified attorney Matt Nosanchuk as point person on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues for the Civil Rights Division. Nosanchuk was a leader in the LGBT policy group during the Obama campaign. Joe Giganti, a conservative talk-show host from Washington, D.C., said he thinks it's the administration's way of calming the demands of gay activists. He says the new post also legitimizes the gay-activist movement. "By putting a gentleman like Matt Nosanchuk in there," he said, "they are insulting real civil-rights laws and the people that have struggled in the history of our country due to race, color and creed."

ADMINISTRATION OPPOSES, DEFENDS MARRIAGE

(EP News)--The Justice Department attorneys in the position of defending the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), made statements in legal filings that the Obama Administration would like to see the federal law repealed. Justice officials filed court papers Aug. 17, which call DOMA "discriminatory." The filing was written to defend DOMA is a legal challenge. Bill Duncan, president of the Marriage Law Foundation, said the administration is making a calculated compromise. "It's good law, so they can't completely ignore it," he explained. "So, what they're trying to do is make weak arguments and concede as much as possible to the side that wants to redefine marriage."

SOUTH DAKOTA ABORTION LAW STANDS

(EP News)--A federal judge has upheld part of a South Dakota law that requires women to be told that abortion ends a human life. However, U.S. District Judge Karen Schreier struck down disclosures that abortion increases the likelihood of suicide. Mailee Smith, staff counsel with Americans United for Life, called the decision a victory for pro-lifers. "The decision by the federal judge in South Dakota is a victory for informed-consent laws," she said. "At Americans United for Life, we have been saying for years that women cannot truly make a choice unless a choice is informed."

VETERANS HOSPITALS OFFER END-OF-LIFE COUNSELING

(EP News)--Sen. Arlen Specter, D-Pa., wants the Department of Veterans Affairs to quit using a handbook many are calling a guide to assisted suicide. Your Life, Your Choices is being pushed by the Obama administration.

Some life advocates say the booklet devalues human life and pressures disabled veterans with a "hurry up and die" message. Jim Towey, director of the Bush administration's Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, wrote an opinion piece on the handbook in The Wall Street Journal last week. "The document's obsessed with death," he said. "For this to be taxpayer-funded, and be the role of government, I find that wrong."

MOM OF PREBORN TWINS KILLED IN CRASH FIGHTS FOR NEW LAW

(EP News)--They died in a crash, but according to Vermont law, Patricia Blair's preborn twins do not qualify as children. Blair was six-months pregnant when her minivan was hit head-on. She, her husband and their other two children survived, but the twins died. Police say they are investigating whether the driver of the other vehicle was under the influence at the time. In 1989, the Vermont Supreme Court determined that a preborn baby cannot be considered a person in a criminal case. Blair is now lobbying the state for a fetal homicide law. "I don't want any mother, ever, to have to wake up and have the state tell them their babies aren't babies," she said. "It bothers me a lot."

ANCHORAGE MAYOR REJECTS GAY ACTIVISM

(EP News)--Anchorage, Alaska, Mayor Dan Sullivan vetoed a controversial measure Aug. 17 that would have threatened religious liberties. The ordinance had been approved by the Anchorage Assembly and would have extended special protections to gay-identified individuals in the areas of employment, housing, education and other areas. Pro-family groups said it would have forced Christian ministries, churches and others in the faith community to hire people who don't share their religious beliefs.

GOVERNMENT TO HAND OUT \$4.35B FOR EDUCATION REFORM

(EP News)--States are competing for a piece of the \$4.35 billion education-reform pie being dished out by the federal government. Candi Cushman, education analyst at Focus on the Family Action, called the "Race to the Top" plan a "mixed bag." Some of the money will be used for charter schools, which tend to be free from bureaucratic strings. The plan also encourages attaching teacher bonuses to student performance. There are some problems, however. "There's a strong push for states to move toward national standards," Cushman said, "and that's very concerning for people who value local control."

WASHINGTON VOTERS TO DECIDE ON MARRIAGE REFERENDUM

(EP News)--Referendum 71 will appear on the November ballot in Washington state, election officials announced Aug. 31. The measure would repeal a domestic-partnership law that mirrors marriage. The secretary of state's office counted 121,486 valid signatures — more than the number needed. Joseph Backholm, executive director of the

Washington Family Policy Institute, said: "The purpose of the initiative is to prevent the state from taking the position that there's no difference between homosexual and heterosexual relationships."

