

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 Ninth Commandment

By Nathaniel R. Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Ex. 20:16).

Well did Arthur W. Pink state, "There is no word of the Decalogue more often and more unconsciously broken than this 9th Commandment." Humanly speaking, perhaps the only way not to violate this commandment, to not trespass against it is to not speak at all or to think at all! A great many people will argue over the various words of this verse looking for 'loopholes' that they may clear themselves of violation of this commandment

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In Desire of True Fellowship

By Donnie Burford
of Irvine, Kentucky

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15).

In the pursuit of fellowship the most obvious need is that of doctrinal agreement. Not that in every issue we must agree wholly. We do not expect every one to dot their I's and cross their T's in the exact manner as we who are all knowing (sic) do. If we do, we will only find ourselves holding our own hand for we will only think of our selves as worthy of our own perceived holy concord. Of course this is exactly the feeling of some, as it has always been. Need I remind you of the words of a

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Having and Having Not

By Frank James
of Cobbitty, Australia

"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? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. 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. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, 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

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The Need of Humility

Troy McGahan
of Somerset, Kentucky

"Hethat loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20).

A character trait that is sorely needed today in



God's people and in the Lord's New Testament churches is that of humility. Why you may ask? For this is one way we show that we are His disciples. Now maybe you are thinking "I thought love was how you show you are a disciple?" That would be true but you must understand that true humility and love go hand in hand.

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The Cry of the Unsaved

By Wayne Cox
(1913 - 2007)

"And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and



commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said

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Likeminded in Love

By Roger Reed
of Mansfield, Ohio

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be



likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of

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Them and Us

By Curtis Pugh
of Bocs, Romania

What is the essential, rock-bottom difference between "them" and "us?" By "them" I refer to that whole class of persons who, in one way or another, believe that each human being has a free-will so disconnected from man's sinful nature that he or she can decide either for or against Christ apart from outside influence. By "us" I refer to those who believe that the whole human race and every part of each man, including the will, has been so evilly affected by



the fall of Adam as to be incapable of coming in a saving way to Christ apart from Divine intervention. I recently stumbled upon a Baptist church website that had the following statement in her confession of faith: "We believe in total depravity, but we do not believe in total inability." I thought several things about this statement. One

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**"Be speedy; Put not off till another time: He who is not prepared today, will be less prepared tomorrow."
"If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles" (Job 11:13-14).**

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to 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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Having and Having

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thy cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!..... "And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:17-23, 26-27).

MAN CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF

This Biblical account of the rich man is still typical of people in our day and age. From man's perspective, the rich man appeared to have performed every necessary thing to gain entrance into heaven, yet in the eyes of Jesus Christ he was sadly lacking. Man's sinful nature is here displayed for our view, for we are prone to make the same mistakes as he did. We want to be accepted by God on the basis of our own merits. We want to be able to work our way to heaven by our own good deeds, religion, and morality. Just like this rich man we often trust in things that cannot save. As in our text, Jesus explained to His disciples that it is impossible for men to save themselves. Only God can save sinners.

HOW DO SINNERS GO TO HEAVEN?

If man cannot save himself, how then does he come to inherit eternal life? How can he be accepted before a holy God? In order to answer this important question, let us look at what this rich man had and what he didn't have. For you, too, may have as much or more than this rich man had. Or, you may be a good person in your own eyes or in the eyes of others. Yet, how do you measure up in the sight of God?

WHAT THE RICH MAN HAD

First of all, we see that this rich man had a high standard of morals. He knew the Ten Commandments in God's Word and had endeavored to obey them from the time that he was young. His friends and family most likely knew him as a person of high moral character. However, this did not make him accepted before God. Many people today are like this young man and hope they will go to heaven on the basis of their "good works." They view themselves as being a good person and strive to live a moral life in this world. While it is an honorable thing to be a person of high moral character, it is folly and vain to trust in this for salvation. It is to embrace a false hope and to trust in that which cannot save. For Jesus said that it is impossible for man to save himself. The Scriptures declare: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift**

of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Second, we see that this man had religion. This is observed by the fact that he knew the Scriptures and had studied them from his youth. He was aware that there is a God and a heaven and a hell. It was his stated desire when speaking to Christ that he might **"inherit eternal life."** It is very likely that he regularly attended public worship and was familiar with the religious practices of the law. Yet, with all of this, he was not accepted of Christ. This is because man cannot save himself, just as Jesus told His disciples. Multitudes of people have fallen into this grievous error. They suppose that because they attend a church, or are a member of a church that this will automatically gain them entrance into heaven. Others trust in their baptism or other religious observances, but the Bible makes it very clear that no person is saved by religious works, rites, ceremonies, ordinances, or sacraments. **"For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"** (Gal. 2:16b). Saul of Tarsus was a devout and religious man, but he was not saved until the Lord apprehended him on the road to Damascus.

Third, we can see that this man had some degree of sincerity in making his request to Jesus Christ. He was not an outright hypocrite. This is seen in the fact that he had practiced his religion and morality from his youth. It is also seen in the respectful manner in which he approached Christ. Still, with all of his sincerity he was not accepted of Christ. How often have we heard people say; "It doesn't matter what religion you belong to or what church you join as long as you are sincere. After all, we all worship the same God and are going to the same place anyway." Nevertheless, by our text we see that this rich man was sincerely wrong about the way of salvation. Similarly, many people today are ignorant about what the Bible teaches concerning sin and salvation. They are trusting in that which cannot save and have a false hope of inheriting eternal life.

Fourth, this man had a proper desire in wanting to inherit eternal life. There should be no greater concern to any person than matters of eternity -- the consequences of our sins and the prospect of eternal salvation. However, just like this rich man, many people want to be saved and to inherit eternal life on their own terms. They are willing to receive the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from hell, and to possess all the blessings that accompany salvation; as long as it is gained by the merits of their own supposed righteousness. Because of pride, they must have a part in securing their own salvation. This grievous error has been propagated both near and far by those who preach that salvation is merely a matter of "letting God save you, making a decision for Christ, or asking

Jesus to come into your heart." Here again, the idea is set forth that sinners can save themselves or have a part in attaining their own salvation. The Lord and His disciples never preached such a misleading message to sinners. Rather, Christ simply declared that "with men it is impossible."

In dealing with sinners, the Lord clearly laid down conditions that He required if any would come to Him or if they had a desire to follow Him. Please read (Luke 14:26-33, Matt. 11:28-30). He did this because these conditions could only be met by those who had truly experienced a work of God's saving grace in their hearts and lives. His conditions required genuine repentance, which is a change within the heart about sin and a turning away from it; and a living faith which worketh by love, which is knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior; and a commitment in love to follow Him at all costs, which is manifest by trusting the Lord completely.

Last, this rich man had a false god which he worshipped. While he professed to believe in the true God and serve Him, in reality it was his wealth and possessions that held the affections of his heart. This is proved by the fact that he could not sell them and follow Christ. His love for the things of this world barred him from the kingdom of heaven. Likewise, many today are held captive in their sinful condition by a love and worship for the things of this world. It may be wealth and possessions, or fame and worldly glory, or power and prestige, or the love of pleasure, or any number of things that are in the world. Yet anything that is loved or adored more than God is idolatry, and idolatry is sin. Christ told those who had a desire to come to Him to **"deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"** (Luke 9:23). This implies that all who will come to Christ as their Savior, must also come to Him as their Lord; and those who would have eternal life, must love Him supremely.

WHAT THE RICH MAN DIDN'T HAVE

We have seen that this rich man had many admirable qualities; yet, he didn't have that which he really needed to inherit eternal life. Let us now consider what this man didn't have.

First, he didn't have a proper knowledge of sin or of his own sinfulness before God. He did not see himself as God sees him. This is shown in the way that he approached Christ and addressed Him as "Good Master." He did not see Jesus as the Savior of sinners or as the eternal Son of God, but only as a "good master or good teacher." Like so many people today, he held to the idea that there are good men and bad men, or that all men are a mixture of both good and bad. Jesus rebukes this erroneous idea by

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His reply; **“Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.”**

The Lord is teaching that all of humanity is corrupted by sin and that there are none that are good in God's sight, no matter how we may view ourselves or view each other. **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). **“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one”** (Rom. 3:10-12). A rotten apple that has been polished and cleaned on the outside is still rotten on the inside. Similarly, all people born into this world as sinners are still sinners no matter how much they clean up the outside with “good works” or “morality.” Only God can save sinners, and He does so by starting on the inside within the heart. There, He quickens the sinner who is dead in trespasses and sins and washes away all of his sins in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He gives repentance and faith by which the guilty sinner is able to turn from his wicked way and self-righteousness and lay hold upon Jesus Christ.

Second, this rich man didn't have a perfect righteousness before God, for all those who would dwell with Him for eternity must be perfect and without sin. While he assumed he had been obedient unto the law of God, Christ was showing him that he had not been perfect. That is why Christ reminded him of God's law as contained in the Ten Commandments. A thorough searching of his own heart and affections would have shown that he was far from perfect in his obedience to the law. The law is a display of God's righteousness and was never given as a means of salvation, but rather as a schoolmaster to show us our need of Christ (Gal. 2:16, 3:24). It exposes every sin, and condemns all impure thoughts and the wicked motives of men's hearts (Matt. 5:17-30, 15:18-20). To be guilty of one of the least of the commandments is to be guilty of all (James 2:10). For this cause, God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that through His perfect obedience to the law and by His substitutionary death, He would redeem all of His people from their sins and impute to them a perfect righteousness (Rom. 5:6-11, II Cor. 5:21). God alone is able to save sinners!

Third, this man did not have a surrendered heart and life unto Christ. While he came to Christ with the pretense of wanting to learn, in reality he would not and could not follow the Lord's instructions. Multitudes of professed Christians are in the same

condition. They claim the name of “Christian” for themselves, yet they have never submitted unto the Lordship of Christ. A sincere love and a surrendered life are the requirements of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who would follow Him (Luke 14:25-33).

CONCLUSION

The message of the gospel is the same for all; whether rich or poor, male or female, Jew or Gentile. It matters not what our position in life is. What matters is that God alone can save sinners and that salvation is impossible by our own efforts. The gospel message in the Bible clearly proclaims that all of humanity is guilty before God and under the curse of the law. All are dead in trespasses and sins, all are by nature children of wrath who love darkness rather than light, and all are without hope in the world apart from the mercy and grace of God. This same gospel message also proclaims the “good news” of God's purpose of grace through Jesus Christ. That He came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost, and to save His people from their sins. That through the shedding of His blood at Calvary is the remission of sins. **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”** (Acts 13:38-39). **“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel”** (Mark 1:14-15).

*With melting heart and weeping eyes,
My guilty soul for mercy cries,
What shall I do, or whither flee,
To escape the vengeance due to me?*

*Does not thy sacred Word proclaim,
Salvation free in Jesus' name?
To Him I look, and humbly cry,
“O save a wretch condemned to die!”*

-GADSBY HYMNAL-



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unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way” (Mark 10:46-52).

This subject is not one that is unfamiliar by any stretch of the imagination, because you have heard it discussed many times, I'm sure. It is the cry of the unsaved in these verses I have just read in Mark 10.

Now I don't want any of you to get the idea that this preacher believes, as the modern world believes, that an alien sinner must plead with God in order to be

saved. I don't believe that and this lesson doesn't teach that. I cut my teeth on that doctrine, and when I was a boy preacher I used what is known as “The Mourner's Bench” in a modified form. I got to the place where I thought if a man were ever to find the Lord, he would surely find Him there. I thought my predecessors knew much more than I, and I had no right to disagree with them. But after seeing the failure of the use of it, I began to study the Word of God concerning this and came to the conclusion that this practice was without Scriptural foundation and completely foreign to the Word of God. It was no where to be found in the Bible.

I launched my study in another direction, and the course led me far from the accepted position of many of my colleagues. In my investigation of the everlasting Word of God, I began to recognize this one specific and definite fact: God says for the lost to believe. They are not to plead with God to save them; they are to believe. **“Whosoever believeth on me hath everlasting life.”** I believe that.

I want you to notice a number of things, perhaps you have already noticed them, perhaps not. But notice some things that are clearly set forth in these remarkable verses. Jesus went in Jericho and He went out of Jericho. In the text before us there are two things about the ministry of Jesus. One was that He entered Jericho and always the Scriptures quickly add, **“He went out of Jericho.”** It is an astounding fact. In Luke 19:1-2, notice that Jesus entered Jericho and went out of Jericho. You recall, of course, that on that occasion Zaccheus was gloriously saved.

It has been said by men who have studied both profane and religious history that there never was a city more wicked, debased and profane than Jericho during the days of the ministry of Jesus. But if Jericho was wicked, ungodly, sinful and ugly that was not the reason that Jesus only entered and quickly passed through: because He “came” to the ungodly.

You might ask me: “Brother Cox, why then did Jesus enter and quickly pass through?”

I don't know; we are not told, but suffice it to say that on these two occasions men found the Lord, salvation was given to three different men on two occasions. For example, the Gospel of Matthew recording the same incident in the life of Jesus speaks of two lepers who were beggars. There is no contradiction in what Matthew and Mark had to say. Matthew is recording the fact that there were two men on the highway side begging, while Mark is dealing with the cry of one and that Jesus helped him; therefore, Mark is dealing with the spiritual aspect and subsequent events of this visit.

Notice He came to Jericho, and He went out of Jericho. Here was a blind man sitting on the highway side and the

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Scriptures say he was begging. But the thing I want you to get, first, last and always, is that he was blind. This to me teaches every lost man in the world is blind. He is spiritually blind, blind to the truth of God's Word, spiritually blind.

You might ask me: “Why are the lost blind? Why has the shade been pulled? Why are they blind to the truth of God's Word?”

The Devil has blinded them, that's why.

Then you might ask me: “Why has he blinded them, why have they permitted him to bind their hearts and minds?”

Because they are his children, that's why.

You know, I have never believed in that rotten, devilish doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Beloved, I believe with all my heart if it had not been for the propagation of this hellish doctrine we would not be faced with the issue of integration. I believe that with all my heart. The “do-gooders” are constantly saying that all men are brothers and God is the Father of all of us. I have searched the Bible from cover to cover and I have never found the slightest inference that God is the spiritual Father of anybody save those that have been born of the Spirit of God.

In John 8:44, notice that Jesus said to the Pharisees, **“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”**

Notice this: they were very devout and religious, yet Jesus pointed the finger of accusation at them when they claimed God as their Father and said, **“Ye are of your father the devil. . .”**

Then you might ask me: “Why is it? Why will people let the Devil blind their hearts and minds?”

Romans 9:8: **“The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God. . .”** And in Matthew 13, the parable of the tares and wheat, Jesus in this exposition of that parable said, **“The tares are the children of the wicked one.”** Therefore, the Devil has a family upon the earth.

The Apostle Paul, speaking to the Ephesian brethren concerning their spiritual condition prior to their conversion said, **“And you hath he quickened, (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of**

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disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3).

Paul said that the Ephesian brethren, prior to their conversion, were by nature the children of wrath; therefore, that is why men permit the Devil to blind their hearts, minds and eyes.

I heard a man say one time---and I am inclined to believe it---"You know why men go to Hell? They go there because their daddy is there and they want to go home to be with their daddy."

What was he talking about? Was he talking about their natural father? No, he was talking about their spiritual father, the Devil. He didn't have any reference to the natural father but the spiritual father. Men die and go to Hell because their daddy is there. It makes sense, doesn't it? Therefore, men permit the Devil to blind their eyes because they are the children of the Devil.

In II Corinthians 4:3-4, the Apostle Paul said, "**But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**"

The Devil has blinded their hearts; that's why they are blinded.

I'll go further and say that in the New Testament, especially, leprosy stands for--though people actually had leprosy--or represents the sinfulness of the human heart. There must be a spiritual application: it represents the utter loathsome condition of the human heart. Paralysis always represents the inability of man to save himself; and blindness always represents blindness on the part of the unbeliever. Bartimaeus was blind.

And the second thing I want you to notice: he was begging. Now for what was he begging? He was begging for that which sustains the body; that which keeps body and soul together. He was begging for food for his physical body. I imagine he was sitting there and every time someone came along he would hear the footsteps and would cry out to them for aid, for assistance.

Beloved, every lost man in the world is a beggar in the sight of God. It makes no difference how rich he may be in material things; it doesn't make any difference how much wealth he may possess, if he is without the Lord, he is a spiritual beggar.

