

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Lent, Easter, and Hot Cross Buns

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

Roman Catholics, Protestants and even some modern Baptists are all involved in celebrating or observing Lent and Easter. That the fast of Lent is not only unknown in the Bible, but was not a practice of the apostles is admitted in the Catholic Encyclopedia. It says, "We may then fairly conclude that Irenaeus about the year 190 knew nothing of any Easter fast of forty days." That being the case there is nothing in the Bible that tells or encourages you to observe any of the pagan observances of Lent and Easter. Not only is there no encouragement for you to do these things, to do so is to observe both hypocritical and pagan practices. There are, actually, words from the Lord Jesus against Ash Wednesday practices. It is common practice to have ashes put on the forehead on Ash Wednesday as a sign of fasting. The Lord said, **"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they**



may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

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God Changes Everything: The Newness of Life

By Greg Ward
of Williams, Indiana



"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

It is a true saying that "When God saves us, He changes us." And when He changes us, He changes us completely. There is not one area of our life that goes untouched. There is not any stone that is left unturned. But we are

like wet clay in the hands of the Potter. He molds us and makes us into something that is entirely new, different,

and beneficial for His honor and glory. Some aspects of our life will change rather quickly. Almost instantaneously, we are given a thirst for Scripture, a love for God's people, and a

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True and False Worship Distinguished

By Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio



Paul begins Philippians chapter three (#:1-7), with a warning against the false religion that was spreading through the churches. The Judaizers were teaching that salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone was not enough to be accepted by God. They insisted that in addition to faith in Christ all converts had to be circumcised and keep the law

of Moses to be genuinely saved (Acts 15:1). Even though the issue of performance versus grace had been supposedly settled at the

Jerusalem council, the disease of works salvation had continued to infect the churches causing much harm and confusion among the saints of God.

The heresy of works salvation is as old as the account of Cain and Abel. When every religious system is boiled down to the bare essentials there are only two basic religious beliefs. The false system of religion is based on the idea that man can somehow make himself acceptable to God, receive the forgiveness of his sins, and make it to Heaven based on his own merits and supposed righteousness. The true

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He doeth much who loveth much.

Love of God is the mainspring of activity, and sets a man doing much.

Even when the good work is apparently little, the abundance of love which is in it makes it much in the sight of God. **"Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:47).**

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

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Lent, Easter, and

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Wearing ashes on one's forehead is most certainly appearing unto men to fast. It is a pagan sign of fasting – with no Bible basis. The Lord said, **"Wash thy face!"**

Did you know that in the early days of European settlement in North America most people did not celebrate either Lent or Easter? Why? Because everyone knew that Easter (named for the pagan goddess "Ishtar") was pagan. Easter is nothing more than a pagan, fertility cult observance. (The King James translators incorporated the pagan word "Easter" one time in their work, but the Greek word there is actually the word for "passover" - a God-given Jewish observance, not a pagan one.) That Easter and all that goes with it is pagan is why eggs and bunnies are incorporated into its observance: they are fertility symbols. Consider what this author wrote for children: "When the Puritans came to North America, they regarded the celebration of Easter—and the celebration of Christmas—with suspicion. They knew that pagans had celebrated the return of spring long before [professing Roman Catholic] Christians celebrated Easter... for the first two hundred years of European life in North America, only a few

states, mostly in the South, paid much attention to Easter." (*Easter Parade: Welcome Sweet Spring Time!*, by Steve Englehart, p. 4 [brackets added]) "Easter first became an American tradition in the 1870s," (ibid. p. 5).

The Catholic Encyclopedia admits what Baptists have always said: neither the Bible command nor did the apostles ever celebrate, observe or instruct anyone to celebrate "Easter" each year. Instead the Baptists have always maintained that we gather on the First Day because that was the day Christ was found to be resurrected: so we have a weekly celebration. The Catholic Encyclopedia says: "Further, there seems much to suggest that the Church in the Apostolic Age designed to commemorate the Resurrection of Christ, not by an annual, but by a weekly celebration..." That is what healthy Baptists have been doing ever since the days of the apostles. The Catholic Encyclopedia admits that it was not until the fourth century that some began to observe the forty day fast we know today as Lent.

If you want to know the truth about Lent, Easter and hot cross buns, do a little research. Find out about Nimrod (great-great-grandson of Noah) and Semiramis. Find out about Tammuz, the supposedly virgin-born son of Semiramis (who was also called Ashteroth or Ishtar - "Easter"). Find out about the Babylonian mystery religion – the fertility cult - established back then. The Old Testament condemned this idolatrous worship. Here is what was revealed to the prophet, Ezekiel: **"He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the**

door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, BEHOLD, THERE SAT WOMEN WEEPING FOR TAMMUZ. Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that THEY COMMIT THE ABOMINATIONS WHICH THEY COMMIT HERE? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose" (Ezekiel 8:13-17)(emp. CP). This "weeping for Tammuz" is the source of the fast of Lent incorporated by the Catholics to please their "pagan" converts.

Semiramis was called "the queen of heaven" and is mentioned twice in connection with the "hot cross buns" baked as a part of her worship. Jeremiah 7:17-18 says, **"Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? THE CHILDREN GATHER WOOD, AND THE FATHERS KINDLE THE FIRE, AND THE WOMEN KNEAD THEIR DOUGH, TO MAKE CAKES TO THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN, AND TO POUR OUT DRINK OFFERINGS UNTO OTHER GODS, THAT THEY MAY PROVOKE ME**

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Lent, Easter, and

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TO ANGER" (Emp. CP). Again in Jeremiah 44:16-17 the Jewish women blatantly tell God's man that they are going to do as they please. There it is written: **"As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. BUT WE WILL CERTAINLY DO WHATSOEVER THING GOETH FORTH OUT OF OUR OWN MOUTH, TO BURN INCENSE UNTO THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN, AND TO POUR OUT DRINK OFFERINGS UNTO HER, AS WE HAVE DONE, WE, AND OUR FATHERS, OUR KINGS, AND OUR PRINCES, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil"** (Emp. CP).

We are confident that if you will do independent investigation you will come to the conclusion that Lent, and Easter (as well as hot cross buns) are all pagan. (The "cross" is pagan, too, but research that for yourself!) The Jewish women in Jeremiah chapter forty-four plainly told God's man that they were blessed by their idols and were going to continue their idolatrous worship. They refused to obey the Word of God as spoken by God's man Jeremiah. This preacher does not dare compare himself with Jeremiah. So he fully expects all sorts of people to continue with their idolatrous observances: if they would not listen to Jeremiah, they will not listen to this preacher. But God sees and God remembers. Either do as God pleases or do as you please. You are free, but you will be required to give an answer to God one day.



God Changes

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palate for Gospel preaching. And though God has given us an abhorrence of sin, for many new Christians, mortifying old sinful habits requires additional grace. But rest assured, though it may be sooner or later, God will completely change those that belong to Him. Our text, drawn from II Corinthians 5, is used by the Apostle Paul to summarize the ways in which the Lord has changed us in the newness of life.

GOD CHANGES OUR HOME

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). Before we were saved, where were our cares and concerns? What was it that consumed our thoughts and influenced our actions? Was it not our own lusts, wants, and desires? Why? Before conversion, our home consisted solely of this world. There was no concern with eternal things. We only cared about the world, because we were of the world! We were like the rich fool in Luke 12 that prioritized his life based upon his earthly possessions. **"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"** (Luke 12:19).

Today, lost people concern themselves with the activities of the world: work, relaxation, parties, and vacations. That is where their priorities are. That is where their focus is directed. Nowhere, in their hearts and minds, is there concern for heavenly things. At no time do they give thanks to God, pray, or study the Scriptures. They are utterly consumed with themselves, and

what they can attain in this life, because for them, this life is the best they will ever know. Heaven is not their home!

But when the Lord saves us, our cares and concerns become radically different. Our desires become heavenly. We long to see Christ. We long to drop this cloak of sin and flesh. It is now burdensome for us to be here. **"For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"** (II Cor. 5:2). Rather than setting our hearts on accumulating and amassing wealth here on earth, we now desire the treasures and privileges of Heaven because, by the Lord's help, we realize that this present world is only temporal. The glories and the beauties of this life will ultimately pass away. But we have a home in Heaven which shall never pass away!

GOD CHANGES OUR HOPE

"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (II Cor. 5:4-5). When we were yet in our sins, we had no hope. Life had no meaning or purpose. We were as a ship tossed upon troublesome seas, without an Anchor. We were as chaff driven about in a hot breeze. The lost are still in such a condition,

"being burdened." But when the Lord saved us, and changed us, He also gave us hope through **"the earnest of the Spirit."** The indwelling of God's Holy Spirit is the promise that we have eternal life. If a man sells his trustworthy friend a used car, and his friend uses "earnest money" to put down as a payment, then the man can rest assured that his friend will indeed pay him the remainder in full. In much the same way, God has given to us His Holy Spirit, as an "earnest" for future glory. God has promised all born-again believers the glories and splendors of Heaven. We are not there yet, obviously, but we might as well be! Heaven belongs to us just as much as someone who is already worshipping around the Throne of Christ. The unsaved do not have this kind of glorious expectation. But, we can believe this because we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God as our "earnest." And we can know we possess the Holy Spirit by how we have been changed (i.e. the enlightenment of Scripture, the conviction of sin, the love for God's people).

GOD CHANGES OUR WALK

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). Christianity is based on faith. We are saved through faith (Eph. 2:8). Christ requires us to trust Him by faith. Ask the unbeliever how Heaven can be attained, and what do they say? "Be a good person. Do good works. Live a good life. Help

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others as often as your can." These good works are not based on "living by faith," but rather "living by sight." Living by faith begins with believing God's Word. We must believe what the Scriptures say concerning sin and ourselves. And we must believe what the Bible says concerning Christ.

Living by faith begins when we repent of our sins and place our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. This doctrine absolutely confounds the minds of unregenerate men, but to us it is eternal life. We trust God while we yet live. We look to Him to provide our needs. We follow Him day by day. Christians are a people who trust God even when conventional "Wisdom" says to do otherwise. We believe God does right even in the midst of our trials. Heaven, as well as the Holy Spirit, cannot be seen, but we believe they are ours. All these things are possible because God has changed our walk; we now walk by faith.

GOD CHANGES OUR WORK

When our walk is changed, our work will also change. **"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men"** (II Cor. 5:11). Once we are saved, our work here on earth becomes about much more than simply getting a paycheck. But what is our mission and our work here on earth? Is it not the Great Commission? Jesus said, **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"** (Matt. 28:19-20). Our work is now concerned with convincing men to come to Christ. Our passion is to see lost

souls saved. Whatever secular vocation we have here on earth, it is ultimately for the honor and glory of God in seeing lost souls saved.

Paul says **"we persuade men."** This is why we pray, witness, pay tithes, and invite men and women to attend church. Paul tells the Corinthians, **"For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us"** (II Cor. 5:13-14). We do not work on this earth for our own benefit. But we are here for the glory of Christ, and for the benefit of others. A former pastor once told me, "There is no prestige in pastoring an Independent Baptist Church." If a man approaches the ministry with the mindset that he will find status and prestige, he is in the wrong profession. Let him be a politician, an actor, or a sports figure. The work of Christ is for the glory of Christ, not the honor of men. **"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Gal. 6:14). We ought to be constrained by the "love of Christ," not vain enterprises such as fame and fortune.

GOD CHANGES EVERYTHING

Paul tells us, **"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."** We know we are saved because of the change which has taken place in our life. If there is no change present, then Christ does not abide with that individual, and they are yet outside the ark of safety. The Lord changes us completely. Yes, we will still stumble and fall in sin but God has given us a new heart with new desires.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself

by Jesus Christ. . . 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. 5:18, 21). Though we were once sinners, lost and undone, God has changed us. He has saved us and reconciled us by His grace. We are now deemed holy and righteous in the sight of God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "God does the saving," therefore, God must also do the changing. And He will most definitely change those that belong to Him. And we ought to rejoice in that fact, because we cannot change ourselves.



True and False

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system of religion set forth in the Scripture completely strips man of any goodness or righteousness causing him to depend entirely upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as his only basis of acceptance with God. False religion is based upon man's supposed abilities and achievements, whereas true religion is based solely upon the performance of Jesus Christ. False religion exalts the works of man, true religion exalts the work of Christ. False religion emphasizes fleshly performance, true religion emphasizes the sovereign grace of God. False religion reasons that man is somewhat good, true religion acknowledges that God alone is essentially good and that all righteousness must flow from Him.