JUDGE RULES IN FAVOR OF WASHINGTON MARRIAGE REFERENDUM

(EP News)--A judge has rejected gay activists' attempt to halt a November ballot initiative that gives voters the final say on a state domestic-partnership law passed this year. Joseph Backholm, executive director of the Family Policy Institute of Washington, said there's good reason to let the voters decide. "We want to make sure," he said, "that marriage retains the purpose and significance that it has always had in the state: to create an environment where the mother and father who created the children are most likely to raise them."

LAWSUIT SEEKS TO KEEP BIBLE IN IDAHO CHARTER SCHOOL

(EP News)--The Alliance Defense Fund has filed a lawsuit on behalf of Nampa Classical Academy, in defense of their use of the Bible as part of its curriculum. The Idaho Public Charter School Commission has threatened to revoke the school's charter for using religious texts. Eric Buehrer, founder and president of Gateways to Better Education, said the Bible is a legitimate historical document. "You can't understand great speeches from people like Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln and Shakespeare," he said, "without an understanding of the Bible. They're really academically handicapping students if they don't give them a good understanding of the Bible."

N.H. COURT ORDERS HOME-SCHOOLED GIRL INTO PUBLIC SCHOOL

(EP News)--The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) has asked a New Hampshire court to reconsider its decision to order a 10-year-old home-schooled girl into public school. "Parents have a fundamental right to make educational choices for their children," said ADF-allied attorney John Anthony Simmons. "In this case, the court is illegitimately altering a method of education that the court itself admits is working." Mike Donnelly, staff attorney at the Home School Legal Defense Association, agreed this is "not the place for the courts to be inserting themselves."

NEBRASKA ABORTIONIST VOWS TO TRAIN OTHERS

(EP News)--LeRoy Carhart wants to educate as many doctors as he can to perform late-term abortions so the process doesn't die with him, according to the latest issue of Newsweek. "That makes the anti-abortion activist's job just 10 times harder," he said, "because there are now 10 times more of us." Carhart's clinic in Omaha, Neb. sees dozens of women each day seeking late-term abortions. Newsweek reporter Sarah Kliff calls Carhart, who also has licenses in seven other states, an

"abortion evangelist." Carhart can't exactly say why he does abortions, but he refuses to stop. "Abortion is not a four-letter word," he said. "I'm proud of what I do."

"These ... things doth the LORD hate ... hands that shed innocent blood" (Pro. 6:16-17).

FORMER EMPLOYEES SPEAK OUT AGAINST LATE-TERM ABORTIONIST

(EP News)--Four former employees are speaking out about what they called deplorable conditions at late-term abortionist LeRoy Carhart's Nebraska clinic. The women have said they assisted in the gruesome procedures, even though they didn't have the required experience or licenses. The four recalled seeing dirty surgical instruments, bloody operating gowns that went unchanged between patients, and unqualified nursing care. The testimonies will be turned over to the Nebraska attorney general.

TENNESSEE SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL ALLOW "GOD" ON POSTERS

(EP News)--A school district near Nashville, Tenn., has agreed to allow religious speech on student-made posters, following a federal lawsuit filed by the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF). In March, ADF sued Wilson County School District after school officials censored the words "God" and "pray" from posters promoting National Day of Prayer and See You at the Pole events. The court issued an injunction in May that halted the censorship while litigation continued. "We're glad that the school acknowledged the constitutional right of these children and these parents and decided to respect their freedoms to express their views just like anyone else," said Nate Kellum, senior counsel with ADF.

FLORIDA WOMAN WILL NOT BE CHARGED WITH CONTEMPT OVER PRAYER

(EP News)--A federal district judge told Michelle Winkler, a Florida school district clerical assistant, that she would not be held in contempt regarding her husband's prayer at an awards banquet. The decision stems from an American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit filed last year in which the court entered an injunction barring school employees from praying at school activities. Winkler's husband, who is not a school employee, read a prayer his wife had written at a privately funded event at a nearby Naval base. The ACLU claimed the event in question was in connection with the public school. Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel, said, "We don't want to have to go to these contempt hearings," he said. "We want to make sure that the students, faculty, staff and administrators understand and enjoy their First Amendment right to freedom of speech."

HOMESCHOOLERS BEAT NATIONAL AVERAGE ON ACT

(EP News)--On a scale of 1-36,

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homeschoolers scored an average of 22.5 on the ACT, one of the nation's leading college entrance exams. The national average for the all students taking the test was 21.1. "This is a remarkable achievement and shows that homeschool parents are successfully preparing their children for college," said Michael Smith, president of HSLDA. A total of 1.48 million students took the ACT in 2009 which included 11,535 homeschoolers or just under 1 percent of the total. It has always been the position of homeschool advocates that the one-on-one instruction provided by dedicated parents is a more effective way to educate children. It's also much cheaper. The average public school spends \$10,000 per child per year whereas the average homeschooler spends \$500 per child per year. Homeschooling is also growing rapidly. The National Center for Education Statistics, part of the Federal Department of Education, estimates that homeschooling is growing at around 7 percent per year.

