

## A Pale Horse of Pestilence

By Milburn R. Cockrell  
 (1941 - 2002)

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:7-8).

Here the Lamb is seen opening the fourth seal in Heaven. The living creature like a flying eagle commands the pale horseman to ride on the stage of world events. The pale horse denotes a fourth stage in the development of



the kingdom of Antichrist.

In the three previous chapters we have seen the white horse of the world government, the red horse of war and bloodshed, and the black horse of

◊ (Continued on page 62)

## The Death of Samson

"Yes, I fully agree with you," said my friend, "that for the most part the narratives of the Old Testament are so vividly told, and so natural, that they bring their own evidence of being true; especially when compared with such other fragments of ancient history as have been preserved. But this is not the case with all. Take, for example, the story of the death of Samson. Can you imagine a building, could any modern architect plan one, that could be overturned in the way described? One in which the breaking down of two columns by a man of unusual strength should bring about such a catastrophe?"

Now I do not study the Bible as a difficulty-hunter, and had not



considered this as a perplexing question. Hence it puzzled me. My friend had the best of the argument.

◊ (Continued on page 61)

## Too Hard for the Lord?

By Rosco Brong  
 (1908 - 1985)

**THE GOD OF THE BIBLE HAS POWER TO GOVERN HIS OWN CREATION**

"Is anything too hard for the LORD" (Gen. 18:14)?

Jehovah Himself asked this question of Abraham when Sarah laughed at the idea of her bearing a son to Abraham in their old age: "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" Not long before, even Abraham, the "friend of God" (James 2:23), had laughed momentarily at the same promise (Genesis 17:17), but both Abraham and Sarah came



to believe in the promise and power of God, and their faith found its reward in fulfillment (Heb. 11:11).

Surely God is good, and perhaps most people who regard the Bible as in any sense a special revelation from God believe that God is somehow righteous and true as well as loving and kind. No doubt all true Christians would profess to believe that God can do what He will, else He is not God at

◊ (Continued on page 79)

## A Faithful Friend

By C. H. Spurgeon  
 (1834 - 1892)

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Pro. 18:24).

CICERO has well said, "Friendship is the only thing in the world concerning the usefulness of which all mankind are agreed." Friendship seems as necessary an element of a comfortable existence in this world as fire or water, or even air itself. A man may drag along a miserable existence in proud solitary dignity, but his life is scarce life, it is nothing but an existence, the tree of life being stripped of the leaves of hope and



the fruits of joy. He who would be happy here must have friends; and he who would be happy hereafter, must, above all things, find a friend in the world to come, in

the person of God, the Father of His people.

Friendship, however, though very pleasing and exceedingly blessed, has been the cause of the greatest misery to men when it has been unworthy

◊ (Continued on page 68)

**Carry an appetite to God's house, and you will be fed.**

A notable preacher said: "The hearer sometimes complains, 'There was no food for my soul,' when the truth is, there was no soul for the food."

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).

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## A Pale Horse of

*(Continued from page 61) ♦*

world-wide famine. In this chapter we study the last of the four horsemen, the pale horse of pestilence.

### THE COLOR OF THE HORSE

In the Authorized Version the horse is said to be pale in color. But the color in the Greek text expresses a pale-green. The reference is to a color like the green of young vegetation. The same word is used to describe grass elsewhere in the Scriptures (Mark 6:39; Rev. 8:7; 9:4). Grassy-green is a beautiful color in trees and the fields, but when it appears upon flesh it is unseemly, disgusting, and even horrible. Here is seen a greenish ghastliness, something like the color of putrefying flesh.

### ITS MEANING

John does not give us a description of the rider. The picture of him is left to be supplied by the imagination of the reader. His name is Death and Hell. It goes without saying this Death and Hell are here personified. Death is seen as it claims the bodies of men and Hell as it claims their spirits. The idea seems to be that men's bodies are taken away by death while their souls go immediately to burn in Hell. A fourth part of the world of the living goes to the world of the dead!

The order of events under the four horsemen of the Apocalypse are in their logical perspective. War is nearly always followed by famine and famine by pestilence. **"He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence"** (Jer. 21:9; 24:10; Jer. 29:17-18). **"For they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence"** (Ezek. 6:11). The order of the prophets, the order of John and the order of Christ coincide. In the Olivet Discourse Jesus said: **"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places"** (Matt. 24:7).

In the tribulation period there is to be a time of widespread disease epidemics. The pale horse is to ride roughshod over the earth, spreading disease and death to countless millions. Dead bodies will line the

earth and whole cities will become graveyards. Families will perish by houses daily. As far as the eye can see there will be putrefying flesh. Hospitals will look like funeral homes. Undertakers will experience a boom with which they cannot cope.

Bible prophecy indicates a third of the earth's population dies under the four horsemen (Rev. 6:8). Another third is destined to perish under the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:15). Two-thirds of Israel is to expire in the time of Jacob's trouble (Zech. 13:8-9). It is fearful to contemplate such destruction and death. This is a picture of billions of dead bodies of men, women, and children. More people will die than ever died in the history of the world at one single time.

### MAN IS DESTROYING HIMSELF

In our day of modern industry our streams are being filled with toxic metals that become a part of our drinking water. Chlorination cannot take care of many viruses, organic compounds, or toxic metals. A recent survey of the lower Mississippi River found 66 organic chemicals present in the drinking water. The Rhine in Germany usually contains about 40 percent sewage. Most of the drinking water in the cities of the world is the same water that was discharged from a sewer only hours before. By poisoning his water supply man is headed for disease and death.

The world agricultural situation is fraught with disease-causing potential. The use of heavy sprays of insecticides have had an adverse effect. These cause public health problems as can be seen in the use of DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbons. The disease-carrying pests men seek to eradicate by these chemicals have in some cases become a generation of super bugs resistant to sprays.

The use of penicillin and the sulfa drug have saved the lives of millions of people. But unfortunately, bacteria and viruses have begun to stiffen, resist and fight these invading antitoxins. We are approaching an era of drug resistant germs. This is sure to bring pestilence.

The modern world cannot bring itself to believe there is to be in the

near future an outbreak of deadly disease---a disease probably caused from drug resistant germs. People doubt that today's scientific wizards can be baffled by one of man's oldest killers. They say it cannot happen to us in this age of miracle drugs and space-age medicine. But when the pale horse gallops across the world men will be forced to repent of their hopes of false security.

Man has not yet alleviated pain and pestilence from the earth. The truth is that he is a long way from doing so. Every year one million people around the world succumb to tuberculosis. Malaria takes another million lives in Africa alone. Venereal disease is all but out of control in most nations and infects as many as 10 percent of young people in some areas.

In the U.S. 28 million are afflicted by some form of heart and blood disease. About 4 million have suffered coronary attacks. One in six has hypertension. Arthritis torments 40 million. About 4 million are diabetics. Something like 20 million have lost half of their teeth!

### DISEASE A WORSE KILLER THAN WAR

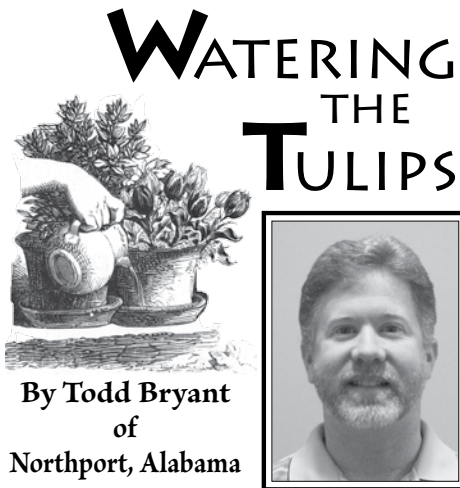
During the Middle Ages the black plague raged in Europe killing millions, beginning about the 13<sup>th</sup> century and lasting until the Protestant Reformation. An estimated 40 to 60 million people are believed to have died. About 25 million died in Europe---something like one-third or one-half of the population. In China 13 million expired. Two hundred thousand towns in Europe were left completely depopulated. Some cities in Italy lost 60 percent of their inhabitants. Only one-third of the people of Norway lived through the plague. Dead bodies were everywhere. They littered the field and lined the streets of cities. Mass burial was common.

### GOD AND DISEASE

What causes disease? Some would answer that it is caused from germs which enter the body of man. Others might say it is caused by disease in the blood. Still others would probably say it is caused by habit-forming drugs such as alcohol, morphine, and cocaine. These are all good answers according to man's present

*♦ (Continued on page 63)*





## Exceeding Righteousness

**"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer" (Ps. 4:1).**

We have no righteousness of our own. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul plainly said, **"As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one"** (Rom. 3:10). Simply put, God can have no fellowship with an unrighteous people...like fallen men. Since we all fell in Adam, this means we could not be worse off spiritually than we are. God is righteous. We are not. Therefore, there is a gap there which must be overcome somehow if we are to escape His righteous wrath and live with Him eternally.

Religion certainly is not the way. Many in the world today are religious and are yet dead in their sins (Eph. 2:1). There was not a more religious group than the Pharisees in Jesus' day. Our Lord said to His disciples, **"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven"** (Matt. 5:20). And yet, the disciples fell in Adam just like the scribes and Pharisees.

The Pharisees, like many today, sought reconciliation with God through ceremonial acts. They wrongly believed that their adherence to excessive Jewish ceremonialism was their ticket into Heaven. Jesus continually made it plain that it was not....and they hated Him all the more for it. He did not fit any mold that they had mentally created of the Messiah. He did not spend a

moment trying to please them or keep their man-made traditions. They ultimately nailed Him to a cross for just that reason.

And yet, they were sinners and He was righteous! Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus **"was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."** They fell in Adam. They were guilty. They were sinners. They were unrighteous. Yet, Jesus was sinless and righteous. They were full of religion and ceremonialism. He was not. And yet, the Father said, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"** (Matt. 3:17).

So, how is our righteousness to exceed the scribes and Pharisees? We are as guilty before God as they were. We are naturally as unrighteous as they were. When Adam fell, we fell right along with the Pharisees. So, what are we to do? Can we seek righteousness with God through church attendance, church membership, baptism, tithing, praying, or any other ceremony or tradition? A thousand times no! This was the way of the Pharisees and they rejected the Savior!

There is one way to be declared righteous before God...one way!! We must approach God through His Son. As believers, our sins were imputed to Christ on the cross of Calvary. In turn, His righteousness was imputed to us. His righteousness is a complete righteousness. It is perfect. It is holy. If one day we stand before God in Him, we will be declared "not guilty."

Child of God, take this moment to thank God for the righteousness He freely gave us in His Son. Reader, if you are approaching God through any merit or action of your own, your righteousness will not exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees.



## A Pale Horse of

(Continued from page 62) ♦  
understanding.

But the Bible gives a simplified answer as to the cause of disease and death in the human race. It reveals that disease is an instrument of God's judgment against sinners. **"And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I**

**give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession"** (Lev. 14:33-34). The disease of leprosy is traced to an act of God in this verse. Yet there are other times when sickness is for the glory of God (John 9:1, 3) and caused by Satan's influence (Luke 13:16).

Generally speaking, sin is the cause of disease and death. Sickness comes from disobedience to Divine law; **"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. . .The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee. . .The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning. . .they shall pursue thee until thou perish"** (Deut. 28:15, 21-22).

God promised Israel a basically disease-free existence when they came out of Egypt upon their obedience to His laws: **"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee. . ."** (Ex. 15:26).

Many of the laws and statutes God gave Israel were health laws. Jehovah forbade adultery (Ex. 20:14). This was to prevent venereal disease. He instructed them to bury their sewage (Deut. 23:12-13) to avoid contamination of their water supply. This would tend to eliminate crippling waterborne diseases. Old Testament dietary laws did not allow a person to eat disease carrying animals such as pigs (Lev. 11:7), rabbits (Lev. 11:6), oysters and snails (Lev. 11:9-12). Obedience to these laws would reduce trichinosis, hepatitis and other parasitic diseases.

### DISEASE AND THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

Numerous accounts in the Scripture reveal how God has at times visited sin with immediate physical affliction and in some cases death. For the sin of making slaves

Egypt suffered the ten plagues which God sent by Moses (Exodus chapters 7-12). I Samuel 25:38 says: **"And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died."** God made Nabal the Carmelite sick for ten days and this sickness was unto death. Gehazi (II Kings 5:27) and Uzziah (II Chron. 26:17-20) were smitten with leprosy. Jehoram died with an incurable disease (II Chron. 21:18-19). Jeroboam was stricken and died (II Chron. 13:20). The angel of the Lord killed Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:23).

Since God has often sent pestilence upon men for their sins it should not take much faith to believe He will do so again. Under the pale horse disease will be sent on a much larger scale than ever before in the history of man. It will be sent because man's sins will reach unto Heaven.

### PESTILENCE SENT BY GOD

Pestilence does not happen by chance or accident. They are sent by a righteous God in response to the evil actions of men. II Samuel 24:15 says: **"So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men."** (Note Ezekiel 28:22-23 and Amos 4:10).

Under the pale horse of Revelation 6:7-8 God will punish the earth-dwellers. Four of the ten Egyptian plagues are to be repeated. The seventh Egyptian plague of great hail (Ex. 9:22-26) is to be again under the first trumpet (Rev. 8:6-7). The sixth Egyptian plague of boils (Ex. 9:8-12) is to be reproduced under the first vial (Rev. 16:1-2). The first Egyptian plague of blood (Ex. 7:19-21) is to be revived under the third vial (Rev. 16:4-7). The ninth Egyptian plague of darkness (Ex. 10:21-23) is to be experienced again under the fifth vial (Rev. 16:10-11).