As an antidote to the spreading heresy of legalism, Paul exposes the falsehood of works salvation and shows the character of genuine spiritual religion. To further emphasize his point, Paul cites his own personal pedigree

and experience to prove that trusting in the flesh was vain and unprofitable in comparison to faith in the finished work of Christ as the only means of acceptance with God. May God be pleased to enlighten our eyes to discern and distinguish between the true and the false systems of worship.

THE TRUE SOURCE OF JOY v. 1

"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe" (Phil. 3:1).

1. The word **"finally"** used to begin this chapter would seem to indicate a summation and conclusion of the epistle. However, the Greek word literally means "as for the rest," meaning that Paul uses this word to introduce a transition to another subject matter.

2. Paul then reiterates what he has emphasized throughout the epistle, namely that the source of the believer's joy is bound up in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we meditate upon the person of Jesus Christ our hearts should fill with joy unspeakable. He is the God-man who willingly left His throne in glory to be identified with man in His incarnation. Christ demonstrated that He is the Righteous Branch, the Just One, the Altogether Lovely One by fulfilling the law for His people. He demonstrated His great love by willingly offering Himself up as a sacrifice to pay the sin debt and suffer the penalty of the law on behalf of His people. He rose again from the dead to prove He was the Son of God sent to put away the elect's sins. He ascended into Heaven at the Father's right hand to make intercession as

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True and False

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our Great High Priest. He has promised to come again to glorify and conform His people to His very image of holiness. These are all good reasons why the saint of God can and should rejoice in the Lord.

3. You can tell a lot about a man's spiritual condition by determining what he considers to be his source of joy and happiness. The carnal worldling delights in possessions, power, and prestige. His happiness is based upon the superficial and temporal, things that he can experience with his natural senses. The believer in Christ, on the other hand, finds as his source of satisfaction and delight a genuine, living relationship with Christ. His joys are bound up in His Lord who has forgiven him of his sins, justified him from all things, enabled him to fellowship with the Almighty, and secured for him a place in Heaven. His joy is based upon the spiritual and eternal realities of union with the living Christ.

Thus, the repeated command to rejoice in the Lord was not grievous for Paul to write. Rather he considered it a point of duty that could not be overemphasized as his inspired writings clearly reveal.

3. Paul also reveals that his purpose in commanding the Philippian believers to rejoice in the Lord came out of concern for their safety. The dangerous teaching of works salvation was spreading rapidly. Even though it had not yet arrived at Philippi, Paul knew that the Judaizers would soon seek to infect the new believers with legalism. Legalists are those who teach that salvation in whole or in part is based upon the works and

merits of the individual. They insist that salvation is attained by human effort rather than in the Lord alone. The logical end of their teaching directs individuals to trust and rejoice in their own goodness, performance of religious rites, observance of the ordinances, and measuring up to certain arbitrary standards. The reason why such teaching is so dangerous and damnable is that it leads men to trust in themselves rather than in the finished work of Christ alone as a means of salvation.

CHARACTER OF FALSE WORSHIPPERS v. 2

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (Phil. 3:2).

1. This verse contains a strong warning against legalism by

exposing the character of its adherents. Three times the word **"beware"** is used to arrest the attention of the reader. Paul then uses three terms of derision to describe the character and teachings of the Judaizers who were promoting works salvation. The warning contained in this verse should be applied to anyone who is guilty of promoting works salvation in its various forms. Just as Paul fearlessly exposed error, we should likewise sound a warning against all who would seek to pervert the Gospel of the grace of God. Titus 1:9-11 declares our solemn duty: **"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are**

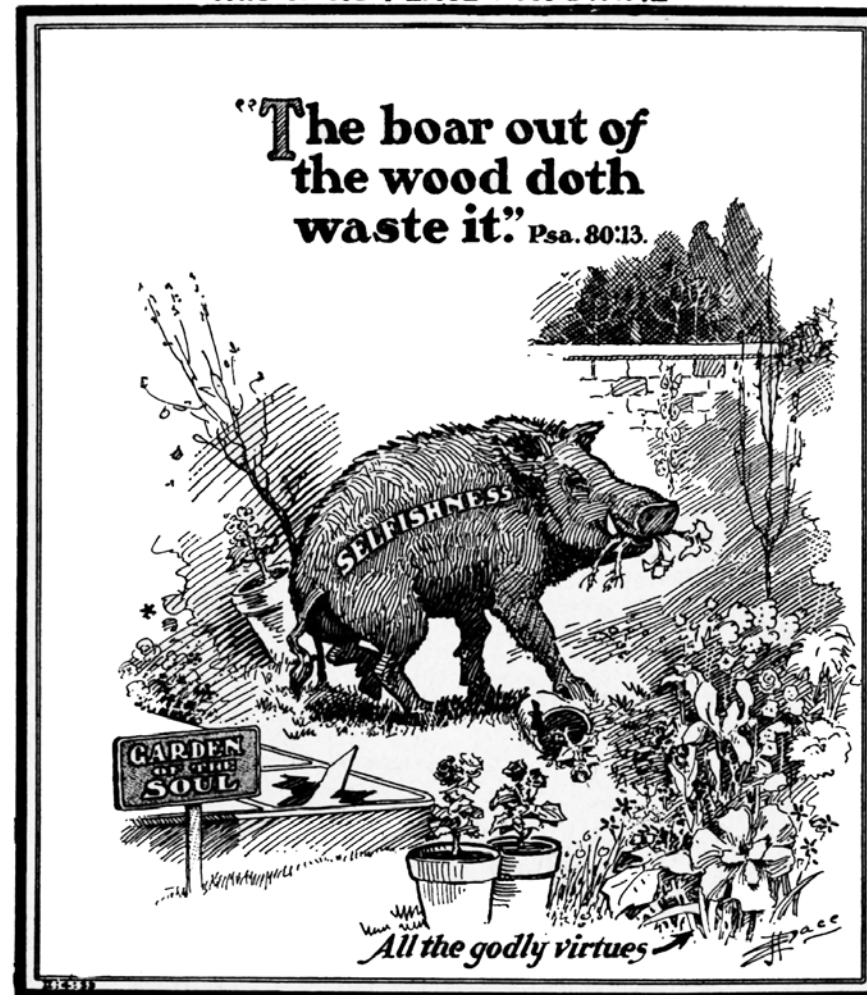
many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

2. The teachers and adherents of works salvation are referred to as **"dogs."** This was a term of contempt among Jews and Greeks. In fact, the Jews often described the Gentiles as unclean dogs. It was used to denote a person that was shameless, stubborn, malignant, snarling, and contentious. Paul is thus warning the believers against the impure barking of the legalists who were trying to pervert the Gospel of free grace. These unclean Judaizers wandered about as dogs seeking to devour unwary prey through their false teaching. They were also guilty of snarling and fighting against the precious truths of the grace of God. We have many such dogs in our day who are found fighting against the doctrines of free and sovereign grace. There are Catholic dogs, Charismatic dogs, Campbellite dogs, and Calminian dogs who are promoting a salvation based on man's free will and good works. The doctrines they spew forth are as unclean and full of poison as vomit, and should be avoided by the saints of God.

3. The legalists were also referred to as **"evil workers"** because they were employed by the Evil One (Satan) to spread evil heresies. II Corinthians 11:13-15 describes them thusly: **"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great**

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THIS IS NO PLACE FOR SWINE



True and False

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thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

Anyone who teaches that an individual may be saved in part by faith in Christ, and in part by their own good works is an **"evil worker."** It is a terrible evil to say that human works, which God considers to be nothing more than filthy rags (Isa. 64:6), can somehow contribute to an individual's acceptance with God. Believers are accepted in the Beloved, on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ, not on any works which they have done (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:5). Thus we must conclude that those who teach that salvation may be obtained or maintained by good works, baptism, church membership, or sacraments are **"evil workers"** whose teachings and influence are to be avoided.

4. The final term of derision used by Paul to describe the legalistic Judaizers was a play on words. The legalists insisted that believers be circumcised to complete their salvation. Paul declares that such teachers, rather than being partakers of the internal circumcision of the heart in regeneration, were in reality the **"concision,"** mere mutilators of the flesh. By declaring that circumcision was necessary for salvation, they were guilty of mutilating the message of the Gospel. Hence these legalists, who boasted of their outward circumstances would in reality be cut off in judgment for trusting in a ritual rather than in Christ. There are many religious in our day who are guilty of mutilating the message of the Gospel by adding

various rituals and requirements to the finished work of Christ. Those who promote the idea that salvation can only be completed by the performance of men are in reality saying that the blood of Jesus Christ is not enough to redeem a soul. It is the height of blasphemy to presume that the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ needs to be supplemented by the works of men in order to be saved! What a solemn day it will be for all the adherents of works salvation who boast on their merits when they hear Jesus Christ declare: **"I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Matt. 7:23).

CHARACTER OF TRUE WORSHIPPERS v. 3

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

1. The circumcision that Paul refers to in this verse is not an external cutting of the flesh, but rather an internal work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of regeneration. The children of God are partakers of an inward, spiritual operation performed by the Holy Spirit which sets them apart from the service of God (Rom. 2:28-29). The legalists were declaring they were the true people of God because of their adherences to an outward ritual. Paul says the true people of God, the circumcision, are those who have been made new creatures by the power of God. Galatians 6:15 declares: **"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."** I like John Gill's comment describing the circumcision of the heart:

"Which lies in being pricked to the heart under a true sense of sin; in having the hardness of the

heart removed, and the iniquity of it laid to open view; in pain and contrition of heart about it, joined with shame for it, and loathing of it, the consequence of which is, a putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, according to the former conversation; and also in a renouncing a man's own righteousness in point of justification before God, and acceptance with Him. All which is a work of God, and not man, and is therefore called the circumcision made without hands; it has God, and not man, for its author; and its praise is of God, and not of men; and its seat is in the heart and spirit, not in the flesh; and such whose hearts are circumcised to love the Lord their God and fear Him, are the true circumcision."

2. True worshippers are identified as those **"which worship God in the spirit,"** meaning their worship is spiritual in nature as opposed to a carnal, formal, ritualistic worship. True worshippers are prompted by the Holy Spirit of God to offer up praise and thanksgiving to the Lord regardless of the place or time. They are not like the Pharisees, who drew nigh to God outwardly with their lips, but whose hearts were far from Him (Mark 7:6-8). Rather, the true children of God worship the Lord in a sincere and spiritual manner as prescribed by Jesus in John 4:24: **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."** This does not mean that their worship is never expressed publically or outwardly. It means that their worship comes from a heart that is overwhelmed by the love of God, directed by the Spirit, and according to the truth of the Word of God. Oh, that God would raise up more true

worshippers whose hearts are devoted entirely to pleasing and honoring the Lord!

3. True worshippers are further characterized by rejoicing **"in Christ Jesus."** They rejoice that they are united to and have an interest in Christ Jesus, the Lord of glory. They rejoice that they have received the righteousness of Christ by faith and are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ. They do not glory, trust, or boast in their own works, but rather in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. True worshippers know that all of their worship is in vain apart from Jesus Christ as Hebrews 13:15 implies: **"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."** Like Paul, true worshippers proclaim: **"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"** (Gal. 6:14).

4. Finally the true worshippers are identified as those who **"have no confidence in the flesh"** meaning that they do not trust in their own religious performances or outward ordinances. They have been stripped of their self-righteousness and self-trust to see the true nature of their flesh. They have been enlightened by the Spirit to see that the flesh profits nothing. Their confidence is not in themselves, but rather in Christ alone. Those who are trusting their good works for salvation in the slightest degree whatsoever are not true worshippers according to this verse. God will not accept the worship of those who are not depending entirely upon Christ and His righteousness alone.

EXPOSING THE ABSOLUTE

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True and False

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VANITY

OF FLESHLY TRUST vs. 4-7

“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ” (Phil. 3:4-7).

