

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

Misplaced Trust

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD. But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was" (Ezek. 16:14-15).

My text verses come from the middle of an important passage that describes the salvation of the people of God in Jerusalem – how



that a people in terrible condition, were found and rescued by a compassionate and gracious God. Their salvation was

not something that they could have accomplished on their own. In fact, without God they were destined to die – the picture painted for us reveals a helpless babe, cast away beside the road, and without any hope of life or salvation. This people was blessed by God and was granted clothing

♦ (Continued on page 15)

The World Is Getting Hostile Toward Christians

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

There are at least three things we can learn about the hatred and hostility of the world toward Jesus Christ and His followers in the life and times of Daniel. They will first be hostile toward the purity of the believer, then progressively, it will get worse, in that the world will become hostile toward our worship and thirdly, they will develop further into being hostile toward our thoughts and prayers. Selah! Think about it!

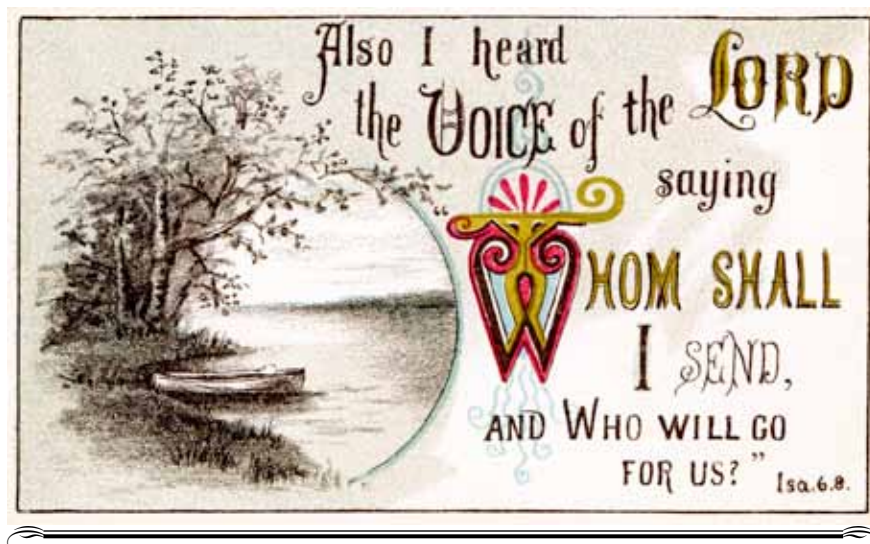
In Chapter 1 of Daniel, it seems



like such a little thing that Daniel is trying to do. Why make such a big deal out of eating the King's meat and drinking

his wine? Various speculations have determined the food/drink to be portions that had been sacrificial offering to the pagan gods of Babylon. They may have been from unclean animals to the Jews, like pork, seafood, etc... But

♦ (Continued on page 2)



The Evidence of Discipleship

Part Two
By Robert Fleming

III. THIS KNOWLEDGE IS ESSENTIAL TO TRUE HUMILITY, AND IS THE ONLY GROUND OF COMFORT TO THE CHRISTIAN THROUGH LIFE AND IN DEATH.

Whoever takes Christ's yoke upon himself, and learns of Him, becomes, like Christ, meek and lowly of heart--becomes truly an obedient disciple. If rebellion against God is the highest evidence of the pride of the human heart, obedience is the highest evidence of true humility. "Behold, to

obey, is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I Sam. 15:22-23).

The same author says, pride, which is the opposite of humility, "is the master sin and first-born of the Devil." Humility may be denominated the master Christian grace and first-born of God; and he who has never learned the lesson of humility, has never learned of Christ. There is no conversion to God where there is no humility, and no humility where there is no knowledge of

♦ (Continued on page 6)



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

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World is Getting

(Continued from page 1) ♦

whatever the details that were provisional to that day and time, we can take the picture of purity home with us, today, beloved reader. **"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself"** (Dan. 1:8).

How many times, the true hostility of the world will be evidenced when we try to keep from defiling ourselves from the depravity they love so intimately. Just by trying to abstain from prevarications that have become acceptable and normal behaviors, will turn folk against you today. How quick will be the scorn, the burst of hatred, and the antagonism toward our purity. If just by our standing for the truth, values, and moralities of God's Word, the modern libertine is rebuked, he will certainly NOT appreciate it. **"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you"** (John 15:18-19).

One does not even have to say anything anymore. To abstain from their evil, is viewed as treachery and to go that step further and actually comment on their vile conduct will bring upon ourselves malignity and bitter vile words. It might be easy to just remain silent, and turn our eyes aside, but that is unacceptable in God's eyes and it is even now becoming evident in American society why God deems it a sin

to remain silent in the open face of abominations. The following passage in Proverbs is an indictment to those that will not put their own reputation on the line to speak out against abortion, anti-semitism, gay marriage, easy divorce and the militant liberal's destruction of the family. If we "forbear" (choose not to) deliver the unborn and innocent by the utmost of our power, it is simply abdication of Christian integrity and God calls it sin (via James). **"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works"** (Prov. 24:10-12)? **"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"** (James 4:17).

Our desire for purity should not be just a mere whimsy. Daniel and the Hebrew children desired that purity more than life, itself. **"And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king"** (Dan. 1:10). Truly, for us there might be a great fall-out of social peer pressure, but for Daniel, the danger was already significant enough, that heads would literally roll at the royal chopping block, if they persisted in their push for purity. But as David the shepherd boy avowed many years before, concerning the purity and reputation of

♦ (Continued on page 3)

World is Getting

(Continued from page 2) ♦

God's holy name. **"..Is there not a cause?"** (I Sam. 17:29).

The reason that abortion, easy divorce, and gay marriage are commonly in our midst in 2020, is that we capitulated these precious American standards many years ago, acquiescing to a flawed perversion of American equality, that hindsight shows is just a tool of Satan and the ACLU. **"Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice"** (Dan. 9:14). **"But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great"** (Luke 6:49).

The second stage of hostility toward Christians that we can see evidenced in the book of Daniel is the opposition toward our worship. In Chapter 3, the three Hebrew children were condemned and convicted of believing in only one true God. Knowing that God ALONE was deserving of their adoration and submission, they refused to worship any other. Selah! Think about it! **"Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? ... but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to**

the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. ...be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury.." (Dan. 3:14-19).

The world is furious with Christians (Baptists) that will admit of no existence of ANY God, but our own. When civil powers start to turn toward liberal organizations and politically correct government, Christian beware of the hostility and enmity of the world. Particularly, the religious world. **"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me"** (John 16:2-3).

Hostility is not new, beloved reader. Ask Peter and the Lord's apostles. **"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and**

the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:27-29). The enthronement of religious liberty is what this country was based upon. That we should have freedom to worship our God as our conscience and the Word of God dictates is peculiar to American history as in few other countries. John Leland in 1791 judiciously stated: "Every man must give an account of himself to God, and therefore every man ought to be at liberty to serve God in that way that he can best reconcile it to his conscience. If government can answer for individuals at the day of judgment, let men be controlled by it in religious matters; otherwise let men be free."

That the encroachment of a tendency to crush conservative beliefs in our day, is seen on every hand as "toleration" of diversity has developed into a "requirement" of diversity, and thereby any religion that claims unique and solitary authority has been denounced as contrary to the new, blighted "equality," which has become a humanistic worship of the diverse. The more diverse, the better. Left field theology? Not any more! Every logical nonsense is paraded as if it had as much truth as all other "truths!"

Want to be a man, but you were born a woman? No problem for this modern generation! Do not even have to change the plumbing anymore! Just "will" or "desire" it to be, and any opponents are not labeled "scientific," but "...phobic"... homophobic, xenophobic, genophobic, etc... Former President John Adams prophesied of potential downfalls of our republic, and pointed out wisely that: "our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." When we lose the morality of the Bible, we can expect naught but the wiles of the father of lies, (no, that is still Satan, not Adam Schiff!).