The ten plagues of Egypt literally happened in the days of Moses. There is every reason to expect a literal fulfillment of those in the Book of Revelation. Gross spiritualizing must be used to escape the repeating of four of the Egyptian plagues. Such spiritualizing is unnecessary, for it takes no more faith to believe the four

♦ (Continued on page 64)

## A Pale Horse of

(Continued from page 63) ♦

shall happen again than that the ten already have occurred.

### WAR AND DISEASE

War and famine are often the harbinger of more than agricultural destruction and physical death. War often paves the way for rampant disease epidemics. History records many such tragic examples. Herodotus tells us that a plague cost Xerxes 300,000 men during the Persian Wars. During the crusades disease among the soldiers was common. Disease contributed more to defeat Napoleon than the Duke of Wellington. Of 25,000 men sent to quell a revolt in Haiti in 1801, 3,000 returned. Most of the 22,000 died of yellow fever. When Napoleon began his infamous retreat from Moscow in 1812, only 80,000 men out of an organized army of half a million were fit for combat. During the Crimean War typhus and cholera laid both sides low. Of the 309,000 Frenchman who were sent into combat, 150,000 were hospitalized by disease.

The military importance of disease was shown in World War I, when there was 135,000 deaths in a total population of 2,500,000 during the Serbian retreat in 1915. The killing in war is always disease as much as bullets. In the U.S. During World War I there were more than 20,000,000 cases of influenza with about 430,000 deaths within six months. In John's vision of the four horsemen the pale horse of pestilence follows hard on the heels of the red horse of War and the black horse of famine.

### PESTILENCE AT CHRIST'S COMING

As the Great Tribulation draws to an end the whole world will be suffering under pestilence---the worst pestilence the world has ever known. The King of kings is foretold to destroy Gog with an earthquake. The Lord said by the pen of the Prophet Ezekiel: ". . .when Gog shall come against the land of Israel. . .there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon

the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground" (Ezek. 38:18-20).

After this there comes anarchy, pestilence and natural disasters: **"And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone"** (Ezek. 38:21-22).

John in the Book of Revelation speaks of this same time: ". . .and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great" (Rev. 16:18-21).

John connects this with the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16). He describes the coming of Christ in connection with the battle with the armies of Heaven on white horses in Revelation 19:11-21. The Prophet Habakkuk speaks of this glorious coming of Christ with the armies of Heaven when before Him will go **"pestilence"** (Hab. 3:5-16).

### PESTILENCE FOREVER PAST

Disease will continue to be man's worst enemy. Under the pale horse it will take the lives of millions of people. Sickness and death will be abolished only when the Great Physician comes to earth. In the kingdom of Christ the inhabitants of earth **"shall not say, I am sick"** (Isa. 33:24). What a wonderful coming day! Hospitals will close and doctors will change their profession. Drug stores will become obsolete and hospital insurance

companies will be abolished. Funeral homes will not be needed.

In these happy days on earth Psalm 91 is to have a literal fulfillment. Of the Lord it is said: **"Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. . .Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness. . .There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling"** (Ps. 91:3,5-6,10). Earth's nightmare of disease and death will be passed, and the world will awaken to a full realization of Utopia! Thank God the pale horse of Revelation 6:7-8 is followed by the white horse Rider of Revelation 19:11-21.

Just ahead the world will witness the pale horse of deadly disease. The Prophet Daniel wrote of this time: **"There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time"** (Dan. 12:1). In this time of unparalleled suffering men will cry for the mountains to fall on them (Rev. 6:15-17), instead of calling upon God to deliver them. But they will discover the mountains cannot hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Thank God His churches have a hiding place, not in the rocks of earth, but in the Rock of Ages in Heaven.



## The Death of

(Continued from page 61) ♦

It is true that we are told to be thankful for the bread of life, and not to complain if we find a piece of grit therein from the stone which ground the corn. But to bite on a sharp spicule of flint is not pleasant, and when we find one we are apt to reject the whole loaf from which it came.

In a perplexity of this kind, I have always found it well to put aside all preconceived notions and just read the chapter with a free mind. It is surprising how many of the so-called difficulties of Scripture have been forged in skepticism and put into

the Bible. In a certain large town, not long ago, considerable expense was incurred in an experimental installation of electric lighting. It turned out a failure. Men shook their heads wisely, and thought themselves superior persons as they asserted it would never do. The truth was, an unscrupulous gas shareholder had given a workman a sovereign to drive an iron nail into the cable insulation. I have seen page after page of learned unsatisfactory disquisition to clear up a difficulty. It failed simply because there was no difficulty to clear up, and nothing is more unsatisfactory than to fight a fancy. One fine autumn morning some boys were greatly puzzled on finding a coconut growing apparently on an apple tree in their garden. Their conjectures were greatly astray, until they found out it had been tied on the night before for the sake of seeing what they would say.

The narrative as given in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Judges, when read without sophistication, is natural enough. An ancient temple was an open space with a colonnade all round. On the roof of this colonnade some three thousand persons gathered to see the proceedings. It is not said that these were killed. They are distinct from "the men and women in the house and all the lords of the Philistines." The extent of the calamity was not so much in the quantity as in the quality. The leaders of the people were gathered in a base, brutal spirit to see the fallen hero in his blindness and to make sport of him. We can imagine them gathered under the colonnade at one end. We see Samson, his hair grown, his consecration renewed, his strength returned. There has been deep penitence for past sin, and faith has been restored in his strength. He would finish his work, even should he die in accomplishing the destruction of the enemies of God. There is surely no difficulty in imagining his pulling down two columns of the colonnade and bringing death to the assembled nobility in their hour of pride. And, if the reader is not satisfied with this, even then it is not an impossibility that the strength of the building was

♦ (Continued on page 65)

# The Death of

(Continued from page 64) ♦

tested to its utmost, and that the giving way of one part brought about the collapse. Nor would there be, in any other age than this, a difficulty in believing that the hand of God was there. These suppositions are to many minds easier than that the Bible should contain a false account. The man with a bias in favour of the inspiration of Scripture will prefer any one of these three explanations to disbelief in the narrative. The man with a bias against inspiration can soon invent a difficulty in a condensed narrative. It is so easy to drive a rusty nail and destroy the electric wire.

The Bible is written, not for one class only, but for all. It has to teach men the evil effects of a foul life. Samson had a high mission entrusted to him; instead of fulfilling it, he fell into gross sin. From a literary point of view, we cannot but admire the purity of the narrative. The tale of vice had to be told, and we may imagine what it would have been from the pen of a modern realistic writer. The delicacy of the record is surprising, and the moral is grand. It illustrates the glorious truth, that it is never too late on earth to return to God; that even the foul-lived man, who has destroyed his power to serve God by neglect and sin, may yet, through Divine grace, accomplish his mission, and though his life be one of shame and disaster, may at the last hour retrieve all, and take his place amongst the heroes of faith. The doctrine of regeneration needed, for its full illustration, the story of the penitent thief on the cross. So the doctrine of successful consecration of life to the glory of God, and the completion of the work He has given to be done, needs the illustration of the close of Samson's life. The deed was a great success; it broke the power of Philistia, the great enemy of Israel, for many a year. Hence Paul, with true spiritual insight, places Samson's name in the list of the heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

(The Baptist Magazine, March, 1893).



## - A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS -

By Timothy J. Hille  
of Ashland, Illinois

### Chapter Twenty-Six – Holy Promises and Threatenings

In this chapter, God begins to close the book of Leviticus. The things contained here form a concluding summary and a closing exhortation to all that has passed before. Should Israel observe the duties and privileges given to them in the preceding chapters faithfully, then they would enjoy the blessings here promised. Should Israel fail in obeying the commands and judgments of the Lord, then upon them would fall the chastisements here threatened. "Two paths are opened up before us in this chapter, the one of obedience and blessing, the other of disobedience and misery."<sup>1</sup> God had now established a way of life and worship for Israel to secure them in holiness and thereby continual communion with God. Their obedience or disobedience manifested their love and respect (or lack thereof) for God and His blessings, which He had bestowed and promised to bestow upon them.

#### Chapter Outline

- i. Fundamental principles and ordinances restated: vs. 1,2
- ii. Blessings to accompany obedience: vs. 3-13
  - a. Fruitfulness: vs. 4
  - b. Safety: vs. 5
  - c. Peace: vs. 6
  - d. Strength and victory: vs. 7,8
  - e. Divine favor: vs. 9
  - f. Abundant provision and blessings: vs. 10
  - g. God's fellowship and presence: vs. 11,12
- iii. Chastisements to accompany disobedience: vs. 14-39
  - a. Trouble, decline, and wasted effort: vs. 16
  - b. Failure, defeat, and cowardice: vs. 17
  - c. Humiliation and unanswered prayer: vs. 19
  - d. Sorrow and loss: vs. 22
  - e. Divine displeasure and chastening: vs. 25
  - f. Poverty and want: vs. 26
  - g. Descent into gross and inhuman immorality: vs. 29
  - h. Desolation: vs. 30,31
  - i. Dispersion: vs. 33
  - j. Faint-heartedness: vs. 36
  - k. Inner division: vs. 37
  - l. Hopeless and long-lasting sorrow: vs. 39

(an alternate outline)<sup>2</sup>

- a. First chastisement – distress: vs. 16,17
- b. Second chastisement – drought: vs. 18-20
- c. Third chastisement – beasts: vs. 21,22
- d. Fourth chastisement – disease: vs. 23-26
- e. Fifth chastisement – famine: vs. 27-31
- f. Sixth chastisement – dispersion: vs. 32-39
- iv. God mindful of His covenant: vs. 40-46

### I. VERSES ONE AND TWO.

We note here the fundamental principles of the Law which was given to Israel, and which formed the covenant of relationship between them and God. Idolatry of all forms and the worship of anything other than Jehovah God was forbidden, and holy regard for the sabbaths and sanctuary of the Lord was required. Every form of idol is here forbidden. They were to have no rivals for the adoration, affection, honor, and worship which belonged to the Lord. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21). We must not allow anything to take the place which belongs only to God in our hearts and minds and lives (Col. 3:5-6; Matt. 6:33). "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD." The appointments of God



were to be kept and regarded with an holy esteem. God's day of worship and God's house ought to be regarded today by all true Christians: and to lightly esteem them betrays a light esteeming of God (Ps. 26:8; I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 10:25).

"As, when a master has given many things in charge to his servant, he concludes with the repetition of those things which were of the greatest importance, and which the servant was most in danger of neglecting, bidding him, whatever he did, be sure to remember those, so here God by Moses, after many precepts, closes all with a special charge to observe these two great commandments."<sup>3</sup>

"All backsliding and decay may be said to be begun wherever we see these two commands despised."<sup>4</sup>

A helpful outline of the beginning verses of this chapter is as follows. Characteristics of the obedient.<sup>5</sup>

1. WILL HAVE NO IDOLS (v. 1). No idol or image will have standing ground in their thoughts or minds. They will not bow and worship the gods of the world.

2. REVERENCE THE APPOINTMENTS OF GOD (v. 2). They will not turn the Lord's day into a day of selfish pleasure, or the sanctuary into a theatre or showhouse, or the pulpit into a puppet box.

3. ARE GUIDED BY HIS WORDS (v. 3). They walk in the statutes of the Lord, and not in the light of the sparks of their own kindling (Isa. 50. 11). To them the Word of God, like the sun, is settled in Heaven (Psa. 119. 89).

4. DELIGHT TO DO HIS WILL (v. 3). The Word of God is to be kept, not as the miser keeps his gold, hoarded to be useless, but as the warrior keeps his sword. Not he that heareth, but he that doeth His sayings is wise (Matt. 7. 24).

### II. VERSES THREE THROUGH TWELVE.

"If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them . . ." The blessings herein described are promised on condition of hearty, sincere, and faithful obedience to the law of God. The spiritual blessings of God for His children today are still attached to obedience. There is a walking, a keeping, and a

♦ (Continued on page 66)



## A Study in Leviticus

(Continued from page 65) ♦

doing for every child of God where the teachings of the scriptures are concerned. This is the end to which you were saved, if so be that you have been born again and tasted that the Lord is gracious (Eph. 2:8-10; Luke 6:46-49). We have the Word of God as our guide, our rule, and our instruction, to walk in, obey, and perform its teachings (Ps. 119:11, 89, 103-105, 130, 133). God's Word is the way into blessing for every child of God. His Word will not only keep you from errors into which you would plunge yourself, to your own hurt and ruin, but also lead you into blessings of eternal worth and secure to you their full enjoyment. Walk ye in His ways!

There is a prevalent spirit at large today of which we must wary, and concerning which we must seek from God preserving grace, which spirit is that of judging the Word of God. Many today walk, not in the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, but in those things which they judge to be of equal worth with His commands. Much substituting is being done today, wherein people substitute for Christ's commands that which they esteem to be of equal importance or worth. The children of Israel, in their long history, often substituted something in which they delighted for the actual commands of God, and this led, not to their being blessed, but their being ruined (Matt. 15:7-9).

"Then..." when you have followed God willingly, sincerely, faithfully, and obediently, you shall receive these manifold blessings. The blessings here mentioned were of the most valuable and beneficial kind for the people as they entered upon the inheritance of the promised land. These were choice blessings. We have given to us **"exceeding great and precious promises,"** (II Pet. 1:4), tending to spiritual fruitfulness and prosperity of soul; and these promises are all **"yea, and in him Amen,"** (II Cor. 1:20), being given to us by Him who **"is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think"** (Eph. 3:20) (John 15:7-8).