VERMONT GAY MARRIAGE BEGINS

(EP News)--The Vermont same-sex marriage law will take effect Sept. 1. The Legislature adopted the law in April that gives gay couples full marriage rights. The law may also open the door to out-of-state same-sex couples who want to get married. Six months after legislators passed civil unions in 2000, 78 percent of those applying were from outside of Vermont, according to an Associated Press report. A report from Iowa mirrors those numbers. About 45 percent of Iowa's same-sex marriages have included out-of-state couples after that state's Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in April.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CITES "NATURAL FAMILY"

(EP News)--Delegates from more than 60 nations affirmed Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that asserts "the family is a natural and fundamental group unit of society, and is entitled to protection by the State." The World Congress of Families (WCF) met in Amsterdam in August. Significantly, it defined "natural family" as "the lifelong marriage of a man to a woman, for the purposes of welcoming and nurturing new human life, providing love, companionship and mutual support, building a home rich in functions, and strengthening the bonds of the generations." In the "Amsterdam Declaration," the delegates also agreed to discourage divorce, to protect the right of parents to guide their children's moral and practical education, and to guard human life at "the beginning and end of the life cycle."

JAPAN A VICTIM OF FALLING BIRTH RATES AND A RAPIDLY AGING POPULATION

(EP News)--In Japan's historic election on Aug 30, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party lost power for only the second time in the post-

World War II era. The opposition Democrats swept to power, winning 308 of 480 seats in the lower house of parliament. Lost in election analysis is the role declining birth rates and a rapidly aging population is playing in Japan's ongoing economic crisis. According to a story in the Aug. 31 "New York Times": "Many Japanese saw the vote as the final blow to the island nation's postwar order, which has been slowly unraveling since the economy collapsed in the early 1990s." In that period, Japan's stock market fell 80 percent from its all-time high. Its real estate market lost 60 percent of its value.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

CANADIAN RULING GOOD FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

(EP News)--Religious-freedom advocates cheered a decision by Canada's Human Rights Tribunal on Sept. 3, which ruled that Section 13, the human-rights hate-speech law, was unconstitutional. Dave Quist, executive director of the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, said that although the Tribunal has no legal standing in the court system, the ruling should prove beneficial. "Unless the Ministry of Justice or some other part of the court system, appeals that ruling," he said, "this will set a precedent for future rulings."

GAY ACTIVIST BILLS RESURFACE IN CONGRESS

(EP News)--The Employment Non-Discrimination Act is on the fast track in Congress. The bill will get a full committee hearing on Sept. 23 in the U.S. House of Representatives. For the first time, the measure includes special rights based on "transgenderism." Family advocates say the bill would put undue burdens on Christian employers by forcing them to hire people whose views are at odds with the company's values. Gay activists are also pushing to repeal the federal Defense of Marriage Act. Rep. Jerald Nadler (D-NY) introduced legislation to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). DOMA was passed by Congress in 1996 after the Hawaii Supreme Court seemed willing to impose "gay marriage" on that state. But concerns about federalism and the Constitution's "Full Faith and Credit" clause led Congress, with more than 80 percent support in both chambers, to pass the Defense of Marriage Act, which was signed into law by Democrat President Bill Clinton.

FAMILY GROUP SAYS OBAMACARE WILL PUT PLANNED PARENTHOOD IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(EP News)--As America processes the president's health care reform speech last night, the American Family Association is drawing attention to a little-noticed provision in H.R. 3200, the House version of ObamaCare, which will put Planned Parenthood clinics inside America's public schools. Under the provisions of section with the innocuous-sounding title, "School-Based Health Clinics" (pp. 993-1001

of the bill), a "non-profit health agency" such as Planned Parenthood will be authorized to serve as a "sponsoring facility" for school-based health clinics that will operate during school hours. Although the bulk of the health care bill is scheduled to go into effect in 2013, this particular provision is slated to go into effect next summer, in time for clinics to appear in public schools by next fall.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE PASSES BILL THAT PROMOTES SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(EP News)--On Sept. 9, the California State Legislature approved Senate Bill 54, authored by Sen. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco). SB 54 would require California to validate and recognize same-sex marriages performed outside the state prior to Nov. 5, 2008, when California voters approved Proposition 8. SB 54 was approved by the Democrat majority on a party-line vote in both the Assembly and Senate. California Family Council's director Ron Prentice said, "The people of California are sovereign, and the language of Proposition 8 is clear regarding the people's intent. However, California's current legislature will continue to attempt to weaken the laws set forth by the people. Californians are better informed to these antics and will ultimately press Governor Schwarzenegger for his veto of SB 54."