1. Paul now proceeds to show the absolute folly of trusting in one's pedigree, religious performances, or personal righteousness for salvation. He states that if there was ever a man who had reason to trust in and have confidence in the flesh it was him. From his own personal experience he proves that the very best of human merit is nothing in comparison with the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. He shows the fallacy of trusting in your birth-right or bloodline. Salvation is not inherited. Paul was an Israelite who had been circumcised the eighth day after his birth just as the law required. He was not an unclean, uncircumcised Gentile, but a natural Jew. In fact, he was of the tribe of Benjamin, the only tribe that did not forsake Judah when the kingdom split. The tribe of Benjamin maintained its allegiance to the true worship of God. In fact, Benjamites lived in close proximity to the Temple which was regarded as the most sacred spot by the Jews. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews, meaning

that both his father and mother were Israelites, not tainted with Gentile blood. If salvation could come through one's lineage, then Paul would certainly have qualified. However, the Scriptures teach otherwise: **“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”** (John 1:13).

3. Paul next refutes the false idea that strict adherence to religious standards and laws is necessary to secure salvation. He was a member of the religious order known as the Pharisees. They were the strictest religious sect that existed in Israel. They were careful to adhere to the very letter of the law as well as the various traditions and standards that had been arbitrarily established by their forbears. They were considered to be the most outwardly pious and respectable citizens among the Jews. Judging by man's outward standards Paul could say of his own conduct **“touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”** Paul was such a fervent lawkeeper that the Jews in his day could find no outward blemish in his conduct. If salvation could be achieved by strict lawkeeping and observance of religious standards Paul certainly would have qualified. The Jews, like most people who adhere to works salvation, failed to see the spirituality and breadth of the law as well as the true nature of sin. It was not until Paul came under Holy Spirit conviction that he realized how far short he had fallen from observing God's perfect standard. Romans 7:9-10 describes his experience: **“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found**

to be unto death.” The entire Book of Galatians is devoted to refuting the false idea that people can gain acceptance with God by keeping the law or observing certain religious standards and rituals. Galatians 2:16 declares: **“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”**

4. Paul finally proves that religious sincerity and zeal cannot make an individual worthy of salvation. As a Pharisee, he was sincerely committed to stamping out the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. As other Jews watched Paul persecute and accuse Christians they must have said: **“Look at his zeal for Jehovah.”** He considered the religion of Christ to be a real threat to the religion and traditions of the Jews so he launched an all out attack upon the followers of Christ. He gained permission from authorities to hunt down Christians, drag them out of their homes, and commit them to prison, and even death (Acts 22:3-4). His religious zeal was unmatched, as he himself testified in Galatians 1:13-14: **“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.”** Yet religious zeal and sincerity will not secure an individual's salvation. There are literally millions of people in various religions who are sincere and

earnest in their belief that they can earn or maintain God's salvation by their performance. However Proverbs 14:12 declares: **“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”**

5. In verse seven Paul completely refutes the notion that pedigree, human righteousness, and religious zeal can in no way measure up to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The very things that Paul and his fellow Jews thought would cause them to gain salvation, he now counted loss for Christ. He is stating that the very best religious acts and good works you can muster cannot even compare to the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Paul regarded all his religious attainments as false sources of truth and hindrances to salvation in Christ. He abandoned all his legal righteousness and personal reputation among the Jews to completely and totally dedicate himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. For Paul, and all true Christians, salvation is bound up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Dear reader, it is my earnest prayer that God will enable you to see the folly of trusting in your good works and religious performances. The very best works you have are unclean and abominable in the eyes of a perfectly Holy and Just God. Abandon your false hopes, stop trusting in your supposed self-righteousness, and flee to the Lord Jesus Christ, counting all things but loss for Him. Stop trusting yourself and your religion and **“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart. . .”** (Prov. 3:5).





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Christ in the Old Testament

The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus and spoke to them about the prophecies about Himself in the Old Testament. Luke 24:25-27 relates: **"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."**

These words from the Savior Himself show that the Old Testament was concerned with the Person and work of the Messiah. There were revelations of Him scattered throughout all the Old Testament Scriptures which testifies of Him (John 5:39). The law, the psalms, and the prophets bore witness to the coming Messiah. Those who ignore or play down the Old Testament miss much valuable information about the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

TITLES OF CHRIST

The titles given to Christ constitute an important aspect of the total revelation of Christ's person. Some of these have to do with His preincarnate state; others with His incarnate state.

A comparison of the Old Testament and the New Testament passages proves that Jesus Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. While this title belongs equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit and the Trinity

as a whole, we cannot fail to see that in most cases it is applied to Jesus Christ. Those Scriptures which link Christ with Jehovah prove beyond any question the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, especially since Jehovah is never applied to any but God in the Old Testament.

Those of us who read the King James Version never see the word "Jehovah" very much. The translators of our version translated the Hebrew "Yahweh" by the word "LORD." They always spelled the word in capital letters. Thus when we see LORD in the Old Testament, we know the reference is to Jehovah. The American Standard Version more properly translates the word "Jehovah." When the New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament passages containing the word "Jehovah" they used the Greek word "kyries" which means "Lord."

In Zechariah 12:10 Jehovah speaks: **"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced."** Revelation 1:7 describes Christ in this manner. In Jeremiah 23:6 it is written: **"THE LORD (Jehovah) OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."** In I Corinthians 1:30 Christ is made the believer's righteousness. We hear Jehovah say: **"I am the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he"** (Isa. 41:4). In Revelation this is said of Christ (Rev. 1:8, 17; 22:13, 16). Compare Psalms 68:18 with Ephesians 4:8-

10, and also Isaiah 8:13-14 with I Peter 2:7-8.

We are distinctly told in Malachi 3:1 that Jehovah will come to His temple. The New Testament reveals that Christ is the Jehovah of the temple (Luke 19:46). The temple could not be Christ's unless He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. The Sabbath was Jehovah's day (Ex. 20:10-11). Christ styled Himself: **"Lord (Jehovah) of the Sabbath"** (Mark 2:28).

There is also abundant evidence in the Old Testament that Christ was called "Elohim," the Hebrew word for "God." In Isaiah 40:3 Christ is spoken of as Jehovah and Elohim, or Lord and God. In Mark 1:1-3 this verse is quoted and applied to Christ. This expressly teaches Elohim in the Old Testament is God in the New Testament. In the New Testament Christ is called "theos" which is the Greek word for "God." If Christ is the Elohim of the Old Testament, then He is seen in Genesis 1:1 as the God of creation, for God in this verse is Elohim.

Various other names are applied to Christ in the Old Testament. He is called Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:22), Branch of Righteousness (Jer. 33:15), the Root of Jesse (Isa. 11:1), Child (Isa. 9:6), Desire of all Nations (Hag. 2:7), Immanuel (Isa. 7:14), Everlasting Father (Isa. 9:6), Counsellor (Isa. 9:6), King of glory (Ps. 24:7, 10), King of Zion (Ps. 2:6), Redeemer (Job 19:25), Righteous Branch (Jer. 23:5), Righteous Servant (Isa. 53:11), Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), Shiloh (Gen. 49:10), Son of God (Dan. 3:25), Star out of Israel (Num. 24:17), Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), Sure Foundation (Isa. 28:16), Tried Stone (Isa. 28:16), and Wonderful (Isa. 9:6).

ANGEL OF THE LORD

One of the most significant titles given to Christ in the Old Testament is the Angel of the Lord. A study of the passages where this title is found will convince one that the Angel of the Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ.

I myself am convinced that every theophany was really a Christophany in the Old Testament. I hold this view because of two statements in the Gospel of John. The first is found in John 1:18: **"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."** The other is found in John 5:37: **"And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."**

It appears to me from such Scriptures, Christ must have been the Person of the Godhead Who appeared in the different forms and shapes in the Old Testament. The Spirit and the Father did not reveal themselves in those times. It is only logical that the same Person of the Trinity should appear in bodily form in both Testaments. There is no mention of the Angel of the Lord after the incarnation of Christ. Thus the Angel of the Lord became incarnate.

When the Angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar, He was identified as the Lord (Gen. 16:6-13). The same is true in the account of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22:15-18). The terms Angel of the Lord and God are used interchangeably: **"And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from**

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all evil, bless the lads” (Gen. 48:15-16).

It is worth noting that this Angel is revealed as a distinct Person from Jehovah which proves the doctrine of the Trinity. In Zechariah 1:12-13 the Angel of the Lord addressed the Lord: **“Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words.”** (Other Scriptures affirm the deity of the Angel of Jehovah without trinitarian personal distinctions (Jud. 2:1-5; II Kings 19:35).

Meditation upon the many Old Testament passages reveals a remarkable breadth to the work of Christ for His people. Micah 5:2 informs us that Christ, or the Angel of Jehovah, had been eternally active before His incarnation. Christ was exceedingly active in the Old Dispensation calling men to service (Ex. 3:2; Jud. 6:11-24), guiding His people (Gen. 21:17-19; 22:11-18; 31:11; 48:15-16; Ex. 13:21; Jud. 13:3-23), judging sin (II Sam. 24:14-17; I Chron. 21:11-30; II Kings 19:35), and executing the providence of God (I Kings 19:5-7; Dan. 3:28; 6:22). Thus we see the Angel of the Lord was engaged in the continual ministry of God to His people during these Old Testament times.

CHRIST AS THE SAVIOR

God has never had but one way of saving lost sinners. The salvation of the Old Testament is the salvation of the New Testament. The only distinction is the Old Testament presents a prospective

Christ; the New Testament introduces a retrospective Christ. All salvation stems from the Son of God and His saving work on the cross.

The Lord passed over the sins of Old Testament saints (Rom. 3:24-26) with a view to Christ's redemption (Heb. 9:15). Salvation has always been by grace through faith in all dispensations of time (Rom. 4:1-16; Eph. 2:8-9). The Old Testament saints by faith looked forward to the coming of the Seed of the woman. They believed the promises of God as far as they were revealed.

Under the legal age, God provided an outward means of manifestation of faith in the coming Redeemer. This was by annual sacrifice. These sacrifices did not save (Heb. 10:4), but they declared the faith of those who truly expected salvation by the coming sacrifice of Christ.

From the time of Adam and Eve, Abel and Job, Abraham and David, Isaiah and Malachi, there was a remnant who believed in salvation by the coming Seed of the woman. Many Old Testament saints spoke plainly about the way of salvation. Job could say **“I know that my redeemer liveth”** (Job 19:25). Jeremiah wrote: **“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is”** (Jer. 17:7).

The book of Psalms often makes a reference to salvation by faith in the coming Messiah. In Psalm 2, verse 12, we are told: **“Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”** Psalm 37:39-40 speak in no uncertain sound: **“But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in**

him.”

CHRIST IN TYPOLOGY

One finds in the Old Testament an inexhaustible supply of types of Christ. Typology contributes much to the Christology of the Old Testament. We must beware of making too little of these types. On the other hand, we must avoid making too much of them. Such persons as Adam, Abel, Aaron, Boaz, Benjamin, David, Isaac, Joseph, Joshua, Melchizedek, Moses, and others were certainly types of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such things as Noah's ark, the rock Moses struck, the manna in the wilderness, Aaron's rod that budded, the brazen serpent, and other things pointed to Christ. The tabernacle, the temple, the sacrifices, the priesthood, the feasts, and the cities of refuge represented Christ.

Taken as a whole, the typical ceremonies and institutions of

the Old Testament had as their major theme the Person and work of Jesus Christ. They formed an important part of the progressive revelation of salvation by Christ's redemption. These wonderful types are exceeded only by the antitype in the New Testament.

MESSIANIC PROPHECY

In the Old Testament there are numerous prophecies of the coming Messiah. Many of these predictions were fulfilled at Christ's first advent; other prophecies await His second advent. But ultimately all prophecies will have a literal fulfillment. The Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament are legions. Space will permit me to call attention to only a few of these.

The Old Testament presents Christ in every book. In Genesis He is the Seed of the woman. In Exodus He is the Passover Lamb. In Leviticus He is the atoning Sacrifice. In Numbers He is the smitten Rock. In Deuteronomy He is the Prophet. In Joshua He is the Captain of the Lord's host. In Judges He is the great Deliverer. In Ruth He is the heavenly Kinsman. In the six books of Kings He is the promised King. In Ezra He is the Restorer of the Temple. In Nehemiah He is the Restorer of the nation. In Esther He is the Advocate and Propitiator. In Job He is my Redeemer. In Psalms He is the Shepherd and the King. In Proverbs He is my Pattern. In Ecclesiastes He is my Goal. In the Songs of Solomon He is my Satisfier. In the prophets He is the coming Prince of Peace.

HIS BIRTH

Much is written about the nativity of Christ. The Messianic line is traced from Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:15), through Seth (Gen. 4:25), through Noah (Gen. 6-9)

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DON'T COMPLAIN IF YOUR READING BASKET IS EMPTY!