In many generations, it has been religious entities that have led the charge against God's people. Despite the Baptist's reputation for being the most tolerant of all peoples in so many socio-political matters, their intolerance of recognizing any Saviour, but Jesus Christ has led to other religious organizations to begin violent hate campaigns against them, just like they did to the Apostle Paul! **"But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. ...But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people"** (Acts 17: 5, 13). Going out of their way, to make sure that nobody ignored their "right to impose upon others their perceived truths!"

The religion in times past that has reached pre-eminence in

♦ (Continued on page 4)



World is Getting

(Continued from page 3) ♦

so many nations, has been the Roman Catholic church. They persecuted God's people and were hostile to the point of executing any that would not worship the "right" or "roman" way. In this generation, the ascendant religion is humanism, and evolution is its faith, with modern science so-called writing out its creed book daily in our public school systems. Remember this liberal science in so many collegiate universities that can not tell whether a child is male or female? It also cannot determine when life begins in the womb, conveniently! Regardless of an unborn child having different DNA, blood type, gender, immune systems, etc, from her mother, evolutionists demand a separate standard of logic, when it comes to their "big bang" religion, that they all accept "blindly, by FAITH," because there is not a shred of evidence for their postulations... They just believe it, by faith, because it is their religion that they have "chosen." LORD, help us! Selah! Think about it!

Lastly, will come to pass the third level of hostility in both Daniel's day, and our own. They will be hostile toward our prayer life. It will become UNACCEPTABLE to object in thought and mind-set to the new mainstream lifestyles. Just look, how not only the liberal left, but from every corner of America came criticism of Kentuckian Kim Davis' choice to live by her Bible and conscience, when she refused to allow her clerk's office to issue gay marriage licenses. Daniel, too, felt the envy, malice and trickery of the establishment. **"Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against**

this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Dan. 6:5). This trampling of religious freedom continued to where no one was allowed to pray to any god, but old King Barack Obama (oops! excuse me, I meant old King Darius!). Presidential candidate emeritus/ad nauseous Hillary Clinton is on the record saying that Christians are gonna have to CHANGE the WAY WE THINK regarding the morality of the New Order!

Hate crimes are being staked out, as particularly heinous crimes, because "criminals" choose not to buy into this New World Order of insanity! Specific laws are even now being crafted to make it a worse crime to seemingly "offend" a gay or lesbian couple, than to actually defraud a "normal" (not anymore!) heterosexual couple. More jail time! More penal restitutions! This judgment even crosses the barriers of time, as Robert E. Lee and Thomas Jefferson must pay the penalties of "thinking wrong" in their own lifetimes, and now the commemorative statues must come humiliatingly down, and some liberal leftist will soon be erected in their place. "Wrong, wrong, wrong!" Who says? The liberated and woke generation of hate thought police.

But will there actually be persecution to the point of throwing Christians into a den of lions? Ask Daniel and Nero's Christian targets about those accommodations. Open our eyes! This is not hyperbole! They are coming to an America near you, beloved reader. Every step being taken today, has been taken before in previous generations and localities. It is nothing new under the sun. In fact these cycles of liberty and

oppression are symptomatic. Religious freedom cannot last forever in a democracy. If we give religious liberty to all, then there are ALWAYS going to be extremes that we cannot police, until God comes in and establishes a MONARCHY. Watch this! **"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you"** (Deut 13:6-11).

I preached a message years ago, "Why Baptists Don't Stone Heretics." Because we do not have the authority of a theocracy, like Israel once did, and will again in the Millennial Reign. Only God has the authority to "police the thoughts of man," and that is because He created them. The Lord's Baptist churches will certainly judge fruit. If one of our

sons or daughters starts teaching heresy, or even immorality, I hope we will continue to expunge them from our membership rolls- saying "Huh-uh! Not in God's house!" But the Catholics never had a problem stamping out "heresies" (hated ideas and thoughts) viciously and to actually and mortally cut down these dissenters, did they? And neither did autocrats like Nebuchadnezzar or Darius. "Do as I say; worship as I say; believe as I say! Or else...!"

Does that sound ominously familiar as political correctness insidiously continues her influential reign here in America? Let me quote Wichita, Kansas Pastor Joe Wright's (in)famous prayer before the Kansas House of Representatives on January 23, 1996, that stirred great controversy in that decade, and is just as relevant today: "Heavenly Father, we come before You today to ask Your forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance. Lord, we know Your Word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that's exactly what we've done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it moral pluralism. We have worshipped other gods and called it multi-culturalism. We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and

♦ (Continued on page 5)



Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

PRUDENCE, PANIC, AND PANDEMICS

Prudence is not the same thing as panic. We are not dealing with an unprecedented disease, though we may be dealing with unprecedented fearfulness. You need to act with wisdom, take precautions, and not tempt God. Being cautious, careful, and prudent is not the same thing as panic. I am thankful to God this is not as bad as it could be. It is not even close to being as bad as things were a little over a century ago. In her book *Flu*, Gina Kolotal tells the story of the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic where 25% of Americans contracted the virus and somewhere between 20-100 million people died world-wide. At Fort Devens, an Army base in Massachusetts, 129 soldiers died in 48 hours. Of the 45,000 men stationed at the base, 8,000 were hospitalized. A few days later, the flu spread outside the camp, and on "September 26, 1918, 123 Bostonians died of the flu and 33 succumbed to pneumonia." A month later, in Philadelphia, close to 11,000 died from the flu. In one day, 759 Philadelphia residents passed away — just to put this current virus in perspective.

Christian, please do not panic. **"Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling"** (Ps. 91:9-11). Remember, God is sovereign. God was not taken by surprise by

this virus. The Lord Jehovah is not merely in control when things go the way we want them to. Nothing is outside of His dominion. No event happens outside of His will. Also understand, that no amount of "social-distancing" will give you eternal life. **"Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass"** (Job 14:5). God is even sovereign over the day of your death. But after we have done all we can, we must trust in the Lord and rest in His sovereignty. What happens if it gets worse? Trust in the Lord. Our God hears His people in distress (Psalm 107:16-21) so go to the Lord in prayer. Psalms 41:3 tells us, **"The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."**

You can also love your neighbor during this time, and for that matter, anytime. You are commanded by your Lord to be **"courteous"** (I Peter 3:8). Cover your mouth when you cough. There really is no excuse for any adult to be coughing and hacking in public without covering their mouth. It is selfish. Yes, it may be a great burden to bend your elbow all the way to your mouth (Proverbs 26:15), but that should be a sacrifice you are willing to make for the sake of the people around you. Another way to love your neighbor is to stay home if you are sick. The graveyard is full of indispensable men. Do

not think so highly of yourself to believe that the world can not go on without you for a few days. You need to check your heart and your priorities if that is the case.

This virus has been revealing. It has showed how quickly things can go south. It has showed us that people are irrational in a panic. What are the symptoms of the coronavirus? Fever and cough. What are the stores sold out of? Toilet paper. I can not imagine what would happen in a real crisis situation. This was a good test run to show us the world is ripe for the picking for a "strongman" to come along and take control. People will gladly give up their freedoms for an exchange of relative safety. I hope it has shown some Christians they need to be members of a church. James tells the sick to call for the elders, but if you are not a member of a church, you are missing out on a great benefit of the Christian life, to have members of the church care for your soul. I also hope it has shown some Christians that life is short, and that you need to wake up out of your sleep, get your mind out of the vanity fair of this world, and be vigilant and on guard. You do not know when the Master will return. You do not know when you will be summoned to meet Him.

This virus revealed to a great number of people that life is frail. The world can change overnight. The things you thought were sure are not as strong as you imagined. I pray that this virus has opened your eyes to eternity. No one has the promise of tomorrow. It is an illusion to believe things will go on like they always have forever. Eternity is just a heartbeat away. The Bible tells us the wages of sin is death. And those who die in their sin face the wrath of a holy God. The only hope man has is

Jesus Christ, who came to save sinners.