SUSAN B. ANTHONY LIST ANNOUNCES "VOTES HAVE CONSEQUENCES" PROJECT

(EP News)--The Susan B. Anthony List announced a list of House and Senate targets for the Susan B. Anthony List's Votes Have Consequences project, an effort to educate citizens about the voting records of legislators who are out of step with their districts. "If there's one thing many members of Congress learned over the August recess, it's the danger of being out of step with your constituents," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, President of the Susan B. Anthony List. "Votes do have consequences, and the current tensions over health care reform should drive that message home. The Votes Have Consequences project will shine the light of the truth on legislators who favor government-backed abortion in health care reform. You can't get further out of sync with the majority of America than by advancing abortion on-demand with taxpayer dollars. We will use every tool in our arsenal to ensure the folks back home know the truth about their legislator's positions."

JUSTICE SCALIA DEFENDS RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES

(EP News)--In an interview with the Jewish newspaper Hamada, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said the Constitution does not exclude religion from the public square. Scalia also said that the reason the United States has been such a successful nation may be because "we honor Him as a nation. We invoke Him in our country, our presidents invoke Him, my court opens its sessions with 'God save the United States.' Those things are not insignificant." He also told the paper that he

judges every issue by the U.S. Constitution. He added that there is nothing in that document that contradicts his Catholic faith.

WASHINGTON TEACHERS LEAVE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

(EP News)--Some teachers in the St. John School District have disaffiliated with the Washington Education Association (WEA) and the National Education Association (NEA) because they no longer wanted to give money to causes they didn't believe in.

"Many of the teachers in St. John were just fed up with funneling huge amounts of their paycheck to advocate for immoral causes that the WEA and the NEA advance," said Cindy Omlin, executive director of Northwest Professional Educators (NWPE). "They thought those causes were hurting children, and they were tired of it."

SOCIAL ISSUES FRONT AND CENTER IN CALIFORNIA

(EP News)--A measure that would have allowed kids as young as 12 to receive mental health treatment without the knowledge or consent of their parents failed in the California Assembly Sept. 11.

SB 543 went so far as to propose deleting a provision from current law that requires professionals working with a teen to contact a parent or guardian, calling such measures "inappropriate." The bill was placed in the inactive file, which means it will not be heard this year.

Two other bills hostile to families have successfully made it by lawmakers. SB 54 recognizes out-of-state same-sex marriages, even though voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment in November defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. SB 572, the Harvey Milk bill, passed the State Assembly by a vote of 45-27. It honors one of the first openly gay elected officials.

"BOY IN A BIKINI," OTHER GAY FILMS GET WIDE AUDIENCE IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

(EP News)--A San Francisco group billing itself as "the best in LGBT media" is claiming hundreds of public schools in California have signed up to show its films and use accompanying discussion materials. One film features a boy "coming out" by wearing his mother's bikini. Another film incorporates Native American spiritualism to cast LGBT (lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender) persons as "two-spirit" people.

The films and school materials are being distributed by Youth in Motion, a partnership between Frameline and Gay-Straight Alliance Network. The films are accompanied by a "curriculum guide" and "action guide." Among other things, the guides encourage students to question whether religious and cultural celebrations, such as Jewish bar mitzvahs, wrongly discourage homosexual and transgender lifestyles.



Heresy of Preterism

(Continued from page 181) ◊

and new Earth. Through the course of this discourse I intend to bring to light this heresy, which I believe in many cases, is a damnable heresy, and show why it is indeed a dangerous error, not simply another view of a “non-essential” matter. This is not a new doctrine, and is believed and propagated even among those who call themselves Landmark Baptists. Hymenaeus and Philetus might have taught church truth. You may have heard a hearty amen from them hearing a message on the doctrines of Grace; but they taught a deadly heresy, and there are some who do the same. They say they agree with us on church authority, and closed communion; they say they agree with us on other Baptist distinctives, but spread a dangerous heresy.