The blessings mentioned begin

with fruitfulness. **"I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."** Timely, or seasonal, rains and bountiful harvests are here promised. These could, in reality, only be secured from God who is the Sovereign ruler of heaven and earth (Ps. 104:13-15). God here indicates that the various harvests would be so plentiful that they would run into one another; the harvest of the grain in the spring time (**"threshing"**) lasting until the harvest of the vineyards (**"vintage"**) in summer, and that lasting until the time of planting of grain again in the fall (**"sowing time"**). In connection with this they would have contentment and safety. **"Ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely."** The fruitfulness, stability, and contentedness of the Christian life are only found when we are living in humble and whole-hearted obedience to the Lord.

The blessing of peace is next found. **"And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid."** God would give calm and rest to them as they followed Him. He would remove those things which might threaten them. **"I will rid evil beasts out of the land."** He would protect them from the destroyer. **"Neither shall the sword go through your land."** (Ps. 23:2-3). The rest and peace of God is known by those who submit themselves to Him in following the truth. He is able to deliver you from the evils of this life and the lusts which war against the soul.

God would give them strength and victory in battle over their enemies. **"And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword."** He would enable them to do great exploits: **"five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight."** (I Sam. 14:1-14; II Sam. 23:8-12). The Christian must look to God for strength in the spiritual battles of life, in which the flesh, the world, and the devil seek to bring the Christian's life into captivity and ruin (Eph. 6:10-11; I Pet. 2:11). Faithful children of God may still do exploits by trusting in and obeying the Lord (I John 5:3-4).

**"For I will have respect unto**

**you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you."** This speaks of divine favor. The goodness of God would be manifest toward Israel as they followed Him. This blessing has no earthly comparison. To what shall we liken the favor of God? The covenant of God speaks of His purpose and promise to bless. They would experience the fulfillment of God's promises as they walked in obedience to His precepts. "The obedient ones have the eye of His special grace continually upon them (Rom. 8:28). The Lord will make a difference, so that they need not beg or borrow the favor of the ungodly princes of this world."

With divine favor comes numerous blessings. **"And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new."** This speaks of both the abundance of blessings, and the continual bestowal of blessings. The **"old store"** of crops would have to be eaten in order to make room for the new. The obedient child of God will have thanksgiving because of old blessings and rejoicing because of new blessings. As we praise and serve God because of past mercies, we shall receive new mercies. We ought to desire His blessings, and desiring them we should seek them in humble obedience.

The capstone blessing is here described, which is God's presence in their midst. **"And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."** To experience the presence and fellowship of God is the chief blessing. This was the end to which God had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, from which it might then be gleaned that God had brought them out (1) to bless them, as He recounts here how He would bless them if they walked in His ways; and (2) to be worshipped by them, which is signified by His setting His tabernacle, the center of worship, among them, and His being their God (Ex. 6:6-8; 19:4-6). The reason God saved you who are His children today is so that He might bless you, that He might have fellowship with you and you with Him, and that you

might worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23; I Pet. 2:9-10). Only through obedience to God's Word can we enjoy His presence and His fellowship (I John 1:5-7).

### III. VERSE THIRTEEN.

**"I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen."** The children of Israel were saved from slavery in Egypt and from being servants to the will of Pharaoh. God has saved you who are His children from being slaves to sin, self, and Satan. He has **"brought you forth out of the"** world, the land in which you once dwelt, so that you should no longer serve the world and its ways (Rom. 6:16-22; I Cor. 7:23; John 8:31-36). **"I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright."** God breaks the power of the devil and of sin, cancels the guilt of sin, and makes a believer to **"go upright"** in truth and righteousness. You who are saved are saved to righteousness and true holiness (I Pet. 1:13-16).

### IV. VERSES FOURTEEN THROUGH SEVENTEEN.

We now find in these verses, and the verses which follow, the threatenings of God against the children of Israel should they disobey the commandments and statutes of God. We can be sure that as the promised blessings of God are sure and certain, so are His threatened chastisements. We find in the warnings of God here many terrible judgments. Yet we find that disobedience in this New Testament age is no less serious, and the indignation of God no less terrible against willful and stubborn sin (Heb. 10:26-31). If Israel should disobey God, they would be guilty of (1) not hearkening unto the Lord; (2) despising His statutes; (3) abhorring His judgments; (4) and breaking His covenant. To discount and despise the teachings and the blessings of God is to despise God Himself. God did not warn heathen nations of these judgments, but rather He warned His redeemed people.

**"I will also do this unto you."** God is the One who deals with His people when they sin. **"I will appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague [fever]."** This

♦ (Continued on page 67)

## A Study in Leviticus

(Continued from page 66) ♦

speaks of affliction and sorrow (Ps. 78:33). The afflictions mentioned here are those which waste away at the body, and which make the life unfruitful. Many in churches today have **"terror"** about a great many things. Their lives are filled with trouble. Their Christian lives slowly waste away, as with **"consumption"**; and they go from one feverish pitch to another in the service of the Lord, rather than manifesting a progress in Christian usefulness and doctrine. They may be active, but their activity is unhealthy and profitless. **"Ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it."** That which God's hand appoints, only God can take away.

**"And I will set my face against you."** This is a dire case indeed, to be opposed by God. No wonder then, is it said, **"... and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth."** To willfully disobey God is to proclaim yourself His enemy. God may allow us to be overcome by the world, the flesh, and the devil: yea, indeed, we surrender ourselves to these foes when we disobey the Lord (I Cor. 5:5). Fleeing in the absence of a real threat not only speaks of cowardice and fear, but also of shame.

### V. VERSES EIGHTEEN THROUGH TWENTY.

We may note that the warnings of judgment from the Lord are for the purpose of keeping us from evil, and not for our discouragement. **"And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me . . ."** **"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him,"** (Heb. 12:5). **"I will punish you seven times more for your sins"** is the warning given to any who would not heed God's Word and would instead continue in disobedience. This statement is repeated several times in connection with increasing severities of judgment. God's dealing with sin will be thorough, severe, and complete.

**"And I will break the pride of your power."** That in which we take pride while living in disobedience to God, God can break. When David felt the chastening hand of God and pleaded in repentance for mercy, he said, **"Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice"** (Ps. 51:8). While we continue in sin, our prayers will go unanswered, and our efforts be unproductive. **"I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass."** To the children of Israel, this meant no rain from heaven, and no fruit of harvest (Ps. 66:18; James 4:3; 5:16).

The children of Israel would experience uselessness of effort if they hearkened not to the commands of the Lord. **"And your strength shall be spent in vain."** They would spend their strength, but to no profit: **"for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits."** When we walk in disobedience, God can remove the things which we took for granted; and the harder we work to have the things we desire to please the flesh and to satisfy our longings, the less we will have of them.

### VI. VERSES TWENTY-ONE AND TWENTY-TWO.

**"And if ye walk contrary to me, and will not hearken unto me."** The case is here worse than the first, for not only have the ears been closed to God, but also the feet are in opposition to the leadership of God. The very path of life being taken is here one which is **"contrary"** to God. So, a **"seven times more"** judgment is threatened, not only of plagues, but also of **"wild beasts"**. When we continue in sin, we will not only suffer ourselves, but others will suffer and we will experience sorrowful loss. **"I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate."** The ways of sin and disobedience to God will lead to the destruction of our children, our possessions, and our homes. **"The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked"** (Prov. 3:33).

### VII. VERSES TWENTY-THREE THROUGH TWENTY-SIX.

**"And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things . . ."** God's purpose in chastisement is the correction and reproof of the backslider (Heb. 12:10-11). Yet if the backslider will not be reformed, then he or she shall be ruined. **"Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins."** Those who oppose God's rule will find God opposing them, and punishing them. **"God resisteth the proud,"** (James 4:6). **"I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant."** God's covenant requires holiness. They would experience **"the pestilence"** and **"be delivered into the hand of the enemy."** Ten families would be forced to eat the bread baked in only one oven, and they would **"not be satisfied."** Sin will leave you disappointed, sorrowful, and unfulfilled (Ps. 106:15).

### VIII. VERSES TWENTY-SEVEN THROUGH THIRTY-ONE.

Continued disobedience brings continued punishment, and that **"in fury."** We read here of the gruesome depths to which any people may come when they walk in opposition to God. **"And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat."** The famine that would come upon them would be such that they would eat the flesh of their own children (II Kings 6:24-30). This is shocking and seemingly incredible to believe; yet, people are consuming their children by continuing in disobedience to God's Word.

Not only will sin lead to the ruin of homes, families, and nations, but God will also destroy that which is worshipped in His place. **"I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you."** Idolatry (putting anything in the place which belongs to God alone) will lead to spiritual ruin and death. God despises that which is rival to Him. The worship and service of those who are not living in obedience to God's commandments is rejected by God. **"I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours."** No matter

how often people attend church services, nor how loudly they sing the hymns, nor how gravely they pray, their religion is vain if they are not actually putting God first in their lives by living in obedience to His will (I Sam. 15:22-23).

### IX. VERSES THIRTY-TWO THROUGH THIRTY-NINE.

**"And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it."** The land which had flowed with milk and honey would become desolate. The population would be diminished, the cities and villages would be ruined, and the land would lie in waste. Enemies would inhabit the land, and they would look upon the land in astonishment and disgust (Jer. 18:15-16). The Lord would disperse, or **"scatter"**, Israel **"among the heathen [nations]"**, into foreign lands, some here and some there, such that there would not be enough people left to inhabit the cities or till the ground and bring forth any crops. This did indeed take place when the northern ten tribes were carried away captive by the Assyrians, and when Judah was carried away captive by the Babylonians (II Kings 17:6-23; 18:9-12; Matt. 23:37-39). Israel's house has been left unto them desolate by the Lord.

**"And I will scatter you among the Heathen – As with a fan,"** (Jer 15:7); so they were at the time of the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities, some were carried to one place, and some to another, some fled to one place, and some to another, and they are at this day scattered among the several nations of the world.<sup>6</sup> **"Their cities lie waste, the land is desolate, and poor Israel wanders over every country on the face of the earth. While the Lord still pities them, He abhors them for their sin, not a word fallen to the ground."**

**"Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land."** The land would rest, as it were, from the corruption and defilement of the sins perpetrated by Israel. The condition of the land was linked with the spiritual condition of the people and their obedience to the Lord. If Israel was not obedient to keep the

♦ (Continued on page 68)

## A Study in Leviticus

(Continued from page 67) ♦

commandments of the Lord, then they would be removed from the land and scattered among the nations of the world, and the land of promise would observe the rest it did not receive while Israel sojourned in it (II Chron. 36:11-21). The sin of Israel was not limited to, but was expressly manifest in, their manner of keeping (or rather not keeping) the sabbaths of the Lord (refer to vs. 1-2). **"Their God was not honored. They did not give spiritual service. They also turned the observance of the Sabbaths appointed into times of pleasure."** (Jer. 17:19-27). Should it not be considered that in this day when the house of God is being forsaken by so many on the Lord's day that there shall be some similar punishment from God, that our spiritual lives will be ruined, that our children will be consumed – yea, that we will consume them ourselves by our own wickedness – and that we shall live lives of fearfulness and defeat (Neh. 13:15-22).

**"And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies."** The condition of Israel would be one, not only of fewness of numbers, but also of distress, weakness, cowardice, and defeat. They would have internal divisions and be overcome by outward enemies. The land into which they were scattered would consume them. **"And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up."** Those who remained alive would **"pine away"** in doleful sorrow and grief because of their sins (Ps. 137:1-4). How many today are living the pining life, wasting away in misery because they have lived in sin against God, and are far from repentance and fellowship with Him? Your own sin and the sin of your generation will be a constant source of grief to you if you do not repent. Israel did not come to this condition or receive this wickedness from the Lord all at once. Let us not despise the correction and reproof of God, lest we harden our hearts and be suddenly broken under the rod of

His wrath.

### X. VERSES FORTY THROUGH FORTY-FIVE.

We find here the only way of restoration to God, which is true repentance. The reason that repentance may be granted is because of God's covenant, which is one of grace. True repentance is here described. **"If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespasses which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them . . . if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity . . ."** Sin must be acknowledged, owned, and confessed to God. True repentance involves sorrow, not merely over the sad state in which a person is existing because of sin, but over sin itself as being that which offends God denies His rights and claims. If the people of Israel who were scattered among the heathen nations repented after this manner, then God would remember His covenant and the land which He promised to give them. He would restore the land and the people.

For all of their disobedience, God would **"not cast them away, neither . . . abhor them, to destroy them utterly."** He would not break His covenant with them. God is here seen acting in remembrance and respect to His covenant. This is how God always acts. In His relation to His people today, He acts in remembrance and respect to His everlasting covenant, in saving them, in keeping them, in chastening them when they backslide, and in restoring them to fellowship with Himself. Many of the Old Testament saints remembered this covenant promise of God (II Chron. 6:36-39; 7:13-14; Dan. 9:1-19; Neh. 1:4-10). We may also remember the covenant promises of God as our only hope (I John 1:9; 2:1-2).

### XI. VERSE FORTY-SIX.

**"These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses."** This verse forms a summary of all that has preceded, from the beginning of the

book of Leviticus to this point. These commandments were the rule of God for the children of Israel. They formed the basis of the relationship they would have with Him. He gave them to Israel through His chosen servant. God has given to us **"statutes and judgments and laws"** through His Son Jesus Christ – **"all things whatsoever I have commanded you"** (Matt. 28:20) – and these govern our relationship with God (John 14:21-23; 15:7-14). Through obedience to God's Word we who are saved shall be blessed of Him.

#### NOTES

1. *Handfuls on Purpose*, Series III, by James Smith, 1971.
2. *The New Scofield Study Bible*, 1967.
3. *Matthew Henry's Commentary*.
4. Hille, Harry J. "Outlines on Leviticus," 1979.
5. Adapted (with modifications) from *Handfuls on Purpose*, Series III, by James Smith, 1971.
6. Gill, John. *Exposition of the Old Testament* ("The Online Bible," Larry Pierce, 1994-95).