(Doug Newell IV is pastor of the Buffalo Valley Baptist Church of Clay, West Virginia.)



World is Getting

(Continued from page 4) ♦

called it building esteem. We have abused power and called it political savvy. We have coveted our neighbors' possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our fore-fathers and called it enlightenment. Search us oh God and know our hearts today; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state. Grant them Your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your will. I ask it in the name of Your Son, the Living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen."

Will any political figure ever again ask Joe Wright, Daniel or Shadrach to pray to open up a session of Congress? ...to bless a presidential inauguration? How affected would Matt Stepp be to be asked to pray such a prayer? Are we ready to be hated? ...go to Prison? ...die for our Saviour's honor and glory? May God give us the strength and courage to stand like Daniel in the face of a hostile populace, religious world, and secular government! Selah! Think about it!

(Matthew Stepp is pastor of the Big Creek Baptist Church of Wayne, West Virginia.)



Evidence of

(Continued from page 1) ♦

Christ; **"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."**

The wisdom of the plan of salvation in the gospel is illustriously displayed, by reconciling in the Christian, the utmost humility with the utmost confidence of acceptance with God. All human schemes of salvation, in proportion as they give confidence of acceptance, increase spiritual pride. If salvation depends on the fulfillment of conditions of any kind on our part, why should we not glory when we have fulfilled them? If we fail how can we hope? We have confidence only when we have a high opinion of our performances. We are humble only when we doubt. But the plan of salvation through faith in the righteousness of Christ, leaves no room for self-confidence. Were Heaven every moment as open to the believer as it was to the eye of Stephen at his death, it would not lead him to glory in himself. His righteousness is the righteousness of Christ, and the faith through which he becomes partaker of this righteousness, is the gift of God.

"But not only in the wisdom of the gospel is confidence of acceptance with God, perfectly in harmony with humility, it is the very thing which produces humility. In proportion as the believer advances in the knowledge of God, he will advance in confidence of acceptance with Him. In proportion as he advances in the knowledge of God, he will advance in humility; for the more he sees of the perfection of the divine character, the more will be led to abhor himself. It had this effect upon Job: **"I have**

heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Now is not this wonderful wisdom? The very plan that this world accuses of leading to spiritual pride, is the very thing that produces humility. Put the matter to the test. Let any believer express confidence of faith with respect to his acceptance with God, and by all who do not understand the gospel, he will be considered as having a high opinion of himself. Men, ignorant of God, have no conception of any other way of acceptance with Him, than by something good in themselves. The confidence of the Christian they judge to be a confidence from their own high attainments in holiness. The plan of salvation, then, which precludes boasting, and necessarily produces humility, is truly the wisdom of God. It is not a creation of human wisdom" (Carson, Alexander).

To know that salvation is of the Lord, and that we have no other hope of entrance into life eternal than that which is presented to us in the gospel, will not produce pride. A Christian is never so humble as when he perceives clearly the ground of confidence in the work of Christ. The knowledge of our acceptance with God is the concomitant of faith, and is found in connection with the everlasting consolations of a good hope through grace. **"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."** Here let it be distinctly noted, these three graces are found abiding together; and although they may be imperfect in this life, and need continual strengthening, yet they are inseparably united in the Christian character. The whole

of a Christian experience is not made up of hope. The other graces of the Spirit must be found in connection with hope. There is no Christian charity or love, it is true, where there is no hope in Christ; but it is true, there is no hope in Christ where there is no faith in Christ, and no faith in Christ where there is no knowledge of Christ; and there is no knowledge of Christ, only as it is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

The convicted sinner is coming to God through Christ by faith, brings Christ and presents Him to God as his sin-offering. Laying his hands on His head, he confesses his sins over Him, and slays Him, and sees Him offered a sacrifice to God for a sweet savour, and feels his sins forgiven him through the shedding of His blood, which cleanseth from all sin. The guilty Israelite obtained pardon under the law, by laying his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sins (Lev. 1:4; 4:28-29). This idea is given us in the following verse by Isaac Watts, which beautifully shows the faith, the penitence and humility of the true believer in Christ:

*My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.*

To have no confidence in the flesh is true humility, Paul himself being our authority: **"We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."** The knowledge of Christ is the great center-truth upon which the Apostle rested amidst the storms and conflicts of life; and the things which were gain to him,

he counted loss for Christ. **"Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"** (Phil. 3:8-9).

"This knowledge makes Christ precious, engages faith and confidence in Him, influences the life and conversation, humbles the soul, and creates in it true pleasure and satisfaction. When all other knowledge fills with self-love, pride and vanity, this supports under affliction, and in view of death and eternity. Through it grace is received now, and by it glory hereafter; for it is the beginning, earnest, and pledge of eternal life" (John Gill).

Those who know most of Christ will feel themselves to be **"least in the kingdom of heaven"** --- the church of Christ on earth. They will feel that they have continual need to be baptized of Jesus Christ. No office or station in the church of God can give pre-eminence over true humility. He is the greatest Christian who is the humblest man, no matter what his birth, or blood, or station.

But the knowledge that we are Christ's disciples, is not only essential to true humility, it is essential to our happiness and comfort through life. **"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God"** (I Cor. 2:9-12). The converted soul knows these things and feels their blessed influence.

♦ (Continued on page 7)

Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Temperance, Michigan

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3).



in order to come. The day of the Lord's coming will someday be upon us, and eternal safety will still be in Him. I pray that you trust in the Lord's promises and seek safety in Him during these days of repentance.

(Joseph Sidders is pastor of the Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Temperance, Michigan.)



Evidence of

(Continued from page 6) ♦

The unconverted beholder sees the change and is brought to admire, love and adore the glorious Redeemer of sinners.

*When God revealed His gracious name,
And changed my mournful state,
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,
The grace appeared so great.*

*The world beheld the glorious change,
And did thy hand confess;
My tongue broke out in unknown strains,
And sung surprising grace.*

This is in perfect agreement with the sacred records. **"But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit."** Again says the Apostle: **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ"** (II Cor. 5:17). The conversion of the soul is here represented as the work of God--reconciling us. All men are not reconciled to God; hence the Apostle prays unconverted souls, **"Be ye reconciled to God."**

But the Apostle had his tribulations and sorrows. Yes,

truly, and so have all Christians in this world. Christ has said they must. **"But we glory in tribulations also,"** says Paul. Thus sustained by the reigning grace of God, he fainted not at the tribulations which came upon him. **"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,"** said Christ; **"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"** (I John 5:4).

This enabled the Apostle at Lystra, after he had been stoned and dragged from the city as a dead man, to go exceedingly joyful in all his tribulations, **"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"** (Acts 14:22).

That Christian professor is a poor Christian, if one at all, who can see the hand of the Lord only in the sunny days of his pilgrimage, who can feel he is on the Lord's side, only when he is on the side of continual prosperity. **"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction,"** says God. **"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes,"** said David. **"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,"** says Paul. **"What, shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?"** said Job.

This is the kind of faith which enables its happy possessor to know, and feel and sing:

*My God the spring of all my joys,
And life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.*

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known

♦ (Continued on page 8)

JESUS IS COMING

When I was young, my parents took my little brother and me to all 48 of the continental United States. Before I graduated college, we had been to 49 total, praise God! On one such trip they took us to the state of Washington where we stopped for the night to have a meal with some of my mother's cousins. I was amazed by the landscape peppered with hills and cavities of water. We spent many beautiful evenings cooking out and watching the sun set on the western coast of our great country.

As we finished our meal one night, the sun disappeared and evening clouds began to roll in. While our family sat outside enjoying some fellowship, the wind suddenly picked up; the sky began to rain shards of dirt and stone. We ran for the house and we could hear our RV rocking back and forth outside as a result of the wind. The news on the radio said that a spontaneous tornado had touched down just a mile from where we were. The violent storm left a lot of trees barren, but we were blessed to be safe.