First, let's look at some of the major points of heresy that the advocates of Preterism hold that makes this doctrine RANK heresy. Preterism teaches that Jesus Christ came back and fulfilled all prophecy contained in Holy Writ in AD 70. In the year AD 70 Rome destroyed the temple in Jerusalem lead by Emperor Titus, just as Jesus foretold. This destruction is a historical fact and it did happen; but the basis of this teaching is that ALL prophecy was fulfilled at this time. They take the works of Josephus and other secular histories to be their authority on the matter as it is necessary for them to rest upon secular accounts as their foundation and not God's Word. Indeed, some of the things in the first 14 verses of Matthew 24 were fulfilled, but not in total. The first 14 verses of Matthew 24 deal with the entire time period prior to the rapture, and then, up through the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. They were not fulfilled in total in AD 70. Jesus mentioned the destruction of the temple in Matthew 24:2, “**And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**” Jesus is speaking of the AD destruction of the temple by Rome. But the next verse is very important to understanding the rest of the chapter. Matthew 24:3, “**And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?**” The disciples after having thought of what the Lord had said asked three questions.

Question 1. When shall these things be?

Question 2. What shall be the sign of thy coming?

Question 3. What shall be the sign of the end of the world?

Jesus answers these three questions throughout the rest of the chapter. The rest of the 24th chapter is not dealing explicitly with verse two, but answering the questions of verse 3. The premise that all

things were fulfilled at this time is taken by the Preterists saying that the remainder of the 24th chapter of Matthew deals with verse two and the year AD 70, and this assertion forces all prophecy into that time period by taking Scripture out of context, or spiritualizing the Scriptures instead of a literal interpretation of Scripture. They rest their proof of Christ's so-called AD 70 coming on the historical works of men, and Josephus in particular. You cannot take the Scripture and prove such a belief system. A person could read their Bible and learn from the Bible alone the truth of the church and desire to be a Baptist, a person could read their Bible and learn the truth of Sovereign Grace from the Bible alone; however, you could not read your Bible and become a Preterist because they rely extensively on extra-biblical testimony. “**Let God be true and every man a liar.**” In order for this theory that Matthew 24 was fulfilled in AD 70 to fit, everything else in Scripture has to shift to make room and thus the dangerous descent of this profanation. Preterism must then find someplace to put the time of Jacob's trouble, so they teach the tribulation period was from AD 63 to AD 70. However, dealing with the end of the tribulation God's Word says in Revelation 1:7, “**Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.**” Every eye did not see the Lord Jesus Christ. When He comes, EVERY eye shall see him! Only gross spiritualization of Holy Writ could explain away such passages as “every eye shall see him when He comes in glory.” Matthew 24:30, “**And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**” It is hard to nail down the whole of Preterism, because like most heresy, there are so many different interpretations. One interpretation of this verse is that Christ's glory mentioned here was the glory of Emperor Titus and the Roman army and that Christ was guiding the army as He did Israel in the wilderness. This Scripture is referencing the second advent of the second coming of the Lord Jesus. There will be a sign in heaven, and all the tribes, notice, all the tribes, not just Jerusalem, but from America to Australia, all the people of the earth shall mourn, and they, the whole earth, shall SEE the Son of man coming in the clouds, with power and GREAT glory. You would think that if the Lord Jesus Christ came back in great glory, and an event that the whole world saw and mourned over that it would be documented by every tribe and people on Earth. It is not documented because it has not happened yet.

The most vital point of the Christian faith that Preterism stands contrary to, is on the resurrection, claiming it is already past and even goes so far as to a complete denial of a bodily resurrection,

claiming only a spiritual resurrection. In order to make their AD 70 theory fit, their doctrine now has to do something with the resurrection. Preterism, like most dangerous heresy, will use the same words as you and I, but apply their own definition. For example, if you ask a Preterist if they believe in the resurrection, they will answer yes. If you ask them if they believe in the resurrection of Christ, they will say yes; but what they mean by resurrection and what the Bible means by resurrection are two completely different ideas. Preterist, when speaking of resurrection, mean a spiritual resurrection, or the new birth, it has nothing to do with the body, and if you press a consistent Preterist for an answer they will, if they will be honest with you, deny Christ's bodily resurrection as well. Very deceptive, isn't it? That's why it is dangerous. You must define the terms every step of the way to find out what they truly believe. General questions, unfortunately, will not get you to the bottom of their belief system. Notice, in the frequently asked questions of a prominent website dedicated to Preterism, which we will continue to refer to, concerning the resurrection: “Preterism does teach the Resurrection of the dead, however it does not subscribe to a physical resurrection of bodies” (PlanetPreterist.com FAQ). What kind of resurrection is that? What blatant double talk. Preterism is directly contrary to the Word of God which very clearly and quite often speaks of the bodily resurrection of the saints of God. Romans 8:11, “**But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.**” The danger of this teaching is if our resurrection is past and if there is no bodily resurrection for us, then there was also no resurrection of Jesus Christ, and if no resurrection of Christ, our hope is in vain! Please read the 15th chapter of I Corinthians. Our future resurrection is tied to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul put himself on the line, his credibility; the faith once delivered, salvation and the work of Christ all on the fact and necessity of the resurrection. If Christ did not rise, then, like a house of cards, it's all coming down. But, He is RISEN, and risen BODILY. You have hundreds of eye witnesses, credible witnesses of the friends of Christ, also the enemies of Christ, most of all, the divinely inspired record of the Holy Scriptures; and I know by faith, the faith given to me by the risen Lord, that He bodily arose from the dead. This makes Preterism a damnable heresy. If you deny our resurrection, you deny the resurrection of Christ, if you deny the resurrection of Christ, you are not saved! No matter what you say about doctrines of Grace, the church, Landmarkism, baptism, if

you deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, you are on your way to Hell. I Corinthians 15:13-20, “**But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**”

Preterism teaches that the time of Jacob's trouble, or the great tribulation period, has already taken place. Matthew 24:21, “**For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.**” The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was not the worst tribulation the world has ever seen. For the people who lived then say that AD 70 was the worst tribulation the world will EVER see. From the time of Jacob through that time, it was terrible tribulation, but can it be said that it was worse than Sodom and Gomorrah, the Genesis flood, or more recently, WWI and WWII, the Jewish holocaust, the millions killed by Communist China, the countless massacres that fill the pages of history, and with the countless tribulation that was before and since that time, and then trouble will be the worst tribulation that ever has been, or ever will be again? With out question, there will not be a worse time on the face of the earth than that great tribulation period (Revelation 8:7-13). “**Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the three angels, which are yet to sound!**” Not woe to Jerusalem or woe to the Middle East, but woe to the inhibitors of the earth. The problem with this philosophy is there is always a slick answer for everything, but not a scriptural answer for it and “**by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.**” With this doctrine they must also say that God is finished with Israel, contrary to Romans 11. Consider the words of Duncan McKenzie, a columnist for Planet Preterist. “The Coming of Jesus in Revelation 19 is referring to the one and only Second Coming at AD 70. With harlot Israel destroyed, Jesus comes and defeats the beast from the abyss.” They teach that Israel is destroyed. Israel is MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH according to their heretical doctrine;

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**BEREA BAPTIST BANNER
Financial Report
8-1-2009 to 8-30-2009**

Beginning Balance	\$3,878.83
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C. , Stockdale, TX.....	25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	29.25
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	836.75
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....	60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX.....	100.00
Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY.....	150.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....	25.00
F. W. Howard, Kansas City, MO	10.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL.....	50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....	35.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL	25.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA.....	225.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH.....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR.....	50.00
Rose Young, Senatobia, MS.....	25.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC.....	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	66.00
Anon.....	1,150.00
Dividing checks.....	150.00
Sub Total	\$4,607.00
TOTAL.....	\$8,485.83

EXPENDITURES:	
Printing.....	581.71
Postage	692.07
Supplies	97.00
*Wages	2,891.50
FICA	234.32
Dividing Checks	150.00
Supplies	81.32
Total Expenditures	4,630.92
ENDING BALANCE	\$3,854.91

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

**BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST
Financial Report
8-1-2009 to 8-30-2009**

Beginning Balance	\$11,141.86
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY.....	100.00
Anonymous	1,000.00
.....	1,475.00
TOTAL.....	12,616.86
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	710.00
Tape Production (3 months).....	195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	905.00
.....	\$11,171.86
Interest	+97
.....	11,712.83
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,488.52
ENDING BALANCE	\$10,224.31

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$648.52
RECEIPTS:	
Anonymous	1,000.00
.....	1,648.52
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time (WCTT)	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,488.52

Heresy of Preterism

(Continued from page 198) ♦

which also causes God to disannul His everlasting covenant with Abraham and David. A slippery slope, for now the logical and natural consequence is that God has denied Himself, lied to Abraham and David, and gone back on His Word. The consequences here are dire. Hebrews 6:11-20 proves God's promises are sure for us because they were sure for Abraham, and God is unchangeable and cannot lie. For this cause we have full assurance of hope and we have an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. If the promise to Abraham was no good and could be disannulled, so could the promise to us. But praise God He cannot deny Himself, and His Word is sure.