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to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). His lineage goes through Isaac (Gen. 17:19), Jacob (Gen. 28:14), Judah (Gen. 49:10), through Boaz, Jesse, and David (II Sam. 7:12-13). Then the accounts in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 complete what is lacking in the Old Testament genealogies.

There are prophecies about the Messiah's birth which are very detailed. Micah 5:2 discloses that Christ would be born in Bethlehem of Judah. Isaiah 7:14 makes known He would be born of a virgin from the royal family of King David. Genesis 49:10 indicates His birth would occur before the destruction of the Jewish government. Daniel 9:24-27 reveals the Messiah would be crucified after 483 years from the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem.

HIS PERSON AND LIFE

Old Testament predictions reveal much about the Person and work of Christ. There is evidence of His deity and His humanity. His humanity is seen from Genesis 3:15 where He is called "the seed of the woman." His deity can be discovered from His supernatural birth in Isaiah 7:14. The same Scripture tells us He would be "**God with us.**" The two natures of the Messiah are seen in Isaiah 9:6 in the expressions "**a child is born**" and "**a son is given.**" This same child is called "**the mighty God**" in this same verse.

Prophecies in the Old Testament concern the life of Christ. These generally foretold that He would fill the threefold office: of prophet, priest, and king. Moses predicted the Messiah would be a prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. His priestly office is seen in I Samuel 2:35 and Psalm 110:4. Zechariah 6:13 combines His priestly and

kingly offices.

The kingly office is the most prominent in the Old Testament prophecies. It is first presented in Genesis 49:10. In Numbers 24:17 the prediction is made more definite. II Samuel 7:12-16 reveals the King will be of the house of David. Psalm 2 discloses the King Messiah will be the King of Zion. In Isaiah there are numerous verses which deal with His reign as King of Zion (Isa. 2:1-4; 4:1-6; 9:6-7; 24:23; 32:1; 49:7; 52:15). There is in chapter 11 of Isaiah a picture of the rule of the coming King. Jeremiah 23:5-6 adds light to this future kingdom and its King.

The Saviorhood of Christ is frequently presented in the Old Testament. Isaiah 53 is the classic passage on the saving work of Christ. Psalm 22 pictures His suffering and death. Zechariah 13:7 shows the Shepherd being smitten. Psalm 16:10 predicts the resurrection of Christ (Acts 13:34-37).

DO YOU KNOW CHRIST?

The Old Testament Scriptures presented Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinners. Of Timothy it is written: "**And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**" (II Tim. 3:15). The reference is to the Old Testament here, for the New Testament was not written when Timothy was only a child. Timothy could be brought to salvation by faith in Christ by reading the Old Testament, because all the prophets preached that through Christ's name "**whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins**" (Acts 10:43).

The New Testament was written to point sinners to salvation by faith in Jesus Christ who has

already come in fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. John 20:31 declares: "**But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**"

Sinner, do you believe that He came and died for sinners? Have you repented of your sins which crucified the Lord of glory? If so, then you have eternal life. If not, you are spiritually dead in your sins and into Heaven you shall never enter.



Gospel Grammar

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

Recently this preacher came across a so-called gospel tract. We term it a "so called" gospel tract because its approach to the truth was distorted: so distorted as to make the whole thing a lie. The basis of the tract was this, of course: God loves everyone and God wants to save everyone. If only they will "let Him" save them, by doing this or that – which of course sets forth two heresies. The first heresy is that God loves everyone and is trying to save everyone. Thus God is a failure and cannot save whom He wants to save. The second is a damnable heresy for it makes the new birth the result of human effort or works. The only difference between the ideas set forth in this tract and the Judaizers of Paul's day is in the works required for salvation. In Paul's day it was the work of circumcision and law keeping that added to Christ's work and brought salvation. The modern

idea is that "praying the sinner's prayer" or "calling on the name of the Lord" or "making a decision for Christ" or being "baptized" (take your choice) which is the required work necessary. Thus, just like those dealt with in the Book of Galatians, works are required to add to what Christ did. Christ's work, according to them, actually saves no one unless and until they "do" something. In this way the so-called gospel is not of grace, but of works.

The tract in question assured the reader not only of God's love for them, but also assured them that Christ was praying for them. The tract said that Christ was praying for all the lost! We wonder who would be so ignorant of God's Word as to think that Christ's prayers go unanswered! In the record of the resurrection of dead Lazarus we read: "**Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me**" (John 11:41-42). Now it is plain and clear: Jesus said that the Father always hears Him! Has something changed now that Jesus is with the Father? He said that He knew that God always heard His prayers. Now do not attempt such folderol as the little ditty that goes 'God always hears our prayers. Sometimes He answers yes, and sometimes He answers no.' That whole scheme is totally unbiblical and untrue! The Bible says, "**And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him**" (I John 5:14-

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15). This last verse is plain. It is clear: if God hears us, He gives us the things requested! It must be, then, according to these passages that either Jesus is not praying for the lost or God does not hear the prayers of His own dear Son. If prayers are heard, the petitions are granted! So which is it? Does God shut His ears and refuse to hear the prayers of His Son or is it that Christ is really not praying for all the lost?

Now the text used by the writer of said tract to attempt to prove that Christ is praying for the lost was this: Romans 8:34, to wit: **“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”** The tract writer latched onto **“maketh intercession for us”** as if **“us”** refers to all humans. We have no way of knowing whether the writer of the tract was purposefully deceptive or just plain ignorant of both grammar and common sense as well as the Bible. If this were an isolated case, while the instance would still be regrettable, it alone would not cause so much concern. But it is another example of people misunderstanding or misusing plural pronouns. Repeatedly we hear and read of this same thing: the misunderstanding or misuse of plural pronouns. This preacher is not an English teacher and does not pretend to be, but he does understand basic grammar. Are people so incapable of thinking and understanding what is meant by simple sentences in plain everyday English? We hope not! Are there people who would read the aforementioned tract and believe it is true that Jesus

is praying for them? Probably. But go to a drunk on skid row. Tell him that God loves him and that Jesus is praying for him and as he turns up his bottle of Listerine or pulls on his bottle of vanilla flavoring, he will think – and rightly think – if God loves me and Jesus is praying for me, I am all right. He is right in that: if God loves you and the Lord Jesus is praying for you, you are all right! Only spiritually blinded or improperly taught religious folk can swallow double-talk and double-think and say that God is trying to save everybody and at the same time say God is a success and not a failure. Those whom God loves will not be turned into hell and shall not be cast into the lake of fire. Jesus does not intercede in vain for anyone! It is no wonder that modern “Christians” live loose lives, dress like harlots and male prostitutes, swear like sailors, enjoy religious circuses, relish pornography, and worship at the idol of sports and money. There is no fear of God before their eyes. They think everything is OK because someone told them their little religious exercise coupled with the Lord’s intercession will get them to Heaven regardless. They know nothing by experience of practical holiness. They think God is like them – He tries but fails. Lost people have been “Christianized” by Arminian lies and liars and given false assurances of God’s love. They are filling most Baptist churches as well as others. If that is too strong for you, you are too bad off to see the truth.

A little common sense, please: if a relative of yours wrote a letter to you and said, ‘Your cousin John, my brother, mowed the family cemetery for us’ you would know what the writer meant. First of all, you share something

in common with the writer: you have a connection with the writer in that you are related either by blood or by marriage. You know of the cemetery mentioned and you know what the verb ‘to mow’ means. And you not only know who ‘John’ is, you know that he mowed for ‘us’ – that is, for those having an interest in the cemetery – the family, of course. What John did was on behalf of a specific family and not on behalf of all humanity. In other words, the plural pronoun ‘us’ does not refer to all humankind. If you received such a letter you would not have any reason to think that ‘us’ refers to more than the family – those connected with the family cemetery. Is that not reasonable and logical? To insist that the plural pronoun ‘us’ in this illustration means all humanity is ludicrous and at the same time ignorant.

Now when Paul wrote the Book of Romans he was writing to specific people: believers in Christ in Rome. In other words he wrote to saved people in that city. Logic and common sense cause reasonable and unbiased people to understand Paul’s “us” to refer to: 1) the writer of the statement; 2) and those people addressed – the saints in Rome; and 3) any others who share the same connection – the things common to both Paul and the saints in Rome – that is, to all saved people. So we can logically and reasonably conclude that Christ presently makes intercession for all saved persons. There is nothing here that even remotely suggests that Christ prays for lost people. Furthermore we have the example of Christ as stated in John 17:9 where the Lord Jesus prayed thus to His Father: **“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me;**

for they are thine.” Not only does logic and common sense indicate that “us” refers to saved folk only, here we have a plain statement where Christ prayed for His disciples and not for the the lost. In passing it is suggested that the reader consider and ponder the seventeenth chapter of John. It is one of the most particularistic portions of the Bible offering many contrasts between the world and the saints of God.

We cannot fathom how that any person supposedly knowledgeable in the Word of God would suggest that Christ is praying for the salvation of people who will never be saved. Do they think that God and Christ do not know who will be saved? And yet some religious printing “ministry” has published such a tract as mentioned earlier. But let us go on and briefly deal with the root cause of such an error. Aside from being illogical and devoid of common sense – and not understanding plain English – there is a prejudice that warps the thinking of many religious people. They approach the Bible already convinced that God loves everybody and is trying to save everybody. While God is beneficent toward all His creation, the Bible plainly, clearly and repeatedly says that there are some people whom God hates. Consider the following texts, please. **“The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth”** (Ps. 11:5). **“As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated”** (Rom. 9:13). **“The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man”** (Ps. 5:5, 6). **“These six things doth the**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Could you please show Scripture references that forbid the moderate and controlled use of alcoholic drinks such as wine and beer, by professing Christians? - South Carolina

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Every time I hear a Christian use the word moderation, moderate in this case, I shudder. So before I get to the answer, I want us to look at three people in the Bible that must have thought it was all right to do "all things in Moderation!" First, there was Eve. Here Eve is in the garden, looking everywhere but where she should be looking. She hears the serpent's plea, (paraphrased) Eve, you will not surely die, God knows that if you eat of this tree you will be like Him, and Eve, God did not say anything about tasting the fruit, He just does not want you to eat the fruit, and she thinks a little ole bite (moderation) will not hurt. Now our second character Adam comes along (I believe he was beside her the whole time this was going on, or at least watching at a short distance) and Eve says, I am not dead honey so we must be able to do "all things in moderation." So Adam takes this little bite thinking that this moderation thing sounds like a good idea. **"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"** (Pro. 16:25). And the rest is history.

Now allow me to bring in our third and final character. Oh,

there are many more but I do want to get to the answer. Our third person is David, King of Israel. You know the story of David in II Samuel 11-12 so I will cut to the chase. Again, I will paraphrase; Nathan confronts David about his adulterous affair with Bath-sheba and the murder of Uriah. Those who do believe "all things in moderation" will probably not want to read this next part. Again I will remind the reader I am paraphrasing here; you should study these things for yourself to see if they be so, you know the thus saith the Lord thing. Here is David's thinking; I only committed adultery with one woman it is not like I did it with the whole town, and I did not really kill Uriah, it was an act of war that he died.

By now I can hear some say that is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard. My reply, "IS IT, why?" I believe David was thinking he was not going to get caught because he was the king and no one would dare confront the king? David, like everyone else, justified and lied to himself, until he got caught. What are most people sorry for, really, that they sinned, or that they got caught? Christians will excuse their actions and then try to justify their excuses because they know they have been caught red-handed. Then making matters worse, they try to defend their sin while they make their excuses. It is a vicious circle. Beloved, when are we going to get it into our heads, every thought, every action and every word is

known of our Almighty Sovereign God?

I used to watch a child's TV show before I started grade school and this is what they would say at the end of every show. "Remember kids, you can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, BUT YOU CAN'T FOOL MOM." Well I never forgot that and beloved as hard as you try YOU CAN'T FOOL GOD!

I have always wondered how long it would have been before David would have repented if Nathan had not confronted him. Also, the way Nathan confronted David, which was God working through His servant Nathan. What if Nathan would have just said to David right out, did you lay with Bath-sheba? Did you kill her husband Uriah? We can only speculate what would have been David's reply but God never gave him the chance, that is why He is God! I am most thankful we serve such a God, are you not?