Beloved, it is hard for this writer to not think of the second coming of our Lord as I know His arrival will be equally sudden and most effectual. In I Thessalonians 4:16, Paul tells the church that **"...the Lord HIMSELF shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."** (emph.

JS) For those who are born again (John 3:3-21) and know the Lord Jesus as their Savior, there will be a great day of rejoicing as His return will be a promise fulfilled. God keeps His promises to His children:

According to II Peter 3:9-12, **"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"**

If this is your first reading of Christ's return, it undoubtedly sounds scary. The day is coming. Understand that there was no stopping the tornado we experienced that night in Washington. There was no talking the storm into taking another path; earthly safety is in the Lord. While it is much easier to prepare for an impending storm when you know it is coming, it does not require your acknowledgment

Evidence of

(Continued from page 7) ♦

of mine.” But, says the trembling, fearful, timid Christian, “I know so little about this greatest and most important of all matters, I fear I am deceived, and know nothing of Christ. I am not satisfied with the amount of my faith, penitence, love and humility; in short, I do not have so strong faith as I want to have. My love to God, His Word, His people and His service, is not as fervent and unwavering as I want it to be.” Very well, all this is possible, even where a saving knowledge of Jesus exists. If any one should say he had just as much of the knowledge of divine things as he desired to have, was just as well satisfied about his attainments in the divine life as he wished to be, it would be so inconsistent with what the Bible teaches, that we might feel fully authorized to pronounce such an individual yet unconverted and ignorant of the first principles of vital godliness. Let us hear David on this point: **“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness.”** He did not expect to be satisfied on earth with his attainments. He looked for this only when he should awake in the world of future glory, in the likeness of the immaculate Redeemer. And what is Paul’s testimony on this important feature in the experience of the child of grace? He says: **“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”** (I Cor. 13:9-10,12).

Do we not learn from this

that even the Apostle knew only in part, and saw, like others, through a glass darkly? Shall we conclude we know nothing of Christ, because we know only in part? Shall we decide that we do not see at all because we see so imperfectly? Such conclusion is not authorized. Go on, then, trembling, fearful, timid child of God, rejoicing. **“Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling”** (Ps. 2:11).

Go on, rejoicing in hope of the glory, that is to be revealed, **“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time,”** says Paul, **“are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us”** (Rom. 8:18). It is not the business of a work of grace in the soul, to cause the individual to feel he is good enough, has faith enough, has repented enough, has humility enough, has love enough, zeal enough! No, No, NO! Such thoughts are an abomination in God’s sight; but it is the business of God’s to cause its possessor to feel his unholiness and weakness, and to confess, **“In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.”** **“My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.”** **“The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.”** Yes,

*Our deliverer shall come by and by,
And our sorrows have an end,
With our three score years and ten,
And vast glory crown the day, by and by.*

But notwithstanding Paul knew only in part, and saw through a glass darkly, yet he did not fight as one that beateth the air. He believed, long before he died, that he would be saved by the grace of God; and in his warfare, as a soldier of Jesus Christ, he felt he was fighting the good fight of faith. He did not believe he was engaged in a doubtful conflict, and that soul withering uncertainties hung

over the issue. **“So fight I,”** says he, **“not as one that beateth the air,”** and does not know until the final battle shall come, whether he shall slay his foe or be slain by him. **“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly,”** as they do who all run in a race where but one can win the prize, and no one can know who he will be until the race is ended.

But further, the Apostle says, **“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”** (II Cor. 4:6). With him experimental religion was something more than theory. It was not a problem to be solved, but a glorious fact known; not merely by an outward reformation, but by an inward change---a renewal in the spirit of the mind. Hence we hear him addressing the Corinthians: **“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”** This knowledge gave buoyancy to his soul in his trials and conflicts as he pressed forward in the high calling of God.

Did the knowledge of the certainty of a favorable issue in reference to his salvation, produce carelessness and looseness in his manner of life? Did it infuse a spirit of sluggishness and inactivity, and hamper his zeal in the service of God? No. **“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”** ---should be rejected by others, and cast away by them as an Apostle. **“If I be not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine**

apostleship are ye in the Lord” (I Cor. 9:2, 27).

He desired and labored so to live and preach, that wherever he might go he might not be cast away by any. The pen of inspiration has not written, that the more certain our salvation may appear to our faith, the greater will be the tendency to unholiness of life, or to sluggishness of heart in the work of the Lord. The language of holy writ is, **“ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.”** This is the way the Holy Spirit teaches in our conversion.

These doctrines, so clearly taught by the Apostle, and so heartily believed by thousands since his day, have always had the same practical tendency. Look at the lives of the two Haldanes as an illustration. These two brothers, James and Robert, of Scotland, like Paul, would have been great in any official capacity among men. They entered the British navy in 1780-’5, and engaged in many battles with the French fleet. Robert early left the navy and settled on the paternal estates at Airthy, while James attained to distinction as commander of an East Indiaman. At nearly the same period they enlisted under the banner of Jesus, and devoted their fine abilities and manly accomplishments, and wealth, and station, to the cause of Him who had loved them. The glorious truths of the gospel were not held by them at arm’s end. They embraced them in their fulness, and to the propagation of them they consecrated nearly half a century of unremitted toil, with results extending from island

♦ (Continued on page 10)

Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of
Texarkana, Texas

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).



DO YOU REALLY KNOW GOD?

"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Ps. 135:6).

I ask this question because many people who call themselves "Christian" and "churches" do not know God. They claim to know God but have no biblical understanding of Him. They, nor their pastors, can properly describe the true God of the Bible with a right understanding because they do not know God, nor do they have much knowledge about Him. The Bible is a revelation of the Holy Spirit, it is not humanly understood, Paul makes this very clear in his first letter to the church at Corinth. **"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither**

can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:10-14). Please understand, I am not being condescending in saying this, but the facts are on my side. There is a very deep gap between the natural person and the spiritual person, one is spiritually discerned and the other is spiritually educated. The Bible is a spiritual book, it was inspired by the Holy Spirit to the writers to be understood by spiritually saved people and not to be understood by the natural spiritually discerned person or "the lost." Paul gave us a great understanding of this "natural/spiritual" thinking in his writing to the church at Corinth. The natural person refuses to believe God as the True God, they refuse to believe they are at His mercy and grace and not at their own understanding and power. People are (because of the fall) at odds with God, they loathe Him in His true nature and therefore refuse to accept Him as all Sovereign. People can learn anything; people will believe anything except God's truth in their natural state. This is the reason there are so many different sorts of denomination's among people calling themselves "Christian's" and "churches" today. I am not saying they do not have a genuine "zeal" for God, but it is not according to spiritual knowledge, as Paul said of his beloved Jewish people. **"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I**

bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:1-2). People can and do have a great zeal for God and the worship of God in the natural state, but it is damningly wrong. The Jews thought they were biblically correct when they crucified Jesus Christ, Catholicism and reformers thought they were biblically right when they killed millions of Baptist and other Christians who refused to convert and join them in the "dark ages." Saul of Tarsus (Paul) thought he was biblically right when he persecuted the church at Jerusalem. **"Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."** (Phil. 3:6). However, all this zeal was done in their natural state, being "spiritually discerned" or not having a spiritual understanding of God and His will.

One must believe in the sovereignty of God in order to even begin a real understanding of God. The Bible is full of the fact that God is sovereign. Here is a great understanding of God's sovereignty, **"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it"** (Isa. 46:9-11). Here is another example of God's sovereignty, **"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have**

compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9:15). The sovereignty of God is so important because it is the force that saves a lost sinner and one cannot be saved without it. John tells us in his writings, **"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:12-13). Jesus said, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:44). However, the wise and prudent among us keep teaching unbiblical terms such as, decisions, choices, turning over new leaf's, praying prayers, etc. etc. These same people today try to worship God in whom they truly deny in their thinking because they deny God as a sovereign being. These very same natural wise and prudent teach that "God cannot change people's will, because the will is yours" when God says **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..."** The word "draw" means to drag. Salvation has nothing to do with your will, it has to do with God's will. God owes people nothing, He did not create mankind to act according to their will. Therefore, how dare people say that God acts only if the creature is willing, just read the Bible and you will find that is impossible. Laugh at it if you want, mock it if you please, but you will never prove it wrong in the Scriptures.