Preterism teaches that Satan is now in the Lake of Fire, that he is out of the picture. If Satan is at the present thrust in the Lake of Fire, what about I Peter 5:8? **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."** According to Preterism, this verse has nothing for us in our day because Satan is bound and merely a historical figure. All the Scripture concerning the Devil doesn't apply to us anymore by the accounts of this heresy. It's all historical information. This points us to another great problem with Preterism; it takes away so many promises and warnings in the Scripture that are directly related to the second coming of Christ and future events. Notice the Scripture that we just quoted. For the Preterist, since the Devil is out of the picture, we have no need to be sober, but let's look at the context of the passage in verses 6-10, **"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."** The challenge for the Preterist is to tell us what is historical and what is not. If the verse in the middle is historical about Satan, what about the sentence before telling us that Christ cares for us? Does He care for us, or only those historical characters that had to resist the Devil? Proper interpretation and plain sense tells us that those whom Christ cares for are also the very same that are to be sober and vigilant. The command to be sober goes with the same thought as the promise of Christ making us perfect, stablishing and strengthening

and settling us. Who is Scripture written for, and how are we to read Scripture if the commands of the New Testament no longer apply to us? Denial of Scripture is a fruit of Preterism, which leads to picking and choosing what one wants to obey, and casting aside what you don't. I was once told that the New Testament is to be read no differently than genealogies of the Old Testament, it is God's Word but you have to pick out what you can use, and view the rest as historical information. That, unfortunately, is their view of Scripture, and only the beginning of the errors. There are far too many Scriptures that are directly tied to future things to list everyone here so we will consider only a few. Many of our blessings, encouragements, commands and warnings are tied into the teaching of the coming of Jesus Christ, thus making the verses irrelevant to us if what they teach is true. Not only those particular verses, but the entire context of the verses are lost as well as we have seen in our example of I Peter 5. But why stop there, if the context of the passage does not apply, what about the entire epistle? Notice a few Scriptures that are linked with the future. The Bible says to look for the Saviour (Titus 2:12-13), if He has already come back, then that verse doesn't apply to us anymore which tells us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly and godly in the present world while we are looking for Christ to return. Preterism destroys our hope. Consider Romans 8:24-25, **"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."** Please consider the context of this verse, this is not merely hope in going to Heaven, Romans 8:23, **"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."** The Preterists believe that the only resurrection is a spiritual resurrection that happens when you are saved; but how can one hope of the adoption, the redemption of our body with a spiritual resurrection? If the resurrection takes place at salvation, how could a saved person be looking towards it? That is how Preterism destroys our hope, you can't hope for something in the past, but you can hope for FUTURE things. Look in Titus 2:13 again, **"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."** Our hope (future) is the glorious APPEARING of Christ, so we have no blessed hope any longer according to their tenets. Also, the weapons of war God gave us are both useless and unnecessary if this teaching is true. Ephesians 6:10-11, **"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the**

whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Why have armour to protect and war against an enemy that is already gone? When pointing out their error, I have found that one of the cries of Preterism is they claim to hold to 'Scripture only' and put no value on confessions or creeds, as if to say that they are relying only upon the Scripture. Having a belief that differs from the faith of the historical Baptists is supposed to be a pious badge of honor and an example of their stand for God's

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Silsbee, TX would like to announce their 24th Annual Sovereign Grace Bible Conference.

The conference begins Friday, October 16th at 7:00 p.m. and will continue through the Lord's Day, October 18th.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Jerry Dodson, Larry Wilson, Tom Horn, Jimmy Nelson, Dan Taylor, Nathaniel Hille, Doug Newell IV, and Richard Perfecto.

For those that arrive on Friday, a light meal will be served at 5:00 p.m. The church will also provide lunch and dinner on Saturday and Sunday.

All are invited to attend.

For further information please contact Pastor José Serrano at (409) 385-9344 or email pastorserrano@sbgcsilsbee.org.

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

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

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

Elder Andy Proctor is available for pulpit supply, mission work, special meetings and/or pastoral work. Any interested parties can contact him at (352) 895-1437 or email npsc5@juno.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heresy of Preterism

(Continued from page 199) ♦

Word rather than men; which is good and right. We should never, ever, ever put the words of men above the words of God, but this is a deceptive tactic to hide their error and validate the fact of being opposed to historic Christianity. Beware of anyone who will not put into writing what they believe or those who object to written statements of belief. We, too, believe that Scripture is sole authority, but as Baptists, we have never been afraid to have what we believe about the Scriptures written down for all to see. It is an cop-out to say "I don't live by confessions or creeds or articles of faith, only the Bible"; the person who says that, oft times has a false doctrine or false teaching they are trying to hide or are embarrassed by their belief. This is indeed dangerous teaching for it does away with much Scripture.