Now just in case the reader wants to refer to I Corinthians 6:12, and I Corinthians 10:23, or any other Scripture to refute what I have just said and defend their stand on "all things in moderation." I would ask before you do, please study the whole of those chapters along with Galatians 5:13 and I Peter chapter 2, paying attention to verse 16.

The answer to the question is simple but I want the questioner to think about what they are asking. And by the way you will only find the word "moderation" in the Bible one time (Philippians 4:5) and it means forbearance, gentleness, sweet reasonableness, not as Webster puts it, to drink in moderation.

So I said all that to say this, NO, I cannot show you one Scripture reference that forbids

the controlled use of alcoholic drinks, such as wine and beer, by professing Christians. Forget moderate/moderation because there is no such thing in the Word of God. I know of many who try hard to show that Scripture forbids the drinking of alcohol, but to no avail. The most popular is Proverbs 20:1; 23:31-32, but they do not teach abstinence.

What I will tell you though is "We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior." This is in the "Church Covenant" and to my knowledge it has been adopted by every New Testament Baptist Church I know of. Though it is not enforced it is agreed upon, or should be agreed upon, when anyone joins the church. You are making a covenant with that local church and agree to do as it teaches. Like we said, it is not enforced but should be.

I know of many preachers that have a bottle of Jack Daniels (whiskey) in their cupboard for medicinal purposes. And some say, well Paul told Timothy to drink wine because of stomach problems. Let me remind the reader of the word "little." **"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities"** (I Tim. 5:23).

The question before me as soon as I read it, was recognized as a

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. How does a Christian know they are in a backslidden condition? Would lack of Bible reading, attending church services, and a poor prayer life be signs? Email

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Yes, all the things mentioned above would definitely be signs of a backslidden condition. I think backsliding starts in the heart before any of the signs mentioned become full blown. Anytime we do not love the Lord like we ought, and fail to draw nigh to Him in prayer and communion we are already on the road to a backslidden condition and in need of revival. I offer the following list as indicators of a backslidden condition:

1. When fervent, earnest prayer ceases to be a vital and necessary part of your life (Luke 18:1; Eph. 6:18; I Thess. 5:17).

2. When the quest for Biblical truth ceases and you grow satisfied with your current knowledge of eternal things. You are backslidden when you lose your hunger and thirst for God's Word (I Pet. 2:1-3; II Pet. 3:18).

3. When what you know Biblically is not applied inwardly and experimentally. When what you know about God and His Word doesn't affect the way you live (Matt. 15:8-9; John 8:31; James 2:21-25).

4. When sports, recreation, and entertainment occupy a major block of time in your life. We are not to set our affections on earthly things or allow worldliness

to crowd out our worship and service to God (Col. 3:1-15; Phil. 3:7-17).

5. When the acquisition of money and material things becomes a dominant part of your thinking (Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:15-21).

6. When you can watch degrading movies on TV or the internet and read morally corrupt literature (Psalm 101:2-3).

7. When you can merely mouth hymns and spiritual songs without your heart being engaged (Eph. 5:17-20; Col 3:15-17).

8. When you cease to care about the welfare and unity of your church. You are backslidden when you do not love and care for the members of the body (Phil. 2:1-5; I Cor. 12:14-27).

9. When the slightest inconvenience or excuse is able to keep you from spiritual duty and service (Luke 14:18-21; Rom. 12:1-2).

10. When you become content with mediocrity and lack of spiritual power. You are backslidden if you are joyless, lifeless, and apathetic about spiritual things (Psalm 42:1-3).

11. When your tears are dried up. When you possess Biblical knowledge but have no compassion, no tenderness, or godly sorrow over sin. When you have no concern for lost souls you are backslidden (Psalm 126:5-6).

If you did not take the time to look up the Scriptures cited above you are probably backslidden. May God help us! **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and**

pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14).

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If truth be told, usually the last person to know that a Christian is backslidden- is the Christian that is backslidden... Selah! Think about it! Others will notice it before we typically will know that something is seriously wrong. That is because we are so good at deceiving ourselves and rationalizing away the evidences of our deviating walk. **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it"** (Jer. 17:9)?

To define a backslidden Christian- 1) A cold heart. 2) A stiff neck. 3) Rebellious walk. 4) Murmuring mouth. The Children of Israel are a good (bad) example of folk in a backslidden condition as they wander thru the wilderness of the Exodus and also after they arrive in Canaan in the book of Judges. Constantly at odds with God and His prophets, they are carnal and indifferent. **"Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)** Take heed,

brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:8-13).

Some things to watch out for in our lives, to determine whether we are in a backslidden condition (or sliding towards it) are found in Galatians 5:22-23, **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."** A thriving Christian will be generating these fruits listed here. We need to examine our lives often to verify that we are producing glory and honor to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Do we love? Loving God has always been a difficult medium to measure. But, God says that if we love Him, we will love the brethren. **"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also"** (I John 4:20-21). Love cannot really be measured emotionally by an exchange between lovers. "I love you," one will say. "I love you more," replies the other. Love is an action. A selfless, sacrificial action! **"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"**

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Gospel Grammar

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LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him... A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren (Prov. 6:16, 19). **"And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them"** (Lev. 20:23). **"Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished"** (Prov. 16:5). **"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons"** (Heb. 12:6-8). **"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him"** (John 14:21). **"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent"** (Rev. 3:19).

Surely to any honest mind, this multiplied evidence from the Bible must be sufficient to show that God does not love everyone. This preacher believes that God hates all people who were not chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world. Since God hates all workers of iniquity, it seems that the only way He loves His elect is that they are seen in Christ. They are seen in Christ because He chose them in Christ who is the Beloved. The Bible does say that some people were chosen in Christ before the foundation

of the world. **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"** (Eph. 1:4-5).

Concerning this election or choosing by God of some people, the old New Hampshire Baptist Confession – once extremely popular among Baptists in the South and West – says this about God's choice or election of some people to salvation: "...that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence". Reader, have you ascertained that you are among the elect of God? Election is not salvation, but is unto salvation. Only if you have had an experience of grace will you be able to understand and "ascertain" that you are indeed one of God's elect! The knowledge that God loves you as an individual and that He chose you to salvation is indeed "the foundation of Christian assurance" as these old Baptists believed. Such knowledge is not a mental understanding. If somebody told you that God loved you in presenting the gospel to you, they added to the gospel. They did what no New Testament preacher ever did in the Bible. The knowledge that God loves you and has chosen you is not a part of the gospel. Such knowledge is a part of an experience of grace and cannot be manufactured or duplicated by human efforts or a mere head knowledge of Scripture. If you lack such assurance as this, may God through His Word and by His Spirit enable you to ascertain

it.

In conclusion, let us be first of all reverential and then studious, thoughtful and careful in our reading and study of God's Book. In spite of preconceived notions, we can by the Spirit who authored the Bible, come to think God's thoughts after Him. We can know and understand the truth revealed in the Bible, but only when we let the Bible say what it says and not force our own prejudices upon it. Saint of God, you are special in God's eyes and Christ indeed **"is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"** - for you and every truly regenerate person. Amen and amen!



Forum #1

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loaded question. Many today want the preacher to answer this question in hopes that it will give them the big okay for social drink. Whether this was the intent of the questioner or not, I do not know, but I hope that is not the case. This preacher will never give a big thumbs up to social drinking. I have no problem keeping a bottle around if one thinks it will help to rid of a cold or the chills (medicinal purposes). I do not, but if it would help with the croup or the chills I would probably give it a try but there are no bottles in my home.

My dad has arthritis really bad in his hands; he is 92 and read where you put white raisins in a jar and cover them with gin and eat 11 raisins a day it will relieve the pain and stiffness. He swears by it and his hands look good. But again, that is a far cry from socially having a beer or other such beverages. I do not really see the need for a born again

child of God doing such. Ask your pastor the next time he gets a call from a wife that is a church member, and her husband just beat her half to death, who also is a member, but was out drinking with his golf or bowling buddies. Tell him that you would like to go along. From experience it is not a pretty sight, nor is it a pleasant one to go into that home when the man is so drunk he can't stand up and the kids are crying and screaming in their beds. Ask him (your preacher), I bet he will stop and pick you up and you can go watch the show. Beloved, it is not something you want to see, believe me. And nine times out of ten it all started out with the belief in "all things in moderation!"

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

"Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ" (I Pet. 3:16).

We are to be unspotted from the world, be different, walk the straight and narrow, walk a different path than the world. **"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water"** (Heb.

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Forum #1

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10:22). **"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"** (I Pet. 1:15-16). God Bless!

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I want to state at the outset that I possess a definite prejudice against the consumption of alcohol as a beverage. I am ashamed to say that I started drinking when I was 14 years old and was a drunkard until the Lord saved me at the age of 21. I have seen the abuse of beer, wine, and liquor destroy many individual lives, homes, and careers. I hate private and social drinking of alcohol as a beverage. I do not drink beer, wine or liquor as a beverage either privately or socially. By God's grace neither my wife, children or grandchildren have ever seen me drink alcohol as a beverage. The only exception to this rule in my life is when I observe the Lord's Supper at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. Our church has always used wine as the liquid element. I drink a thimble full of wine 4 or 5 times a year when observing the Lord's Supper. I am sure there have been times I used cough medicine that had a small amount of alcohol in it. Our church covenant forbids the drinking of alcohol as a beverage. As such I only see two exceptions where the drinking of alcohol is concerned. For sacred use in the observance of the Lord's

Supper and medicinally (Prov. 31:6-7; I Tim. 5:23).

Verses abound warning against the use and abuse of alcohol as a beverage. Proverbs 20:1 may be the most famous: **"wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."** Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11, 20-23; Isaiah 28:1, 7-8; Hosea 4:11-12; Amos 6:1-6; Habakkuk 2:5, 15-16; Ephesians 5:15-20 are all passages that warn against the use and abuse of alcohol as a beverage. Drinking is often linked to sexual immorality, perversity, lack of discernment, worldliness, sickness, poverty, and judgment. I know from personal experience of the terrors of the "devil in the bottle" and would heartily recommend everyone to stay away from it. I Thessalonians 5:21-22 declares: **"Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."**

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Many times, we as pastors are hit up with questions like this. Carefully worded questions, using liberal words like "moderate" and "give liberty" to try and get permission for us to engage in the sinful activities of the world. Typically the best response is to turn the question around. Instead of asking how much we can get away with and still be considered a "professing Christian," challenge them to see how holy they can live and still be considered a resident of this world! Selah! Think about

it!

Admittedly, this is a tough topic for the world to understand, but I do not believe that God's people will have any problem at all with the answers of this forum. Let us get to the Scriptures that forbid any alcohol at all (not just excessive). **"Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court"** (Ezek. 44:21). **"Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses"** (Lev. 10:9-11).

These two passages are outstanding! No moderate use of wine (whatever we may determine that to be); but completely banned. Abstinence is required! Let it be understood, however, that there is a context to this banning of wine. The first distinction made is that it is when the priests are "on duty," as it were. When their job requires them to be completely sober and aware of what is going on. The second passage in Leviticus goes on to say that this abstinence will make a difference between the holy and unholy/clean and unclean. I hope we desire to fall on the right side of those equations!

Next passage of abstinence... Proverbs 31:4-5, **"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted."** Now we move outside the realm of religion and

into government. The Bible here strictly forbids kings, princes, rulers and politicians from drinking wine. Holding positions of weighty authority (like the priests above), they are to be totally abstinent and sober. As this practical book typically does, the next verse shows the opposite pendulum swing. It tells us who is to be using wine (if worthy rulers are not)...vs 6-7, **"Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."** Wine is to be given (or left) to the perishing, the heavy-hearted, the poor, and the miserable! None of which qualifies the "professing Christian!" Selah! Think about it!

To put it simply, wine has ALWAYS been a dangerous thing. **"Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people"** (Hab 2:5). The abuse and excess of alcohol has broken more homes than can be numbered. Just when we think we have gotten it boxed (or bottled) in a moderate amount, this old heart's lusts will deceive us. **"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise"** (Prov. 20:1). The Bible is full of admonitions for moderation and temperance in this matter of controlling both the flesh and the alcohol. But I would like to see that in many situations (including our modern American scenario), abstinence is required!

"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep

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Forum #1

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sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober" (I Thess. 5:6-8). The Greek word the Apostle Paul uses here is "*nepho*" which *Strong's* defines as "to abstain from wine." That is what sober still means today! So twice in this passage, Paul is advocating abstention! Yes, the same Apostle that advocates wine medicinally for Timothy's stomach (I Tim. 5:23)! Obviously there is a difference between social drinking and cough syrup, even in the First Century AD...