But I want everyone to know that the child of God is rich. He may not be rich in material things; he may live in a shack in the cotton field; he may be destitute of

wealth as far as material things go, but if he is the Lord's he is rich. He is rich not in houses and land but in the fact of his relationship with the Lord. I Corinthians 4:8, the Apostle Paul said, "**Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings. . .**"

Now I want you to notice "**he heard.**" Get that word "**heard.**" When he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing that way, when he "**heard.**" Now I have sense enough to know that whoever told him was not preaching a Gospel message; I know that he only heard that Jesus, the wonder Man of the age, was passing through. But let me ask you this: would it be doing violence to the Word of God to put a spiritual application to the word heard? Certainly not. "**When he heard that Jesus was to pass that way,**" when he heard. Someone had told him that Jesus was coming that way. Just like everybody that has ever been saved, he heard about Jesus Christ.

I believe the Gospel should be preached to every creature in the world. In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus said to His church, "**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**" Jesus said, "**Preach the gospel.**" And in Matthew 28:19-20, He says to tell the Gospel to every nation of the earth. Tell everybody about Jesus.

You might ask me, "What is the Gospel?"

Did you know that you can preach the Word of God without preaching the Gospel? It took me a long time to learn that fundamental truth. In I Corinthians 1:1-4 we are told what the Gospel actually is: "**Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel. . .**" What is the Gospel, Paul? "**For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.**"

"The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for our sins is the Gospel," said Paul. You see? Preach the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for our sins: that is the Gospel.

I am going further and say, "There won't be a soul saved in this dispensation separate and apart from the hearing of the Gospel."

"What are you saying, Brother Cox? Do you mean that the heathen who have never heard about Jesus will die and go to Hell?"

That is exactly what I am saying. I never have believed that God has two ways of saving people, one through the knowledge of the truth and the other through ignorance. Get this: suppose we assume the Lord is going to save the heathen without the hearing of the Gospel, then we do them a grave injustice when we send the Gospel to them because

they are safe if left alone, but if we send the Gospel to them some of them are going to rebel against it and we are going to be responsible for them going to Hell--"if" God saves some because of their ignorance.

I don't believe that. Men are going to Hell because they are sinners. The heathen is a sinner whether or not he ever hears the Gospel; he is a sinner because he is a son of Adam, and in Adam all sinned (Rom. 5:19, "**for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.**"). Therefore, the heathen is a sinner whether or not he ever hears of Christ, and sin must be punished by the justice of God. I say again that in this dispensation not one soul shall be saved without first hearing the Gospel.

Then I want you to get this: "**For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**" (Rom. 10:13). That has been used, hasn't it? People will quote that verse and forget about the 14th verse, "**how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?**" And in the 17th verse: "**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" Faith comes how? "By hearing the Word of God."

God uses two agents in the conviction and conversion of a sinner: the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the agent and the Word of God is the instrument.

Some people get the idea that the Gospel isn't necessary and that we are just wasting money when we send the Gospel to the heathen nations, but Paul said it was: "**Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel in the begetting of men to new life in Christ Jesus. In I Corinthians 4:15, notice the Apostle Paul said, "**For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.**"

Paul said that you may have ten thousand instructors to tell you something about Jesus, but you don't have many fathers because "**In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.**" Therefore, the preaching of the Gospel is necessary. The man heard that Jesus was passing through. May we always dedicate our lives to seeing that men hear about the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the thing that is needed.

Then the third thing that I want you to notice: "**He began to say to Jesus, Thou son of David. . .**" Now you notice that he didn't address Him as "Lord," but he addressed Him as "**Thou son of David.**" He was only applying it to the Kingship of Jesus in that expression "**thou son of David have mercy on me.**" He was not thinking of the Divinity of Christ at all,

only the power associated with being king. He is not thinking of the Lordship of Jesus, but the kingship of Jesus.

Next I want you to notice what the church was doing---"What do you mean? Do you mean the church was there?"

I most assuredly mean just that. The church was there; Jesus had it with Him. They went here, there and everywhere. They were a going church: Jesus had it with Him. Notice the Bible distinguishes between the disciples of Jesus and the multitudes of people in Mark 10. The church said, "You are disturbing us; you are upsetting the appletart." When the blind man cried after Jesus, the disciples rebuked him, but Jesus when He knew what the man was doing, stood still and said, "Call him, send him here."

You know that a church can make mistakes. For example, I know of a church that has the anathema of God upon it because of what they did to an eight-year-old boy many years ago. This church was holding a revival and an eight-year-old boy came down the aisle trusting the Lord and wanting to unite with the Lord's church. The preacher looked at him and thought, "I don't know if the church will do anything about this or not."

Two or three of the "good sisters" went to the boy and said to him, "You are too young; ---I want you to get this now---" "You are too young to know what you are talking about; you can not know anything about Jesus."

The boy said, "I do, I do. The man preached it simply; I am saved and I want to get in the Lord's church."

But they rebuffed and rebuked him, and he wasn't accepted. Years later I talked to this man, and I asked him if this really happened. He said, "Yes, it is true, and you know this thing that happened to me nearly ruined my life. I know that I should go somewhere to the church of the Lord and be baptized, not because I think that it is essential to salvation, but because I am a child of God. But I don't desire to go to church. Every time I go to church I think of those hypocritical, sanctimonious women who turned me back and said I didn't have sense enough to know what I was doing, that I didn't have sense enough to believe in Jesus."

As far as I know, he has never become identified with the Lord's church, living out of it. And that is what these were doing when the blind man was crying after Jesus. They rebuked him, but finally Jesus stood still and said, "**Come here.**" And the man laid aside his dirty, filthy, tattered rags and came to Jesus.

To me this represents a man's own filthy rags of self-righteousness. The man recognized his own righteousness, or self-righteousness, availed nothing. Before a man can be saved he must realize his own works and self-righteousness are as filthy rags in the sight of God, and that

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Cry of the Unsaved

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“nothing in his hands he brings, simply to the cross to cling.”

This brings us to the subject of repentance. What is repentance? The repentance of a sinner is repentance from dead works. Who has dead works? A dead sinner, and he must change his mind about self-righteousness and come to Jesus to be saved. He must repent of dead works, lay aside his own self-righteousness, filthy, dirty robes and come to Jesus.

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. . .” (Isa. 64:6).

All our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God, and, brother, when the light of God’s grace and truth hits the robes of self-righteousness of unbelievers it pierces them, tearing them to shreds, and he becomes filthy in the light of God’s truth.

Blind Bartimaeus laid aside his robes and came to Jesus and stood in the presence of the Lord. And what did he say? No longer was Jesus the **“Son of David,”** for Jesus had become his Lord. And Jesus said unto him, **“What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”** And he said, **“Lord, that I might receive my sight.”**

I tell you he was saved: he was a child of God the very moment he got up, for Jesus called him to Him, and he addressed Jesus as **“Lord,”** and “No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit” (I Cor. 12:3).

Get the picture now. Here he was lost, blind and dressed in filthy rags, representative of every unbeliever in the world whose mind has been blinded by the Devil, whose robes are dirty, filthy robes of self-righteousness: and then he hears the story of the redeeming love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lays aside his own filthy rags and comes to Jesus. But---and here is something I want you to see---just before he gets up and starts to Jesus, the Lord saves him. He hears the Lord call to him, and he is saved before he starts.

I want you to get this picture firmly fixed in your mind: you notice he said to Christ, previous to this, **“Thou son of David, have mercy on me,”** but now when he walks into the presence of the Lord, no longer is Jesus **“thou son of David,”** but he calls Him **“Lord.”** Now he recognizes the Divinity of Christ, that He is his Saviour, his Lord. It means reverent love. He said, **“Lord, that I might receive my sight.”** He was a saved man when he said that, because he addressed Jesus as **“Lord.”**

Now notice what happened: **“He followed Jesus in the way.”** Just because people think they are saved doesn’t mean that they are; for Jesus said, **“My sheep**

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hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

He didn’t say they start and then stop, but He said, **“They follow me.”** He did not say that they might, they should, but He said they would follow Him. And this old boy followed in the way the very moment his sight was restored. In fact, the very moment Jesus saved this poor, lost, deluded soul, Bartimaeus became a follower of Jesus Christ: **“He followed him in the way.”** That is the way it has always been since the days of Jesus. When men become saved, genuinely born again children of God, they follow Jesus Christ. They do, they do. That is the difference in the lost and the saved. The saved follow Jesus; the lost don’t. There is your difference.

Now this last thought and then I am through: Just as blind Bartimaeus’ sight was restored by the power of the Lord Jesus, anyone here that is lost can have the blindness lifted from his heart and mind.

Paul, talking about Israel’s blindness in the Epistle to the Corinthians, in II Corinthians 3:16 said that when the heart of Israel turned to the Lord, the veil was to be lifted. You turn to the Lord---by that I mean let the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ find a lodging place in your heart---and the veil will be lifted and you will become the recipient of the power of Jesus Christ Who can save, cleanse and make you whole, and you will go on your way rejoicing.

May God enable you to do that if you are without Christ. Amen.



Them and Us

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of my thoughts was that such a statement was just about the most ignorant thing I had read in a long time. In both error and ridiculousness it ranks right up there with the article that claimed the old Welsh Tract Church was organized without the vote or action of a “mother Church.”

Now I think I know what the author of this confession of faith meant. He meant

that while they believed every human being was constituted a sinner by Adam’s sin, they did not believe Adam’s sin had affected their wills. Another thought that sprang into my mind was that I have never read a standard theology book that suggested such a belief. Nor have I read a standard Bible commentary that approached unto such a position. (I am aware that there may be some Johnny-come-lately books on the market that would try to maintain such a position, but these are not regarded by candid people as “standard.”)

Most “evangelical Christians” – even most Baptists – agree with the view that every man is master of his own destiny. That is, they think that every person has a will completely separate from his sinful nature and can come to Christ if he or she wills to do so. I am aware of the popularity of their view, but I am fully convinced that the Bible teaches just the opposite. The Bible teaches that the whole human race was plunged into total ruin at the Fall of Adam. That ruin was so devastatingly complete as to render all the seed of Adam spiritually dead. (See Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13) It is a slander on the nature and character of Jehovah to suggest that He, when referring to the race as being “dead,” meant that mankind was capable of doing something spiritually good and profitable. That which is dead is incapable of “doing” anything! That is so obvious that only a prejudiced mind (or a spiritually dead one) will not admit the truth of the statement.

I should insert here that the same view regarding the will being free is held by the lost world as well as by most of the religious world. Both the world’s ungodly philosophers and the Arminian religionists are in agreement here! That speaks volumes to this writer and I think it should to all thoughtful people. Think of it! Most of the Baptist folk alive in the world today are in agreement with unbelievers as to the condition of mankind. Most Baptists believe about man’s sinful condition exactly what the pagans believe! That has not been the case in much of Baptist history, but it is a sad commentary upon the majority of present day Baptists.

Quite a number of years ago I was scheduled to preach in a certain Baptist Church in the United States. This Church had a reputation of being a sovereign grace landmark missionary Baptist Church. It was listed as such in one of the directories put out at the time. In conversation with the pastor, I was startled and saddened to hear him say something like this: “I just cannot believe that God elected some people to salvation apart from anything that is within them.” Now stay with me. I have not wandered off the track. I am not chasing rabbits here. This pastor held a view quite in agreement with the view of election held by those who believe in free will. Those who support the free will view generally say that God looked down through time and saw that so-and-so would believe and based on that “foreseen faith” God elected that person to salvation. Since the words “election” and “elect” and “chosen” are in the Bible, free-willers have to come up with some kind of explanation for them and so they say that God’s election is based on something good He foresees in those whom He chooses.

I maintain that the person who believes in election based on foreseen faith (or any other imagined goodness in an individual) has not only a problem with what the Bible teaches about election, but he has a far more basic problem in that he does not believe in total depravity. You see, the doctrine of total depravity includes the doctrine of total inability. Paul makes this abundantly clear when he says, **“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:8). But more on that subject later! It seems to me that whenever we are involved in a discussion with our “free will” relatives and neighbors on the several facets of sovereign grace, we ought to steer the discussion to foundational matters. We ought to steer the conversation to the subject of total depravity / total inability. We can talk about election, effectual calling, etc., “until we are blue in the face” and not make much headway because we have a far more basic difference.

This whole “free will” system among modern “evangelical Christians” which we call Arminianism, is based upon a false view. Their whole system rests upon man’s ability to come to Christ in a saving way of his own volition, completely apart from Divine intervention. To admit that God must act first in the salvation of an individual requires from the Arminian an admission he cannot give. It requires him to admit that God does not act alike toward all men. It suggests that God might have as His purpose the salvation of only a select number of human beings. Such a thought is repugnant to the free will mind that has been taught that God must act in a way which seems right to men.

The free-will view held by most
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Baptists today can be summed up in the last verse of the poem INVICTUS by British poet William Ernest Henley. He wrote:

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.*

People who cannot add an inch to their stature nor make one hair white or black think they can do what God says they cannot do. They think they are masters of their destiny. They think they can come to Christ and be saved anytime they want to do so – and the popular preachers of our day tell them that this is so – that their own salvation is all up to them. They tell them that if they will take one step toward Christ He will save them!

Many evangelical Christians (to use a politically correct term) have a picture in their minds of poor, lost men and women who, if they only knew that they were lost and understood that God loves them – why these folk would come a running to Christ. They think that there are unregenerate persons who because of something in them are earnestly searching and seeking Christ. In answer to this view I call attention briefly to the story Jesus told of the lost sheep. **“How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray”** (Matt. 18:12, 13). That lost sheep was not seeking the shepherd! It was the shepherd who sought his lost sheep! And it is the true Shepherd, Christ, who seeks His own sheep! If we will keep in our minds this simple story from the lips of our Savior we will begin to be several steps down the road to understanding how God saves sinners.

Not only does the Bible teach us that lost sheep do not seek the shepherd, the Word of God says: **“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God”** (Rom. 3:11). Now either lost men seek after God or they do not. The Bible says they do not! So get rid of the mental picture of poor, lost humanity seeking after God! Poor, lost humanity may seek after the perceived benefits and blessing that God bestows on His true children, but they do not seek after God. Whatever other motives men may have for claiming to be Christians, no one is ever born again (regenerated) because they have been seeking Christ. The soul that seeks after Christ does so because of a sovereign work of God in him and not vice versa. By vice versa I

mean that the sovereign work of the new birth (regeneration) is not brought about by anything that man does. To believe otherwise is to get the cart before the horse.

This truth is further made clear by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He said: **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day”** (John 6:44). There are two words sometimes used mistakenly by Americans. The two words are “may” and “can.” “May” as in “May I go?” means “Do I have permission to go?” “Can” as in “Can I go?” means “Do I have the ability to go?” The verse last quoted says “can” – **“No man CAN come to me..”** (Emph. C. P.). The meaning of the Lord Jesus is that no man has the ability to come to Him unless and until the Father draws him. He cannot do it! Let us do a little word study: The Greek word translated “draw” in John 6:44 is the same word used of the disciples dragging a net full of fishes to the shore. See John 21:6 and 11. It is the same Greek word used of Peter pulling his sword out of its sheath. See John 18:10. It is also used of the Jews forcibly removing Paul from the temple in Jerusalem. See Acts 21:30.

Now the testimony of the original language is clear: the word translated “draw” in our verse (John 6:44) means to drag – to move something by use of superior strength. Some use of force or power is indicated. And so Jesus is properly understood as saying that no one has the ability to come to Him in a saving way unless and until the Father uses superior power to cause that man to come to Christ. You may not like my theology on this point and you may argue with me, but you cannot argue with the meaning of the word Jesus used – and I think He knew what word to use in describing what was necessary for a man to be saved. Jesus said that it is impossible for a lost person to come to Him unless the Father uses His strength to cause and enable that man to come.

In addition, Jesus said that all those whom the Father brings to the Son will be resurrected by the Son. So it just does not work to try to evade the truth of this verse by saying that God only attempts to draw all men to Christ. If you say that, you must be willing to say that all men will experience a blessed resurrection at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ because God tried to draw all men. But that is not true. Only some will be resurrected and these are those whom the Father chose to draw savingly to Christ. Therefore coming to Christ is according to the will of God and not according to the will of man which always acts in accordance with the sin nature, except God be pleased to give a new nature in regeneration.

Jesus restates His teaching in John 6:65 where He says, **“..Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto**

The Backside of the Desert



Brief Devotional Thoughts from Scripture by Joseph Harris

When Ye Be Angry...

“Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26).

Anger is something we all have to deal with in life. Anger usually results when someone infringes on our rights. We get angry when someone slanders us because WE have a right to a good name and reputation. We get angry when the motorist ahead does not signal their turn off the road because they were inconsiderate of OUR safety. We get upset with long check out lines because WE have places to go and things to do. Sometimes our anger seems justified.