## A Faithful Friend

(Continued from page 61) ♦

and unfaithful; for just in proportion as a good friend is sweet, a false friend is full of bitterness. "A faithless friend is sharper than an adder's tooth." It is sweet to repose in some one; but O! how bitter to have that support snapped, and to receive a grievous fall as the effect of your confidence. Fidelity is an absolute necessary in a true friend; we can not rejoice in men unless they will stand faithful to us. Solomon declares that **"there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."** That friend, I suppose, he never found in the pomps and vanities of the world. He had tried them all, but he found them empty; he passed through all their joys, but he found them **"vanity of vanities."** Poor Savage spoke from sad experience when he said—

*You'll find the friendship of the world a show!  
Mere outward show! 'Tis like the harlot's tears,  
The statesman's promise, or false patriot's zeal,  
Full of fair seeming, but delusion all.*

And so for the most part they are. The world's friendship is ever brittle. Trust to it, and you have trusted a robber;

rely upon it, and you have leaned upon a thorn; ay, worse than that, upon a spear which shall pierce you to the soul with agony. Yet Solomon says he had found **"a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."** Not in the haunts of his unbridled pleasures, nor in the wanderings of his unlimited resources, but in the pavilion of the Most High, the secret dwelling-place of God, in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, the Friend of sinners.

It is saying a great thing to affirm that **"there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;"** for the love of brotherhood has produced most valiant deeds. We have read stories of what brotherhood could do, which, we think, could hardly be excelled in the annals of friendship. Timoleon, with his shield, stood over the body of his slain brother, to defend him from the insults of the foe. It was reckoned a brave deed of brotherhood that he should dare the spears of an army in defense of his brother's corpse. And many such instances have there been, in ancient and modern warfare, of the attachment of brethren. There is a story told of a Highland regiment, who, while marching through the Highlands, lost their way; they were overtaken by one of the terrible storms which will sometimes come upon travelers unawares, and blinded by the snow, they lost their way upon the mountains. Well nigh frozen to death, it was with difficulty they could continue their march. One man after another dropped into the snow and disappeared. There were two brothers, however, of the name of Forsythe; one of them fell prostrate on the earth, and would have lain there to die, but his brother, though barely able to drag his own limbs across the white desert, took him on his back, and carried him along, and as others fell one by one, this brave, true-hearted brother carried his loved one on his back, until at last he himself fell down overcome with fatigue, and died. His brother, however, had received such warmth from his body that he was enabled to reach the end of his journey in safety, and so lived. Here we have an instance of one brother sacrificing his life for another. I hope there are some brothers here who would be prepared to do the

♦ (Continued on page 69)



## A Faithful Friend

(Continued from page 68) ♦

same if they should ever be brought into the same difficulty. It is saying a great thing, to declare that **"there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."** It is putting that friend first of all in the list of loving ones; for, surely, next to a mother's love, there is, and there ought to be, no higher affection in the world than the love of a brother to one begotten of the same father, and dandled on the same knee. Those who have "grown in beauty side by side, and filled one house with glee," ought to love one another. And we think there have been many glorious instances and mighty proofs of the love of brethren. Yet, says Solomon, **"there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."**

To repeat our assertion, we believe that this friend is the blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ. It shall be ours, first, to prove, this morning, the fact that He sticks closer than a brother; then, as briefly as we can, to show you why He sticks closer than a brother; and then to finish up by giving you some lessons which may be drawn from the doctrine, that Jesus Christ is a faithful Friend.

I. First, then, beloved, we assert that CHRIST IS **"A FRIEND THAT STICKETH CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."** And in order to prove this from facts, we appeal to such of you as have had Him for a friend. Will you not, each of you, at once give your verdict, that this is neither more nor less than an unexaggerated truth? He loved you before all worlds; long ere the day star flung his ray across the darkness, before the wing of angel had flapped the un navigated ether, before aught of creation had struggled from the womb of nothingness, God, even our God, had set His heart upon all His children. Since that time, has He once swerved, has He once turned aside, once changed? No; ye who have tasted of His love and know His grace, will bear me witness, that He has been a certain friend in uncertain circumstances.

*He, near your side hath always stood.*

*His loving-kindness. O! how good.*  
You fell in Adam; did He cease to love you? No; He became the second Adam to redeem you. You sinned

in practice, and brought upon your head the condemnation of God; you deserved His wrath and His utter anger; did He then forsake you? No!

*He saw you ruined in the fall,*

*Yet loved you notwithstanding all.*

He sent His minister after you; you despised Him; He preached the gospel in your ears; you laughed at Him; you broke God's Sabbath, you despised His Word. Did He then forsake you? No!

*Determined to save, he watched o'er your path,*

*Whilst, Satan's blind slave, you sported with death.*

And at last He arrested you by His grace, He humbled you, He made you penitent, He brought you to His feet, and He forgave you all your sins. Since then, has He left you? You have often left Him; has He ever left you? You have had many trials and troubles; has He ever deserted you? Has He ever turned away His heart, and shut up His bowels of compassion? No, children of God, it is your solemn duty to say "No," and bear witness to His faithfulness. You have been in severe afflictions and in dangerous circumstances; did your friend desert you then? Others have been faithless to you; he that eat bread with you has lifted up his heel against you; but has Christ ever forsaken you? Has there ever been a moment when you could go to Him, and say, "Master, thou hast betrayed me?" Could you once, in the blackest hour of your grief, dare to impugn His fidelity? Could you dare to say of Him, "Lord, thou

hast promised what thou didst not perform?" Will you not bear witness now, "Not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God hath promised; all hath come to pass?" And do you fear He will yet forsake you? Ask, then, the bright ones before the throne—"Ye glorified spirits! did Christ forsake you? Ye have passed through Jordan's stream; did He leave you there? Ye have been baptized in the black flood of death; did He there forsake you? Ye have stood before the throne of God; did He then deny you?" And they answered, "No; through all the troubles of our life, in all the bitterness of death, in all the agonies of our expiring moments, and in all the terrors of God's judgment, He hath been with us, **'a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.'**" Out of all the millions of God's redeemed, there is not one He hath forsaken. Poor they have been, mean and distressed, but He hath never abhorred their prayer, never turned aside from doing them good. He hath been ever with them.

*For his mercy shall endure,*

*Ever faithful, ever sure.*

But I shall not longer stay, since I can not prove this to the ungodly, and to the godly it is already proven, for they know it by experience; therefore it is but little necessary that I should do more than just certify the fact that Christ is a faithful friend—a friend in every hour of need and every time of distress.

II. And now I have to tell you THE REASONS WHY WE MAY DEPEND UPON CHRIST AS BEING A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

There are some things in Himself which render it certain that He will stick close to His people.

1. True friendship can only be made between true men. Hearts are the soul of honor. There can be no lasting friendship between bad men. Bad men may pretend to love each other, but their friendship is a rope of sand, which shall be broken at any convenient season; but if a man have a sincere heart within him, and be true and noble, then we may confide in him. Spenser sings in fine old English verse—

*No, certes can that friendship long endure,*

*However gay and goodly be the style,*

*That doth ill cause or evil end endure,*

*For Virture is the band that bindeth Hearts most sure.*  
But who can find a stain in the character of Jesus, or who can tarnish His honor? Has there ever been a spot on His escutcheon? Has His flag ever been trampled in the dust? Does He not stand the true witness in Heaven, the faithful and just? Is it not declared of Him that He is God Who can not lie? Have we not found Him so up to this moment; and may we not, knowing that He is "Holy, holy, holy Lord," confide in Him, that He will stick closer to us than a brother? His goodness is the guaranty of His fidelity; He can not fail us.

2. Faithfulness to us in our faults is a certain sign of fidelity in a friend. You may depend upon that man who will tell you of your faults in a kind and considerate manner. Fawning hypocrites, insidious flatterers, are the sweepings and offal of friendship. They are but the parasites upon that noble tree. But true friends put enough trust in you to tell you openly of your faults. Give me for a friend the man who will speak honestly of me before my face; who will not tell first one neighbor, and then another, but who will come straight to my house, and say, "Sir, I feel there is such-and-such a thing in you, which, as my brother, I must tell you of." That man is a true friend; he has proved himself to be so; for we never get any praise for telling people of their faults; we rather hazard their dislike; a man will sometimes thank you for it, but he does not often like you any the better. Praise is a thing we all love. I met with a man the other day who said he was impervious to flattery; I was walking with him at the time, and turning round rather sharply, I said, "At any rate, sir, you seem to have a high gift in flattering yourself, for you are really doing so, in saying you are impervious to flattery." "You can not flatter me," he said. I replied, "I can, if I like to try; and perhaps may do so before the day is out." I found I could not flatter him directly, so I began by saying what a fine child that was of his; and he drank it in as a precious draught; and when I praised this thing and that thing belonging to him, I could see that he was very easily flattered; not directly, but indirectly. We are all pervious to flattery; we

♦ (Continued on page 72)



### FORGOT SOMETHING?

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. I have some questions on Proverbs 30:17, **"The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."** Is this to be taken literal in that real ravens will pick out the eyes of those who mock their dads and despise to obey their mothers? If it does not mean real ravens and eagles what do they signify? Is there any scriptural examples of this? Just what does this verse actually mean? - Virginia

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I can tell you this, God hates disrespectfulness. The 5<sup>th</sup> commandment is for children to honor parents. Those children who refuse are worthy of a disrespectful death. Seems awful harsh to hear someone say such a thing, but read all the verses that speak of children not obeying, or cursing and causing shame upon mother or father. After you have read them search out what is the punishment to be enacted, its not a time out or a little spanking, but death.

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Last question first- The Bible is clearly stating here that rebellious children will come to a bad end. That is not debatable, whether the context is literal, parabolic or spiritual (or all three!). **"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"** (Eph. 6:1-3).

The chapter we find our text in is the words of Agur. He presents many

pictures of physical things to bring out spiritual truths. In the same manner, our Lord Jesus spoke parabolically in parables to make a spiritual point. **"And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ...Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side"** (Matt. 13:3-5, 18-19).

So, to answer the question, Yes, it is a literal warning, in that those that "mock their fathers and despise obedience of their mothers" will come to the point where the carrion birds will many times feast upon their discarded carcasses. In America, we can to some point see that "Old West" picture of the dead bad guy lying forsaken in the desert as the good guy rides off in the sunset with the girl. Who cares any longer for the rebellious teen grown up bad? I am sure the mother and father still are somewhere grieving that their son has left their lives, but God will work out His will of justice. And the literal buzzards (ravens and young eagles) will descend from their circling heights to feast upon the "mocking eye" that mocks no longer.

The context in Agur's pictures is the things that **"say not, It is enough."** **"The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are**

**never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough"** (Pro. 30:15-16). All of these insatiable (unquenchable) pictures denote the rebellious heart of a child gone astray. They will never be satisfied with the world's liberties, any more than the unquenched fire and sucking drain. And they will always have that aching heart of a barren womb- never filled without the love of God and family. Selah! Think about it!

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The first commandment with promise in the moral law is the fifth which states: **"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee"** (Ex. 20:12). Great blessings are promised to children that respect, love, and obey their parents. Read Proverbs chapter three through seven carefully and you will discover why it is so spiritually, physically, and socially profitable to observe the instruction of parents. Since the command to honor father and mother is included in the moral law, often referred to as the Ten Commandments, it is a law of supreme importance. Disobedience to the fifth commandment often results in terrible judgments as evidenced by the warning contained in Proverbs 30:17. If you were to go to the gallows in ancient times or to the hangman's platform in early America you would probably find a consistent thread running among the character of the condemned that bound them all together. In all probability they were disobedient, unruly, rebellious, wicked children who despised the authority of their parents and who would not listen to their counsel. It was not uncommon, especially in ancient cultures, to leave the bodies of the condemned out in the elements

instead of burying them as an added example of public shame to their judgment. In such cases carnivorous birds would often feast upon the dead carcasses of those who were executed (Gen. 40:19; I Sam. 17:46). Perhaps one of the more glaring examples of judgment upon an ungodly son is the tragic end of Absalom, King David's wicked offspring (II Sam. 18:9-17). I have no doubt that the warning of this verse has literally come to fruition several times over the course of human history.

As with all Scripture, there is a principle that may be spiritually applied contained in Proverbs 30:17. Where there is not a literal fulfillment of the verse, the curse is no less sure. Rebellious children often grow into wicked men whose judgment will be certain. The wheels of justice may grind slow but they grind sure. Be sure your sin will find you out. God will not bless rebellion against His commands, rather He will punish the wicked and impenitent with great severity. Revelation 21:8 declares: **"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."**

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We have found that very seldom in Holy Writ are we not to take it literal. I myself would take this portion of Scripture very literal. The meaning here, to bring it into modern day terms, is very basic. If you treat your father and mother with little or no respect, and you think they are old fuddy duds, and you mock them and their counsel like many of our young people do today, then God will take you out! The sad part is they will die a horrible and untimely death. God has appointed that time, but to us we

♦ (Continued on page 74)



## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Was it man's depravity that caused him to sin or was sin the reason for man's depravity? - Mississippi

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Genesis 1:27 and 31 declare: **"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them... And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."** Ecclesiastes 7:29 states: **"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."** These verses make it clear that God created man without sin or depravity. However, man as a created being, was finite and mutable meaning that he had the propensity to change. When Eve fell prey to the temptation of Satan and Adam willfully chose to disobey God and violate His law, sin was introduced into the human race. Romans 5:12 makes this clear: **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."** As a result all children are born with a corrupt, sinful nature of inherent depravity. Ever since Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden all men are sinners at the point of conception (Psa. 51:5; 58:3). The only exception to this rule is the Lord Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin, thus not defiled or tainted by Adam's sin. Now men sin because they are inherently depraved. Adam sinned through the exercise of his free will wherein he chose to rebel against a holy God. Adam and Satan are really the only two created beings who had a free will. I find it interesting that they both used their free will to rebel against God. Since sin was introduced into the human race man's will is

in bondage to his depraved nature which prompts him to choose the path of sin and wickedness. As a free agent, man will always rebel against God and His Word unless God intervenes in sovereign grace. Jesus stated this truth when He said: **"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life...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 5:40; 6:44). God must change the perverse will of man through the exercise of invincible power as Psalms 110:3 implies: **"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power..."**

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Without a doubt sin was the reason for our depravity.