Folks, it is sad when I talk

◇ (Continued on page 10)

Brief Truths

(Continued from page 9) ♦

to people of strong zeal and faith in their belief but being without knowledge. It is sad when they desire to use out-of-context Scriptures to prove their false thinking or read into the Scriptures something that is not even there. It is sad when they condemn God's sovereignty attempting to prove a lie, but sadly they do. However, the saddest part of it all, is when these very people who attempt to call themselves "Christians and churches" deny the true God to worship a false, incapable god who is not able to do or is not in control of anything. I will conclude with this thought because nothing I say will change their heart, **"Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish"** (Jer. 10:11-15).

(Randy Johnson is pastor of the Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Texarkanna, Texas.)



Evidence of

(Continued from page 8) ♦

to island, and from continent to continent. James became a minister of the gospel, and was a burning and shining light for fifty-four years. The people flocked around to hear the sea captain; and when driven from the school-house, they followed him to the barn. Persecution raged, detraction followed, jealousy hissed, and civil and ecclesiastical authority opposed to restrain him. But He, whose gospel he preached, was with him, and thousands heard him gladly.

Robert converted the Edinburgh circus into a church-house at his own expense, and bought or built large houses of worship in Glasgow, Dundee, Perth, Thurso, Wick and Elgin. From his immense fortune he provided for the support and instruction of three hundred young men for the ministry. In these and kindred plans, he expended, in twelve years, more than three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. He wrote many valuable religious works, besides his commentary on Romans, all aiming at the one central object of his life, the exaltation of Christ as an Almighty Saviour. He did not confine his labors to Scotland. He spent three years at Geneva, where his bold and unremitting declaration of a spiritual religion was abundantly blessed in the conversion of most of the students of theology, and many of the pastors of the churches. Caesar Malan, Monod, Gouthier, Pyt, Vivien, and Merle D'Aubigne, the celebrated historian, were among the number who connected their spiritual life with his visit. The gospel sounded out from Geneva, and its echoes reverberated through the mountains and

valleys of Switzerland, till they were heard in France, Germany and Belgium.

Who can glance at the lives of these modern "sons of thunder," and not feel fully convinced that experimental religion with them was a bright, burning, soul-stirring reality. And who can read the works of their wonderful compeer and fellow-laborer, Alexander Carson, of Ireland, and not feel his bosom glow with a consciousness that "the knowledge of Jesus is the most excellent science."

The knowledge of Christ is not only the ground of comfort to the Christian through life, but it is the only source of consolation in the hour of death and in view of eternity.

The Apostle in his dying charge to Timothy, impressively says: **"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."** Here the crown of righteousness is not only for the Apostle, but for **"all them also,"** that love Jesus Christ.

Some have been sadly puzzled respecting the meaning of the following passages: **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."** Not the love of God to His people is meant, for that admits of no increase or diminution, but the grace of love to God in His people. Nor is this love to God and to His people perfected in His saints in this life as to its degree, it is only in part; **"but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."** The proper view to be taken of this passage is, that the grace of love, as it is exercised in

the hearts of Christians, is sincere and without dissimulation---is not in tongue only, but in deed and in truth. So that love to God in the saints is perfected by love to the brethren, just in such sense as faith is made perfect by works. See how the Apostle James explains this subject: **"Was not Abraham our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"** When love to the brethren appears to be perfect, that is, genuine and sincere, and a man knows that he sincerely loves the saints, he may safely infer the perfectness of his love to God. This kind of love frees its possessor from the fear of future punishment. But **"fear hath torment"** ---keeps the soul uneasy and in bondage through the fear of men, of the devil, of death, judgment and Hell. And such are all their life-time subject to bondage through fear. **"He that feareth is not made perfect in love."** He that is under the servile fear of punishment, and dreads punishment more than he does the offensiveness of sin, does not have his fruit unto a holy love of God, His people and His holy law, and is not a true believer in Christ; for if he were he would not be in fear of destruction from the presence of the Lord.

It is true, however, that Christians do often have doubts and fears, but these are not essential to the existence of the love of God in the heart, and are not evidences of true piety, but rather evidences of our frail, fallen, sinful state. Fallen! yes---O how fallen! how fallen! The very things which we should consider as evidences of our pollution, we sometimes consider as proofs

♦ (Continued on page 11)

Little Valleys

By Timothy J. Hille of
Ashland, Illinois

"He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills." (Psalms 104:10).



ARE YOU A BEAST?

"Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" (Ps. 49:20). The Bible has nothing flattering to say about sin or those who persist in sin. In fact, those who do not turn from sin to God are likened to brute beasts, living only for the sensual gratification of their bodies and intellects, while they unheedingly travel the path to the grave and a flaming, eternal torment reserved for unbelieving, unrepentant sinners. Sadly, many are following this course. It is not merely the mass murderers, the rapists, the child abusers, or the dishonest politicians whom God calls **"beasts"**. Consider another description of the brutish person: **"...men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes"** (Ps. 17:14). Here are people who have families, who are successful, who build houses and participate in society. Yet, all they have are the things they accumulate materially, and the children they beget; and they go to the grave in darkness, not knowing God and not possessing spiritual life. They live and die like dumb animals – being born, eating, drinking, pursuing earthly pleasure, begetting offspring, and dying. All they have they leave behind them as an inheritance to their posterity, who follow in their very same ways to the very same end – the lake of fire forever and forever. **"This their way is their**

folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings" (Ps. 49:13). **"For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light"** (Ps. 49:17-19).

Some beasts are religious. They attend church, they maintain certain moral standards, and they contribute to certain charitable causes. They do these things, however, not in love to God and to other men as being created in the image of God; but, like a dumb animal, merely as instinctual behavior. They feel they ought to do something, so they do these things; or they learned to do these things from their predecessors, so they maintain the same ways. A dog can learn to hunt from following the pack. This pack, however, is heading for destruction. **"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption"** (II Peter 2:12). **"Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things"** (Phil. 3:19).

If God in His Word accuses you of being a beast, living no better than an animal, then you may be sure you are justly accused. Will you persist in ignoring God and pursuing the path of sin; or will you turn, repent, and submit to

God's call to come to Him by faith in His Son Jesus Christ? **"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about"** (Ps. 32:9-10).

(Timothy J. Hille is pastor of the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church of Pleasant Plains, Illinois.)



Evidence of

(Continued from page 10) ♦

of our conversion. And those things which should be viewed as unquestionable indications of a gracious state, we often reject through the blindness of our understanding.

The plan of salvation, through the righteousness of Christ is so deep and astonishing an instance of divine wisdom, that while it is not at all perceived by the wisdom of the world, it even in some measure lies hid from those who are savingly enlightened by it. Many Christians are afraid to give the Scripture language on this subject the full extent of its meaning; and instead of representing themselves as being made righteous---perfectly righteous---by the righteousness of the Son of God, they look on their justification as merely an accounting of themselves as righteous, while they are not so in reality. But the Scriptures represent believers as truly righteous, possessing a righteousness fully answerable to all the demands of the law. By their union to Christ they are 'dead to sin,' and 'the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them.' They have paid its penalty and fulfilled its utmost demands, and are 'the

righteousness of God in him.' God never accounts any one to be what he is not in reality and as Christ's righteousness is reckoned ours as well as Adam's sin, believers ought to consider themselves as truly righteous in Christ, as they are truly guilty in Adam---as certainly saved in Christ as they were certainly lost in Adam.