Ephesians 4:26 is not a command for the Christian to get angry. Anger is not something we schedule into our lives; it usually just happens without warning. Notice the context. Verse 25 is a command to stop lying. Verse 28 is a command to stop stealing. Sandwiched in between is the subject of anger. Unlike lying and stealing, which are premeditated, anger is an emotional response. We are commanded to cease from lying and stealing because we can refrain from these actions (regardless of what modern society may say about man’s inability to control sinful urges). Anger, however is not something we do: it is something that happens. We get angry. Getting angry is not a matter of IF, but WHEN.

Lying and stealing are always wrong, but anger in and of itself is not always sinful. Jesus was angry with the moneychangers and drove them from the temple. He was also angry when the Pharisees questioned His authority to heal on the Sabbath. In

both of these instances, the Scriptures tell us that Jesus was angry, but His was a righteous anger against sin. However, Ephesians 4:26 is not speaking of righteous anger.

We can refrain from lying and stealing, but we cannot always keep from becoming angry. Paul is giving guidelines on what to do when anger happens. He is not saying, “Be ye angry” but is saying, “When ye be angry” do not sin. Why? Because the potential to commit sin is greater when we are angry. In fits of anger, people do and say things they might not otherwise do or say. In anger, people curse, profane the Lord’s name, say hurtful words, attack others, and sometimes commit murder. Anger can be an Achilles heel, so Paul is giving a warning to stay on guard and deal with it quickly by using the phrase, **“let not the sun go down upon your wrath”** which is an admonition to get it right within 24 hours. Even if we can stay in control at the first sign of anger, we may not be able to remain in control if we remain in an angry state too long. Paul is hinting that one day may be all we can handle before we begin to commit sins of the heart (and in other ways) against those with whom we are angered.

Do not minimize your anger. Do not excuse it by claiming that you have a short fuse or quick temper. When someone infringes on one of your “rights,” ask yourself how important is that right. Rely on God’s strength and the power of Scripture to respond as Jesus would respond. And if you do experience righteous anger against sin, display it in a spirit of love, for **“the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God”** (James 1:20).

me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” Evangelical Christians and many Baptists raise objections to the teaching of these verses because they see in them this truth: God does not draw all men to Christ. They see that the Father does not give all men the ability to come to Christ. They see that if these verses are true, God is selective in whom He saves – and to “them” this is terrible. But those of “us” who know that **“The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil”** (Pro.

16:4) have no problem with God doing what He wills with His own! We rejoice at the grace of God bestowed upon us unworthy sinners. We understand that being dead in trespasses and sins, if God had not drawn us to Christ we would never have come. We have seen ourselves and know something of our desperately wicked hearts (Jer. 17:9). We know we would not have come unless it had been given to us by the Father. And we rejoice to know that if it be wise in the eyes of

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our Heavenly Father to save our kindred and loved one, He is well able to do it. Their salvation does not depend upon us nor the persuasiveness of our arguments or those gimmicks often resorted to by many modern churches. **“... Salvation is of the LORD”** (Jonah 2:9).

Generally, those who believe that lost men are the masters of their fate – that their free-will can act apart from their sinful nature – believe that if men can be made to understand their need to come to Christ they will do so. So they resort to such things as emotionally-charged preaching or miracle services or gospel-rock or southern-gospel or such things as the “Jesus Film.” Sometimes they equate saving faith with mere intellectual assent. The Campbellites do this, teaching that faith precedes repentance while the Bible always puts repentance ahead of faith. In doing this they equate faith with mental agreement with Bible facts. (This is not the gravest of Campbellite errors, for they do not believe that naked faith justifies a man at all. They put regeneration in the waters of baptism.) But while they believe these things, we believe that the unsaved man cannot receive or understand the Word of God. Therefore we do not depend on emotionally charged meetings or theatricals or musicals to save. Why do we believe that lost men cannot receive or understand the Bible? Because the Bible says: **“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”** (I Cor. 2:14). This verse clearly says that not only do men reject the Word of God because it is foolishness to them, but that they “can-not” (there’s that lack-of-ability word, again) – they cannot know or understand the Bible in a spiritually profitable way. It takes more than just the Word of God to regenerate a man. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit (See John 3:6).

The world’s different Christian religions, including most of the Baptists, believe that there is something that a lost person can do to acquire God’s favor. Thus they call on unregenerate men to pray, to open their heart’s door, to receive Christ, to believe, to call on the name of the Lord, to be baptized, and perhaps other things. They tell their hearers that God commands one or more of these things and that in this way they will please God. I remind you of a verse quoted earlier: the Bible says of the unregenerate man that, **“... they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:8). There’s that lack-of-ability word “can-not” again! So, what will you do, unregenerate person, that will please

God and cause His grace and favor to be extended to you in salvation? Will you exercise your free will? That will not please Him. Will you pray? That will not please Him. The Bible says that **“... the plowing of the wicked, is sin”** (Prov. 21:4). If an activity as wholesome and innocent as plowing a field is sin for a wicked person, what can you do to please God? The answer is nothing.

Now we have not presented all the Scriptures that bear on the subject of man’s total depravity / total inability, but these we believe are sufficient for this present article for there is another aspect of this subject that we think needs to be explored. The “them” of this article (free-willers) think they are more evangelistic than those of “us” who are convinced of man’s inability to freely exercise his will and come to Christ on his own. They think they have a better gospel message than we have. But I submit that in reality, their doctrine breeds complacency and calms the hearts of lost sinners who ought to be properly grieved and agitated upon hearing the real teaching of the Word of God.

Let me illustrate what I am saying this way. Picture in your mind’s eye a room with six men seated around a poker table. It is their regular, Friday night (illegal) high-stakes poker game. They have all they need in that room, having enjoyed a large supper earlier. The door is locked and they are secure from outside interference. The local authorities have been bribed and will not raid the place. All is going along well until someone says, “I smell smoke.” Nobody is upset at the statement. Each man knows that he has a key to the door in his pocket. He can escape, if necessary, whenever he chooses. After a few minutes, someone else says, “Hey, I smell smoke too.” Each man reaches into his pocket and feels his key. There is no need to panic. He is secure in knowing that he can exercise his will and leave when he sees a need to do so. The ability to escape IF there really is a fire is within his reach. Although he feels a little nudge of concern, he does nothing until, suddenly, he finds that he cannot make it to the door because of the heat, flames and smoke. It is too late and the men perish.

So it is with the “free-will” view. The natural man thinks he is able to come to Christ anytime and in any way that he wants to come. His ideas are reinforced by free-will preachers who tell him he can come to Christ all on his own. All he needs do is make a decision for Christ. The popular doctrine is decisional regeneration. What is taught by “them” (free-willers) is that when they believe, the Holy Spirit will regenerate them. The cause of their new birth is seen to be their own will. In opposition to their view, those of “us” who believe free-will is a myth, tell people that the new birth (regeneration) is a work of the Spirit and

has nothing to do with the will of the unsaved man. For proof, among other verses, we cite John 1:13 which tells us the reason some people received (welcomed) Christ when He was on earth by saying, **“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”** The reason they received Christ was not their wills but God’s will. It is difficult to imagine how God could have shown that salvation is according to His will in any clearer fashion than this verse.

So we conclude this piece by asking, “What is the fundamental difference between “them” and “us?” While we differ on the doctrine of election, particular redemption, effectual calling and perseverance of saints, our basic, fundamental, essential difference is the doctrine of total depravity which includes the doctrine of total inability. They deny this doctrine. We affirm it.

Perhaps I should also say that all of “us” – contrary to “them” once believed and perhaps even taught the free-will view. Spurgeon is credited as having said, “All men are by nature born Ariminians” (free-willers). Such persons as advocate man’s having a will capable of acting contrary to his sinful nature maintain the same view of the human will as the world and its pagan religions hold. But then there is “us.” We see in the Word of God another and contrary doctrine than that held by “them.” We see a sovereign God who, in spite of man’s total inability to come to Christ, has chosen some to be His own. These He brings to Christ not with brute physical force, but by working in them, regenerating them so that they are enabled to willingly come to Christ trusting Him and His finished work on behalf of His sheep. **“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep”** (John 10:11). We did not make ourselves “sheep,” but rather were chosen by the Father in Christ for Paul wrote, **“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...”** (Eph. 1:4). May God grant that many of “them” may come to be among “us” – for the glory of Jesus Christ!



Ninth Commandment

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of God. However, we must remember, that it is always best to receive God’s Word the way in which God spoke it.

First—I would like to note that the word **“Thou”** is speaking to every person. He is not speaking to Israel as a nation only, but to all people, every where at all times. Note again Matthew 7:12, **“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”** It is quite evident

that the Lord speaks unto every person individually. Many think that the Lord does not speak to them. We know that this is not true for we read in Scripture that “God hath commanded all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30, 31).

It might also be noted that it matters not what another person does to you. You are responsible to “not bear false witness against them.” We are to **“overcome evil with good”** (Rom. 12:21; I Thess. 5:15) and lying is clearly a work that originated with Satan (John 8:44). We exhort that you keep these thoughts in mind as you read on through the remainder of this article.

Secondly—we would like to look at four definitions of the word **“bear.”** If one will honestly look at this subject and the definitions of the word **“bear,”** we shall see of the great deliberateness and careful calculation in bearing false witness. Tis true what Sir Walter Scott stated:

*O what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive.*

DEFINITION #1 OF “BEAR”

The word **“bear”** means “to bring forth,” or “to produce.” We see this meaning when one speaks of “a woman bearing a child” or “producing a child,” or “bringing forth a child.”

Now let us substitute our definition into our text verse: “Thou shalt not bring forth or produce a false witness against thy neighbour.”

This definition of the word **“bear”** speaks to the origin of the falsehood. What the Lord is telling us is that **“false witness”** ought not to originate with me against my neighbor! All lies originate in the heart of unrighteousness. We know this to be true because Satan’s title is the **“Father of lies”** (John 8:44). A child of God is not to be involved in giving birth to lies, but rather his or her business is to be involved in the spiritual birth of others through the planting and sowing of truth! It is a dastardly thing for children of God to generate lies in general, especially regarding their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and fellow church members. No doubt that many churches and homes have been shattered by reprehensible falsehoods that were born about in this manner.

DEFINITION #2 OF “BEAR”

The word **“bear”** also means “to carry around.” We see this definition used in that an ox “carries” or “bears” the load of the wagon.

Now let us substitute this definition into our text verse: “Thou shalt not carry around false witness against thy neighbour.”

This is the next step in lying. It is to carry that cantankerous, troublesome thing around inside us. It is far worse than a cancer cell waiting to metastasize for now the lie is on the move.

No doubt, if one did have cancer, they

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would seek to have it removed from them, yea far from them. One would be so desperate to have this cancer removed from their body that if no doctor with tools of precision could be found, they would hire a butcher to use blunt objects that this debilitating and destructive disease would be separated from them post haste. But this is not always so in our bearing of falsehood. For at many times we do hear a nice bit of juicy gossip and we carry it into our homes, churches, workplaces, or until we perceive that it will be of some profit unto us to exclaim it and we say "Did you hear this?" My dear reader, this is exactly what God did prohibit you and I from doing when He declared "**Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour**" (Ex. 20:16).

All too often a lie or falsehood is produced in our own thoughts and in our own hearts. It originates within us. Now at the onset of this lie, it is quite an inconceivable thing, is it not? Why, absolutely it is. We know this person, but we have, for some reason, originated a lie against them. But then as we bear that lie, or carry the lie about, we bear it around, we have told ourselves that it is true. Oh, how well we follow the proverb of Demothenes:

Nothing is easier than self-deceit.

*For what each man wishes,
that he also believes to be true.*

It is like a cancer exacerbating within us. We have now convinced ourselves, through bearing this falsehood about, that the lie is now true! We manipulate the lie until it seems plausible to us. This is accomplished in bearing false witness against our neighbour.

DEFINITION #3 OF "BEAR"

Our third definition of "bear" means "to tell." This is what most of us are familiar with. But as we have already written, it is not the only meaning to our text.

Now, let us substitute this definition of 'bear' into our text: "Thou shalt not tell false witness against thy neighbour."

This is the telling of the lie. God's Word declares that this is an abomination unto Him. In Proverbs 6:16-19, we find that five out of seven of the abominations listed are directly dealing with bearing false witness or lying; while the other two abominations are not far from having lying as a part of them!

Five out of seven abominations dealing with lying: 1) Lying tongue (vs.17), 2) An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations [origination of the lie] (vs.18), 3) Feet that be swift in running to mischief [carrying the lie] (vs.18), 4) A false witness that speaketh lies [telling the lie] (vs.19), 5) He that soweth discord among brethren (vs.19).

We also want to note that God has

placed a severe penalty on those who lie and bear false witness against their neighbors (Deut. 19:15-21). We know the instruction of James regarding our tongues (James 3:1-18). We especially wish to draw attention to: "...**Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell**" (James 3:5-6).

DEFINITION #4 OF "BEAR"

The fourth definition of "bear" that we would like to draw our attention to is "to tolerate or to receive."

Now let us insert this definition into our text verse: "Thou shalt not tolerate or receive false witness against thy neighbour."

It is used in such fashions as "Jesus did bear the burden of our sins at Calvary." We find this used in Isaiah 53:4 in the form of 'borne': "**Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted**"

One of the easiest ways not "to tolerate or receive false witness" is to scrutinize the company of which you keep. Truly Paul wrote unto the church at Corinth saying, "**Be not deceived: evil communications [company] corrupt good manners**" (I Cor. 15:33). We need to be very careful of the company of which we keep and of those to whom we fellowship with. If we surround ourselves with liars, then we will soon have nothing to hear but lies! Beloved, think not that you or I are unable to succumb to the lies and brainwashing of Satan and his ministers. No wonder Christ did command His people to come out from among false religions (Rev. 18:4).

In our every day conversations with people, false witness is borne more than we think. The difference must be made in whether or not we are going to 'receive' the lies that others tell. I cannot stop a person from lying, but I can stop the lie with me, by not receiving it. Lies are like fires. When lies run out of an accelerant, they will usually burn out of themselves.

How many times have we tolerated or received a piece of gossip about another person and said to ourselves, "Well, that sounds just like something they would do." Maybe it does sound exactly like something that person would do or say, but it does not mean they did this. Did we see it with our own eyes? And even if we saw it with our own eyes, can we even really trust our own eyes, brain and heart to perceive what it was that we saw? Truly the Lord spoke saying, "**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**" (Jer. 17:9). The only right thing to do is to go and get the truth right from the horse's mouth. To tolerate or receive a lie, would be the same as letting one come into our fields and into our gardens and knowingly

permit them to plant tares therein. Not a man in his right mind would let that happen, but we let men plant lies within our hearts and minds every day through toleration of what they say.

There are certain things that I do NOT tolerate in my home. I do not tolerate whining, blasphemy, alcohol, smoking, cursing, and disrespect to lawful authority, to name a few. One thing we all ought to NOT tolerate is lying or bearing false witness. Let it be banished from our homes, our churches, and our lives.

These are four definitions of "bear." And when each of them is inserted into the text of Exodus 20:16, much light is shed upon this forbidden command of God.

Thirdly—we wish to note the "who" it is that we are to not bear false witness about. "**Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy NEIGHBOUR**" (Emp.NH). The word "neighbour" means more than the person who lives next door. It means "brother, companion, friend, lover, husband, fellow or another." If one we come into contact with does not fall into one of these categories, truly it does fall into the category of another.

Remember our secondary text: Matthew 7:12, "**Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.**" I cannot help what my neighbor does or says about me, except to be sure it is either true or false. But it is my responsibility to be a bearer of truth and only truth. There is a story my earthly father once told and repented of his sin to the pastor. The Pastor forgave the boy, but requested of the boy a favor, to which the boy agreed. He asked the boy to take a feather pillow, cut it open, and run through the town shaking the pillow every where he went. The boy agreed. Upon finishing his task, the boy returned to his pastor. The pastor then asked the boy to go and gather every feather that he shook out of the pillow. The boy replied, "That is impossible; for the wind has carried the feathers to every place in the city and even beyond." To which the Pastor replied, "Now you see the length at which your lie has gone. It has been spread through the whole town, even beyond her limits because one lie leads to another." Never think that a lie ends when you tell it. Well did the boy's adventure illustrate to him the dangers of "bearing false witness."

Fourthly—We wish to note that lying comes in various forms. To the amazement of most people, lies are most often told, not in the prison cells, not in the universities, not in the opinion lines of the newspapers, nor in the halls of government, but in pulpits every Lord's Day.