**"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of**

**the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day"** (Gen. 1:26-31).

The key verse here is Genesis 1:31, **"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."** **"It was very good"**, man was pure, holy, perfect. And then we read in Romans 5:12, **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."** So it is because of our great, great, granddaddy Adam we have to thank for our depravity, the depravity of man.

Man once could walk with God in the cool of the day but that all ended when he (Adam) sinned. But our God is merciful and loves His own. **"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 15:57). Because of Jesus Christ we once again can walk with God in the cool of the day, is not that just marvelous? God Bless!

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I am taking the question to be referring to Adam in the Garden of Eden. A good place to start to find your answer is Romans Chapter 5. The chapter will have some very important words that distinguish between a sin that was committed, and those who are sinners because of that sin. All of mankind became sinners because Adam sinned in the garden. Adam was not created depraved. Adam was created very good in a holy and happy state.

Thank God His plan of redemption and adoption thru Jesus Christ our Lord was in eternity past, set in order before death came upon all.

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This is a question similar to "which came first, the chicken or the egg...!" It may be confusing to the world, but not to a reader of God's Word! Very good question!

I believe that there will be three answers to this question, because there are three different kinds of men in the history of the world. First, I would like to introduce the Lord Jesus Christ as the immutably perfect God/Man! He has not depravity within His perfect self, and no sin! **"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"** (Heb. 5:8-9). **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (II Cor. 5:21).

The second category is also singular, with only our original parents to be considered. Adam and Eve were created perfect, holy and innocent of any sin or depravity. **"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day"** (Gen. 1:31). God could not have created anything less than perfection! Nothing wrong with Adam and Eve! And if they had kept the Law of the Garden, nothing would have ever changed that perfection! But they did commit that rebellious sin there in the center of the garden, **"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat"** (Gen. 3:6).

This is a very important point to understand! Adam and Eve's SIN caused their DEPRAVITY! **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death**

◇ (Continued on page 75)



## A Faithful Friend

(Continued from page 69) ♦

like the soothing cordial, only it must not be labeled flattery; for we have a religious abhorrence of flattery if it be so called; call it by any other name, and we drink it in, even as the ox drinketh in water. Now, child of God, has Christ ever flattered you? Has He not told you of your faults right truly? Has He not pricked your conscience even upon what you thought to gloss over—your little secret sins? Has He not provoked conscience to thunder in your ears notes of terror, because of your misdeeds? Well, then, you may trust Him, for He shows that faithfulness which renders a man right trustworthy. Thus I have pointed out to you that there are reasons in Himself for which we may trust Him.

3. In the next place, there are some things in His friendship which render us sure of not being deceived, when we put our confidence in Him. True friendship must not be of hasty growth. As quaint old Master Fuller says: "Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath." It is even so. I think it was Joanna Baillie said—

*Friendship is no plant of hasty growth.  
Though planted in esteem's deep fixed soil,  
The gradual culture of kind intercourse  
Must bring it to perfection.*

In vain thou trustest the gourd over thy head, O Jonah; it will not be of much use to thee; it came up in a night, it may wither in a night. It is the strong stiff oak, of ages' growth, which shall abide the tempest; which shall alike put out its wings to shield thee from the sun, and shall afterward find thee a hovel in its heart, if necessary, in its gray old age, when its branches tremble in the blast. Friendship is true when it begins; but we must have a man's friendship long before we can say of him, that he will stick closer than a brother. And how long has Christ loved you? That you can not tell. When the ages were not born He loved you; when this world was an infant, wrapped in the swaddling clothes of mist, He loved you; when the old pyramids had not begun to be builded, His heart was set upon you; and ever since you have been born He has had a strong affection for you. He looked on you in your cradle, and

He loved you then; He was affianced to you when you were an infant of a span long, and He has loved you ever since. Some of you I see with gray hairs, some with heads all bald with age; He has loved you up till now, and will He now forsake you? O! no, His friendship is so old that it must last; it has been matured by so many tempests, it has been rooted by so many winds of trouble, that it can not but endure; it must stand. Even as the granite peak of the mountain shall not be melted, because, unlike the snow, it has braved the blast, and borne the heat of the burning sun; it has stood out always, catching in its face every blow from the face of nature, and yet been unmoved and uninjured. It shall last, for it has lasted. But when the elements shall melt, and in a stream of dissolving fire shall run away, then shall Christ's friendship still exist, for it is of older growth than they. He must be **"a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;"** for His friendship is a hoary friendship—hoary as His own head, of which it is said, "His head and His hair are white like snow, as white as wool."

4. But note, further, the friendship which lasts does not take its rise in the chambers of mirth, nor is it fed and fattened there. Young lady, you speak of a dear friend whom you acquired last night in a ball-room. Do not, I beseech you, misuse the word; he is not a friend if he was acquired merely there; friends are better things than those which grow in the hot-house of pleasure. Friendship is a more lasting plant than those. You have a friend, have you? Yes; and he keeps a pair of horses, and has a good establishment. Ah! but your best way to prove your friend is to know that he will be your friend when you have not so much as a mean cottage, and when, houseless and without clothing, you are driven to beg your bread. Thus you would make true proof of a friend. Give me a friend who was born in the winter time, whose cradle was rocked in the storm; he will last. Our fair weather friends shall flee away from us. I had rather have a robin for a friend than a swallow; for a swallow abides with us only in the summer time, but a robin cometh to us in the winter. Those are tight friends that will come the nearest to us when we are in the most



**"The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook"** (Proverbs 18:4).

distress; but those are not friends who speed themselves away when ill times come. Believer, hast thou reason to fear that Christ will leave you now? Has He not been with you in the house of mourning? You found your friend where men find pearls, "in caverns deep, where darkness dwells;" you found Jesus in your hour of trouble. It was on the bed of sickness that you first learned the value of His name; it was in the hour of mental anguish that you first did lay hold of the hem of His garment; and since then, your nearest and sweetest intercourse has been held with Him in the hours of darkness. Well, then, such a friend, proved in the house of sorrow—a friend who gave His heart's blood for you, and let His soul run out in one great river of gore—such a friend never can and never will forsake you;

He sticketh closer than a brother.

5. Again, a friend who is acquired by folly is never a lasting friend. Do a foolish thing, and make a man your friend; 'tis but a confederacy in vice, and you will soon discover that his friendship is worthless; the friendship you acquire by doing wrong, you had better be without. O! how many silly friendships there are springing up, the mere fruit of a sentimentalism, having no root whatever, but like the plant of which our Saviour tells us, "It sprang up because it had no depth of earth." Jesus Christ's friendship is not like that; there is no ingredient of folly in it; He loves us discreetly, not winking or conniving at our follies, but instilling into us His wisdom. His love is wise; He hath chosen us according to the counsel of His

♦ (Continued on page 73)

## A Faithful Friend

(Continued from page 72) ♦

wisdom; not blindly and rashly, but with all judgment and prudence.

Under this head I may like wise observe, that the friendship of ignorance is not a very desirable one. I desire no man to call himself my friend, if he doth not know me. Let him love me in proportion to his knowledge of me. If he loves me for the little he knows, when he knoweth more he may cast me aside. "That man," says one, "seems to be a very amiable man." "I am sure I can love him," says another, as he scans his features. Ay, but do not write "friend" yet; wait a wee bit, until you know more of him; just see him, examine him, try him, test him, and not till then enter him on the sacred list of friends. Be friendly to all, but make none your friends until they know you, and you know them. Many a friendship born in the darkness of ignorance, hath died suddenly in the light of a better acquaintance with each other. You supposed men to be different from what they were, and when you discovered their real character you disregarded them. I remember one saying to me, "I have great affection for you, sir," and he mentioned a certain reason. I replied, "My dear fellow, your reason is absolutely false; the very thing you love me for, I am not, and hope I never shall be." And so I said, "I really can not accept your friendship, if it be founded upon a misunderstanding of what I may have said." But our Lord Jesus never can forsake those whom once He loves, because He can discover nothing in us worse than He knew, for He knew all about us beforehand. He saw our leprosy, and yet He loved us; He knew our deceitfulness and unbelief, and yet He did press us to His bosom; He knew what poor fools we were, and yet He said He would never leave us nor forsake us. He knew that we should rebel against Him and despise His counsel often times; He knew that even when we loved Him our love would be cold and languid, but He loved for His own sake. Surely, then, He will stick closer than a brother.

6. Yet again, friendship and love, to be real, must not lie in words, but in deeds. The friendship of bare

compliment is the fashion of this age, because this age is the age of deceit. The world is the great house of sham. Go where you may in London, sham is staring you in the face; there are very few real things to be discovered. I allude not merely to tricks in business, adulterations in food, and such like. Deception is not confined to the tradesman's shop. It prevails throughout society; the sanctuary is not exempt. The preacher adopts a sham voice. You hardly ever hear a man speak in the pulpit in the same way he would speak in the parlor. Why, I hear my brethren, sometimes, when they are at tea or dinner, speak in a very comfortable decent sort of English voice, but when they get into their pulpits they adopt a sanctimonious tone, and fill their mouths with inflated utterance, or else whine most pitifully. They degrade the pulpit by pretending to honor it; speaking in a voice which God never intended any mortal to have. This is the great house of sham; and such little things show which way the wind blows. You leave your card at a friend's house; that is an act of friendship—the card! I wonder whether, if he were hard up for cash, you would leave your banker's book! You write "My dear sir," "Yours very truly;" it is a sham; you do not mean it. "Dear!" that is a sacred word; it ought to be used to none but those you regard with affection; but we tolerate falsehoods now, as if they were truths; and we call them courtesies. Courtesies they may be; but untruths they are in many cases. Now, Christ's love lieth not in words, but in deeds. He saith not, "My dear people;" but He let His heart out, and we could see what that was. He doth not come to us, and say, "Dearly beloved" simply; but He hangs upon the cross, and there we read "Dearly beloved" in red letters. He does not come to us with the kisses of His lips first—He giveth us blessings with both His hands; He giveth Himself for us, and then He giveth Himself to us. Trust no complimentary friend; rely upon the man who giveth you real tokens worth your having, who does for you deeds to show the truthfulness of his heart. Such a friend—and such is Jesus—"sticketh closer than a brother."

7. Once more, and I shall not weary you, I trust. A purchased friend will never last long. Give to a man nineteen times, and deny him the twentieth, and he shall hate you; for his love sprang only from your gifts. The love which I could buy for gold I would sell for dross; the friendship that I could buy for pearls I would dispense with for pebbles; it were of no value, and therefore the sooner lost the better. But O believer, Christ's love was unpurchased love. Thou broughtest Him no present. Jacob said, when his sons went to Egypt, "Take the man a present, a little oil, a little balm, a few nuts and almonds;" but you took Christ no presents. When you came to Him you said,

*Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling.*

You did not even promise that you would love Him; for you had such a faithless heart, you durst not say so. You asked Him to make you love Him; that was the most you could do. He loved you for nothing at all—simply because He would love you. Well, that love which so lived on nothing but its own resources, will not starve through the scantiness of your returns; the love which grew in such a rocky heart as this, will not die for want of soil. That love which sprang up in the barren desert, in your unirrigated soul, will never, never die for want of moisture; it must live, it can not expire. Jesus must be "**a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.**"

8. Shall I stay to urge more reasons? I may but mention one other, namely, this—that there can not, by any possibility, arise any cause which could make Christ love us less. You say, how is this? One man loves his friend, but he on a sudden grows rich, and now he says I am a greater man than I used to be, I forget my old acquaintances. But Christ can grow no richer; He is as rich as He can be, infinitely so. He loves you now; then it can not be possible that He will by reason of an increase in His own personal glory forsake you, for everlasting glories now crown His head; He can never be more glorious and great, and therefore He will love you still. Sometimes, on the other hand, one friend grows poorer, and then the other forsakes him; but you never can grow poorer than you are,

for you are "a poor sinner and nothing at all" now; you have nothing of your own; all you have is borrowed, all given you by Him. He can not love you, then, less, because you grow poorer; for poverty that hath nothing is at least as poor as it can be, and can never sink lower in the scale. Christ, therefore, must love thee for all thy nakedness and all thy poverty.