The Apostle Peter uses this same word in I Peter 1:13-15, **"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."** He, like Paul, links this "sober abstinence" from wine with a holy lifestyle as obedient children, separated from former ignorant lusts.

So, knowing that there is a time and place for everything under the sun- is there a place for moderate or controlled drinking? Not for Priests! Not for Kings! Not for Obedient Children! Not while we are ON DUTY...! Beloved, being a Christian is not like being a carpenter. Christianity is a FULL-TIME job! How abominable to be just a "part-time" Christian! But that is when the Bible says it is okay for us to drink a moderate amount of alcohol- when we are off-duty... May the LORD help us to NEVER be off-duty Christians!

Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

(Continued from page 81) ♦

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:16-18).

Do we love the Bible? Another good test to find where our heart's treasure is! If we neglect the Word of God, then our hearts will grow colder. Do we love God's Commandments? **"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous"** (I John 5:3). Do we love the Lord's Baptist churches? Are we faithful to attend the services, support them with our tithes, and fellowship with joy and happiness? Do we love to pray to our Heavenly Father? Or do we just assume He knows all and neglect to commune with Him- heart to heart?

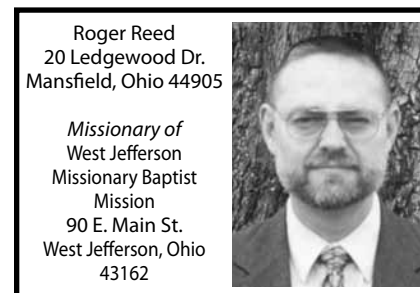
Going down the list of fruits, we can judge ourselves. Christian joy keeps a smile on our faces. If we are frowning too much, or lacking a whistle while we work, it is a serious sign of lack of fruit! Peace and contentment with the life the Master has given us, is imperative. Grumbling and complaining are signs of backsliding away from a godly walk, not satisfied with Christ Jesus alone!

A longsuffering attitude toward the world, both people and conditions, is fruit. Make sure of your perspective as a pilgrim in this world. Gentleness and goodness are traits that are lost quickly as one's heart gets cold in the absence a committed communion with Jesus our Saviour in our daily prayers. How harsh and bitter the world is, as it

seeps into our consciousness.

Faith, meekness and temperance in our life (or lack thereof) will be sure signs of whether we are a prosperous Christian. Always trusting, always helping, always concerned more about others than self. If any of these fruits are missing in your life, please get back into weekly church, daily Bible reading, and praying without ceasing! Selah! Think about it!

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When we eat food that is nutritious for the physical body we become strong and are able to do our physical labors. Take our food away and we become weak and sickly, unable to perform our daily tasks properly. Food is our lifeline to physical health.

It is the same with our spiritual body, take away Bible reading, attending church services, and a poor or nonexistence prayer life and yes, this would absolutely be signs of backsliding. These things are our lifeline for our spiritual health and spiritual wellbeing.

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness,

longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:9-16).

There is something though that causes our unwillingness not to read the Bible, go to church, and stop praying and it is a thing we like to call sin. In the above verses we see the very first verse says, **"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds"** (Col. 3:9). The thing I have seen the most in Christians is lying to one's self, the verse says **"Lie not one to another"** but I believe a person can lie to themselves as well as lying to others.

If we think everything is alright in our life and we are not too bad off, and of course we think we really are not in a sinful condition, then the old devil has us deceived. Backsliding is always manifested by preferring some earthly thing to the Lord. For some reason in today's society Christians do not want to admit they are wrong, and/or that they have made any mistakes (sin), and will not own up to it and repent. Here is the promise, **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (I John 1:9). But many will not because; once again, they are lying to themselves of their condition

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Forum #2

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before a Thrice Holy God!

I believe we all know when we are in a backslidden condition, so the answer is simple, do not lie about it to yourself, get back on your feet, brush yourself off, repent, and get with the program, Bible reading, attending church services, and start praying, that is why Paul said, **“Pray without ceasing”** (I Thess. 5:17). **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”** (Heb. 4:16).

Whatever occupies the chief place in our hearts and lives takes the place of God and becomes our god. We are constantly in danger; Israel was, of allowing visible things to usurp the place of the Eternal One, whom we see not. “When the Lord spake out of the midst of the fire in Horeb no manner of similitude was seen” (Deut. 4:15). To study more on backsliding: its cause and cure, look at Deuteronomy 4:23-31.

To be or stay in a backslidden condition is to allow Satan to rob us of our joy, the joy we have with the Blessed Saviour, walking hand in hand everyday with Him. Do not let Satan have that kind of control! God Bless!

ROGER REED



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.

VIRGINIA JUDGE RULES TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE LAW UNCONSTITUTIONAL

(WNS)--In what has become almost a foregone conclusion in challenges to state marriage laws, a Virginia judge Feb. 13 struck down that state's voter-approved prohibition of same-sex marriage. U.S. District Judge Arenda Wright Allen called the law upholding traditional marriage a violation of the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. “The court is compelled to conclude that Virginia's marriage laws unconstitutionally deny Virginia's gay and lesbian citizens the fundamental freedom to choose to marry,” she wrote. “Government interests in perpetuating traditions, shielding state matters from federal interference, and favoring one model of parenting over others must yield to this country's cherished protections that ensure the exercise of the private choices of the individual citizen regarding love and family.” Virginia is just the latest state to have marriage laws struck down by judges. At least one of those cases, if not all of them, will eventually end up before the U.S. Supreme Court. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia now allow same-sex marriage, and more than a dozen lawsuits are pending in states that ban the unions.

WALGREENS TERMINATES PHARMACIST OVER ABORTIFACIENT DRUGS

(WNS)--A pharmacist from Tennessee filed suit against drug store chain Walgreens in early

February, claiming the company fired him because he refused to dispense so-called “morning after” emergency contraceptives. Philip Hall worked as a pharmacist at a Walgreens in Jamestown, Tenn., for six years before he was fired in August 2013. Until then, the company accommodated his request not to fill prescriptions for drugs like Ella and Plan B. Emergency contraceptives are considered abortifacient drugs because they can prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus. Hall, a Baptist, told the company his faith prevented him from participating in abortions, a position he claims his supervisors honored. The company's decision to fire Hall violated both the federal Civil Rights Act and the Tennessee state constitution, his attorneys said.

KENTUCKY MARRIAGE LAW BECOMES LIBERAL COURTS' LATEST VICTIM

(WNS)--A federal judge struck down a portion of Kentucky's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage. U.S. District Judge John G. Heyburn II ruled on Feb. 12 that Kentucky should recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, leaving in place the ban on gay marriage within the state itself. Heyburn stated in a 23-page ruling that refusing to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states treats gay and lesbian spouses differently in a “way that demeans them.” Conservative groups lashed out against the ruling, saying it

violated the rights of states and their voters to set their own laws. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, called the ruling a “deep betrayal of a judicial system infected with activist judges who are legislating from the bench.”

FACEBOOK OFFERS 56 GENDER OPTIONS

(WNS)--Facebook upped its gender options for user profiles from the basic two to at least 56. Slate published a comprehensive list of choices, which includes bigender, transgender, pangender, gender fluid, and more. Both “Trans Female” and “Trans* Female” are options, though the difference between the two was not explained. Jeff Johnston, an issues analyst for Focus on the Family, said, “Of course Facebook is entitled to manage its wildly popular site as it sees fit, but here is the bottom line: It is impossible to deny the biological reality that humanity is divided into two halves—male and female.”

NEW YORK SUDDENLY SAFER FOR UNBORN BABIES

(WNS)--The New York City abortion rate, one of the highest in the country, dropped significantly between 2011 and 2012, according to newly released data from the city. In 2012, 37 percent of pregnancies ended in abortion in New York City, compared to 40 percent in 2011, continuing a downward trend. According to the Chiaroscuro Foundation, a pro-life group that analyzes the annual abortion data from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, this represents the lowest abortion rate since New York legalized abortion in 1970. The city had about 7,000 fewer abortions in 2012 compared to 2011, a drop to 73,815 total abortions for the year.

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AIR FORCE GIVES VET SERVICE AWARD AMID RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FIGHT

(WNS)--The U.S. Air Force has awarded its Meritorious Service Medal to a 19-year combat veteran who claimed his commanding officer fired him because of his views on same-sex marriage. Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Monk received the award, the second-highest non-combat recognition the Air Force can bestow, on Feb. 12. It is the best sign Monk will not be punished for filing a religious discrimination complaint, said Michael Berry, senior council with the Liberty Institute, which represents Monk. "This is a noble gesture by the Air Force to recognize Senior Master Sgt. Monk's hard work and sacrifice," Berry said in a statement. "I am pleased that they have done the right thing by him. Because of his example, other service members should be encouraged to stand up for their religious beliefs."

IS NORTH CAROLINA DISCRIMINATING AGAINST PRO-ABORTION DRIVERS?

(WNS)--A federal court has ruled North Carolina's "Choose Life" license plate violates the U.S. Constitution because the state does not also offer pro-abortion plates. Upholding a previous ruling by a federal judge, the three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Richmond, unanimously struck down the plate, claiming it seeks to "privilege speech on one side of the hotly debated issue—reproductive choice—while silencing opposing voices." In the court's opinion, Judge James Wynn said the legislature's decision to approve the plates while rejecting proposals for "Trust Women" and "Respect Choice" plates amounts to "blatant viewpoint discrimination squarely at odds with

the First Amendment."

FATHERS' FAITH KEY TO PASSING IT ON

(WNS)--The rate of children who adopt their parent's faith has remained stable in the past 40 years, despite increasingly anti-religious influences outside the home, according to research published in a new book, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down Across Generations*. The research found that six out of 10 people have adult children who share their religious affiliation, a rate that has remained steady for four decades. The book's lead researcher, professor Vern Bengtson of the University of Southern California, began studying 350 families in 1970 to understand why some people adopt the faith of their families while others reject it. He regularly interviewed the same families—a total of 3,500 individuals spanning four generations—until 2008.

BAMA BACKS DOWN CENSORSHIP OF PRO-LIFE DISPLAY

(WNS)--A University of Alabama administrator apologized in February for removing a pro-life display from the school's student center and said the pro-life student group would be allowed to put it back up. The Bama Students for Life (BSL) display featured the phrase, "Abortion—not safe—not rare—just legal," on a yellow, three-sided poster board. Surrounded by baby booties, the exhibit reported facts about the consequences of abortion, including that "abortion has killed enough people to fill Bryant Denny Stadium 550 times." Bryant-Denny Stadium is the university's football stadium, which has a spectator capacity of almost 102,000. The board also had photos of women who died after having abortions, two small pictures of aborted babies, and a photo of

abortionist Kermit Gosnell, who was convicted of first-degree murder for killing babies born alive.

FEDERAL JUDGE DECLARES TEXAS MARRIAGE LAW INVALID

(WNS)--A federal judge declared Texas' ban on gay marriage unconstitutional, but left it in place until an appeals court can rule on the case. Judge Orlando Garcia issued the preliminary injunction after two gay couples challenged a state constitutional amendment and a longstanding law. Garcia ruled the law violates the U.S. Constitution's equal protection and due process clauses by denying recognition of one couple's Massachusetts marriage and denying another couple the right to marry. The decision came exactly two weeks after a Feb. 12 hearing, and Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott will likely make an immediate appeal to the 5th U.S. Circuit of Appeals in New Orleans.

MORE BLACK BABIES ABORTED THAN BORN IN NEW YORK CITY

(WNS)--According to Mario Diaz, Concerned Women for America's legal counsel, more black babies were aborted in New York in 2012 than were born that year. He cites a report recently released by the City of New York. Diaz combed through the report to come to this startling conclusion: "There were 31,328 abortions of black babies and only 24,758 black children born. That's 6,570 more abortions than births. And it makes up almost half the total number of abortions in NYC. If you combine Hispanic women, who had 22,917 abortions, for about 31 percent of the total, these two minority groups alone make 73 percent of the total number of abortions!" Some have called such numbers a "black genocide," and it is hard to argue.