The grandest lie ever told is that a man, woman, boy or girl, can be saved any other way than by faith in Christ Jesus as their only Savior (Acts 16:30, 31). Over and over again in Scripture,

we are assured that there is no other way unto heaven except through "the blood that makes whiter than snow" (Isaiah 1:18; Acts.4:13; John 14:6). Sunday after Sunday, people are being told that there are other ways to being saved from eternal hell fire. Preachers are still drawing imaginary lines in the floor of their churches and tell those in the audience that if "they will just cross over that line, they'll be saved." Oh, what a monstrous lie of the Devil. I pray me of a boy who told a lie about his pastor. The boy, under Holy Spirit conviction, came that you who are reading this, that you might become a Berean. Oh, that you might search the Scriptures to see whether or not these things be so, and whether or not the preachers' words be so (Acts. 17:10-12). This is the grand reason so many are ignorant of what the Bible says: they do not search the Scriptures.

Beloved, Hell is a real place and there are real people there who have believed the lies of the Devil that salvation can be found another way besides Christ Jesus. Right well did Paul denounce them who spoke of such falsehood (Gal. 1:6-9). Today's pulpits are filled with another gospel which is better titled "detestable lies of deception." And all who tell them, all who receive them shall find themselves abiding with the rich man in hell lifting up their eyes being in torments (Luke 16:19-31).

Many today are lying to themselves and they are ignorant of it. They lie, in that they call God, Who cannot lie, a liar (Titus 1:2). If we were to ask the average person if they have ever called God a liar, they would be greatly offended saying, "I have never done such a thing." And the Bible declares quite the opposite of what many might think. "**This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son**" (I John 5:6-10).

Now do you see that "bearing of falsehood" which so many today are doing? They have not believed upon Jesus Christ as Savior! They have not believed even the record that God hath given of His Son! And to do this is to call God a liar.

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Ninth Commandment Humility

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Closing—Bearing false witness has always been a sin. Thomas Jefferson once said:

*“He who permits himself to tell a lie once,
Finds it much easier a second and third time,
Till at length it becomes habitual.”*

Let us now look at our text verse with these definitions inserted as though it is an amplified text: “Thou shalt not originate, carry about, tell or receive a falsehood against another.”

This command of God is quite clear; is it not? Which one of us cannot understand such basic language as this? We have outlined the story of a lie. False witnessing must first be originated. After that comes the carrying about, telling and receiving. Read Genesis 3:1-7 and see every part of bearing false witness from origination with Satan, to Satan telling it to Eve, then Eve tolerating or receiving the lie, to the fact that Eve carried the lie with her, and finally in that she told it unto her husband in that she made him a partaker of the lie also. My grandfather always said, “God never colored any lies.” No lie is of little damage, for all lies are a violation of the character of God; whom is truth, and cannot lie (John 14:6; Titus 1:2). I can assure you, by the authority of the Word of God, that your sins will find you out (Num. 32:23). Maybe not in the day your lie is told, perhaps not even in the same year, but it shall be brought to light in the eternal light of judgment before God’s throne to give account, for Christ hath said: **“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment”** (Matt. 12:36).

Furthermore, we find that the sin of lying is a sin that sends men to hell: **“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”** (Rev. 2:1-8). (Emp. Mine NH)

We who are saved ought to have our tongues permanently cloven to the roofs of our mouths and our lips sown shut rather than bear false witness, knowing the sufferings of Christ at the hands of liars (Matt. 26:57-68). The Scriptures declare much more on the subject of bearing false witness, but may these words suffice for the present time.

Oh, that we may have hearts, and tongues, that will **“be alway with grace, seasoned with salt”** (Col. 4:6); that they will not originate, receive or tolerate, carry within them, or speak forth lies, but truth to the praise, honor, and glory of Jesus Christ the Righteous. AMEN! Maranatha!



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This is how we display our love for one another and for our Saviour. What a solemn thought, that our love to God will be measured by our everyday interaction with others and it will be manifested by our humility; I am afraid that most of us will find that many times our professed love for God will be illuminated by our lack of humility. Do we really think we are humbling ourselves before God if we can’t do so with our spouse or people we deal with on an everyday basis? Humility is manifested by our actions to others. Can we prove that we are truly Christ-like because we have made ourselves of no reputation? One of the problems is we have too many, making a reputation for themselves and not seeking to exalt the reputation of Christ. If I have to hear another singer on the radio brag about how many people come to hear them sing, or I listen to another preacher brag about how many churches they started, or the throngs of people they lead to the Lord I will get sick. The fact of the matter is whatever is accomplished in our ministries or churches truly has not been accomplished by anything that we have done, but it was (in the past), is (the present), and will be (in the future) God doing every bit of it. What arrogance to actually think that we can do anything to please or benefit God in anyway at all. Let us remember that it is not only when we are in the presence of God that lowliness of heart is to be our posture. We ought to be humbled when we think on Him or pray to Him but not only then!

Humility should be ingrained into the very fabric of our lives. One who truly lives like this will manifest this God honoring trait in how we treat others and think of ourselves. It is in our most unguarded moments that we really show and see what we are. To know the humble man is to know how the humble man behaves, you must follow him in the mundane occurrences of everyday life to see if he truly is humble in mind and spirit or if he is putting on the mask of false piety. Is this not what Jesus taught? Think on these examples in Scripture and I believe you will understand what I am saying. How about when the disciples disputed who should be greatest; when He saw how the Pharisees loved the chief place at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues; when He had given them the example of washing their feet? It was at these times that He taught His lessons of humility. Humility before God is nothing if not proven in humility before men.

The Scriptures bear record that Paul was a man of great humility. To the Romans he writes: **“In honour preferring one another”; “Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to those that are lowly”; “Be not wise in**

your own conceits.” To the Corinthians: “Love,” and there is no love without humility as its root, **“vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked.”** To the Galatians: “Through love be servants one of another. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.” To the Ephesians, “Therefore, walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love”; “Giving thanks always, subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.” To the Philippians: “Doing nothing through faction or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, each counting others better than himself. Have the mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and humbled Himself.” And to the Colossians: “Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, even as the Lord forgave you.” Certainly Paul gives us much to consider about humility.

When we consider the lack of humility in our lives is it any wonder that so many lost people despise God and the things of God because they see the hypocrisy of so-called Christians with their haughty spirit and terrible attitudes? Is it any wonder children that were reared in sound churches will not have anything to do with worship of the Most High because they have seen the arrogance and lack of humility amongst their own families? It is not supposed to be about us and how smart we are or how wonderful we think we are. Rather, it is supposed to be about the love and power of the Most High and His mercy toward us. Our prayer should be, God give me the mind of a child, the heart of a servant and the humility of Christ. If this was our prayer, the world would be greatly impacted for Christ.

It is in our relationships to one another and in our treatment of one another, that the true lowliness of mind and the heart of humility are to be seen. Our humility before God has no value except that it be used to reveal the humility of Jesus to our fellow-men. Let us study humility in daily life in the light of these words.

The humble man seeks at all times to act up to the rule, **“In honour preferring one another; servants one of another; each counting others better than himself; subjecting yourselves one to another.”** The question is often asked, how we can count others better than ourselves, when we see that others are below us in wisdom and in holiness, in natural gifts, or in grace received. The question proves at once how little we understand what real lowliness of mind is. True humility comes when, in the light of God, we have seen ourselves to be nothing, have consented to part with and cast away self, to let God be all.

The soul that has done this, and can

say, so have I lost myself in finding Thee, no longer compares itself with others. It has given up forever every thought of self in God’s presence; it meets its fellow-men as one who is nothing, and seeks nothing for itself; who is a servant of God, and for His sake a servant of all. A faithful servant may be wiser than the master, and yet retain the true spirit and posture of the servant. The humble man looks upon every person he comes into contact with and no matter if they be the feeblest and most unworthy person, and will show them honor and prefer that one as the child of a king. Oh dear friend, may we remember back to the time before our conversion and remember that it was Christ who in love condescended to us and brought to us the living water that we may never thirst again. May we show forth the love of God by having a humble spirit.



In Desire of True

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most pious man of Luke 18:9-14. Don’t ever doubt the Pharisaical mind set is still existent even among Baptists of like faith and order, maybe even especially among us as Baptists.

Let me be clear, I am speaking doctrinally of we who call ourselves Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Independent, Missionary, etc. Baptist! We do not, nor can not find or expect to have true and full fellowship with any others, for we doubt they are even Baptist at all. But my point is not others, it concerns US! Even among us it is hard today to find true, sweet and holy fellowship with the brethren and churches of the Lord. Personally, it is believed it is not so much because of doctrinal disagreements, although this of course is always a first consideration, but more because of the stinking (that’s mountain talk for pathetic) attitudes and sinful actions among our supposed loving brethren. Let us be careful of our proclamations of love for the brethren, for from what I read in the Bible, love is much more an action than mere verbiage (I John 3:18; I Cor. 13: 4-6).

It only seems a most ridiculous thing that we would expect to find, let alone seek fellowship with those who are trying to consume us; literally destroy us with their actions as well as their words. You see it is believed that just as important in true fellowship as doctrine, is the practical application of living out those doctrines. We will break fellowship with one who holds to false doctrine, and we should. But should we, can we, continue fellowship with those who commit such wickedness as gossip and backbiting? I know by the accepted standards of our culture today, and its acceptance into our thinking as Baptists, it seems as though

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Has changing of the length of time we conduct services had an effect on our churches (i.e. a two hour sermon of old compared to a 30-45 minute one of today)? – Mississippi

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Changing the length of services certainly has had an effect upon the Lord's people who are members of churches. The impact on the members is manifest in a negative way, such as clock watchers. We have all been clock watchers at one time or another, but I am talking about the clock watchers on a regular basis who have other things to fill the Lord's day with other than religious exercises. Short sermons cater to these members and non members who tire easily of the food that is fed to the lambs. The lambs are faithful to the Master's words and seek to be fed no matter how long it takes, for the gospel is sweet.

The next negative is that sermons have not grown to become filled with more information in less time; rather they have become the reader's digest version sermon. I, myself, am guilty of this negative. There have been times in which the sermon that I have prepared is sculpted to last right around 45 minutes to an hour. The negative to this is that the studying for a sermon is also shortened and less information is learned or sought out by the preparer and thus ministers fail to fulfill the words of the Apostle Paul.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

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I have been preaching since 1981. In all my years of preaching and listening to preaching I can't recall a two hour sermon. In my estimation it is not the length of the sermon that matters but the scriptural content and the power of God attending it. I would rather listen to 30 minutes of powerful preaching than two hours of a boring lecture. I have found that a 30-45 minute message that is well

prepared, prayed over, and delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit can be quite effective. Usually when I go over 45 minutes I find myself repeating portions of what I have already said or chasing rabbits. Preachers preach to honor God, evangelize the lost, and edify the saints. Every preacher must keep this in mind as he is delivering the message regardless of the length of the sermon.

May God help all of His preachers to emulate the apostle Paul who wrote: **"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God"** (I Cor. 2:4-5).

TOM ROSS



In Desire of True

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I am speaking much about nothing to some. But the reality of these things proceeding from our lips are not only an offence against our brothers and sisters, they are a wicked offence against the Lord and His holy purpose for us. Yes, we will quickly break fellowship with those who are practicing doctrinal error, but I suppose we feel we must overlook these most wicked practices unless we condemn ourselves. To see the wickedness we need only look at the context in which God has included them. Note the awful company such a thing as a busybody, which most often is the real issue of gossip, is listed with in I Peter 4:15.

Maybe the greatest hindrance to fellowship today among Baptists is WE the brethren. By our lack of spiritual conformity to God's Word, it is believed (God be merciful to us) that we are guilty, even addicted to the fleshly manner of chewing on one another. We are all guilty, whether recognized or admitted, for we are all still sinners. Oh, I know we start out convincing ourselves that we are most pious in our intentions, but the fact is that most often all we are doing is backbiting and gossiping against one another. It is a pitiful thing when we personally experience these fleshly attacks, but even worse is when we are found to be the ones doing the chewing. No matter how much expressed doctrinal agreement we may find with another, it is impossible to have true and biblical fellowship when we are chewing up and often spitting out our brother. It is believed that we all could use a good dose

of James 3 for the healing of our hearts and controlling of our tongues in this matter..

Ought these things to be? James, by the Spirit of God says they should not (James 3:10), Can two brothers come close in fellowship while both of them have this beam of sin protruding from their own eye? I think not! (Luke 6:41-42). Have we forgotten that our idle words will be judged? (Matt 12:36). I must admit, that next to my own sinful and fleshly desires nothing has caused me more trouble and hurt than my own un-controlled tongue. I can only ask, as I have from the Lord, for forgiveness from those I have by my wicked words offended in the past, and thus to any who reads, this I ask, your forgiveness. Assuring you, by the grace of God I will do my best to keep them in my mouth until they can be eradicated from my heart.

Let me ask, have we all not been hurt enough by these sins? Personally, I have felt the sting of my brother's tongue, whether their words have been true or not, as they have bitten on me, my family, and the churches I have pastored. I have seen and experienced the pain and disunity it causes in a church, and I have seen the discord it has and is still causing among the brethren and the Lord's churches. I have learned that I may not be able to control the tongues of others, but I am only responsible and thus, by the Spirit of God able to control my own. I wonder if this devilish fire and the confusion it brings were put out, if we may not once again find sweet and holy fellowship.

Well there, I have said it. Said, I believe what we all know already to be true. I pray I have given you something to chew on besides me. As a Baptist, unfortunately, I have had to learn to have a thick skin. I would rather concern myself with having a tender heart, wouldn't you? I would prefer to spend my years of pilgrimage through this life learning to love the brethren rather than trying to consume them. If you would like to be what God fully purposes for your life, quit chewing. I believe a good place for us all to start is Ephesians, **"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you"** (Eph. 4:29-32).

Can we have sweet fellowship again? I pray that we can, and I believe if we will all take to heart this great truth it at least would make it more probable. For now, I await your appraisal of these things, but

while I wait, I guess I'll keep the meat tenderizer handy just in case you didn't get it.



Likeminded in

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no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil. 2:1-16).

The text will be taken from verse 2, **"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."**

It has always puzzled me why the Lord's true Sovereign Grace, Missionary, Landmark Baptist Churches over many years have had such a history of disagreements, fussing, and fighting. Many such feuds have left so much bitterness and hate that it has scarred wonderful fellowships that many had at one time over the years. I would like the reader to know that I HATE such things as this. For one, it makes us divided and second, it is a poor witness to those around us. I would imagine many feel the same as I do, and I have NO doubt that our Father and our Lord and Saviour are grieved as well by such behavior.

I have wanted to write this article for some time, but I just didn't know quite how to put it in the context that would get the point across. But the more I put it off the more the Lord has burdened me to write it. We pray that it will be a blessing to you dear reader.

What really encouraged me and gave me more of a desire to write this article (other than the Holy Spirit) was an article I read called "The Bride of Christ" by Elder Sam Wilson that was published

♦ (Continued on page 311)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. How can we tell if our afflictions and sicknesses are the result of sin or just a sign of poor health? – Mississippi

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This is an excellent question that is difficult to answer. Sickness and afflictions are both appointed by God **“...being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will”** (Eph. 1:11). The “all things” would include times of sickness, affliction, and chastening. I Thessalonians 3:4-5 declares: **“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.”**

I have known many dear saints of God who had serious health problems, yet were spiritually strong and vibrant in the faith. While preaching a meeting in Alabama last fall I met a brother who was in a motorized wheel chair. The only thing he could move was his head and mouth. As we enjoyed fellowship together I could tell that he studied his Bible and prayed daily. His heart was set upon the things of God, he had a great attitude, and a real desire to please the Lord. He was sick, afflicted, and in poor physical health yet strong in the Spirit.

On the other hand, I have known lost men with no heart for God who live long lives with no serious physical health problems. The point is that good physical health doesn't necessarily mean good spiritual health.

As a child of God I have a pretty good idea when the Lord is chastening me and appointing me to affliction because of my sin. Psalm 32:3-5 states the experience of David while God was chastening him: **“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.”** God's children should know when they are out of fellowship with the Father. If you are not in the Word of God, not praying, forsaking God's house, failing to pay your tithes, not witnessing

to the lost, have a bad attitude, no joy, a mean spirit and you are suffering a great deal of affliction, I would chalk it up to chastening from God. I would urge you to follow the admonition of Proverbs 28:13: **“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”**

If you are serving the Lord and suffering bodily affliction ask the Lord for grace to submit to His Providence. Realize that affliction can be beneficial to your spiritual growth as II Corinthians 4:15-18 implies: **“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

Seek the face of your Heavenly Father. Ask Him to plainly show you whether you are suffering affliction or being chastened. Be honest, open, and transparent with God. Practice the truth of Psalm 139:23-24: **“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”** God is a good Father and He knows how to give good gifts to His children. Our gracious God has proclaimed: **“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not”** (Jer. 33:3; cf. Matt. 7:7-11; Heb. 4:14-16).