"But I may prove sinful," sayest thou. Yes, but thou canst not be more so than He foreknew thou wouldst be; and yet He loved thee with the foreknowledge of all thy sins. Surely, then, when it happens it will occasion no surprise to Him; He knew it all beforehand, and He can not swerve from His love; no circumstance can possibly arise that ever will divide the Saviour from His love to His people, and the saint from his love to his Saviour. He is "**a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.**"

III. Now, then, AN INFERENCE TO BE DERIVED FROM THIS. Lavater says, "The qualities of your friends will be those of your enemies; cold friends, cold enemies, half friends, half enemies, fervid enemies, warm friends." Knowing this to be a truth, I have often congratulated myself, when my enemies have spoken fiercely against me. Well, I have thought, "My friends love me hard and fast; let my enemies be as hot as they please; it only indicates that the friends are proportionately firm in affection. Then we draw this inference, that if Christ sticks close, and He is our friend, then our enemies will stick close, and never leave us till we die. O, Christian, because Christ sticks close, the devil will stick close too; he will be at you and with you; the dog of hell will never cease his howlings, till you reach the other side of Jordan; no place in this world is out of bow-shot of that great enemy; till you have crossed the stream his arrows can reach you, and they will. If Christ gave Himself for you, the devil will do all he can to destroy you; if Christ has been long-suffering to you, Satan will be persevering, in hopes that Christ may forget you; he will strive after you, and strive until he shall see you safely landed in Heaven. But be not disappointed: the louder Satan roars, the more proof you shall

♦ (Continued on page 74)

## A Faithful Friend

(Continued from page 73) ♦

have of Christ's love. "Give me," said old Rutherford, "give me a roaring devil rather than a sleeping one; for sleeping devils make me slumber, but roaring ones provoke me to run to my Master." O! be glad, then, if the world rant at thee, if thy foes attack thee fiercely. Christ is just as full of love to thee as they are of hatred. Therefore,

*Be firm and strong;*

*Be grace thy shield and Christ thy song.*

And now I have a question to ask: that question I ask of every man and every woman in this place, and of every child, too—Is Jesus Christ your friend? Have you a friend at court—at Heaven's court? Is the judge of quick and dead your friend? Can you say that you love Him, and has He ever revealed Himself in the way of love to you? Dear hearer, do not answer that question for thy neighbor; answer it for thyself. Peer or peasant, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, this question is for each of you; therefore, ask it: Is Christ my friend? Did you ever consider that question? Have you ever asked it? O! to be able to say "Christ is my friend," is one of the sweetest things in the world. A man who had lived much in sin, one day casually entered a place of worship. Before the sermon, this hymn was sung—

*Jesus, lover of my soul.*

The next day the man was met by an acquaintance who asked him how he liked the sermon. Said he, "I do not know, but there were two or three words that took such a hold of me that I did not know what to do with myself. The minister read that hymn, 'Jesus, lover of my soul.' Ah!" said he, though he was by no means a religious man, "to be able to say that, I would give up all I have got! But do you think," he asked "that Jesus ever will be the lover of such a man as I am? 'Jesus, lover of my soul!' O! could I say it." And then he buried his head in his hands and wept. I have every reason to fear that he went back to his sin, and was the same afterwards as before. But, you see, he had conscience enough to let him know how valuable it was to have Christ for his lover and his friend. Ah! rich man, thou hast many friends. There be some here

who have toiled for their country's good, and deserve a medal of honor at their country's hands, who, for one mistake—or what, perhaps, was a mistake—have been neglected by too many who once appeared to be their most trusty adherents. O! put no confidence, ye great men and ye rich, in the adherence of your friends. David said in his haste, "**All men are liars;**" you may one day have to say it at your leisure. And O! ye kind and affectionate hearts, who are not rich in wealth, but who are rich in love—and that is the world's best wealth—put this golden coin among your silver ones, and it will sanctify them all. Get Christ's love shed abroad in your hearts, and your mother's love, your daughter's love, your husband's love, your wife's love, will become more sweet than ever. The love of Christ cast not out the love of relatives, but it sanctifies our loves, and makes them sweeter far. Remember, dear hearer, the love of men and women is very sweet; but all must pass away; and what will you do, if you have no wealth but the wealth that fadeth, and no love but the love which dies, when death shall come? O! to have the love of Christ! You can take that across the river of death with you; you can wear it as your bracelet in Heaven, and set it up as a seal upon your hand; for his love is "strong as death and mightier than the grave." Good old Bishop Beveridge, I think it was, when dying, did not know his best friends. Said one, "Bishop Beveridge, do you know me?" Said he, "Who are you?" and when the name was mentioned, he said, "No." "But don't you know your wife, Bishop?" "What is her name?" said he. Said she, "I am your wife." "I did not know I had got one," said he. Poor old man! his faculties all failed him. At last one stooped down and whispered, "Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Yes," said he, making an effort to speak, "I have known Him these forty years, and I never can forget Him." It is marvelous how memory will hold the place with Jesus, when it will with no one else; and it is equally marvelous, that,

*"When all created things are dry,  
Christ's fullness is the same."*

My dear hearers, do think of this matter. O that you might get Christ for your friend; He will never be your

friend while you are self-righteous; He will never be your friend while you live in sin. But do you believe yourselves guilty? Do you desire to leave off sin? Do you want to be saved? Do you desire to be renewed? Then let me tell you, my Master loves you! Poor, weak, and helpless worms, my Master's heart is full of love to you; His eyes at this moment are looking down with pity on you. "O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" He now bids me tell you that He died for all of you who confess yourselves to be sinners, and feel it. He bids me say to you, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." He tells me to proclaim salvation full and free; full, needing nothing of yours to help it; free, needing nothing of yours to buy it.

*Come ye thirsty, come and welcome;*

*God's free bounty glorify:*

*True belief and true repentance,*

*Every grace that brings us nigh—*

*Without money,*

*Come to Jesus Christ, and buy.*

There is nothing I feel that I fail so much in as addressing sinners. O! I wish I could cry my heart out, and preach my heart out, to you and at you.

*Dear Saviour, draw reluctant hearts,*

*To thee let sinners fly,*

*And take the bliss thy love imparts;*

*And drink, and never die.*

Farewell, with this one thought—we shall never all of us meet together here again. It is a very solemn thought, but according to the course of nature and the number of deaths, if all of you were willing to come here next Sabbath morning, it is not at all likely that all of you would be alive; one out of this congregation will be sure to have gone the way of all flesh. Farewell, thou that are appointed to death; I know not where thou art—yon strong man, or yon tender maiden with the hectic flush of consumption on her cheek. I know not who is appointed to death; but I do now most solemnly take my farewell of such an one. Farewell, poor soul; and is it farewell for ever? Shall we meet in the land of the hereafter, in the home of the blessed; or do I bid you farewell now for ever? I do solemnly bid farewell to you for ever, if you live and die without Christ. But I can not bear that dreary

thought; and I therefore say, poor sinner! stop and consider—consider thy ways, and now "turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Why will ye die?" "Why will ye die?" "Why will ye die?" Ah! ye can not answer that question. May God help you to answer it in a better fashion, by saying, "Here Lord!

*Just as I am, without one plea,*

*But that thy blood was shed for me,*

*O Son of God I come to thee.*

I trust my soul in thy kind hands." The Lord bless you all for Christ's sake! Amen.



## Forum #1

(Continued from page 70) ♦

would think it to be sudden or before their time. People today are riddled with emotions and want to blame death on many things, but the fact is, it is the time God appointed for them to die.

But back to the question; I am amazed what people think they can get by with today. We believe, no doubt, we are talking about godly parents here that have very unruly and mocking children, not just young or teenage children but children of any age. If I give my 40 year old son advice or instruction about his unruliness and life style, and he mocks me as a child of God, he is treading on thin ice. God will take care of me, "His own"; be assured of that!

Back when this was written the manner of death the verse is speaking of is either the dead body in the wilderness, hanged from or on a tree or has been crucified. Regardless the ravens and eagles, (which I believe here and other places are actually vultures/buzzards, depending on where you live) these are birds of prey feasting on the eyeballs and carcass of someone's dead older child, because the way they treated their parents. We believe it would have to be continuous and most serious before God would take actions in such away, it would have to be at the point of no remorsefulness on the child's part. Regardless of what our president said while he was yet a senator, partly quoting or miss quoting Deuteronomy 21, God is serious about children obeying their

♦ (Continued on page 75)



## Forum #1

(Continued from page 74) ♦

parents, please read Deuteronomy 21:18-23.

The bleeding heart liberal and some Christians today would proclaim, "O, but God would not do that today, He is a loving God and would never do such a thing." My reply would be, "then you don't know your Bible."

**"Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him"** (Deut. 13:4).

**"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"** (Eccl. 12:13).

**"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord"** (Col. 3:20).

Must we say more? God Bless!

ROGER REED



## Forum #2

(Continued from page 71) ♦

**by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ...For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"** (Rom. 5:12, 6:23). It is called original sin, and thus it is for the human race... death (and depravity, thusly) have **"passed upon all men..."**

The third and last category is the remainder of the multitudes of mankind. Every single son of Adam and daughter of Eve are born in the image of their own post-Edenic father and mother- now fallen and with a depraved and corrupt nature...! **"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred**

**and thirty years: and he died"** (Gen. 5:1-5). This passage chronicles the difference between Adam and Seth. As we saw in our second point, Adam was created in the likeness of a holy and sinless God, but now we perceive Seth was begotten **"in his (Adam's) own likeness, after his (Adam's) image"**. Selah! Think about it!

So, the answer for us today in 2013, is everyone commits sins because they are depraved in very nature. This is the VERY important TULIP doctrine of total depravity. To understand the concept of grace, we must first realize that man has NO ability to do good in the eyes of God. We sin because we are depraved and are totally unable to do anything else! Even the so-called "moral goodness" that some sons and daughters of Adam may exhibit is nothing less than sinful exaltation of a corrupt and spotted humanity. Even our **"righteousnesses"** are as filthy rags, **"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities"** (Isa. 64:6-7).

Thank God that Jesus Christ the Perfect One has deigned to come in His immaculate flesh to redeem a chosen people for Himself! He alone can cleanse the iniquity and make us holy once again... I urge each of the beloved readers to examine themselves and see what your hope is placed in- If not Christ, then I point you to HIM! **"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation"** (Heb. 9:27-28).

MATTHEW STEPP



### THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read.

Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

### OBAMA PROPS UP CALLS TO END PROP 8

(WNS)--The Obama administration late in February filed a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court urging the justices to strike down California's gay marriage ban. The administration's controversial move marks the first time a U.S. president has called on the high court to redefine marriage as we know it: a legal union between one man and one woman. Although the friend-of-the-court brief is not legally binding, the government's opinion is sure to carry weight with the Supreme Court when it hears oral arguments on California's Proposition 8 in late March. In addition, the brief outlines a broad legal argument that could ultimately nullify similar traditional marriage standards in states across the country. California currently gives gay couples all the benefits of marriage through civil unions or domestic partnership, but doesn't give them the freedom to wed, as that would mean literally redefining the word "marriage."

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### DENVER LIMITS ROLE OF COPS IN SCHOOLS

(WNS)--After Newtown, many groups are calling for more armed guards in schools. However, in February the Denver schools went in the other direction. A new contract limits the role of police officers in schools. Why? Police were getting too involved in minor disciplinary problems. In the wake of the 1999 Columbine shooting, Colorado adopted a "zero-tolerance" policy, referring students to law enforcement automatically for relatively minor

offenses. State lawmakers relaxed some of the policies last year because too many kids were ending up in the criminal justice system. According to Associated Press, "one Denver student, Tori Ortiz, said she had seen students ticketed or escorted out of class by police officers for indiscretions as small as talking in class or talking back to a teacher. The culture in the schools, she said, was one of criminalizing young people."

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### OREGON DISCRIMINATION CLAIM TAKES THE CAKE

(WNS)--The Christian owners of a Portland, Ore., bakery are waiting to hear whether state officials will fine them for refusing to make a wedding cake for a lesbian couple. Aaron and Melissa Klein declined to make a cake for Laurel Bowman and Rachel Cryer, citing their biblical belief that marriage can only be between a man and a woman. Bowman claimed discrimination and filed a complaint against the bakery, Sweet Cakes by Melissa, for refusing to serve her. State law prohibits businesses from refusing to serve customers based on their race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. The Kleins maintain the U.S. Constitution protects them from being forced to participate in something that violates their conscience and religious beliefs.

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### PLAN B BECOMES PLAN A

(WNS)--Almost 1 in 9 young women who are sexually active have used the morning-after pill after sex, more than double the rate that used it 11 years ago, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study released Feb. 14. The study, which evaluated women between 15 and 44, found that 5.8 million women—11 percent—used the morning-after pill between 2006 and 2010, compared to 4 percent in 2002. For women between 20 and 24, the rate was even higher: 1 in 4 women who had ever had sex used the drug at some point. The

♦ (Continued on page 76)

## Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 75) ♦

increased popularity of the drug stems in part from easier access and media coverage of efforts to lift the age limit for the over-the-counter sales. Women over 17 do not need a prescription to buy the morning-after pill but must request it from a pharmacy. Under President Barack Obama's healthcare reform, employers will be required to cover birth control, including morning-after pills, which likely will increase their use in the future.

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### TEBOW THROWS IN THE TOWEL

(WNS)--In an attempt to avoid controversy, New York Jets quarterback Tim Tebow has backed out of a scheduled appearance at First Baptist Church in Dallas later this spring. "While I was looking forward to sharing a message of hope and Christ's unconditional love with the faithful members of the historic First Baptist Church of Dallas in April, due to new information that has been brought to my attention, I have decided to cancel my upcoming appearance," Tebow wrote in a series of tweets today. "I will continue to use the platform God has blessed me with to bring Faith, Hope and Love to all those needing a brighter day. Thank you for all of your love and support. God Bless!" Robert Jeffress, the church's pastor, continues to receive flack from the national media for both his unwavering stance on homosexuality—he says it's a sin—and his belief that Mormonism is a cult, not a branch of Christianity—a comment he made during the 2012 presidential election.

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### PARENTS FILE COMPLAINT ON BEHALF OF "TRANSGENDER" 6-YEAR-OLD

(WNS)--Coy Mathis, born a male triplet, has behaved like a girl since he was 18 months old. When his brother Max was consumed with dinosaurs, Coy played with Barbie dolls. When he enrolled in Eagle Elementary School in Fountain, Colo., the 6-year-old wore girls' clothing. Classmates and his public school teachers contributed to his confusion by using female pronouns to refer to him. But when school officials told Coy's parents he cannot use the girls' bathroom, his case became a national cause célèbre for the homosexual movement. Coy's parents, Jeremy

and Kathryn Mathis, with the help of the Transgender Legal and Defense Education Fund (TLDEF), have filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Division on behalf of Coy, alleging that the school has violated his rights. "Our eye is focused on getting Coy back into school," said TLDEF's executive director Michael Silverman. "We are hopeful we can resolve this quickly for Coy's sake."