We are told in the first chapter of the gospel by Luke, that the design of Christ's advent into the world, was that believers in Him **"might serve God without fear."** Paul says to Timothy, **"God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."** Servile fear is not the gift of God, and should be banished from the mind of the Christian. This fear is a fear of distrust---a distrusting fear---and not that to which we are enjoined in various passages in the Bible, namely: a reverential fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. It is always connected with the consolation of the Holy Spirit, as Luke informs us in the 19th of Acts: **"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied."**

There is a salutary fear in the hearts of Christians which should always be maintained. For the assurance of his salvation, which a believer in Christ ought to have, is not a profane assurance, which prompts him to disregard and authority of God, but leads to a diligent carefulness to conform to His Word and to use the means which God has appointed for edification. This is what the Apostle means when he says, **"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,"** for God

♦ (Continued on page 14)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. In Matthew 9:30 why did Jesus tell the men **“see that no man know it?”**

Roger Reed
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I believe the answer to the question is found in Mark 1:45: **“But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.”**

In Mark 1:40-45 Jesus healed a leper. Then Jesus charged him and sent him away. Jesus told the now healed leper, to say nothing to any man, but to show himself to the priest (v. 44). But he did not listen, and pretty much told everyone he came in contact with.

You might say, when we tell the media anything today like this people are not going to leave us alone. So, the publicity over such miracles might hinder Christ's mission and divert public attention from His message. Mark chapter 1 gives us the account, that is exactly what happened. In this man's excitement over the miracle, he disobeyed; as a result, Jesus had to move His ministry away from the city and into the desert regions.

Jesus had told others not to say anything in other places to avoid public attention. In understanding why Jesus had to do this, I can sympathize with

those that Jesus healed. Imagine being blind or deaf, or having terminal cancer and the Great Physician heals you, it would be pretty hard to keep that quiet and not tell anyone. And yet I can not help think also how disobedient we are to the Master's voice. Even though the healing was a good thing and a miracle, we are still disobedient children, sad is it not? And we should not be, **“being justified by his grace”** (Titus 3:8). God Bless!

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“And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country” (Matt. 9:27-31). I have often wondered about this scenario, where Jesus heals someone and then tells them to keep it quiet, versus other times, where He tells them the opposite,

such as Mark 5:18-20, “And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.” Why the different commands from the Master? Selah!

As we examine the context of the restricted commandment, we see that there was no such constraint placed on Jairus' family that is recorded, just previously in the chapter. “But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land” (Matt. 9:25-26). They told everyone, evidently! Note also the miracle immediately after. “As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel” (Matt. 9:32-33). “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps. 66:16).

Nothing the Lord ever did was to no purpose, so it is an important question to know why the Lord gave such an admonition to these two blind men. One possible reason is evidenced in a similar miracle when Christ healed the leper in Mark 1:43-45, “And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded,

for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.”

The multiplication of the crowds to the extent that the Lord was hampered in His travels and preaching/healing tours is possibly His intent when He commands silence, instead of witness, but would not the Lord have planned for that, and made provision for it? In matter of fact, the Lord even gave great opportunities of faith for the four men that carried the palsy-afflicted man. “And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay” (Mark 2:4).

Could too much attention be a bad thing? Perhaps His hour was not yet come? Certainly the Pharisees and rulers had their disciples come continually with reports of what the Lord was doing and where He was at all times. As His hour drew closer, I am sure the Lord wanted the Sanhedrin to be aware of His doings, as they were going to be used to turn Him over for the Romans to crucify. This is played out in John 11:46-48, 53-54, “But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. ...Then from that day

◇ (Continued on page 14)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Exodus 13:19 tells us that Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. Did they carry Joseph's coffin with them all the time during the wilderness?

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In Genesis 50:24-26 Joseph makes his brethren promise in an oath to carry his bones out of Egypt. An oath among brethren was considered a solemn thing. Yes, Moses and the children of Israel carried the bones of Joseph out of Egypt with them and all throughout their wilderness wanderings. They counted it their solemn responsibility and duty to live up to the terms of the oath they had made with Joseph. His bones were finally laid to rest in the promised land in the land of Shechem according to Joshua 24:32: **"And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."** The fulfilling of this hope-filled oath Joseph made his brethren swear to was significant enough to be mentioned in the faith chapter in Hebrews 11:22: **"By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."**

I find it interesting that the

Israelites were very careful in carrying out the terms of the oath that they had made with their ancestor Joseph. I believe God is even more precise and faithful in carrying out His promises and covenants to His chosen people and His chosen nation of Israel. Not one promise or prophecy will fail, regardless of how difficult or impossible it may seem with men, for with God all things are possible.

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The answer is yes! Scripture and history tells us that after his death he was embalmed and **"put in a coffin in Egypt"** (Genesis 50:14-26), about 1800 B.C. The promise was religiously kept, for **"Moses took the bones of Joseph with him"** (Exodus 13:19), and they were at length put in their final resting place at Shechem (Joshua 24:32) **"And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."**

So, the Israelites took Joseph's coffin with them. Some 360 years

earlier he (Joseph) had foreseen the day when God would bring about the Exodus, and his instructions about his bones being carried to the Promise Land indicated just how certain he was of Israel's departure for Canaan (cf. Genesis 50:24-26; Hebrews 11:22).

After the years of wilderness wanderings, Joseph's remains reached their final resting place in Shechem according to Joshua 24:32. Years ago at a Bible Conference I heard a sermon about, *"Does it Matter Where We are Buried?"* It mattered to Joseph, did it not? Selah! God Bless!

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"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen. 50:24-26). This is an important aspect of the history of the children of Israel. Already the Lord had shown Abraham in Genesis 15:13, 16, **"And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years...But in the fourth generation they shall come**

hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." The chapter of faith, as it records Joseph's entry ignores all of his great life of faith, and goes instead to his great prophesy concerning his bones. **"By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones"** (Heb. 11:22). Selah! Think about it!

Sometimes we do not think through the great logistics of the Exodus, so this might be a good time to stop and consider some of what God did for His people during their 40 year, generational journey through the wilderness into the promised land of Canaan. First of all, the Israelites did not escape from Egypt by the skin of their teeth, but rather went out victoriously, after God's display of power concerning the ten plagues. **"And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. ...and the children of Israel went out with an high hand"** (Ex. 12:36, 14:8).

Sometimes we think the "hasty" exit from the passover night meant they did not have necessary time to prepare to leave. That is not the case. They had already made preparations and it is mostly concerning the unleavened bread that the familiar reference concerns: **"And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders"** (Ex. 12:33-34). That they were packed and ready

◇ (Continued on page 14)

Forum Question #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews..."

Ultimately, perhaps it was a personal test for these two blind men- a charge to see if they would be obedient to His command. Sometime we find ourselves in conflicting circumstances where we cannot see all of the consequences of our actions, which would seem on the surface to be good and godly. Others are able to do it for God's glory, but we are required to be constrained. "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam. 15:22). We know all the fearful were already gone, but God only gave Gideon the 300 that lapped, instead of kneeling to drink. Why? God's choice! If He tells us to be silent, or to speak; what will WE do? Selah! Think about it!

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The context of Matthew chapter nine provides us with a number of miraculous healings performed by the Lord Jesus. A man with palsy had been healed and forgiven by Jesus, and the scribes charged Him with blasphemy (9:1-8). A ruler's daughter was dead and Jesus raised her to life after being mocked by those who were there

mourning (9:18-19, 23-26). The woman with the issue of blood was healed by merely touching the outer garment of the Saviour (9:20-22). Then Jesus healed two blind men by merely touching their eyes as they professed faith that He could do something no one else had ever been able to do (9:27-31). All these were remarkable displays of power performed by God manifested in the flesh.