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I am unable to tell you that we have the ability to discern whether or not our sickness or afflictions are from genetics, diet, environment, or sin. What I would advise is, that we, with all things that happen to the people of God, should examine our life style. The life we live is it blessed of God, are we doing what God

has commanded, are we living a healthy life both physically and spiritually?

I do know that God's Word reveals to us that thru Him we are put in situations in our life to learn and exercise contentment. I would even go so far as to say that there has never been a child of God who has not gone through or is at present going through spiritual or physical maladies. By these maladies we are to give glory to God while suffering, and to thank Him, no matter how difficult that it may be. The Apostle Paul tells us of his life and the many perils he encountered in the book of Acts. In fact, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he advises us on this point precisely, **“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”** (Phil. 4:11).

MIKE DEWITT



Likeminded in

(Continued from page 310) ♦

in *The Landmark Baptist*, volume 10, number 1 January/February 2009 issue. I would encourage you to get a copy and read its entirety.

Brother Wilson stated, and I quote, “Being in the Bride of Christ is the grandiose, it is the supreme, it is the chief, it is the greatest, the highest and most privileged reward that will ever be given to any human being. It is a great honor that is bestowed upon members of a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.” End quote.

Now, he also stated (and this is the main thought that I would like the reader to really meditate on) and I quote, “Only the ‘faithful’ members of the Lord's churches, since the inception of the church by Jesus Christ, will make up the Bride.” End quote.

It is sad but that statement will bring out the worst and fire up some because they would disagree. It has caused and will continue to cause dissension amongst our people. When I say our people, I mean all who belong to one of the Lord's true Sovereign Grace, Missionary, Landmark Baptist Churches; it does not include all of Christendom. In his article he points out what we need to do to be faithful.

Also another good book is “The Baptist Bride” by Elder Oscar Brian Mink, now home with the Lord. In his book Brother Mink gives nine characteristics of the Bride, and he states, “This is the last characteristic that I will mention at this time, and it is, by far not the least.” Pg. 23, paragraph 5. Another book I would encourage the reader to read if they have not already done so.

“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Phil. 2:2).

I want the reader to meditate on the last part of this verse for this is the main point of this article **“that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”** Now I know that Paul is writing to the church at Philippi, but I have no doubt that this is meant for all of the Lord's churches, not just for that local assembly but that all of the Lord's churches should be “likeminded”. Now, I have to be careful here because I was once accused of telling a church what to do, to the point there are still two churches today that have nothing to do with each other. This is how easy it is to destroy fellowship between sister churches. What was really between me and the other pastor was made a church matter when he told the church I was telling them what to do. My statement was this to him, (I will also tell you I lost my temper when I said it, and I said it in anger and out of frustration), my statement to him was, “you as a church do what you have to do and we as a church will do what we have to do.” That was a long time ago and I learned a valuable lesson; I repented, wrote a letter of apology to him for losing my temper (which is not becoming of a pastor), but even if I wanted to do so, how can I tell another church what they can and cannot do? I am insignificant and who am I that another church would even listen to me? I never knew if he accepted my apology, for I have never heard from him again. I tell you this because we can see how foolish and damaging it can be and that I am not telling any church how they should or should not function, that is their business, I believe the local true New Testament Baptist Church is an sovereign, autonomous entity. Many, I am sure, have experienced or at least heard of similar situations going on amongst our ranks. Should there be cause for alarm and cause us to be ashamed?

How can we **“be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”** when we act in such a way? Do we not realize that we have an adversary, old Satan that wants to destroy the Lord's Bride? (I Peter 5:8) **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”** Why fight each other? Allow me to ask this question, are you going to be in the Bride? This article is not meant to provoke an argument or debate but for all to meditate upon. Read again what Brother Wilson has said, “Only the ‘faithful’ members of the Lord's churches, since the inception of the church by Jesus Christ, will make up the Bride.” Note, Brother Wilson says, “faithful” members of the Lord's churches and I believe all churches that have authority are the Lord's true churches. But allow me to ask another question! Are we “faithful” if we all believe something different than what

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the Bible teaches? Selah!

If there are members in one church that believe one way and another believes another way, are both right? Let's look at a list of some of these differences:

1. Wine or Grape Juice? Brother Wilson mentions this in his article.
2. Mother Church or Any Baptized believer can start a church?
3. A divorced and remarried man can pastor (be ordained) one of the Lord's churches or a man that has only been married once can pastor (be ordained)?
4. For a man to be ordained there must be a presbytery to recommend him to the ordaining church or the church can ordain with out the recommendation from a presbytery?
5. Head Covering or no Head Covering?
6. Women should wear a dress all the time, or only in Church, or it doesn't matter what she wears?
7. Women should be allowed to vote or women can't vote?
8. Women can teach or women can't teach?
9. Pre-Trib, Mid-Trib or Post-Trib?
10. Premillennialism, Amillennialism, or Postmillennialism?
11. Only a Baptist preacher can baptize into the church or anyone the church determines can baptize?
12. Only Baptists are going to heaven or all Christians are going to heaven?
13. A person can only be saved by hearing the Gospel from a Baptist preacher or a person can only be saved by hearing the Gospel from another Christian?
14. All the women in the church are under the pastor's authority or women are under the authority of their husbands?
15. Holidays are alright to observe or Baptists should not celebrate Holidays?

I'll stop there, so which is it, which one is right; they both can't be right, can they? I am sure the reader can come up with other such issues that have caused a ruckus. The point is, that these few differences mentioned have caused almost knock down drag out fights, and much debate over the years and a lot of hurt feelings and good men have been separated from each other over them. And some have cost our ancestors their lives. Who's right? It used to be that there may have been just two different views, but now it seems there are three and in some cases four different views. Do all these different views constitute whether a person will be in the Lord's Bride?

Though I never heard the preacher say it, I was told when there was a difference of opinion on a certain subject, the preacher replied and said, "You're wrong and when we get to heaven, you'll find out you're wrong" or something to that effect. He is right, we will most definitely find out who is right and who is wrong. My question then is, why wait? Wouldn't you think we would want to know now, before we get there? How should we be doing things in the Lord's church and how much study should be put forth to see if we will be found "faithful" to the point, we too will be in the Bride? Selah!

Let's read our text again, "**Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.**" It sounds like we are in a no win situation, doesn't it? Who is going to back down and admit they are wrong? Let's see, what was it that Brother Wilson said; "Only the "faithful" members of the Lord's churches, since the inception of the church by Jesus Christ, will make up the Bride." Selah!

The reader might believe that these are petty, unrelated issues and in no way hinder whether or not one would be accepted as part of the Lord's Bride. I am not here to argue that point only to get us to consider how far are we going to push the envelope, do these things matter to the Lord or not? If not let's just continue down the same path that I believe will be a delight to the old devil, he loves it when we are at odds with one another! Ask yourself is this how the Lord would have His Bride to act? Have we all made a diligent study in these matters to make peace or are we just plain stubborn and unwilling to say we are wrong? A preacher told me a long time ago, that Baptists are the most hardheaded people on the face of the earth. That can be a blessing on one hand but a stumbling block on the other.

More than anything I would love to see Baptist people get along in all areas but it won't happen, sad to say, it's too late in the game if you will. The Lord is coming back; I believe soon, in my life time, what will He say to you and me? All this is not new, that's why Paul wrote letters to churches. Do you think he would have needed to write a letter to your church?

I would like to bring to your attention one more issue; actually it is more of an observation. I base this observation on some things others have shared with me on a personal note and one that Brother Mink listed as one of the characteristics of the church, in fact it is the ninth and last characteristic that I mentioned earlier, Brother Mink states and I quote, "**But by love serve one another**" (Gal. 5:13). Christ said to His church: "**A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another**" (John 13:34). Paul, who was mightily used of the Lord in the establishment

of His churches, wrote to the church at Ephesus, saying: "**And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**" (Eph. 4:32). That is a lot of forgiveness, and it would enhance the spirituality and progress of the local church if its members would keep this truth in the forefront of their minds." End quote.

So my last point is forgiveness, which I think is very essential as being part of the Lord's Bride. Maybe the reader can help me out here, for I am having a hard time understanding why there are those who are not forgiving those who ask. One case in particular, a good pastor friend of mine had some issues in the church he was pastoring concerning doctrinal heresy and without going into details, he was the one that ended up being excluded. He went to the church to ask forgiveness with the intentions of moving on with his life, and ministry, but the pastor of that church said he was being placed under the watch care of the church (this is where I need help, where are the Scriptures for that?) and that he was never to step foot back into that church again, (sorry, but I need help again, where is that in the Scriptures). I am not being sarcastic, even though it sounds that way. I invite the reader to show me where that is the practice of the New Testament Church. Please tell me how anyone can make restitution if they are never allowed to step foot back into the church, ever again, or how can the church have someone under their watch care if they can't come back to make things right. I am totally confused by such a thing! But let me see if I have this right? There is a man that has been called by God and ordained to pastor one of the Lord's churches and now he can't because he is not allowed to make amends with the excluding church? Would someone please give me something that I might understand this? Wasn't it David who said in I Samuel 24:6 "**And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.**" The way I see it, a good and godly man's life has been wrecked, and what can we do? Nothing, because it is that local church's business! I can't interfere, because then I would be telling that church what they can and cannot do. Ah, but the Lord knows, and the truth will come out eventually... "**Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he**

trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:1-4). I think too many times we totally ignore verse 4 "**And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.**" Let the Scriptures speak for themselves, "Thus saith the Lord!"

Now I know what some are thinking, what about those who continually sin, come back and repent and on and on, and on, they do the same thing over and over again. Every church has one or two; they take advantage of verse 4 and the church's good graces. For one, I call it ripping off the system! It's like those who are getting Social Security Disability and getting paid under the table for work they shouldn't be doing. Some of these church members know that they can go out and do their thing (sin) and come back, knowing the church will forgive them. I know from experience how hard and stressful this is on the church and the pastor, you can almost hear the people moan under their breath, "here they come again"! There might be many views on this, but what can you do? If we listen to what Jesus taught, then we must forgive them as many times as it takes, I would encourage counseling them and then let the Lord deal with them in His own time. Though sometimes I have thought that these folks aren't really saved, but are we to just cast them away? You know I can preach the truth and obey the truth, but I can't make people believe the truth. We would do good to study Jesus' parable in Matthew 22:1-14 paying close attention to verses 11-14. Some may disagree, but I believe this is what will happen to them that make false professions. If a person is truly saved and he sins it should grieve them so much that they would do all they can to keep from doing the same sin over and over again. And to be fair there are exceptions.

Before I continue to show more Scripture that teaches the contrary for not letting anyone have the ability to repent and make things right, let me tell you of a recent experience. I received a phone call concerning one that wanted forgiveness so they could be reinstated in a specific church because they now live in another state. After many years they finally came to church truth and wanted to get their life straightened out and join a church of like faith in the state they now live, but the pastor refused to accept their apology and allow them to write a letter. Again, is this the practice of the Lord's true church? I'm not making a judgment; I'm simply asking a question! In all fairness to the church, I only heard one side of the story, but I will give them credit, they did finally accept that person's apology and reinstated them.

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Let's look at some Scriptures about forgiveness! As you read these I would ask that you please really listen to the words and the tone in which they are spoken and meditate on each one. Selah!

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15).

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matt. 18:21-35).

Do these Scriptures speak to your heart on the importance of forgiveness? I hope they do. Brother Mink was my first pastor and one of the very first things he taught me was, when someone comes up in front of the church and repents, the church must forgive him unless someone can show just cause that he might still be living in the sin he is asking forgiveness

for, and if not we have no choice but to forgive them. Let me remind the reader once again what Brother Mink's ninth characteristic of The Bride was: **"But by love serve one another"** (Gal. 5:13). Christ said to His church: **"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"** (John 13:34). Paul, who was mightily used of the Lord in the establishment of His churches, wrote to the church at Ephesus, saying: **"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"** (Eph. 4:32). That is a lot of forgiveness, and it would enhance the spirituality and progress of the local church if its members would keep this truth in the forefront of their minds."

Allow me to continue:

"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" (Mark 11:25-26).

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4). This was mentioned above but needs to be mentioned here again.

"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor. 2:4-11). This Scripture should speak to all of the Lord's true churches, remember the man who had his father's wife in 1 Corinthians 5, the one Paul told them to **"deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh"**? Well, here in II Corinthians

Paul is telling them to forgive him for his wrong. I love verse 7 because it shows what would happen if they didn't forgive him, **"So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."** Is that what we want for one of God's elect? What about one of the Lord's ordained men? Do we want him to suffer and be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow? I can tell you that this Brother, I referred to earlier, is in much sorrow! I would certainly expect this from the world but not the Lord's Church! Do you want that on your conscience when the Lord comes back for His Bride? The church that has done this to one of God's anointed; I implore you to **"forgive him, and comfort him."**

I would encourage the reader to cultivate love and compassion for all of God's elect and not only them but all those that are dying and going to hell. They need Jesus, and we need to tell them. May God help us as we endeavor to do just that! Selah! **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (I John 1:9).



A Dose of Reality

"Common Sense Comments"

by Joseph Harris

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Too Big For My Britches

We have all experienced it, or will. That sickening feeling when the snap won't snap, the button won't reach or the belt has to be buckled in a new hole. It may happen from eating too much, exercising too little, a combination of both or just growing a little older. Some give heredity as the reason, a solution I have fled to for refuge. Nevertheless, the feeling of tight fitting clothes is physically uncomfortable, not to mention, emotionally scarring.

There is another way we also get "too big for our britches" (to use a good ole Southern expression). It's when we think we have arrived, we know it all, and get full of ourselves. In other words, being too big for our britches means we are full of self and pride. I remember stretching my independence as an early teen and sassing my mother. Her exact words were, "You are getting too big for your britches" followed with a slap on the face in public. It was amazing how quickly my

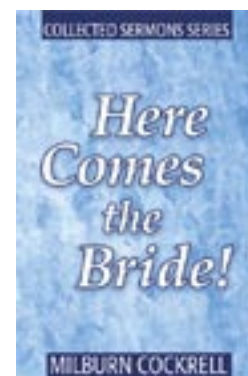
britches got back down to the right size. She took my belt up a notch.

Sometimes in life we begin to think we are doing great and mighty things, especially for God. We begin to take credit for His work and His blessings, forgetting that we are only the conduit through which He flows and gives blessings. When this happens to me, I try to remind myself of that planting and watering thing Paul spoke of in I Corinthians. One person plants, another waters, but God grows the plant.

When someone tells you what a great sermon or lesson you gave or what a great musical rendition you just delivered, beware, lest you begin to believe them. You might actually think you were responsible for doing something great. It is at this point that our britches begin getting a little snug. An important phrase I find in the book of Acts is **"and God added to the church"** speaking of the church at Jerusalem. The inspired writer gave God the credit for church growth. I wonder which church growth seminar they attended? Maybe they were just full of the Spirit, matched by a holy life and spoke the Word of God with boldness, witnessing and winning folks everywhere they went, because they just didn't know any better. One thing is for certain; God was responsible for the growth.

I present over 100 preaching, teaching and illusion programs, Christian education seminars, revivals, etc., each year in churches, at camps and retreats, in several states. There are professions of faith each year. I have no idea how many, since I do not keep a record. That's God's business, and I keep horrible records anyway. If I kept a tally of how many professions were made each year, I might begin thinking I was a spiritual giant. I am in touch with myself enough to know my pride doesn't need any encouragement to grow. I have to beat it down constantly. There is nothing like a good dose of Scripture to deflate ego.

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Dose of Reality

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Just when things are going well and God's blessings are evident, beware lest you steal His thunder. He is the potter, we are the clay. I have never seen a bowl make itself on the potter's wheel. The Master's hands are required for the shaping and He produces the finished product. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). "I (Paul) have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (I Cor. 3:6).

I wrote a poem back in 1993 that speaks of someone who thought they had arrived. Here it is:

Mr. Know-It-All

Little Johnny lay a thinking when he heard his mother call,

"Get up, today's the day, don't be late Johnny Hall."