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### MASSACHUSETTS SAYS BOYS CAN USE GIRLS' BATHROOM, AND VICE VERSA

(WNS)--The Massachusetts Department of Education says boys and girls who identify as the opposite sex now are allowed to use whichever school bathroom and locker room they feel most comfortable in, and schools are discouraged from using gender-based clothes and from conducting gender-based practices — even from lining up elementary-aged children based on their sex. The 11-page directive to the state's public schools was issued Feb. 15 and supposedly was released in light of a new state law — passed by the legislature and signed by the governor — that adds "gender identity" to the state's non-discrimination code. The directive explicitly states it is aimed at children of all ages, including those in elementary school. "In all cases," the directive states in laying out the new policy, "the principal should be clear with the student (and parent) that the student may access the restroom, locker room, and changing facility that corresponds to the student's gender identity."

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### TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY CONSIDERS SANCTIONING ATHEIST GROUP

(WNS)--An atheist group recently formed at Texas Christian University, and it is seeking official recognition. The "Freethinking Frogs" is the brainchild of 32-year-old transfer student Alexis Lohse. Lohse said she wanted to create a club that was agnostic and secular, where students could have a place to challenge religion. "I saw that there wasn't any support system for students who don't have a particular faith," she said. "And that's in stark contrast to the vast number of religiously affiliated organizations available to students. So I thought it might be a good group to set up." TCU already has approximately 20 groups on campus, which range from Protestant

and Catholic clubs to Jewish and Muslim organizations. University officials have acknowledged receipt of Freethinking Frogs' application for official recognition, and say they will soon make a decision on the matter.

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### JON HUNTSMAN SUPPORTS GAY MARRIAGE

(WNS)--Last week former presidential candidate Jon Huntsman announced his support for gay marriage. Huntsman has favored civil unions for years. The position has met with silence from most Republicans, but Utah Democratic Party Chairman (and openly gay member of the Utah legislature) Jim Dabakis said, "Jon Huntsman would make a great Democrat."

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### OBAMA ADMINISTRATION WANTS DOMA DIVORCE

(WNS)--In a legal brief submitted Feb. 22, the Obama administration urged the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which says marriage can only be between one man and one woman. "The law denies to tens of thousands of same-sex couples who are legally married under state law an array of important federal benefits that are available to legally married opposite-sex couples," government lawyers wrote. "Because this discrimination cannot be justified as substantially furthering any important governmental interest, Section 3 is unconstitutional." The government's position comes as no surprise. Congress adopted the law, which governs federal agencies, in 1996. When Edith Windsor filed a constitutional challenge, the Obama administration declined to defend the law. The district court ruled in Windsor's favor, declaring the act unconstitutional.

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### PHOENIX CITY COUNCIL ABOLISHES GENDER

(WNS)--An ordinance passed by the Phoenix City Council forces the city's businesses, charities and churches to consider hiring transgendered people and requires them to recognize any gender expression, even if that means allowing a man to use the women's restroom. The bill, which passed 5-3, claims to protect against discrimination based on sexual preferences in public accommodations, housing, employment, and city contracts. But it also treads on

the religious beliefs of business owners and organizations. "When we looked at this law, we saw a number of problems for businesses, families, and churches," said Aaron Baer, communications director at Center for Arizona Policy. "It creates a lot of potential situations that force people to violate their religious beliefs, businesses are open to frivolous law suits, and women and children are exposed to uncomfortable situations."

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### TEACHING INTELLIGENT DESIGN GOES ON TRIAL IN OHIO

(WNS)--The Ohio Supreme Court heard arguments in late February in the case of a science teacher fired for talking openly with students about his Christian faith and theories of intelligent design. John Freshwater taught at a middle school in Mount Vernon, Ohio, for 20 years before the school board accused him of teaching Christian beliefs in class during discussions of evolution and homosexuality. The board also accused him of insubordination because he refused to remove a Bible from his classroom. The school board fired Freshwater in 2009. Two lower courts have ruled in the school district's favor. But Freshwater's attorneys, supported by Charlottesville, Va., civil liberties group The Rutherford Institute, argue the school board violated the teacher's constitutional rights. The state Supreme Court agreed to hear part of Freshwater's case, allowing him to argue it is unconstitutional to fire someone without clear guidance on what teaching materials or methods are acceptable. His attorneys claim Freshwater's discussions about intelligent design were part of the school's secular education program.

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### ARKANSAS' NEW ABORTION LAW WON'T STOP A BEATING HEART

(WNS)--If an unborn baby's heart is beating, Arkansas abortionists can do nothing to stop it, state lawmakers decided March 6. The Arkansas House of Representatives voted 56-33 to override Democratic Gov. Mike Beebe's veto of a bill banning abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy or after a baby's heartbeat is detected. The state Senate voted to override the veto 20-14. With the new law, Arkansas has the toughest abortion restrictions in the nation. The

♦ (Continued on page 77)

## Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 76) ♦

bill, which maintains exceptions for rape, incest, to save the mother's life, or for severe birth defects, is set to become law 90 days after the legislature adjourns—at the end of March or early April.

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### TRANSGENDER STUDENT SUES BAPTIST COLLEGE OVER EXPULSION

(WNS)--A transgender student is suing California Baptist University for expelling him in 2011 after he claimed he was a female despite his male anatomy. Domaine Javier had been accepted into the school's nursing program for the fall of 2011, but the university retracted the acceptance after he revealed that he was transgender in an episode of MTV's "True Life." The university said he was expelled for "committing or attempting to engage in fraud, or concealing of identity." Javier filed a lawsuit in Riverside, Calif., against the Southern Baptist school, claiming it violated California's civil rights act and breached its contract. He claims he lost about \$500,000 in scholarships and future wages because of the expulsion, since he had to delay his career plan for a year. He had received a \$3,500 dean's academic scholarship from the school.

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### CABLE NEWS MOSTLY OPINION, PUNDITRY

(WNS)--According to a new survey done by Pew for its Project for Excellence in Journalism, most of the major "news" networks are more opinion than reporting. MSNBC is the most opinionated network by far. About 85 percent of its programming is opinion, which media analyst Howard Kurtz reminds us, "is cheaper to produce than reporting." Conservative Fox News doesn't have much to brag about. About 55 percent of the air time is opinion-driven. Only CNN has more reporting than commentary: 54 percent to 46 percent. Kurtz says, though, that "even at CNN, the report says, the number of packaged news reports in prime time dropped from 50 percent to 24 percent from 2007 to 2012, with more time devoted to interviews." Local newscasts did no better in presenting real news. Sports, weather and traffic took up about 40 percent of local newscasts last year. Those stories that did make it on-air were often little more than headlines: only 20

percent of stories lasted longer than a minute. Half took less than 30 seconds.

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### SAVED BY A HEARTBEAT

(WNS)--With little debate, the North Dakota Senate passed the strictest abortion ban in the nation Mar. 15. The legislation, which now awaits Republican Gov. Jack Dalrymple's signature, would outlaw most abortions performed after the heartbeat of the developing baby can be detected. Using trans-vaginal ultrasound technology, heartbeats can be detected from as early as 6 weeks of gestation. That makes the North Dakota measure even more stringent than a recent ban in Arkansas. Legislators in that state overrode their governor's veto Mar. 6 to outlaw abortion after 12 weeks of gestation, or as soon as the baby's heartbeat can be detected using noninvasive technology such as an abdominal ultrasound. Currently, the ban in Arkansas is the strictest on the books, although it is not scheduled to take effect for several months.

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### GAY FATHER DEFENDS TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

(WNS)--Traditional marriage has a unique proponent in Doug Mainwaring, the openly gay co-founder of the National Capital Tea Party Patriots who lives with his ex-wife to co-parent their two adopted sons. Mainwaring divorced his wife to explore his homosexual desires, but in a piece for *Public Discourse* he explained how he discovered over the course of a decade that "creating a family with another man is not completely equal to creating a family with a woman." He also found that "denying children parents of both genders is an objective evil. Kids need and yearn for both." Mainwaring notes one instance when he saw his rough and rowdy 16-year-old son kiss his mother. "With two dads in the house, this little moment of warmth and tenderness would never had occurred. ... To be fully formed, children need to be free to generously receive from and express affection to parents of both genders."

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### GAY CONVERSION THERAPY ISSUE IN NJ GOVERNOR'S RACE

(WNS)--"Gay conversion therapy for children," as the Philadelphia Inquirer called it, has become an issue in the New Jersey governor's race. The issue came up because Gov. Chris Christie would not

commit to signing a bill cosponsored by State Sen. Barbara Buono, who is seeking the Democratic nomination for governor. That bill would forbid licensed counselors from helping minors resist unwanted same-sex attractions. Buono called Christie a "right-wing reactionary" for his indecision on the bill. Christie then said, through a spokesman, that he opposed gay conversion therapy. "You know, I'm of two minds on this stuff in general," Christie said Wednesday. "One, I think there should be lots of deference given to parents on raising their children. . . . I'm generally a skeptic on those things. Now there can always be exceptions to those rules, and this bill may be one of them."

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### MIDDLE SCHOOL DATING PRODUCES PROBLEMS

(WNS)--Ever since Josh Harris published "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" in 1997, lots of Christians, especially in the homeschooling community, have said the modern convention of dating is a destructive practice. Now, new data supports that idea. Pamela Orpinas, head of the Department of Health Promotion and Behavior at the University of Georgia, monitored 624 students as they progressed from 6th grade to 12th grade in six different school districts in Georgia. Every year, the students completed a questionnaire about their personal lives. Teachers evaluated each student's academic performance. Twenty-two percent of teens in the study began dating someone in the sixth grade. According to Orpinas: "At all points in time, teachers rated the students who reported the lowest frequency of dating as having the best study skills and the students with the highest dating as having the worst study skills." Middle-school kids who date are four times more likely to drop out of school and twice as likely to drink and smoke marijuana. The article appeared last week in the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*.

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### INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS FRENCH LAWMAKERS APPROVE GAY "MARRIAGE"

(WNS)--The French National Assembly approved a bill in February that legalizes gay marriage and allows same-sex couples to adopt children, following months of protests and debates in the once heavily Roman Catholic nation. The bill passed 329 to 229 with 10 abstaining, and will be sent for a

Senate vote in April, where the Socialist majority likely will confirm the vote. While polls last August showed same-sex marriage had two-thirds support among the French, that number has now dropped to a narrow majority. The bill is widely opposed by people in traditional small towns in the countryside, along with religious communities.

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### DRUG-RESISTANT GONORRHEA RAISES PANDEMIC THREAT

(WNS)--Gonorrhea, a highly drug-resistant sexually-transmitted disease, is on the rise in the United Kingdom, causing health officials to worry it might soon explode into a global health threat. In 2011, UK doctors diagnosed 21,000 cases of gonorrhea, a 25 percent increase. A third of the cases occurred in gay men and another third in people who had already contracted the disease before, according to a report the country's Health Protection Agency released in February. "We are seriously concerned about continuing high levels of gonorrhea transmission and repeat infection," said Gwenda Hughes, the HPA's head of surveillance on sexually transmitted infections. Although the increase in cases is cause for concern, the bigger fear is its resistance to previously effective forms of treatment. In 2008, scientists found a strain of the disease that was resistant to all recommended antibiotics, according to Reuters. Health officials all over the world have now documented cases of drug-resistant gonorrhea.

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### NEW POPE REPRESENTS MANY FIRSTS

(WNS)--The College of Cardinals, on the fifth vote of the papal conclave, chose Archbishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires as the next pope. White smoke poured from the top of the Sistine Chapel at about 7 p.m. (2 p.m. EDT) Tuesday, Mar. 12. Bergoglio appeared on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica about 90 minutes later. Crowds thronged St. Peter's Square, cheering, waving flags, and snapping photos as they waited for the big announcement. When it came, the crowd's noise almost drowned out Cardinal Protodeacon Jean-Louis Pierre Tauran as he read from a large red folio held open before him by two priests. American news broadcasters scrambled to figure out what exactly Tauran said, their confusion compounded by the

♦ (Continued on page 78)



# Let's Study Baptism

By Nathaniel Hille  
of Caldwell, Kansas

## Part 2

**"One Lord, one faith, one baptism"** (Eph. 4:5).

In the last lesson, we noted the "mode of baptism." This lesson we want to note "Who should be baptized (immerse)?" —OR—"Who is the proper candidate for baptism according to the Scriptures?" Religion has much to say upon this topic, but unless our beliefs and practices are based upon **"Thus saith the Lord"** we have no ground upon which to stand. Let us therefore **"search the Scriptures to see if these things be so."**

1. John the Baptist: (Matt.3:1-17). John was baptizing in the river Jordan when members of two religious sects of the Jews came to him. John refused to baptize any from these two groups. Note the words of John, **"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance"** (Matt.3:7-8). In Matthew 3:7-8 John gives his reason for refusing to baptize them: they (Pharisees and Sadducees) had not given any evidence that they had repented of their sins.

When John spoke of "fruit" he was saying "Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God" (Matt. 3:8 NLT). Christ stated, **"Ye shall know them by their fruits"** and **"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them"** (Matt.7:16, 20). John refused to baptize (immerse) an individual who had not repented of his/her sins, and had evidence to prove that they were dead unto sin and alive unto Christ.