CREATION DEBATE ROILS BRYAN COLLEGE

(WNS)--In 1925, William Jennings Bryan defended a Biblical account of the origins of life at the Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tenn. This year, a statement on the origins of life has triggered a crisis at the lawyer's namesake, Bryan College, an 84-year-old evangelical, nondenominational institution. Students and faculty at Bryan are upset at a move last month by the school's board of trustees to "clarify" that the college believes Adam and Eve were historical figures created directly by God. The board says the clarification does not change the school's historical position on origins. But some at Bryan believe the board's action was intended to force out professors who may be sympathetic to evolution, and think it was unfair to do so at a time when faculty contracts are due for renewal. Last week the situation culminated in a faculty no-confidence vote for school President Stephen Livesay, and a petition drive that gathered more than 300 student signatures.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS CHURCH OF ENGLAND CLINGS TO TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE DESPITE "NEW REALITY" OF GAY UNIONS

(WNS)--The Church of England released new guidelines in February that forbid priests from blessing same-sex weddings, or marrying same-sex couples. Same-sex marriage is set to become legal in England next month. The legislation already bans the Church of England and its sister church in Wales from conducting same-sex services, but a church working group proposed last year that clergy allow religious services celebrating same-sex marriages and civil partnerships. England and Wales legalized secular same-sex civil partnerships in 2005. The church has

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continued to hold that marriage is between one man and one woman, and chose to uphold that stance during last week's meeting.

KIDNAPPERS TARGET CHRISTIAN CHILDREN IN EGYPT

(WNS)--Kerolas Adel Abdel-Malak, a 25-year-old Christian from Egypt, was on his way home from Minya City in late February when he was kidnapped at gunpoint and later held for ransom. Malak's attack is the most recent in a long list of Christian kidnappings in Minya province in Upper Egypt, 125 miles south of Cairo. At least eight similar cases were reported in the last two weeks alone. "Minya has probably the highest percentage of Christians in the country," said Todd Daniels, a regional spokesman for International Christian Concern. "In [Minya] province and villages, where most of the kidnappings happen, there is a lot of poverty." While Christians make up an estimated 50 percent of Minya's residents, they only amount to about 10 percent of Egypt's overall population.



Christ & Life

By E. D. Strickland
(1915 - 2003)

This generation is seeing its religious, emphasis placed on man, man's worth and achievements, his programs, and procedures. It is much more popular today to preach a program than to



proclaim the second person of the Trinity, Jesus the Christ.

Today I want to study with you some Scriptures dealing with the way of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:21 teaches **"if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."** Was the death of Jesus Christ empty, or in vain? Was it useless? It was vain if people could be saved or become righteous by keeping the law. Not one Jew was saved by keeping the law for no one ever kept it perfectly. If he kept the outward ceremonies and still had the wrong desires he was a law breaker. The law could not give life. It could take life but not give it. The law condemned the law breaker and made sin evident, or revealed the sinner guilty.

There are those who will admit we are no longer under the law of Moses, but seek to put mankind under other rules, regulations, ordinances, rituals, and legal obligations to obtain life.

Remember the law of Moses was given by God's Word, but it could not give life. There are many New Testament obligations and responsibilities, but they can no more give life than Moses law.

Eternal life comes only by God's Son. **"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"** (1 John 5:12).

And this life though God's Son is not held out to be obtained through some legal responsibility or by means of ordinances. God offers life through His Son as a free gift, **"but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"** (Rom. 6:23). How do we come into possession of that gift

which assures us of life eternal? How do we possess any gift? First, we believe that the one Who offers the gift is sincere in the offer to let us have the gift freely. Then we simply receive the gift without cost or deserving.

So we come into possession of eternal life and God's Son when we believe God to be sincere in His offer to give us life and receive the Son by faith. **"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"** (John 1:12).

To believe and receive a gift is one and the same thing. So it is with Christ, God's Son. To believe on Him is to receive Him and to receive Him is to possess life eternal.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). Everlasting life then is not on grounds of man's worth or merit, neither his works: for it is **"not by works of righteousness which we have done"** (Titus 3:5).

There is a common belief abroad that one may be saved partly by God through Christ and partly by man, either by oneself or another. Such a doctrine holds that one is saved partly on the merit of Christ and partly by what man himself does or produces. Some hold that Christ in His person and work was necessary, but not necessarily enough to save.

Just suppose one could be saved by Christ's merit plus man's merit. Such an one could go into the presence of God with this attitude: "Well, God I am here through the work of your Son and the added work which I did. Your Son Jesus did a lot for me. He suffered Hell for me

but it just was not enough. You know He had to do His part of the saving and I had to do mine. His part was good but it just was not enough. Had it not been for me doing my work to add to where Christ failed, I could not have been here. Do you not think you ought to congratulate me God? Your Son could not save me by Himself but where He failed, I made it up. After all, that makes me as much my own Saviour as He. I deserve this by what I did. I think I shall go around eternally singing:

"Jesus and I paid it all;

All to him and myself I owe

Sin had left a crimson stain

He and I washed it white as snow"

Friends you know that such an attitude is blasphemy, and such a proposition is not taught in the Word of God.

Eternal life is **"not of works lest any man should boast"** (Eph. 2:9). We are saved by grace (the merit of God's Son) and have not things of which to boast here. And as grace eliminates boasting here while we live, so shall there be no boasting in glory.

My friend, today if you are at all concerned about your eternal welfare consider Christ Jesus the person of God's Son, and His death on the tree as the unworthy sinner's substitute. Repent of your dead works. May your mind be changed about trusting in what you do. Repent toward God. May your mind be changed to see that God provided free forgiveness and salvation through the work of His Son for you. May you come to believe in Jesus Christ. May God bless you! (Scripture Notes, November 1984).



Five Identifying Marks of A True Church

By Perry Ames
Davenport, Washington

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15).

I. THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTIST BAPTISM.

A. Not for salvation (Jesus our high priest was without sin and did not need salvation) Heb. 4:15 says, **"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."**

B. Baptist baptism is sent by God through John the Baptist.

1. John 1:33 says, **"And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."**

2. Baptist baptism administered with authority fulfill righteousness! In Matthew 3:15, Jesus told John that He must be baptized by him to fulfill all righteousness.

C. Baptist baptism has AUTHORITY from God. Luke 3:23 tells us Jesus was about 30 years old when He walked more than 60 miles to be baptized of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:13).

1. Matthew 21:23-27, **"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and**

who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." John the Baptist had authority from Heaven!

2. Our Lord's churches received authority to baptize from Jesus. Matthew 28:18-20; and (John 20:21) **"...as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."** And Jesus was sent with authority!

D. Baptist baptism has the correct "mode" and pictures death, burial and resurrection.

1. John the Baptist buried Jesus in the waters of baptism. Matthew 3:16-17, **"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** God the Father was pleased with Jesus' obedience, the baptism's method and the authority of the administrator.

2. Baptism pictures death, i.e., dying to self, burial and resurrection to newness of life in Christ (Rom. 6:3-7).

E. Jesus' baptism signaled John the Baptist's decrease (John 3:30) and foreshadowed the fact that only saints with Baptist baptism are to be members of the Lord's church.

1. Baptist baptism is the doorway to membership into one of the Lord's churches. Act 2:41 confirms this truth, **"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."** That was on the first day of the week, which we know as Sunday.

F. Baptist baptism requires a "proper candidate."

1. The first act of obedience, after being saved, should be Baptist baptism.

2. Acts 8:35-37, **"... If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest..."**

II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF A TRUE CHURCH (EPH 5:23; COL 1:18).

A. Jesus started His church and earthly ministry, decently and in order by first receiving Baptist baptism in the river Jordan.

1. If you are saved you have been called to service and you are first act of obedience before embarking upon public ministry should be to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in obtaining Baptist baptism. Remember Jesus walked more than 60 miles for a holy, heaven sent Baptist baptism.

B. Secondly, Jesus demonstrated that **"...the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."**

1. **"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil"** (Matt. 4:1) 40 days (Luke 4:2; Mark 1:13).

2. Satan tempted Jesus by wresting Scripture. First the lust of flesh, second lust of eyes and third pride of life. You will be tempted the same way!

3. Jesus quenched all the fiery

darts of the wicked with the shield of faith. This is for our admonition!

C. After being tempted Jesus returned to Bethabara beyond Jordan where John was baptizing and started calling those that would be charter members.

1. Jesus' first publically recorded words after being baptized were **"What seek ye?"**

2. He says to two of John's disciples, **"Come and See."**

3. Then Jesus began calling disciples from people made ready and prepared for the Lord by the authority vested in John the Baptist (John 1:38-48; Luke 1:17).

4. These would be charter members and apostles in the church He would build (Matt. 16:18).

III. THE MESSAGE JESUS TAUGHT AND COMMANDED TO BE PREACHED.

A. The first mention of Jesus preaching in Mathew is 4:17. The message He was preaching was, **"Repent: for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."** Mathew 4:23 tells us Jesus went about all Galilee, **"Preaching the gospel of the kingdom."** In Matthew 10:7 Jesus commanded His disciples, **"as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."**

B. The first mention of Jesus preaching in Mark is Mark 1:14-15, where Jesus preached, **"the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."**

1. The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are not two separate gospels but are parallel with each other. Furthermore, by examining the Scriptures it appears Jesus preached the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God in the same message.

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Five Identifying

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2. Jesus began teaching those He called, the message to preach in His churches. That message was the gospel of the kingdom is at hand as found in Matthew 4:17, 23; 9:35; 10:7; and 24:14.

3. Matthew 25:1-13 exemplifies the message to be preached (the kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins).

4. There is debate about what these ten virgins represent but it is very clear, His church is to preach the message **"BE READY FOR THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH THE KINGDOM IS AT HAND."**

5. The kingdom of God is at hand is taught in Mark 1:14-15; Luke 8:1; 16:16; Acts 2:42; 8:12.

6. Look what Paul told an assembly of preachers in Acts 20:25-30. Paul preached the kingdom of God.

a. He warned about grievous wolves aka preachers who allow anything to gain a pew warmer or a preacher follower.

7. I Thessaloians 1:8-10, demonstrates what Paul was preaching in Acts 20:25 concerning the kingdom of God.

8. Jesus taught about the kingdom of God/heaven in John 14:1-6.

IV. THE PATTERN OUR LORD INSTITUTED FOR DOING MISSIONARY WORK.

A. Jude warns us of those that go the way of Cain. What was the way of Cain? **HE DID IT HIS WAY!**

B. Jesus' church is to be propagated according to the pattern He taught and demonstrated.

1. Jesus sent forth missionaries two by two (See Luke 10:1-4, 9). Luke 9:1-5 tells us the same thing.

C. In Acts 13:1-3 we read that the Church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas forth according to the pattern our Lord established.

1. The sending church is to follow up and confirm the work. See John 4:4, 24-25, 34-38; Acts 15:35-41 (Paul and Silas went confirming the churches); I Thess. 1:8-10 (The Holy Spirit saw fit to have Paul write of confirming their doctrine).

V. THE ORDINANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER: ITS PURPOSE AND INGREDIENTS.

A. The Lord's Supper is not for salvation and it is not a sacrament.

B. The ordinance is to be done in remembrance of Christ (I Cor. 11:23-25; Luke 22:19).

C. Unleavened bread is an ingredient of the Lord's Supper.

1. Exodus 12 describes the first Passover and it tells us they had unleavened bread.

a. The unleavened bread represents Christ's sinless body that was broken for us (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; I Cor. 10:16-17; 11:24).

D. Wine is the correct ingredient for the Lord's Supper. How do we know, Scripture, history, and common sense!

1. According to Scripture, our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper at Passover (Matt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-15).

2. From Scripture, we learn that the drink is representative of the precious sinless blood that was shed at Calvary (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; I Cor. 10:16; 11:25).

3. History tells us Orthodox Jews have used wine at Passover for thousands of generations.

a. To celebrate Passover, Orthodox Jews use wine labeled Kosher for Passover. Therefore, wine would have been the fruit of the vine that Jesus said to **"Drink**

ye all of it."

4. History also tells us that the use of wine for the Lord's Supper diminished with the women's temperance movement and prohibition.

5. Common sense demonstrates that natural fermentation turns grape juice into wine. James 1:15 tells us that **"sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."** So the leaven, a symbol of sin, when it is finished working is dead and there is no more leaven and no more work of sin.

a. The ancients did not have a way to preserve grape juice without fermentation.

E. There are those that say if a church has one ingredient of the Lord's Supper wrong they are off by 50%. I used to think that too, but I now recognize that their supper is 100% polluted and following the way of Cain.