*Today was Johnny's big day, first time to go to school,
His mom told him to learn a lot and keep the golden rule.*

*But Johnny, he thought different, at six he knew it all.
"No use for me to even go" said little Johnny Hall.*

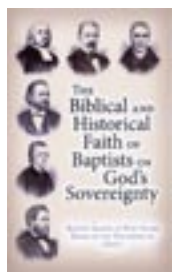
*They try to teach you English, well I done learned to talk,
My Mama showed me what to say as soon as I could walk.*

*And writ'in, so they tell me, can be a great big need,
But all the folks who I could write ain't never learned to read.*

*History is a bore, it sure ain't very fun,
Who wants to study dead folks and what they lived and done.*

*'rithmetic with all them numbers, makes my head to spin,
No use to learn so many, when all you need is ten.*

*No sir, that school, it ain't for me, said little Johnny Hall,
No use for me to even go when I done know it all.*



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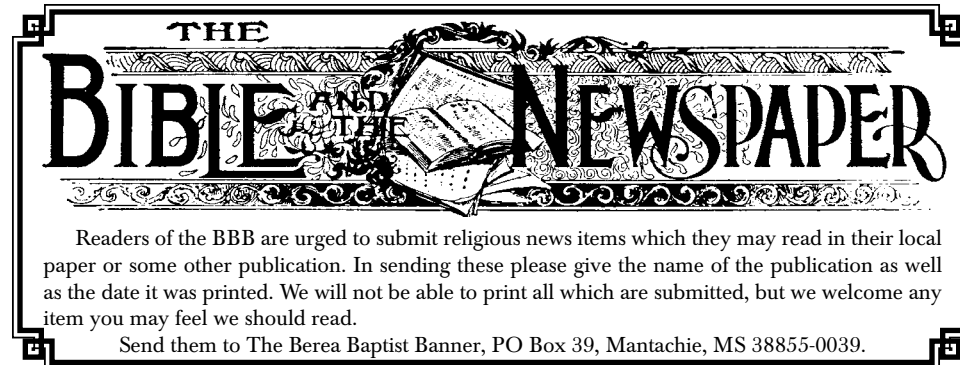
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2011 BUDGET INCREASES FUNDING FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(EP News)--President Obama's proposed budget for 2011 includes more than \$327 million for Title X, the program that funds Planned Parenthood. That's a \$10 million increase. Carrie Gordon Earll, senior director of issue analysis for Focus on the Family Action, said even though the funds cannot go to pay for abortions, any time Planned Parenthood funding is increased, it's cause for concern. "What Title X funding does is it frees up other money that they can then use for abortion," she said, "or other things that people would disagree with." One of the major problems with the funding, according to life advocates, is a change that allows taxpayer dollars to be used to pay for lawsuits involving abortion. "That's something previous administrations have stayed away from, because of the political nature of abortion," Earll said. "It's just not appropriate for tax dollars to be used in this way."

KANSAS LAWMAKER WANTS TO LIMIT INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ABORTION

(EP News)--The Kansas Legislature is considering a bill that would prohibit insurance providers from covering elective abortions. The only deviation is if someone is willing to pay extra for the abortion. Missouri, Oklahoma and four other states already have similar laws. The bill would include exceptions for rape, incest and to save the mother's life. The House Insurance Committee is scheduled to vote on it soon. If it gets out of committee, it would go to the floor for a vote.

Rep. Virgil Peck, who introduced House Bill 2564, said it's important for Kansans to take a stand for life. "I see this bill," he said, "as something that would help the federal government realize that Kansas has joined a few other states in saying, 'Abortion is something we find wrong, morally objectionable. We believe it's more important to save the lives of these unborn children.'"

VETERANS OPPOSE REPEAL OF "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"

(EP News)--Two prominent veterans groups said they are not in favor of President Obama's plan to put an end to the policy banning openly homosexual men and women from serving in the military. The two groups -- The Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion -- have a combined membership of approximately 15 million. The president has repeatedly said he wants

to get rid of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Defense Secretary Robert Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee that he, too, is in favor of changing the policy. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs Chairman Mike Mullen told the Senate Armed Services Committee on that they support the move to allow openly gay-identified men and women to serve in the military.

LAWMAKERS ENDORSE WEST VIRGINIA MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

(EP News)--A marriage-protection amendment was introduced in the West Virginia Senate in February. Senate Joint Resolution 14 would define marriage as the union of one man and one woman in the state's constitution. The amendment was sponsored by 15 senators. The only way to protect marriage from redefinition in West Virginia is to enshrine one-man, one-woman marriage in West Virginia's Constitution. In order to do so, voters have to approve a state marriage amendment after the legislature passes it. More than 70 percent of West Virginians favor the definition of marriage as one man and one woman, according to a Family Policy Council of West Virginia poll. Jeremy Dys, president of the group, said the resolution has to go through committee. "I'm pleased with our senators," he said, "who have chosen to stand by West Virginia's families and voters."

LOUISIANA FORCED TO SIDE WITH SAME-SEX COUPLE IN ADOPTION CASE

(EP News)--The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a same-sex couple from California should receive a new birth certificate for an adopted child. The couple, who adopted a Louisiana-born baby boy in 2006 through a court in New York, was initially told by Louisiana state officials they were refused the revised birth certificate because they were unmarried. Louisiana lawmakers failed to pass a law to prevent cases like this one, which could end up at the U.S. Supreme Court. Gene Mills, president of the Louisiana Family Forum, said the impact of the ruling could help equip gay activists with the use of birth certificates to promote their agenda.

"It's the political tool of choice amongst same-sex advocates," he said, "who want to redefine marriage, family, adoption and even state sovereignty."

ARIZONA ADOPTION BILL FAVORS MARRIED COUPLES

(EP News)--The Arizona House passed an adoption bill today that gives preference to married couples. House Bill 2148 was approved 35-22. The bill now goes to the Senate for approval. Family advocates say there are about 2,500 children in state custody ready to be adopted.

Rep. Warde Nichols, the bill's sponsor, said it does have provisions that allow single people to adopt, such as a relative of the child. "Given a level playing field for kids who are in state custody here in Arizona," he said, "the best possible situation for them is to be adopted by a mom and a dad, a husband and a wife."

OREGON CLINICS TO OFFER CHEMICALLY INDUCED ABORTIONS

(EP News)--Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Oregon plans to offer chemically-induced abortions at its clinics in Eugene and Ashland beginning next month. Gayle Atteberry, executive director of Oregon Right to Life, said, besides killing a preborn child, it poses potential health risks to the mother. "We know that RU 486, for the last 10 years, has caused death in some instances, near death in others," she said. Mailee Smith, staff counsel at Americans United for Life, said promoting chemical abortions will result in the deaths of more preborn children. "It's convenient," she said. "It's easier for the abortionist, and they can provide it to more women in a shorter period of time. And, then they don't have to deal with any kind of follow-up. They just give it to the woman and send her on her way."

WEST VIRGINIANS MAY NOT GET TO VOTE ON MARRIAGE

(EP News)--Members of the West Virginia House voted down an effort to constitutionally protect marriage from redefinition. The bipartisan resolution, HJR5, would have allowed West Virginians to vote on the issue. Only one Democrat, Rep. Tom Louisois, voted not to postpone consideration of the Republican motion. Jeremy Dys, president of The Family Council of West Virginia, said the decision on marriage should be up to the people of West Virginia. "We remind the Legislature that marriage does not belong to the GOP or the DNC," he said. "Nonetheless, this is a good opportunity for the Democrat leadership in the House of Delegates to show its commitment to the committee process. There is no legitimate reason not to allow the people of West Virginia to vote on the legal definition of marriage."

COLORADANS MAY GET TAX BREAK FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

(EP News)--A Colorado bill could give home school or private school families a tax credit the state would have spent on that child in a public school. The Colorado Legislature is considering the Quality Education and Budget Reduction Act, House Bill 1295.

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CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried” (Rev. 2:10).



Storing Up the Word

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. I pray this finds you all doing well and in the highest of spirits.

In my pursuit to continually improve upon myself I have recently begun the Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) for a second time. Yes, this is the class that I've written about in this column several times. I greatly enjoyed it the first time and learned a lot about myself and how to improve my critical thinking skills. I intend to refresh earlier lessons and soak in new ones this second go round. And I would encourage anyone reading this behind steel bars to enroll in CIP at the earliest opportunity; what is the old Alcohol Anonymous saying? "Our best thinking got us where we are." In order to change where we are, to stop coming back to where we are, we have to change how we think--and that is what CIP is all about. Sign up now.

This column has always been about encouraging myself as well as others. I figure that if I'm struggling with something, then other believers are as well. And this month's topic is no different. . .

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps. 119:11).

My first question is what is the purpose of hiding the Word in our hearts? And the simple answer is given right there in our text, **“that (we) might not sin against thee (God)”!** This is our ultimate goal in life, not sinning against God.

My second question is, how do we go about hiding the Word in our hearts? Well, this is where I need the encouragement that I try to pass on to others. We hide the word in our hearts by reading the Word and asking the Lord to **“teach (us) thy statutes”** (Ps. 119:12).

When I was in segregation I would spend hours in my Bible on a daily basis. I was always reading, researching, pondering the Word--hiding the Word in my heart. But since I've been out of segregation I haven't been as consistent. I still read, research, and ponder the Word, but not as often as I once did.

Of course, I don't have as much “free” time as I did when I was in segregation. Now that I'm in the general population I have work, CIP, and college to fill up my time. But that is not an excuse not to at least read my Bible on a daily basis.

I want to take this opportunity to admonish myself and encourage you, dear reader, to read and ponder the Word on a daily basis. For the Word is **“profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Until next time, dear reader: **“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity”** (Eph. 6:24).



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Rep. Kent Lambert, the sponsor, said it could save the state \$184 million in the first year. “It saves families money,” he said, “because they can go to a school that they choose to go to with a part of the money that the state is saving,” by not having that student in public schools. Mike Donnelly, legal counsel for the Home School Legal Defense Association, said it's good to reward educational choice. “Parents who want to send their children to Christian schools have a tax credit. Parents who want to start home schooling get a tax credit, which saves Colorado millions of dollars. Sounds like a good bill, and we support it.”

NEW HAMPSHIRE CITIZENS WILL NOT GET A VOTE ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(EP News)--The New Hampshire Legislature voted down a proposed constitutional amendment on Feb. 17 that would have defined marriage as between one man and one woman – and sent the issue to the voters. The house vote was 201-135. Last year, the Legislature legalized gay marriage. The law went into effect Jan. 1. The New Hampshire House also defeated a bill that would have repealed the same-sex marriage law.

FEDERAL HATE CRIMES LAW CHALLENGED

(EP News)--The recently passed federal hate crimes bill, which provides elevated protection for individuals based on “actual or perceived” “sexual orientation” or “gender identity” is being challenged as a violation of the First, Fifth, and Tenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and the Commerce Clause. The Thomas More Law Center filed the suit against U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder on Feb. 2 in U.S. District Court for

the Eastern District of Michigan on behalf of three pastors, and the president of the American Family Association of Michigan. The suit argues that the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, which was passed as an attachment to the defense authorization bill that President Obama signed in October 2009, “creates a special class of persons whose protection of the law will be, in George Orwell's phrase, ‘more equal than others,’” based on nothing more than their engagement in specific sexual behavior—a violation of equal protection under the Fifth Amendment.

IN SOME N.C. COUNTIES, ELECTIVE ABORTIONS NO LONGER COVERED

(EP News)--Wake County and the City of Apex have decided they will no longer spend taxpayer money to help fund employees' elective abortions, and Columbus County may be next to limit coverage to those procedures deemed medically necessary. “Thank God and thanks to pro-life citizens for speaking out,” said the Rev. Mark Creech, executive director of the Christian Action League of North Carolina. “We hope more and more folks will hold their local officials accountable on this issue.”

MISSOURI LAWMAKERS BACK RELIGIOUS LIBERTY LEGISLATION

(EP News)--A Missouri Senate committee has endorsed legislation that protects religious freedoms. The Committee on General Laws approved the resolution 5-0 February. It was sponsored by Sen. Delbert Scott. Joe Ortwerth, executive director of the Missouri Family Policy Council, said his group promoted Senate Joint Resolution 31, because groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, for example, are trying to convince public school officials that freedom of religious expression cannot be permitted in public settings. “Our goal here in Missouri,” he said, “is to clarify – in our constitution – the extent of the religious liberties that are enjoyed by our citizens and guaranteed by our bill of rights.” If the proposal passes this session, it would go on the August or November ballot.

MARYLAND TO RECOGNIZE OUT-OF-STATE GAY MARRIAGES

(EP News)--Maryland Attorney General Douglas Gansler said the state will recognize same-sex marriages performed elsewhere. Gansler also said state agencies should acknowledge the unions, and afford them the same rights as heterosexual ones. Maryland joins Washington, D.C., New York and several other states in recognizing out-of-state gay marriage. Derek McCoy, president of the Association of Maryland Families, said the attorney general circumvented the legislative process. “The law in Maryland is simple,” he said. “Only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid in this state. Yet, our attorney general takes 53 pages to provide an opinion, or justification, to break the law.”

MARYLAND AG MAY FACE

CHARGES AFTER SANCTIONING OUT-OF-STATE GAY MARRIAGES

(EP News)--Charges are likely to be filed against the Maryland attorney general, after he decided the state will recognize out-of-state same-sex marriages. Delegate Don Dwyer said the charges could be filed within a month. Attorney General Douglas Gansler said on Feb. 24 the state will recognize same-sex marriages performed elsewhere. However, Maryland law holds that the state will not recognize the unions. And Maryland's high court ruled on the issue in 2007, saying only the General Assembly could redefine marriage. “What the attorney general has done is end-run around the court and around the legislative process,” Dwyer said. “I plan on holding him accountable. I do plan to bring charges of impeachment against him on the Maryland House floor.”

D.C. VOTERS MAY NOT HAVE FINAL SAY ON MARRIAGE

(EP News)--A Washington, D.C., judge denied another request, in late February, to allow voters to have a say in whether the District will recognize gay marriages. Family advocates had asked the District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics to put the issue to the people, but the board refused, claiming a vote would violate the District's anti-discrimination laws. Last year, the District Council approved a same-sex marriage ordinance. It goes into effect next month. A Jan. 28 Washington Post poll showed that 59 percent of adult D.C. residents believe voters should be allowed to vote on marriage. Alliance Defense Fund attorney Austin Nimocks said, “A new definition of marriage should not be imposed upon the people of D.C. without their consent, and the majority of D.C. residents agree. The court should support the people's right to vote on this referendum, which would allow them to partake in a legitimate democratic process to decide a critical matter that affects everyone in the district.”

GAY AGENDA IN NEW YORK CLASSROOMS

(EP News)--New York City schools are hosting a Respect for All week. It's billed as an anti-bullying push, but the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) partnered with the city to develop the event. Brochures were handed out to students. GLSEN has helped trained school staff for the program, and its resources are recommended to teachers for use in the classroom. Joseph Mattera, presiding bishop of the Christ Covenant Coalition, said that gives GLSEN a permanent foothold in New York City classrooms. “The whole idea is just to soften up the students so that there will be a receptivity in the future to same-sex marriage or other gay-friendly curriculum,” Mattera said.

HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVISTS TARGET CONSERVATIVE LAWMAKERS

(EP News)--Homosexual activists have

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started a new political action committee to go after New York State senators who supported one man, one woman marriage, according to an article in The New York Times. Fight Back New York is prepared to spend in the six-figure range in the state Senate races this year. Long-time activist Tim Gill will likely be one of the major donors. He has backed many homosexual initiatives across the U.S. Last year a same-sex marriage bill was defeated in New York. Jason McGuire, executive director with New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedom, said activists don't always get their way, even after spending millions of dollars. "When that vote came down in the New York state Senate on Dec. 2," he said, "where the bill was defeated for same-sex marriage 38 to 24, that was a crushing blow to their movement."

WASHINGTON, D.C., USHERS IN SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(EP News)--The U.S. Supreme Court refused to intervene in the Washington, D.C., marriage battle, which means same-sex couples started getting married in the District of Columbia beginning Mar. 3. The Alliance Defense Fund had filed an appeal with Chief Justice John Roberts over the District's refusal to let the people vote on the issue of marriage. In December, the D.C. City Council overwhelmingly approved a bill to legalize same-sex marriage. The U.S. Congress oversees the District, but has not taken action on the new law. The Supreme Court ruling does not end the initiative already begun in the District to overturn the law.

INDIANA HOUSE VOTES DOWN MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

(EP News)--A state constitutional amendment to define marriage as between one man and one woman failed in the Indiana House. It was the second time in three years the marriage amendment has failed. Rep. Dave Cheatham, D-Ind., sponsored the amendment and has been a staunch supporter of pro-family values in his 12 years in the House. "I believe that God says that we should have marriage between one man and one woman," he said, "so, that's what I try to do legislatively here in Indiana." Even though the votes are there in both chambers of the Indiana Legislature, House Speaker Pat Bauer has kept the amendment from getting a vote.