2. Ethiopian Eunuch: (Acts 8:36-37). We look again to the case of the Ethiopian eunuch. The eunuch asked Philip, **"See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized (immersed)?"** (Acts 8:36). Philip responds, **"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest"** (Acts 8:37). Again,



we find that there was a hindrance to the baptism of the eunuch. Philip refused to baptize the eunuch UNTIL he was whole heartedly relying upon Jesus as his

Savior. Because the ordinance of baptism is symbolic of what has taken place to the believer, Philip refused to baptize the eunuch until he was already dead unto sin and alive unto the Lord.

3. The Household of Cornelius: (Acts 10:44-48). The Bible tells us that as Simon Peter was preaching **"Christ and Him crucified"** the Holy Spirit **"fell upon all them which heard the word"** (vv.44). Simon Peter then proposed the question: **"Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"** Here we see that baptism was withheld or forbidden until the individuals had **"received the Holy Spirit."** Receiving the Holy Spirit and the new-birth are one-in-the-same. Simon Peter rightly refused to baptize the household of Cornelius until they had been born-again, or saved by God.

4. The Pattern of the Great Commission: (Matt. 28:19) **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations (make disciples), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."** This verse is a part of the "Great Commission" given unto the Lord's church. Please take notice that "making disciples" is listed before baptism. Christ gave authority to His church to baptize only after one had been converted, or made a disciple. This is the scriptural pattern established throughout the New Testament. First and foremost one came to Christ, then was baptized, then was taught the Scriptures.

Christ limited baptism to those who were made disciples when He stated, **"baptizing them."** Them who? Unless language has lost all meaning **"them"** refers back unto those who

were 'made disciples' (Matt. 28:19). This begs the question, "How is one made a disciple or follower of Christ?" By grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9), repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21), by being born-again (John 3:1-8).

5. History Proves It: We have noted four passages of Scripture where baptism was restricted to those who had brought forth evidence that they had repented of sins; restricted to those who had trusted, relied upon, believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; restricted to those who had received the Holy Spirit; restricted to those who had been made disciples. The Bible and history show us that the early churches restricted the ordinance of baptism to those who were saved, those who in and of themselves believed on Christ as Savior. It was not until the purpose of baptizing was perverted and corrupted by man that the candidate of baptism was changed (of which we will discuss in a future lesson). Please do not take my word for it. We beseech each one to give an honest search of the Scriptures to see whether these things are so. Maranatha. AMEN.



## Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 77) ♦

Latin used for the official proclamation. Bergoglio, 76, will be the first pope known as Francis, a possible tribute to St. Francis of Assisi, whom the new pope is said to imitate, or it could be in honor of St. Francis Xavier, co-founder of the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, of which Bergoglio is a member, making him the first ever Jesuit pope.

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**CHRISTIANS NEED NOT APPLY  
FOR UK JOB**

(WNS)--A graphic designer in the United Kingdom says he was turned down for a job because he is a Christian. Jamie Haxby said he felt "victimized and persecuted" when the hotel manager, Celie Parker, "apologized for inviting him to the interview after discovering he was a committed Christian," according to the British newspaper "The Daily Mail." Haxby said the manager told him his presence might upset atheists working in the hotel. Haxby is now suing the hotel. "The Daily Mail" says "this case is unprecedented because Mr. Haxby apparently faced discrimination merely on the basis of his beliefs rather than his actions, such as wearing a cross." Haxby said his portfolio contained designs for fliers he had done for his church, as well as a T-shirt for a Christian charity. Until then, Haxby said, "Everything was going well, and I felt happy with how the interview was progressing. Celie made several comments about the high standard of my work and how talented I was."

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## BIBLICAL TEACHING A HATE CRIME IN CANADA

(WNS)--The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in February that Biblical speech opposing homosexual behavior, including in written form, is essentially a hate crime. The court upheld the conviction of activist William Whatcott, who distributed flyers regarding the Bible's prohibitions against homosexuality throughout the Saskatoon and Regina neighborhoods in 2001 and 2002. Justice Marshall Rothstein wrote on behalf of the court: "Passages of (the flyers) combine many of the hallmarks of hatred identified in the case law." He said the flyers "delegitimizes homosexuals by referring to them as filthy or dirty sex addicts and by comparing them to pedophiles, a traditionally reviled group in society."



## Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	95.9.....	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680.....	5,000 AM
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
KARI, Blaine, WA.....	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m....	550.....	5,000 AM
KPRV, Heavener, OK.....	Sunday 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.....	92.5.....	6,000 FM

## Too Hard for the

(Continued from page 61) ♦

all.  
Yet in practice our foolish hearts are slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken (Luke 24:25). Assuming that God speaks to us through the Bible, can we really believe that He can and will do as He says?

Victorious faith must believe not only in the truth of God but in the power of God that nothing is too hard for Him.

### CREATING A UNIVERSE

First, then, let us accept the historical fact of Biblical revelation that it is not too hard for God to create a universe. **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"** (Gen. 1:1).

All the fanciful theories of evolution, of **"science falsely so-called"** (I Tim. 6:20), cannot stand against the simple record of God's Word.

**"By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast"** (Ps. 33:6-9).

Ignorant theorists may speculate of eternal matter or chaos, but **"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"** (Heb. 11:3).

Let fools who will imagine that the universe is an accident or a series of accidents, a product of blind chance. Let us be assured that for the God of the Bible it was not too hard to create the heavens and the earth and that without consulting puny men of a race not yet created.

### PRESERVING AND DESTROYING

God the Creator, also preserves or destroys His own creation according to His own will. It is not too hard for God to destroy a world with flood or fire; it is not too hard for Him to preserve it so long as He will.

**"By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same**

**word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"** (II Peter 3:5-7).

Man may make machines and systems that get out of his control, but not so with God. He is in perfect control of His creation. He **"worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"** (Eph. 1:11).

**"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand"** (Deut. 32:39).

### OVERCOMING NATURAL LAW

Beholding the natural order of things and events in God's creation, men infatuated with their own conceit suppose that nature's God must be a slave to nature, limited as man is in his knowledge of nature, so that he is forever discovering new "laws" and reformulating old ones, he would fain reduce God to the level of human ignorance and weakness.

It is not too hard for God to overrule the "laws of nature," introducing higher laws of His own will. Things impossible with men are possible with God. And so Abraham **"against hope believed in hope"** (Rom. 4:18), replacing his and Sarah's doubtful laughter with joyful faith.

**"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when, he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform"** (Rom. 4:19-21).

### DEFEATING HIS ENEMIES

It is not too hard for God to defeat His enemies, including the Devil, all the demons, and wicked men. No concentration or union of evil powers can stand before Him. The conflict between good and evil is very real, but there is no doubt of the outcome.

**"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,"** said Jesus (Luke 10:18). This same Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead; and now **"He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet"** (I Cor. 15:25).

King, Dictator, Pope, Beast, or Devil; rich man, poor man, beggar

man, thief: every enemy of God must one day bow before Him. It is not too hard for God to bring them low.

### PUNISHING THE WICKED

In fact, no creature can interpose any difficulty to prevent God from accomplishing His own will and purpose. Only God's own holy, character makes it impossible for God to do anything wrong. **"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right"** (Gen. 18:25)?

So it is no cause outside Himself, but His own inherent truthfulness, that makes it impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2).

Likewise, the only obstacle in the way of the punishment of the wicked is the benevolence of God. He has **"no pleasure in the death of the wicked"** (Ezek. 33:11).

But presumptuous sinners are wrong when they imagine that God is "too good" or "too merciful" or "too loving" to punish the wicked. He is too just, too righteous, too truthful, to do otherwise than execute His appointed judgments.

From one point of view God is **"not willing that any should perish"** (II Peter 3:9), but rebels against Him who presume on His goodness will eventually learn that it is not too hard for God to **"do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act"** of judgment (Isa. 28:21).

No, it is not too hard for God to punish the wicked in hell, unpleasant duty as it is. He has provided the alternative of mercy through His Son, but sinners who persist in their sins and insist on receiving divine justice will find that it is not too hard for God to give them the everlasting punishment in hell that their sins deserve. It is not too hard for God to **"render to every man according to his deeds"** (Rom. 2:6).

### SAVING AND KEEPING

A happier thought is the glorious truth that it is not too hard for God to save lost sinners, to keep them saved through the trials and troubles of this present life, and to complete their salvation in a better life to come.

Oh it is hard, too hard for men! On the divine side it cost the precious blood of Christ, "Whom God set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood for an indication of his

♦ (Continued on page 80)

### BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 2-1-2013 to 2-28-2013

Beginning Balance .....	\$6,431.61
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	100.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA .....	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL .....	6,956.61
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	363.98
Order of Checks .....	25.09
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	\$389.07
.....	\$6,567.54
Interest .....	+05
.....	6,567.59
Less Corbin, KY des. ....	-1,163.72
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$5,403.87

### CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,323.72
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
TOTAL .....	1,323.72
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
WCTT .....	160.00
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$1,163.72

### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 2-1-2013 to 2-28-2013

Beginning Balance .....	\$2,659.75
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX .....	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Ashland, OH .....	600.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	150.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL .....	25.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Gary Fields, Dublin, GA .....	6.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
Joann Mills, Barboursville, KY .....	10.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC .....	50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM .....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	20.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Robert Wagner, Ashville, NC .....	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL .....	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	142.00
Anonymous .....	3,700.00
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Sub Total .....	\$6,711.45
TOTAL .....	\$9,371.20
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	535.00
Postage .....	621.66
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,782.62
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$5,588.58

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

On March 11, 2013 Elder David S. West went home to be with the Lord. Bro. West pastored several churches in the South Georgia area. Please remember the family in prayer.

**“...and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty”** (I Sam. 20:18).

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The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, AL and pastor Ted Tweet would like to announce their Revival/Quarterly fellowship for May 15th thru 19th. Elder Jim Tweet will be guest speaker for the revival and Elder Larry Lafferty will also speak on Saturday for the fellowship meeting. Service times for Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday are at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 10:00 a.m. with meal after the service. Sunday service times are 10:00 a.m. Sunday school; 11:00 a.m. and 2 p.m. All are invited to attend.

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The Living Stone Baptist Church of Barboursville, WV would like to announce their All Day Fellowship on Saturday, April 13th.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Clint Brown, Chad Johnson, Bill James and Joe Collins. All are welcome.

Any questions or for more information call Richard Chadwick at (304) 522-9428.

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The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, Louisiana and pastor Jerry Dodson would like to announce their 17th Annual Bible Conference for June 7th thru 9th.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Tom Horn of Pensacola, FL, David O'Neal of Tulsa, OK, Larry Wilson of Oakdale, LA, Eldon Joslin of Birmingham, AL and Nathaniel Hille of Caldwell, KS.

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The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS would like to announce their Quarterly Fellowship meeting Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup>. Lord willing, Elder Kelly Hinson, pastor of Landmark Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Fort Worth, TX, will be speaking along with Elder Ted Tweet.

Service time is 10:00 a.m. with lunch following. All are welcome to attend.

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The Calvary Baptist Church of Piqua, Ohio, is in need of a pastor. Any interested party may contact Terry Allen at (937) 773-9272.

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

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The Amazing Grace Baptist Church of Stockdale, Texas is in need of a pastor. The church believes in preaching and teaching the doctrines of grace and the Lord's church. Any interested brother my contact Bro. Charles Reddin at (830) 401-0310, if there is no answer please leave a message.

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

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The Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pre-trib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

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

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

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

8697 or Bro. Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228.

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

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## Too Hard for the

(Continued from page 79) ◊

righteousness because of the passing by in the forbearance of God of the earlier sins, in accord with the indication of his righteousness in the present time, for him to be just and justifying the believer in Jesus" (Rom. 3:25, 26, improved translation).

Even on the side of human experience in appropriating the salvation, provided by divine grace, it is still too hard for men without special help from God. So when Jesus remarked to His disciples that it was **"easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,"** ... **"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 10:25-27).

Nor is it too hard for God to continue and complete the salvation of every one of His children. **"I know whom I have believed,"** said Paul,

**"and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"** (II Tim. 1:12).

### CHASTISEMENT

Surely God is grieved over the necessity of chastening His own dear children, but even this is not too hard for Him. **"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth"** (Heb. 12:6).

Earthly parents correct their children, according to their own pleasure, but when God chastises His children it is **"for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness"** (Heb. 12:5-11).

It is not too hard for God to continue this chastisement to the extent of taking the life of His people when they will not repent. So we read:

**"In that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink: for tomorrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts"** (Isa. 22:12-14).

### REVIVAL

Sometimes we find situations where it seems easier to persuade lost sinners to trust the Lord for salvation than to persuade God's own people to turn from their backslidings in spiritual revival. Yet it is not too hard for God to revive His work in the hearts of His children, to heal their backslidings, to renew their faithfulness and zeal in His service.

It is not too hard for God: the difficulty can be only in ourselves. God Who created us, Who has preserved us so far in life, Who makes all things work together for our good, Who has assured defeat for His enemies and ours, Who will surely punish the wicked, but Who has saved us with an everlasting salvation, God Who in faithfulness has afflicted us for our instruction and correction--this same God can really revive even us if we will but believe. Even this is not too hard for God.



## ARTICLE INDEX

A Faithful Friend by C. H. Spurgeon .....	p. 61
A Pale Horse of Pestilence by Milburn Cockrell .....	p. 61
A Study in the Book of Leviticus by Timothy J. Hille .....	p. 65
The Bible and the Newspaper.....	p. 75
The Death of Samson .....	p. 61
Forum .....	pp. 70-71
Let's Study Baptism - Part Two by Nathaniel Hille .....	p. 78
Too Hard for the Lord? by Rosco Brong .....	p. 61
Watering the Tulips by Todd Bryant .....	p. 63