As to why the Lord commanded the blind men to keep the miracle to themselves and not to spread it abroad, it appears that Jesus did not want to attract undue attention to Himself. Unwanted publicity may serve to hinder His ability to move freely about and preach the message of the Gospel. In fact, after Jesus healed the leper and commanded him not to tell others of the miracle, he disobeyed which resulted in Christ withdrawing Himself as recorded in Mark 1:45: **"But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter."** Christ's command not to publish abroad His miracles and extraordinary teaching was repeated several other times in the Gospel of Matthew (8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 16:20; 17:9). Everything Jesus said and did was on purpose, which ultimately culminated in Him fulfilling all that the Father had given Him to do. After the work of redemption was finished and Jesus was risen from the dead He commissioned His church and commanded them to preach the Gospel to every creature all around the world. We are free to boldly proclaim the good news that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again as

revealed in the Gospel. We are to tell this glorious message of free and sovereign grace far and wide until He comes again!

TOM ROSS



Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

to go is evidenced in this taking of Joseph's bones. Nothing was left behind, but all was prepared and loaded on the wagons. **"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led...the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you"** (Ex. 13:17-19). Harnessed, bespeaks of a great wagon train wending its way toward the Red Sea out of Goshen, Egypt.

Food, water, wood, beasts of burden and sacrifice went out with them, along with a special place in the wagons to carry Joseph's bones. As they get to Mt. Sinai, the Bible makes it clear that the Tabernacle, as it was built was carried on these same wagons, pulled by faithful oxen as the sons of Levi carried the sacred materials, every time the Tabernacle was disassembled for travel, following the pillar of fire. **"...the princes of Israel...brought their offering before the LORD, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and ...Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the**

sons of Gershon, according to their service: And four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service...But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders" (Num. 7:2-9).

"And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem...and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph" (Josh. 24:32). Fulfilling the promise of God, the children made the journey home, dotting every "i" and crossing every "t" along the way. Praise God! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Evidence of

(Continued from page 11) ♦

designs to banish from our hearts a carnal security, as appears when it is added, "for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure," showing that it is God who produces in His people, both the will and the performance. This fear, implanted in the hearts of the children of men, tends to their preservation in the midst of dangers, as instinctive fear of death in all men operates to the preservation of natural life; and it is entirely consistent with the fullest confidence in God, with love and the joyful hope of eternal glory.

The doctrine the devil taught should be a warning, and the conduct of Jesus Christ should be our pattern. The devil took Jesus up into the holy city, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple. **"And saith unto him, if thou be the**

♦ (Continued on page 15)

Evidence of

(Continued from page 14) ♦

Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, **"It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."** Thousands upon thousands take the same view of the doctrine of God's decrees that the devil took. They think and say as the devil did, **"Cast thyself down."** But he whose heart is under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, says, **"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,"** by rashly, foolishly and presumptuously disregarding the word and means which God has ordained for the preservation of life, or for the benefit of the soul. There is, then, no fear in love, no torment; but the true believer has an humble, joyful and peaceful reliance on the promises of God, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus through life and in death.

Did the Psalmist say: **"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil?"** And shall the disciple of Jesus now fear? Has the valley grown more gloomy and terrific? Or is the arm of the Lord shortened, that He cannot now subdue doubt and fears? No, none of these things. The valley is still the same, and the arm of the Lord is the same. His rod and His staff are the same, and they still give comfort to the child of God. "I bless God," said Isaac Watts, "I can lie down with comfort tonight, not being anxious whether I awake in this world or another."

We should be careful how we rely on the manifestation

of piety, given only on a death-bed. The tree is known better by its fruit while living than when dead. **"I will shew thee my faith by my works,"** said the Apostle. A lifetime of faith and good works, is a better demonstration of personal religion, than all the groans and penitent expressions extorted from a suffering and dying patient, just as he departs for the eternal world. There is a criminal, though universal, disposition in the human heart, to put off until the dying hour, the work of seeking God. Though God has said, **"now is the accepted time,"** and **"now is the day of salvation,"** yet the sinner boasts of tomorrow, and promises to seek God at a convenient season. Even the Christian, through the taint of unhealed infirmity, is strongly inclined to look at a death-bed for the most satisfactory manifestations, in his friends, of a gracious state. But God's Word nowhere even intimates that we should suspend our decision--postpone our judgment--in reference to the piety of our friends until death. The text forbids it: **"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."** Mark him through life--his end is peace, whether he die in his senses, in delirium, or by some remarkable providence in a moment, without a word to his friends in reference to his eternal prospects.

But, says one, is it not written, **"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life?"** Yes, truly, but this is not intended to teach that the salvation of the Christian is problematical, is uncertain; for this interpretation would make one portion of God's Word contradict another. **"The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands**

shall wax stronger and stronger."

This address, mark it, is made to faithful ones under peculiar circumstances. It is designed to show them that God requires faithfulness under the severest trials, even unto death; and for their comfort it is added: **"I will give thee a crown of life."** **"Fear not; little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."**

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." "Forty odd years ago," said our venerable Mercer on his death-bed, "I committed my all to Christ, before the mercy-seat, and there is my dependence now. That hymn in The Cluster, which has this verse in it, has been continually in my mind:

*When first before the mercy-seat
I did to him my all commit;
He gave me warrant from that hour,
To trust His wisdom, love and power.*

Though more than forty years had passed away since the day on which he committed his "all" to Christ yet, like the Apostle, he felt that Christ would securely keep that which he had committed to His gracious control. But a little while before he quit the world, he threw his withering arms around the neck of a pious youth, whom he loved in the Lord, and drew him down to his face and whispered, "I have no fears."

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

*O, the sweet joy this sentence gives!--
I know that my Redeemer lives.*

*Lord, when I die, O let me die
Trusting in Thee alone;
My living testimony given,
Then have my dying one.*

(The Christian Repository, Vol. III, pp. 306-327, 1853).



Misplaced Trust

(Continued from page 1) ♦

and given the means to survive and prosper at the Hand of God. The beauty that the people (the City of Jerusalem) attained, was wonderful to behold. However, the people took credit for their own success, and for their own prosperity, and for the perfection or comeliness that was granted unto them. They forgot God. They trusted in themselves.

I want us to use this allegory to picture the state of affairs in Christianity – especially the perverted form of the Gospel that is proclaimed (and believed) by so many today. I think we need to be reminded of our poor beginning! I think we need to be reminded of our past helpless, hopeless, and awful condition!

Many today proclaim a gospel that gives credit to men for their salvation – folks trust in their own goodness (beauty) and deny the perfection and comeliness that comes from God. People trust in their own profession of faith, which is largely grounded on the mistaken perception of their own goodness, worth, works, or abilities. A man might make something of himself, or live a life that is pretty or even lovely in the eyes of the world – a life that would seem to be righteous and moral; but, if that life is based on lies – trusting in oneself more than, or rather than Jesus

♦ (Continued on page 16)



Light Contemplations

By Luke Austin
of Cadillac, Michigan

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD" (Psalm 107:43).

WHICH THIEF ARE YOU?

Now you may say, I am not a criminal, I am neither one. This may be true of your condition before men but not before God. **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23). So again I ask, which thief are you? You could boil it all down and take all the population of the world that has ever lived and is currently living and they are either the thief on the left or the thief on the right.

Do you insist that Jesus get you down off your cross? Do you shake your fist at God and claim to be innocent? Do you try and convince God that you are a pretty good person? Do you look to the law of God and say I have kept most of the Ten Commandments? If you have asked to be saved so you do not have to go to hell but have never repented of your sins, you are the first thief, insisting Jesus get you out of your punishment. **"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us"** (Luke 23:39).

Or do you know you hang upon that cross justly? Do you know you are guilty? Are you without self justification? Do you feel the pain of the nails in your hands yet know that you should endure that punishment? **"But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due**

reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:40-41).

This is the last you hear of the first thief. He is left to his condemnation without hope. But the second thief had a one sentence conversation with Jesus that changed his whole eternity. What did he say? How did he convince Jesus of his worthiness? He did not. He was on that cross because he was a thief, a criminal. He had no excuse and he offered no excuse. **"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"** (Luke 23:42). Lord, remember me. This is a sinner and this is his prayer. And yet it is so simple and bears no resemblance to the "sinner's prayer" of today. It is not about getting all the words in the right order. It is about the faith that causes this thief to look to Jesus.