CALIFORNIA BOARD STILL WANTS TEACHER TO REMOVE "GOD" BANNERS

(EP News)--The Poway Unified School District will appeal a ruling siding with math teacher Brad Johnson, whom the board ordered to take down two banners with references to God, including "In God We Trust" and "God Bless America." U.S. District Court Judge Roger T. Benitez ruled that the

San Diego, Calif., teacher's constitutional rights were violated. Johnson's signs had been hanging in his classroom for more than 25 years. The board ordered Johnson to remove the banners in 2007, because they said "over-emphasized" God and "might make a Muslim student uncomfortable." Robert Muise, attorney with the Thomas More Law Center, said Johnson made a bold move by standing by his convictions. "He was willing to take on the school district and battle this for several years, and he prevailed," he said.

COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF KEEPING 'GOD' IN PLEDGE

(EP News)--The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Mar. 18 that teacher-led

recitations of the pledge of allegiance in public schools are constitutional. Atheist Michael Newdow has been pushing to have "one nation under God" removed from the pledge. Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said the court was correct in its assessment that the "pledge is not a prayer. It establishes a patriotic allegiance, not a religion, and it confirms that this is a nation founded under God, not under atheism." In a separate decision on a companion case, the same three-judge panel unanimously rejected Newdow's challenge to the use of, "In God We Trust," on coins and currency.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Duties of Dignitaries

"Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, And say, Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people. But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation" (Jer. 22:1-5).

Here the king and his officers of state are addressed together by Jeremiah, because a good government depends upon a good cabinet as well as a good king. Rulers must use their power to do all the good they can, for they are the ministers of God for good. To faithfully discharge their duty is to advance and secure the prosperity of their government. The best way to preserve the dignity of the government is to do the God-given duties of it.

RULE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Those in positions of authority are to rule in righteousness as did David and Solomon. Of King Hezekiah it is written: **"And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD"** (II Chron. 29:2). The same must be true of his officers of state: **"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall**

rule in judgment" (Isa. 32:1). Those who do this are a great blessing to their subjects.

Dignitaries are to discourage vice and vicious persons. They are to remove evil from the government and its people. Solomon was a king in Israel **"to do judgment and justice"** (I Kings 10:9). Proverbs 20:8 reads: **"A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes."** Verse 26 says: **"A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them."**

A righteous administration of government magnifies its leaders, elevates its people, and qualifies that nation for God's blessings. By suppression of vice and support of virtue, they exalt their nation. Immorality has ruined many a nation. Proverbs 14:34 declares: **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."**

The principle concern of a chief magistrate is the welfare and safety of his people. They must be secure in their lives, liberties, and property. Citizens must be able to live quiet and peaceable lives. For if the people are not safe, then neither is the government, for the safety of both is closely connected together.

TO TAKE TAXES

The state is to make laws for the good of its citizens. No peaceful society could exist without these. Traffic codes, zoning regulations, various ordinances, and laws against crime are within the jurisdiction of the state. This is seen in studying the United Kingdom of Israel in the Old Testament.

The state has the right to levy taxes from its subjects. Wise King Solomon

levied taxes from Israel (I Kings 4:7-28). When asked if it were lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, Jesus Christ said: **"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's"** (Mark 12:17). In this statement Christ recognized the right of the Roman government to collect taxes.

The Apostle Paul gave the church at Rome the same instructions: **"For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour"** (Rom. 13:6-7).

These taxes must be paid for the protection and benefits we receive from the government. We cannot enjoy such things as paved highways, police and fire protection, and other things without paying for them.

Human government must take great care in not demanding too much taxes from its citizens. Oppressive taxation divided the United Kingdom of Israel (I Kings 12:6-11). Samuel warned Israel that when they had a king he would take their wealth and give it to his officers of state (I Sam. 8:15). Burdensome taxation means a governmental bureaucracy and the possibility of political corruption.

Citizens of every country must realize that increased benefits from the state means a rising taxation. The government cannot give its citizens anything which it does not take from them in taxes. Whenever the state increases its wealth through an ever-growing portion of taxes, it can become a monster which no longer serves the people, but actually enslaves them. America needs to beware of excessive taxation, for one-third of every dollar earned by its citizens goes to some kind of taxes.

MILITARY DRAFT

It is a proper function of government to demand that certain of its men bear arms. A country must protect its citizens from enemies without. A country who fails to do this will not long endure, nor will its citizens remain free men.

Israel had a selective draft (Num. 1:2-3). The males of 20 years and upwards were in it. The Levites (Num. 1:49), cowards (Deut. 20:8), and other individuals were exempted (Deut. 20:5-7). Our government does very much like ancient Israel did in this matter.

A government has the authority to declare war. As long as sin exists there will be wars on earth. A government must do all within its power to prevent war and to stay out of war. But when the welfare of its people is in danger, it may find it necessary to declare war. Proverbs 20:18 says: **"With good advice make war."** The Bible tells us that God favored the Hebrew army in its just war with the Hagarites. Of this battle the

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Duties of Dignitaries

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Bible says: **"The war was of God"** (I Chron. 5:22).

This teaching is not just an Old Testament truth. In Luke 14:31 Jesus Christ recognized the right of a nation to make war: **"Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?"**

War is often essential to peace. Christ will cause wars to cease on earth in the Millennial Reign (Ps. 46:9; Isa. 2:4) by declaring war on the rebellious nations on earth. At the battle of Armageddon it is written of Christ: **"In righteousness he doth judge and make war"** (Rev. 19:11). The saints as the army of Heaven will assist Christ in this battle (Rev. 19:14). This is the time when Christ's servants will wage war (John 18:36).

There will be wars and rumors of wars unto the end of this age (Dan. 9:26; Matt. 24:6-7). War is due to man's being a sinner (James 4:1). War is even sometimes God's judgment upon a nation for its sins (Ezek. 14:21; Hos. 11:5-8). God delivered Jerusalem to the Gentiles because of its rebellion and rejection of Christ (Luke 21:20-24).

TO ADMINISTER CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

God has authorized government to take life. To lynch a man is murder, but to execute a man by governmental authority is not murder. The executioner for the government has a heartbreaking job, but he may be a Christian and do this job, for such killing is not murder. The executioner only carries out the judgment of the state and God.

Certainly no man should be put to death for some small crime. But for such things as kidnapping, rape, and murder, one should be called upon to give his life. Guilt should be established beyond all doubt, but then the law should be carried out.

GOD TAKES LIFE

The Creator takes human life in judgment for sin. In Genesis 38 God took the lives of the two sons of Judah. God took the lives of those who died in the flood. In Leviticus 10 He took the lives of Nadab and Abihu who offered strange fire upon the altar of God. He slew the first born of man and beast on the night of the Passover in Egypt. He destroyed Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. He caused the earth to swallow Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. In II Samuel 6 God smote Uzzah for touching the ark. In II Kings 19 God had an angel to kill 185,000 Assyrians in one night.

God killed Herod for his presumption and pride (Acts 12:23). He smote Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the

Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). God caused some of the members of the church at Corinth to die for their abuse of the Lord's Supper (II Cor. 11:3). Thus, we see that those who oppose capital punishment assume to be wiser, more loving, and more merciful than God Himself.

THE STATE CAN KILL

It is God's prerogative to take life! In certain instances He instructs individuals to put sinners to death for Him. God through Moses ordered the sons of Levi to slay 3,000 Israelites for idolatry. Og, the King of Bashan, and all his people were appointed to death by God (Num. 21:33-35). The same is true of Sihon and the Amorites. We read that Israel **"utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones"** (Deut. 2:32-34). God ordered the extermination of the Amalekites by Israel in the days of King Saul. God ordered Joshua to slay all the people in Jericho. God ordered the destruction of all the nations in Canaan. God ordered Samuel the prophet to slay Agag, King of the Amalekites.

God put in the hands of man the highest principle of government when He delegated the power to take life. In Genesis 9:6 God said: **"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."** This law was given to the whole human race for all time. It has never been revised or repealed. It is to be in force for "perpetual generations."

In Israel the death penalty was enforced. The law required it. **"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death"** (Ex. 21:12). **"And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death"** (Lev. 24:17). **"And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death"** (Num. 35:16).

Jesus Christ declared His belief in capital punishment when He said: **"For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword"** (Matt. 26:52).

The Apostle Paul was not opposed to capital punishment. He told Festus: **"For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar"** (Acts 25:11).

God's law requires that a murderer be put to death for his crime. He must give his life for the life he has taken. A murderer who is put to death can kill no more. Nobody wants to die. The threat of execution has stopped many potential murderers from committing the act.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS JUST

Capital punishment is not "cruel and unusual punishment" as the Supreme Court declares; it is nothing but justice to rapists, kidnappers, and murderers. It

is not an outlet for bestiality in man; it is the way to control the beastly nature of evil men. No capital punishment means a license for anarchy, rape, and murder. To abolish it is to give the criminal more justice than anyone else. To enforce it is not barbaric but Christian.

Mercy to the murderer is cruelty to the community. Henry VIII once pardoned a murderer. The pardoned murderer then murdered again. When a second plea of mercy was made to the king on behalf of this murderer, Henry answered, "No, he killed the first man, but I killed the second, and I will kill no more. He must be executed." Our government may be guilty in the same way.

Public opinion regarding capital punishment has changed drastically in the last 30 years. The movie industry and the liberal theologians have done their part in the drive to eliminate capital punishment. Modern sociologists have just about convinced people the death penalty is cruel and barbaric. They say it is society who is the blame for the misdeeds of lawbreakers. The plain truth is that it is the individual that has failed, not society.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

From 1950 to 1970, less than 10 percent of those convicted of first-degree murder were executed. On June 29, 1972, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a ruling which nullified all existing state and federal laws authorizing capital punishment. Since then the death penalty has been all but abolished in America.

Statistics prove that crime has increased in this country as executions decreased. In 1959 there were 8,580 murders committed, while 49 of these criminals were executed. In 1969 there were 14,830, and to my knowledge not one was executed. In 1973 there were 19,510, and again to my knowledge not one was put to death. Such figures cause one to wonder if serious crime does not pay---at least in this world!

The enemies of capital punishment have much to say about the need for pity for the poor criminal. They never say anything about the need of pity for the poor victim or his family. Speak not to me about the right of a murderer, but rather speak to me about the right of his victim to live. It seems strange to talk about the murderer's right to live, while denying the victim's right!

NOT TO KILL

As soon as one begins to defend capital punishment, there are pinks, pacifists, protestors, and religious infidels who quote the Sixth Commandment: **"Thou shalt not kill"** (Ex. 20:13). The proper translation of this from the Hebrew is: **"Thou shalt do no murder."**

In Deuteronomy 7:2 we read concerning the Canaanitish nations: **"Thou shalt smite them, and utterly**

destroy them." This statement, as well as the one in Exodus 20:13, was written by Moses and by Divine inspiration. Do they contradict each other?

The Sixth Commandment concerns the conduct of the individual. The other concerns the conduct of a nation. Killing as an individual is prohibited, but killing by a nation is permitted. All murder is killing, but all killing is not murder.

The state does have the right to sentence and execute capital punishment on capital offenses. An executioner is not guilty of murder when he turns on the electric chair or the gas chamber. Neither is a local policeman guilty of murder when he kills a man in self-defense or in defense of the life of others.

Listen to God's Word on this. **"And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood"** (Num. 35:27). Exodus 22:2 says: **"If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him."**

PERSONAL RETALIATION FORBIDDEN

A citizen must never take the law into his own hands by engaging in personal vengeance and retaliation for wrong done. Romans 12:19 says: **"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."** We must leave the redress of a grievance to the properly constituted authorities. If they fail us, remember God has promised: **"I will repay."**

When the soldiers came to take Christ, Peter took the law into his own hands and with a sword cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest (John 18:10). Christ rebuked him for this: **"Put up thy sword into the sheath"** (John 18:11). Peter was resisting the governmental authority of his country. He was drawing a sword against the order of a magistrate, which was a crime. Christ wanted Peter to see that if he opposed his own civil government by force, he must expect to be met by force (Matt. 26:52).

Have you ever said, "I'll get even with that person if it's the last thing I ever do!" Such a strong statement of personal revenge is wrong. The strong emotions of pride, anger, and hatred because of wrong done to us are not of God. **"For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God"** (James 1:20). To react too harshly is to perpetuate the wrong by adding sin to sin. We must leave these matters to the magistrate. If we avenge ourselves, we become lawbreakers, and are not any different from the one who wronged us.



- A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF HAGGAI -

The Results of Having the Wrong Spiritual Priorities

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Haggai 1:1-11

The prophet Haggai lived and prophesied during the years following the Babylonian captivity of the children of Israel. The people had been released, and allowed to return unto the land of Israel. They had been enabled to go and begin rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and the temple of Jehovah. Haggai prophesied to Israel during the years in which the temple was being rebuilt. He was the contemporary of Ezra the scribe and Zechariah the prophet (Ezra 5:1, 2; Isa. 44:28; Jer. 29:10; II Chron. 36:22, 23).

The first message of Haggai the prophet which we read here in the Word of God is one of rebuke. The condition of the people was one of spiritual backsliding and idleness. They had become consumed with personal interests and had left off to seek the interests of the Lord their God first of all. One writer has said, in commenting on these verses, "The principle of Matthew 6:33 is valid in every generation" (Scofield, C. I., D.D.). Amen. **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"** (Matt. 6:33). When we allow other things to come before the kingdom of God, the rule of God over our lives and the interests of God in our lives and in the world, then our lives will be out of order, and we will not be blessed, spiritually, physically, or materially.

vs. 1 – God sent His message by His messenger, the prophet Haggai. The message was sent to the leaders of the people. These two who are mentioned were the primary leaders in the effort to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. They were servants and instruments of God. They were to be both examples and instructors to the people in that which was right. This is still true of leaders today. You do not have to be a preacher to be a leader, but you ought to set an example that is worthy of imitation, an example of a true believer who follows in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:1-8; Phil. 3:17-19). Examples that are worthy of following are very lacking in our day and time. No doubt this is why so many are going astray spiritually, there is very little true spiritual leadership.

vs. 2 – The message that came to the leaders at this time showed the condition of the people according to the view of God. We can be sure that God always views things as they truly are. **"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying,**



This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built." The people had an inner thought which was contrary to the thoughts of God.