The identifying marks we looked at were: 1. Baptist baptism, 2. The head of the Church is Jesus Christ, 3. The message is the one our Lord preached, taught and commanded to be taught, 4. Missionary work is done according to the pattern instituted by our Lord, and 5. The purpose and ingredients of the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Church is the only church that Jesus commanded to baptize and teach all things. As the pillar and ground of the truth, the Lord's churches should endeavor to do all things according to the Scriptures and not excuse error because the Corinthian church was still a church despite their error. Surely you recognize I Corinthians is a letter of rebuke. Churches that do not follow God's Word or leadership will have their candlestick removed. Extra-biblical methods of evangelism, baptizing, or using grape juice preserved by man's art is like what God told the children of Israel in

Exodus 20:25, **"And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it."**

In conclusion, are you saved? Are you a member of one of the Lord's churches? If you are saved and not a member of one of the Lord's churches, why not? Does the church you attend bear the marks of a true New Testament church? If not, is your church truly one of the Lord's churches?



Selections from
The Book That Will Suit You;
Or,
A Word for Every One

By James Smith
(1802 - 1862)

THE BELIEVER COMMENDED

"Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45).

Mary's faith was tried, for she was called to believe what no one else ever was; and the whole highly improbable. She was to believe that though a virgin, she should have a son; that though a sinner, her son should be pure and holy; that though her son, He should be, and be called the Son of the Highest; and that though her family was so poor, that she was espoused to a carpenter, yet God would give unto Him the throne of His father David. All this was directly opposed to appearances; but God spake, and Mary believed; this was the ground of her faith. She knew He always intended what He said, could perform all He promised, frequently did wondrous things, and never failed

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The Book That

(Continued from page 89) ♦

to fulfil His Word; therefore she surrendered herself up, and said, **“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”** She visited her cousin Elizabeth, told her the whole of the circumstances, and she said, “Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a fulfilment of those things which were told her from the Lord.” She honoured God by believing His word, and God honoured her by the testimony of her aged cousin. She was blessed of God, and He did fulfill all that He had spoken unto her.

Mary is proposed for one example. God hath spoken to us, He requires us to believe, and to every believer He will fulfill His Word. He speaks to our experience, and promises according to our wants. Are we guilty? Do our sins appear of a flagrant and alarming character? He says, **“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”** Do we believe this? Reader, do you? Do you believe that God calls you to Him, just as you are, and calls you on purpose to forgive you? That if you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sins, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness? This is the fact of the case, that God stands pledged to forgive every sinner who frankly confesses his sins at His throne, and to do so for His own name’s sake. Again, are you thirsting for grace and His Holy Spirit? He speaks to you, and says, **“When the poor and**

needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fadeth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” Do you believe this? God means it. He is faithful to His Word, and He cannot deny Himself. Once more; are you in perplexity, and know not which way to take? The Lord speaks to your case, He sympathizes with you, and says, **“I will bring the blind to a way which they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they had not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.”** Believest thou this? If so, **“Blessed is he that believeth, for there shall be a fulfilment of those things which were spoken by the Lord.”**

The promises are intended to disperse our fears, raise our expectations, exercise our faith, encourage us in our prayers, and fill us with joy and peace. Whoever believes them, and pleads them before God in prayer, will have them fulfilled to him to the very letter. To doubt them, is to reflect upon the veracity of God; to neglect them is to despise our own mercies; and to question the fulfilment of them, if we really believe them, is to question whether the promiser is God. His foreknowledge, unchangeableness, power, veracity, faith, fulness covenant, oath, and the blood of Jesus, all conspire to say, **“There shall be a fulfilment of those things which were spoken by the Lord.”** Let us, therefore, resist our fears, condemn our unbelief, confess our doubts before the Lord, and

seek for more faith. Our God giveth liberally and upbraideth not; He will give us more grace; and enable us to believe, not only to the saving of the soul, but will fill us with joy and peace in believing.

THE INQUIRY

“Is it peace?” (II Kings 9:17).

Peace is either agreement with man, or reconciliation with God: the former is important, the latter is invaluable. Peace with God is external, as proclaimed; internal, as enjoyed; or eternal, as promised. The first is in the gospel, the second in the heart, and the third in Heaven. It is in reference to peace with God that we ask the question, **“Is it peace?”**

Aged pilgrim, is it peace? Thou hast long been pacing the valley of Baca, thou hast passed through many changes, thou art approaching thy end; the snows of age are upon thy head, and the wrinkles of care upon thy brow, but is the peace of God in thy heart? Are thy prospects bright? Does the goodly land appear spread out before thee? Are thy evidences strong? Does faith cleave to the Rock? Does love burn like the fire upon the altar? Does hope hold like the anchor within the pier? Does devotion lead thee upward to thy God? Thou wilt soon be called to lay aside thy staff; to bid farewell to the gloomy desert; thy journey is almost ended, and it is important that the peace of God should keep thy heart.

Tired Christian, is it peace? Thy trials, though many, painful and tedious, are but proofs of thy heavenly Father’s love; they are sent in mercy, they come to convince thee that this is not thy rest. Thy Father’s wisdom chose them, His love sent them, and His mercy will sanctify them to thee:

they may alarm those who neglect their Bible, but they cannot injure a child of God. Thou art tried, but is it peace? Art thou looking to Jesus? He can hush the storm, and still the tempest. He is always near in trouble. Is thine eye fixed upon Him? Does thine heart repose on His tender love and faithful Word? Do you recognize the Lord’s hand in your trials? His hand is in them, whether you see it or no. He sends, bounds, and removes them: and it has often comforted the saint, to realize that the hand of the Lord is in every trial, trouble, and disappointment. Do you suffer as a Christian? With patience, with submission, with fear lest you should offend your God. If so, it is peace: all is well between God and thy soul.

Young believer, is it peace? You have lately forsaken the ranks of the enemy, and turned your back upon the world: are you relying simply on Jesus? No gospel-peace without this. Self must be renounced. **“JESUS ONLY,”** must be our motto. Except we rely wholly and only on Him for acceptance with God; except we look to His blood alone for pardon, and to His righteousness alone for justification, we cannot enjoy peace. Are you strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus? He has grace for you, every kind of grace: grace for suffering, and grace for service: and you must live upon the grace that is in Christ, or you can have no stable peace. Are you aiming to be useful? Happiness is closely allied to usefulness. Activity for God, from love to Jesus, will promote and maintain peace.

Sinner! is it peace? Oh, no. A dead calm there may be, but peace there cannot be. ---Peace! what, while you love sin! Peace! what,

♦ (Continued on page 91)

The Book That

(Continued from page 90) ♦

while you slight the Saviour! Peace! what, while you prefer the world to God! Peace! what, while you put off the evil day, and go on still in your trespasses! Nay, **"there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."** He has no peace in life, his bosom is like the restless ocean; he has no peace in death, his end is like the midnight storm. He lives in uncertainty, dies in perplexity, and enters another world without hope.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, LA and pastor Jerry Dodson would like to announce that their 18th Annual Bible Conference is scheduled for Saturday, May the 31st through Sunday, June 1st.

Service times are 10:00 a.m. both Saturday and Sunday. A noon meal will follow each day.

Scheduled speakers are Brothers Joey Newell, Lucien Lesage, and Jerry Dodson.

Bro. Keith Laurence will lead the music. Everyone is invited to attend.

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will be having their Spring Fellowship meeting on Saturday, April 26th. Elders Nathaniel Hille and Todd Bryant will be speaking. Service time is at 10:00 a.m. Everyone is invited to remain afterward for food and fellowship. All are invited to attend.

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 recoffeypot@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email jamijoe@wowway.com.

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.

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.

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.

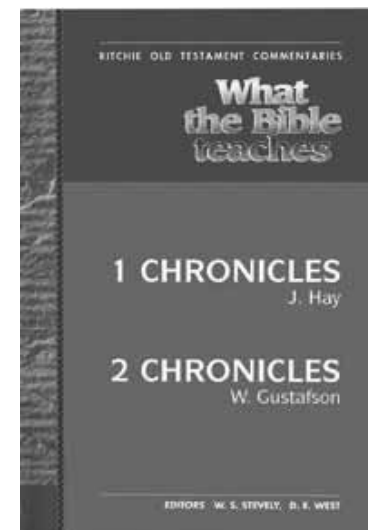
The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is in need of a replacement pastor. Elder Raymond T. Ellis is the current pastor, but due to his age, is needing to resign. The church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and the local church. Any interested Elder may contact Elder Ellis at (618) 983-8697 or Bro. Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228.

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 for more information.

Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.

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BЕРЕА BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 2-1-2014 to 2-28-2014

Beginning Balance	\$6,790.61
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Everson, WA	100.00
	425.00
TOTAL	7,215.61
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	363.98
	6,851.63
October interest	.05
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,851.68



BЕРЕА BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 2-1-2014 to 2-28-2014

Beginning Balance	\$1,837.33
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID	10.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Carol Willitt, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
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
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	25.00
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., Pumerville, AR	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	303.00
Anonymous	1,200.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,483.95
TOTAL	\$5,321.28
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	701.16
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Supplies	89.95
Total Expenditures	\$3,907.07
	\$1,414.21
Bank Service Charge (Jan & Feb)	-26.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,388.21

Why Do You Work?

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma


The way of the world is to work – or at least to have a paycheck from somewhere – in order to have things. Some people in our country are content to lie to various governmental agencies in order to receive benefits for which they are not actually qualified. Others work – and some very hard – in order to have things for themselves and their families. Most are interested in “toys” of all sorts thinking this is the way to happiness. Not only does the desire to “have” dominate man’s thoughts, but the theme is instant gratification. Wanting things and wanting them right now causes people to go in debt unnecessarily. Indebtedness for all sorts of these toys is the norm in mainstream America. A surplus of two or more cars, ATVs, boats, personal water craft, electronic gadgets, sports equipment – anything and everything to entertain the flesh seems to be the goal of most people. Lost men truly are pleasure-seeking animals! It seems that the idea is that whoever has the most toys when they die wins. Even professing Christians often fall prey to this mindset. Professing Christians maintain memberships in all kinds of clubs and groups whose fees run into the thousands of dollars per year per person. Sports, cruises, expensive vacations, concerts – anything that tickles the flesh – are items on the list of expenditures for many who profess to follow the Lamb – though He never went in for luxuries at all. Far too often Christians are caught up this

kind of thinking that says get, get, get. They work in order to get – in order to accumulate wealth and possessions. The Bible is not against people having what they need. But there is a vast difference between what people want and what they need. We advocate thinking like the Bible instructs us to think. When we get a raise in income, we ought to think about that increase in the light of God’s plan for us. What would God have us do with our wealth?

Some people have what they call a “life verse.” They choose a Bible verse which is important to them. Perhaps it is one they think to follow to guide their lives. Has any professing Christian chosen the following verse? I fear not, but here it is: **“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth”** (Eph. 4:28). Honest labor is enjoined here as opposed to theft of any kind. But the last of the verse contains a very different view from what is held by most people. It says that our work is to have a purpose. That purpose is so **“that he may have to give to him that needeth.”** Unthinkable! Unheard of!

Does the Word of God not say this in other ways too? **“As we**

have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). We do not advocate socialism, communism or even the communitarianism of the Jerusalem congregation in apostolic days. God did not command them to sell their property, nor did He instruct those who sold their land to give their money to the apostles for distribution among the membership. The zeal of the people did this. It was misguided zeal. After a time when the increase of members ceased to surge, the whole congregation became destitute because nobody had any income. God in His sovereignty and wisdom used this occasion to bind the Gentile and Jewish congregations together through Paul’s collection of the great Gentile love-offering gathered for the Jerusalem congregation. But the plain fact is this: in many parts of the world there are followers of the Lamb in true New Testament congregations who are destitute – today! What are we doing about this? The following two verses are still in God’s Word: **“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart**



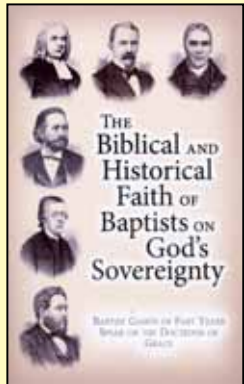
Quotes
from
Brother Ritechus N. Dignation
by Joseph Harris

The only difference
between being humiliated
or being humbled is pride.

in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (Ja. 2:15-16). Will you dare to work so that you may have to give to him that needeth? Do you understand the principle stated in Proverbs 11:24-25? There it is written: **“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”**



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