If what they say is true, we are living in the new heavens and new earth. "Therefore what makes the Heavens and Earth 'new' is not an act of God physically re-creating them, but a renewing and reconciliation of all things in Christ, through his sacrifice, resurrection and return in A.D. 70. The very presence of Christ (his parousia) is what gives the Heavens and Earth a renewed character." (Planet Preterism). Here is what God says: Revelation 21:1-4, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Surely we know that God has not wiped away all tears, and we know that there is pain this very hour. We can look out our window and know that New Jerusalem is not here and that Christ does not dwell bodily with us now. Do you live in the world of Revelation 21:1-4? I don't, not yet anyway. I look about and see war, famine, murders, destruction, poverty, pollution, crime, and all manner of sin. I live in a perilous "II Timothy 3" kind of world. To say that we live in Revelation 21:1-4 is absurd and preposterous. It is hard to believe that one could say they believed the bible and hold to such unorthodoxy. If this is the new heaven and new earth, and this is what a life with no pain, tears sorrow is all about, I am of all men most miserable.

If Preterism is true, there are a lot of unanswered questions. Why preach or baptize? Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." If all has been fulfilled and we are in the end of the world that means our job is done. Also, the Preterist that does preach the gospel should have many saved when witnessing, because Satan is not here to hinder the gospel (II Cor. 4:1-6). The Bible teaches that the work of the church and preaching of the gospel needs to continue until the end of the world, and being in the end of the world according to Preterism, then why serve God in His church? Why take the Lord's Supper? We are to take it "till he come" (I Cor. 11:26-27) and if He has come then we should have stopped taking it a long time ago and taking the Lord's Supper would be a vicious, deceptive lie according to Preterism. Why is there no post AD 70 biblical instruction? Since the Bible was penned before the end of the first century, and all things came to an end in AD 70, why not provide us with some instruction? Why didn't John, or Paul or Peter give us some idea what WE should do once all things were fulfilled? The answer is because when all things are fulfilled, we will be with God, we will dwell with Him through all eternity, and our hope will be realized! In fact, most scholars believe that the book of Revelation was written well after AD 70, some put the date almost 30 years after, thus making John a historian rather than penning a prophecy despite John saying seven times in the book of Revelation that it was a prophecy.

Briefly, let me show you some of their so called 'proof texts' of Preterism. Matthew 10:23, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." They claim that Jesus was telling the disciples that once they preached over

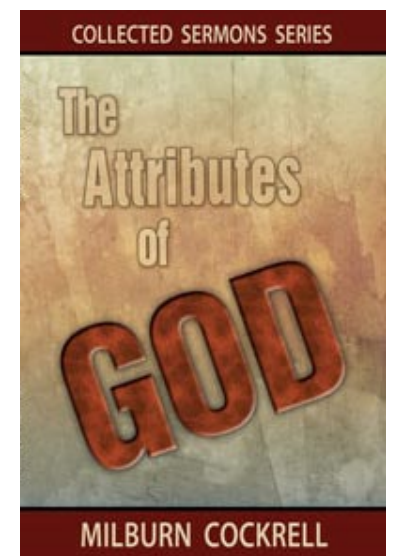
the cities of Israel, Jesus would return. But Jesus was telling the disciples that He was coming after them, as they preached, He would come to them again before they were finished. When you are persecuted in this city go to another, and you won't have preached in all the cities before I come behind you. This is His earthly ministry Matthew 11:1, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities." They claim that Matthew 16:28, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," refers to His second coming, but He is speaking of what happened in Matthew 17:1-9, the transfiguration. Next, Matthew 24:34, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Preterist claim 'this generation' is the generation standing with Christ as He was speaking. But Jesus was speaking to the generation that shall see the signs He spoke of, not the generation standing with Him. Matthew 24:30-34, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Milburn Cockrell, in his book *An Exposition of Matthew 24* well says "I believe that 'this generation' must be taken literally. This is the natural and normal meaning of the world in the Bible...Hence the meaning is the generation that lives to see the specific signs of the Great Tribulation and the signs in the heavens will also witness the return of Christ and the setting up of the kingdom."

The Bible is clear on how Christians must deal with Preterism in II Timothy 2:16-18, "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto

more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." Preterism is expressed as profane, or wicked and heathenish, mixed with vain babbling, or empty sounded fruitless talk. God has ordered us to shun it, to stay away from it because it eats like a canker. It brings death, if left unchecked and its evil wicked influence spreads. The result of Preterism has eternal ramifications, and Scripture says "it will overthrow the faith of some." This teaching can not be tolerated, it can not be compromised with, and it can never be allowed in the Lord's churches. A teaching that overthrows the faith of some and denies the faith once delivered is dangerous, deadly and damnable.



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