They thought that now was not the time for working in the work of God. They were inclined to leave off building the temple at this time. No doubt there had been difficulties and obstacles which discouraged them (read the book of Ezra, and see the many obstacles and difficulties which confronted the Jews as they sought to rebuild the city and the temple at Jerusalem – and know for certain that there are difficulties and obstacles in the work of the Lord today). Nevertheless, they were not viewing by faith the One Who is greater than all obstacles and difficulties, and the One at whose command are all things to dispose of and to use as He sees fit, **"the LORD of hosts."**

We find that this is often the case in our own hour, and that this very condition exists in church member's hearts even now. **"This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built."** Every New Testament church is a building of God (I Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19-22). You the members are the stones of which this building of God is made. The house of God is to be being built. Jesus said, **"I will build (i.e. I will be building) my church (i.e. my kind of church)"** (Matt. 16:18). God's church, (i.e. every local New Testament church like and descended from the one which Jesus instituted), is to be being built up. This does not only refer to membership, but refers to the members themselves being built up spiritually in the faith, the truth of the Word of God (Eph. 4:11-16). The body is to be being built up, fortified and strengthened, nurtured and nourished in the teachings and principles of the Word of God. Nevertheless, this is something about which the majority of church members in this hour are unconcerned. They say, **"The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built."**

The cry of the hour is, "We must have more activity. We must have something for the children. We must be ministering and reaching out." There ought to be activity in the church of God. A body without activity is a dead body. Yet, there ought to be the right kind of activity according to the commands of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20). There's no

use making excuses and saying that the many things going on in churches today are getting the job done as far as the Great Commission is concerned. All of the programs, ministries, junior and children's churches, staffed nurseries, "Discovery" programs, young people's services, youth camps, pastor's wives retreats, radio ministries, television ministries, and printing ministries are not resulting in more people being saved, more New Testament churches being started, and more doctrinally and Biblically sound Baptists being produced. In fact, quite the opposite is the case. When it comes to doing real gospel work, going out and telling people how to be saved, setting aside time regularly to do nothing but pray and ask God for true revival, and assisting the ministers of the Word in the work of God by taking time to help them in the work, then the cry becomes, **"The time is not come"** for these things. We do not hear of too many today being set aside to minister to the missionaries and the pastors, as John Mark was servant to Barnabas and Paul; and as Luke accompanied Paul, Silas, and Timothy to Macedonia, to assist in the work; and as Phebe was a servant to the church at Cenchrea, and doubtless to many of the Gentile churches. There is no time for prayer meetings in homes. There is no time for visitation and witnessing. Some Baptist preachers are saying how they have no time for studying the Bible. That is the reason the ministry is dead in many places. There is preaching, but it is not the preaching of the Word of God.

vs. 3, 4 – God sent a message not only to the leaders, revealing to them the condition of the people and the times, but also to the entire congregation, to all the people at Jerusalem who should have been engaged in the work of rebuilding the wall. **"Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?"** The people said that the time was not come to build the house of God, but yet they were content to build and to dwell in their own houses, and to pursue their own personal interests in the world. They were more than willing to invest time, energy, money, and resources in their own earthly houses, but not in the house of the living God. God's house was not being built, in fact it **"lie waste."** The condition of the temple of Jehovah was shameful. That is the case in many churches today. The spiritual condition of the members is that their spiritual lives **"lie waste,"** while all of their time is spent pursuing worldly things. They have second and third homes, vacation homes, they work two and three jobs, and they have two, three, and four vehicles in the driveway, one for Dad, one for Mom, one for

Junior, and one for fun. They do not miss a movie that comes out, or a show at the symphony. They go to all the same places of pleasure and entertainment that the world goes. They take expensive vacations every year, driving for many miles to see the sights, shop the sales, take a dip, ride the rides, hook some fish, bag a deer, eat some treats, and catch some sun. They build themselves houses to live in, remodel the bathroom and kitchen, add on to the garage, put up a shed, landscape the yard, re-carpet, retile, repaint, and reupholster. Now many of these things are not wrong in and of themselves. The reason they are wrong in the hour in which we are living is because God's people are putting these things above their responsibilities toward God, His house, and His will for their lives. They are wrong because God's house is lying waste, gospel work is not being done, and the lives of God's people are not what they ought to be for the honor and glory of God.

vs. 5 – **"Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways."** God told the people of Haggai's day that they needed to examine their ways. They needed to examine and consider whether their priorities and behavior were right, or whether, as the case was in truth, they were neglecting God and thereby wreaking havoc upon their own lives. Another rendering of the word **"Consider"** here is "Lay to heart." We have become very frivolous when it comes to spiritual things. Almost as many jokes and entertaining stories are told from Baptist pulpits today as time is spent expounding the Scriptures and exhorting and admonishing the saints in their spiritual duties and privileges as sons and daughters of the living God. There is too much lightness, and very little sober-mindedness. People want to feel as though they had a good time, and are not as concerned with whether or not they have laid to heart the truths of God which are able to transform a person from the image of the fallen Adam to the image of the risen Christ.

God tells you and me to consider our ways. God's ways are all right and equal, but our ways need to be examined. How many today are truly seeking to examine their lives and draw closer to the Lord? How many are really and truly desiring to be more and more for God, less and less for self and the world, more spiritual, more earnest in God's work, and less and less idle, foolish, vain, and temporal-minded (Ps. 139:23, 24)? The only way you are going to be able to rightly **"consider your ways"** is by taking heed to the Word of God. God was telling the people what their true condition really was. Jesus still tells church members what condition they are in spiritually (Rev. 3:14-22).

vs. 6 – God now places in plain view

◊ (Continued on page 319)

Study in Haggai

(Continued from page 318) ♦

the lives of the people, so that they may see that their neglect of God's work has been to their own detriment, and if persisted it will result in their own ruin. **"Ye have sown much, and bring in little."** Their efforts to have full lives while neglecting the house of God had failed. They labored much, planting their fields, but the harvest brought little results. While focusing their attention on their earthly, temporal needs, those needs were the very things that were not being met. **"Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink."** They were unsatisfied and unhappy. They had food, but it did not fill them. They had drink, but it did not quench their thirst. The very things which we have for the needs of our lives will prove to be without benefit without God's blessing. The very food you eat is useless to nourish and strengthen your body without the blessing of God. Yet people put obtaining food, drink, clothing, housing, and rest above serving God, which causes these very things to become a curse unto them, and not a benefit. **"Ye clothe you, but there is none warm."** They had no earthly comfort. Their clothing, their blankets, and their fires upon their hearths did not make them warm. They had everything materially that is thought to be necessary and important to comfort and worldly happiness, but they had neither comfort or joy. **"And he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."** The very thing they put first in their lives was the thing of which they had the least. The more money they earned, the faster it went from them. The more they worked to earn the money, the more the money departed from them (Prov. 23:4, 5; 15:16; 16:8; I Tim. 6:9, 10, 17-19). Money, houses, cars, clothes, leisure, convenience, and pleasure have become higher priorities to many Baptists than serving God. Whatsoever you love the most is that which will become your master.

vs. 7, 8 – Once again God calls upon the people to consider their ways. They needed, on the one hand, to consider how that their hearts were not right, and that they had neglected God's house while putting their own earthly homes and lives above His work and His will. They needed, on the other hand, to consider that God's house and God's work are the first need of every Christian life, without which no good thing of lasting spiritual benefit can come to us, and so be building the house the God. **"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure**

in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD." Our first and foremost priority should be to please and glorify the Lord, our God, Savior, and King. Nothing will glorify Him except that which is according to His Word and is connected with His house, the church of the living God (Eph. 3:21). Nothing new needed to be devised. No new program was necessary. No change in method or means, but only a change in behavior on the part of the people of God to carry out God's revealed program, using the means and the method which He had already revealed and prescribed. The same is true in this very hour. Neither the gospel program nor the scriptural means and method of gospel preaching need to be changed; only God's people need to carry out the orders of our Lord Jesus Christ.

vs. 9-11 – God here reveals the source of their personal disappointment and their fruitless, unsatisfying, unfulfilled, and spiritually lean lives. **"Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little."** Great have been the expectations of many in their plans, their strivings, and their devisings; and yet, their lives have turned out quite differently than they had hoped and planned. When they looked for much, it turned to little. **"And when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it."** When they brought what they had desired in this earthly life home, it was withered by the hot breath of God's displeasure, so that it yielded little of the satisfaction and joy which had been so anticipated. **"Why? saith the LORD of hosts."** The reason is simple, but how many today cannot fathom that this is what lies at the source of all their woes and troubles: **"Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house."** They had placed their houses and their temporal delights above the house of God, and the building thereof. They thought that they could build up their own houses without first seeing to the building up of God's house; and now their houses lie in shambles, because they had allowed God's house to lie waste. Many Baptists are in this condition at this very hour. Their lives are shambles of broken promises, unfulfilled plans, disappointments, and leanness of soul. They loved bread more than God's Word, and so God gave them what they wanted, but it was accompanied with spiritual wasting, so that their hearts, minds, and lives are like a field of corn blasted with drought and blight.

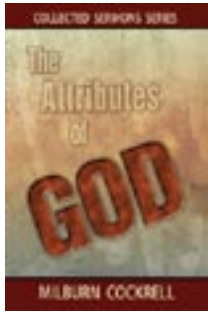
"Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit." Heaven is closed to their prayers, and the blessing of the dew to moisten the earth is withheld, so that no fruitful blessings spring forth from the ground. When Heaven is turned to iron because of our sins, then the ground beneath us will likewise be

turned to brass. There can be no earthly joys without heavenly blessings. If our hearts are out of tune with Heaven from whence we receive the showers of blessing, then our earthly delights will soon all dry up, and nothing of value or joy will we have here below. Without the goodness of Heaven, which is like the dew upon the ground, this earth would soon become a desert, spiritually as well as physically (Ps. 66:18; Deut. 28:23, 24). When we pray, and our prayer is unanswered, and no blessings come, then ought we to consider our ways, and see if we are gone out of the way of the will of God.

"And I called for a drought upon the land." One of the most outstanding facts of this Scripture is that God was the One Who sent the drought upon His people. How many today seemingly doubt that when God has done them good, He will turn and do them hurt, if they turn from following Him. Yes, beloved, He can smite us to our hurt. He Who loves us will not leave off applying the correcting rod when we have turned out of His way. Not only was the ground caused to dry up, but also men and cattle. Why are so many people dry today? Why is there no strength to serve God, no strength to be men in the service of the Lord (I Cor. 11:30-32)? Our homes and our families will be unproductive, and will not bring forth anything worthwhile, until they are surrendered to the work of the Lord. **"And upon all the labour of the hands."** Whatsoever was done turned to nothing. Every source of joy, every thing which was meant to be for their good and benefit was dried up and fruitless (Matt. 6:24-33). Until God is first, and His work comes before any of our work, nothing will be as it ought to be.

Is it time that the Lord's house should be built? Is it time that you should run every one to his or her own house, and God's house, God's work, be neglected? **"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"** (Rev. 3:22).





Retail
\$8.00

This book contains fifteen chapters. Chapters cover the following attributes: Omniscience, Foreknowledge, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Eternity, Holiness, Love, Goodness, Veracity, Spirituality, Mercy, Independency, Justice, Immutability and Long-Suffering. Please add \$3 for P/H.

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 2-1-2010 to 2-28-2010

Beginning Balance.....	\$10,945.08
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
.....	425.00
TOTAL.....	11,370.08
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	640.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	640.00
.....	\$10,730.08
Interest	+ .85
.....	10,730.93
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,406.12
ENDING BALANCE.....	\$9,324.81

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance.....	\$1,606.12
RECEIPTS:	
TOTAL.....	1,606.12
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time (WCTT)	200.00
ENDING BALANCE.....	\$1,406.12

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 2-1-2010 to 2-28-2010

Beginning Balance.....	\$3,244.35
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX.....	25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	90.95
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	433.61
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	600.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	150.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID.....	50.00
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
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....	25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY.....	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL.....	50.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....	35.00
L. H. Ferrell, Des Allemands, LA	125.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM.....	100.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH.....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR.....	50.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Southside B.C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL.....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C. Silsbee, TX.....	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC.....	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	212.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Anonymous	1,000.00
Sub Total.....	\$4,546.56
TOTAL.....	\$7,790.91
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing.....	581.71
Postage	743.56
Supplies	30.17
Wages	2,300.00
Wages*	329.00
FICA	192.57
Dividing checks	150.00
Total Expenditures	4,327.01
.....	\$3,463.90
Check order	-39.72
ENDING BALANCE.....	\$3,424.18

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

The Sleepers in the House of God

My sleepy friends,

As I presume your eyes will be open while reading this, I offer you a few thoughts on the subject of sleeping under the ministry of the gospel. It is a conduct that will be generally acknowledged as reprehensible; and whilst it is disgusting and pitiable in the eyes of others, will be attended with pernicious consequences with respect to yourselves. You will therefore excuse the liberty I take in disturbing your repose, as my officiousness arises from a desire to promote your best interests.

Have you no regard to your character as men? Would you not be ashamed to put yourselves in an attitude for sleeping in the midst of any company whom you respected? How then can it be excusable when assembled with those whose professed business it is to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation? What must be the feelings of your fellow Christians, when they see you throwing all your powers into the embraces of the image of death? Will they not be alarmed for your state, and be ready to exclaim, **"Awake thou that sleepest and call upon thy God?"**

Your preacher is probably a good minister of Jesus Christ, but I should suppose he has not learned the art of communicating his ideas to persons asleep, and if this be not the case, O what do you lose? You lose the words of eternal life! O tremble at the thought of being thus indifferent to the message of life and death sent from the King of Heaven. And have you thought of the ideas that will naturally arise in the minds of those who behold you? When they see you sleeping, in the afternoon especially, some will be ill-natured enough to think that you eat or drink rather too much, and that you are lovers of your own bellies more than lovers of God. Very few will be so charitable as to conclude that your rising early and applying yourselves diligently to your private devotions is the cause of it. If your moderation should be known to all men, and you cannot be suspected of excess, perhaps it may be thought to arise from constitutional weakness or a lethargic complaint. If this be the case, while it entitles you to some sympathy, it affords a powerful argument why you should strive against it; for death is lurking under these frailties and may soon surprise you.

But I fear it is some worse disease than any thing that can afflict the body--a spiritual malady: because you are not so much inclined to sleep in the society of a fellow mortal as you are in circumstances when you should hold communion with God. You rarely sleep sitting in a friend's

house, but it is common for you to do so in the house of God. Will He not consider it as an insult offered to Himself, His worship, and His people? Should your friend invite you to his house, at the same time informing you that he had something of great importance to communicate, and should you, when he began the subject, put yourself in a posture for sleep; would he not justly resent it as an insult? And will you thus treat the Sovereign of the skies, and the Redeemer of men, in whose hand is your existence, and whose favour is your only hope. Does not the indulgence of this sleepy disposition indicate a sleepy soul, and that you possess a general indifference to those things which ought to engage your most diligent attention? When I see persons asleep under a Gospel Ministry, I am apt to think that had the doctrine of "soul-sleeping" been confined to the present state, there might have been some truth in it.

Now what will you offer as an apology? Will you say, there always have been sleepers in such circumstances? It is true, a young man slept while Paul was preaching, but then he continued his discourse till midnight; and you have not to complain of such long sermons now: besides the case affords but little encouragement to your practice; for the young man in his sleepy fit fell down dead; and so he must have remained, had not Paul possessed the gift of working miracles; which I suppose your minister does not.

I am aware that the disciples of Jesus slept, and the kind Redeemer seemed in some measure to excuse their conduct, by saying, **"The spirit indeed is willing**

but the flesh is weak," but their sleeping was the effect of incessant watching; I can hardly suppose that your watching and praying is the cause of your sleeping under the public means of grace.

Presuming that you would wish to be delivered from a practice which is an offence to your God, injurious to yourselves, and disgusting to your fellow worshippers, I hope you will permit me to suggest the means of overcoming it.

1. Be a little abstemious on the Lord's day. Don't keep your servants at home to provide a hot dinner, and thereby deprive them of the services of the sanctuary in the morning, that you may present yourself there a drowsy spectacle in the afternoon. Instead of feasting the body, be concerned to make it a feast day to the soul. Hunger and thirst after righteousness, that you may be filled.

2. To abstemiousness add prayer. Perhaps this kind goeth not forth but by fasting and prayer. However, prayer has done great things, and if you pray to be kept from this evil--to be prepared for a blessing in the services of the sanctuary--assisted in its devotions, and comforted with the enjoyment of its privileges; you will find its happy effects. Will it not be found that those who sleep much in the house of God, pray very little before they come?

3. Consider to whom you are accountable, and what you are in danger of losing. If you should lose Heaven, or only the comforts of religion, by sleeping; will you not be guilty of greater folly than "Lysimachus," who lost a kingdom by staying to drink a draught of water? Let these hints suffice for the present, --should they answer the end designed, you will hear no more on this subject from your DISTURBER.

(The Baptist Magazine, August 1810).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Landmark Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Wheelersburg, OH will be having a meeting April 7th - 9th at 7:00 p.m. each night in honor of their 3rd Anniversary as an organized church.

The speaker will be Elder Tom Ross of Chesapeake, OH.

For more information contact Pastor Robert Asbury at (740) 776-7643.

The New Testament Baptist Church of Burton, OH is seeking a pastor.

For further information please contact the church at PO Box 840, Burton, OH 44021 or you can email your inquiry to ctiber@hughes.net.

If you would like to know more about the church, please visit their website at www.newtestamentbaptistchurchoh.com.

Grace Baptist Church of Rural Hall, NC is planning a revival meeting beginning on Wednesday May 12th thru Sunday May 16th. We extend an invitation to all to attend the services. Wednesday thru Saturday services will be at 7:30 each evening. Services on Sunday will begin at 9:45. The ladies of the church will provide lunch with afternoon services starting at 1:00 pm.

Elder Lewis Kiger, pastor of New Testament Baptist Church of Bristol, TN, will be preaching at these services. Please pray for the meeting.

For any assistance or information please contact Elder Gene Kiger at 143 Cross Baptist Church Rd., Rural Hall, NC 27045. Phone (336) 377-9808 or email at gbckiger@gbcstanleyville.com.

We now have an additional four discs of the Berea Hymnal Piano music CD's.

These are Disc #9 (songs 201-225), Disc #10 (songs 226-250), Disc #11 (songs 251-275), and Disc #12 (songs 276-300).

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

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

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.

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- Keeping Our Trials from Becoming Our Troubles by Donnie Burford
- The Bible and Human Government by Milburn Cockrell
- Our Social Problems by J. B. Hawthorne