Jesus responds to sinners the same way every time. When someone comes to Jesus as a sinner, He says yes. He always does. Search the Scriptures. Find me someone that came to Jesus with a pressing need and He said no. Even when they hang on a cross, and can not come to Jesus because their feet are nailed. Even when they can not take hold of the hem of His garment because their hands are nailed. If they look to Him and Him alone He says, **"...to day shalt thou be with me in paradise"** (Luke 23:43).

So I will ask one more time, which thief are you? Repent of

your sins and believe the gospel.

AND PEACE

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

There is no denying the upheaval this virus has caused. Whether you are completely trusting your government's intentions and complying with their decrees, or suspicious of them at every turn and expecting martial law to be exercised at any moment, upheaval seems to encapsulate the mood of the country.

There is still a place of rest even in these storms. A place of assurance and peace. Without Jesus you dwell in a place of death. To be carnally minded, as the text says above, is to have the thought processes of death. In our natural state or carnal, we are at enmity with God. We hate God. We run from God. And we have no rest, no peace. A life without God is a life of storms without safe harbor.

But in Jesus Christ is life and...., more than just eternal life beyond the veil of mortal death. And peace. What is the root cause of upheaval, anxiety, worry, and fear? No peace. Look, you have a God shaped hole in your heart that only God can fill. What was the message of the angels in Luke 2? **"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"** (Luke 2:13-14).

Now the misinterpretation of this text would say peace on earth, as in, peace between man and man. This is false. As long as sin still exists on this earth there will be no worldwide peace between man and man. To understand what it is saying read the next words. Good

will toward men. Good will from God toward man in the person of Jesus Christ. The peace spoken of is peace between God and man. If you would have peace in this life it must have its wellspring flow from peace with God. Without Him there is no sure foundation in life and everything is a variable, a potential wave that will capsize your boat in this life.

In times like these the lack of peace people have for their situation reveals their lack of peace with God. You can have peace. You can have an assurance that the same God that sent His Son to die for you is also on the throne of Heaven sovereignly watching over you. Will you repent of your sins and trust in Jesus? He is the safe haven in the storms of life.

"Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Ps. 107:28-30).

(Luke Austin is a member of the Cadillac Baptist Church of Cadillac, Michigan.)



Misplaced Trust

(Continued from page 15) ♦

Christ – then that life, and that salvation, will most certainly not endure, and that person and all of his hopes and dreams will be utterly destroyed in the judgment to come.

GOOD WORKS

Fruits meet for repentance? Or, fruits meant to deceive?

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers,

♦ (Continued on page 17)

Misplaced Trust

(Continued from page 16) ♦

who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt 3:7-9). Not just any works will do; the saved must do the works of repentance – the works that prove their salvation, that prove the presence of God, that give evidence of a life-changing experience in the Spirit of God. **"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance"** (Acts 26:19-20).

The religions of men rely upon the good deeds and the good works of men in order to save them. This is true in the heathen idolatrous religions, often mentioned in the Scriptures, wherein men must say or do the proper things to please their idols, and must offer the acceptable sacrifices in order to appease them, or in order to gather their favor.

Sadly, this is also the case in much of today's Christianity. So many folks today, in what passes for Christianity in our place and time, set much store by the works or deeds of men, in order that they might be saved. They might pin the success of salvation on some ritual or ordinance – maybe baptism or mass? They might connect effective salvation with some deed or some set of good works that a man might do –

maybe some charitable deed, or some work performed in the name of some church or institution? Or, the salvation that is proclaimed in Christianity might be nothing more than an obedience to a set of doctrines, or the successful completion of some works which may or may not indicate a change in a person's life – changing them (supposedly) from servants of the devil to servants of God.

However, I want you to know that there are no good works which you can do, and there are no good deeds that you can perform, which will justify you in the Sight of God. There is nothing that you can do to atone for your sins – that work, and that salvation, must be accomplished by God. Additionally, there is no good deed that you can do which can bring life to your dead spirit, and usher you into the Kingdom of God – that quickening must be performed by the Holy Spirit, and that new birth and eternal life must be brought unto you by God.

Repentance and faith, which are both necessary unto salvation, are both the Works of God. **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"** (Eph. 2:8). **"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life"** (Acts 11:18).

When men seek to save themselves through good works, they are bound to fail. They may look good in the sight of other men, but they fall far short of the standards and the requirements of our Holy God. Only Jesus Christ – the Son of God – can meet those requirements; only He is good enough to save us. **"And when he was gone forth**

into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me" (Mark 10:17-21). If our salvation rests upon good works (and it does), then those works must be done by the only Good Man Who has ever lived – the Son of God. If we place our trust, or condition our salvation upon any other good works, then ours is a "Misplaced Trust."

GOOD WORDS

Possessing Christ as Saviour? Or, merely professing Christ as Saviour?

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18). It is not the man or woman with a gifted tongue, to say the right words at the right time, who will be the saved. It is not the man who is eloquent in speech, and who is able to tickle the ears of men who will be saved. It is not the man who is ready to say what

others want to hear, and who is able to put on a good show of words and noble intentions who will be saved. Rather, it will be the man who submits himself to the Will and Word of God, and who trusts in God to save Him – this is the one who will be saved, and who will be used by God in His service. Consider the man Moses: **"And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say"** (Ex. 4:10-12).

Also, the Lord told the disciples to not depend on their own abilities to speak, or their own intelligence to know what to say when they were brought before men who would deny the Lord and the Word of God. The Lord told them that their trust should be placed in the leadership of the Holy Spirit – let God tell us what we should say and do! **"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you"** (Matt. 10:19-20).

It is a "misplaced trust" when men trust in the good words that they say, which may seem to justify them in the sight of others and may even gain them a place in Christianity. However, it is the good words that come from God, the confession and possession of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, which

♦ (Continued on page 18)

Misplaced Trust

(Continued from page 17) ♦

are granted unto us by the grace of God, and through the leadership of the Holy Spirit – these words shall be unto salvation. **“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”** (Rom. 10:8-13).

GOOD WORTH

Good for something? Or, good for nothing?

“The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth” (Prov. 10:20). There must be humility and obedience in the manner and life of the saved. We must acknowledge our own helplessness and worthlessness, and trust in the help and the worth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. If we trust in ourselves or rely on ourselves in any aspect of our salvation, then we will fail, and our lives and souls will be forever lost. We must pursue Christ and His ability to save, and His righteousness interposed on our behalf. **“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it”**

(Matt. 10:38-39).

The centurion who had his servant healed by Jesus Christ, knew his own worthlessness and submitted to the worthiness of Jesus. As a result, the servant was healed, and the centurion was honored with a commendation from the Lord Jesus Christ. **“Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick”** (Luke 7:6-10).

There is One Who is worthy of praise and adoration. There is One Who is worthy and deserving of the highest place in Heaven. **“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of**

David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Rev. 5:2-5). There is One Who is worthy and able to save the miserable persons of Adam’s race – that One is not any mere mortal man; none of us are worthy. That One Who is worthy and able to save is only the Lord Jesus Christ – any other person, or any other way of salvation, is only a “Misplaced Trust.” **“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing”** (Rev. 5:9-12).

Let me close by reading a hymn written by Joseph Hart.

*When we pray, or when we sing,
Or read, or speak, or hear,
Or do any holy thing,*

*Be this our constant care:
With a fixed and constant faith
Jesus Christ to keep in view,
Trusting wholly in his death
In all we ask or do.*

*Holiness in all its parts,
Affections placed above,
Self-abhorrence, contrite hearts,
Humility, and love;
Every virtue, every grace,
All that bears the name of good,
Perseverance in our race,
We draw from Jesus’ blood.*

*Lamb of God, in thee we trust,
On thy fixed love depend;
Thou art faithful, true, and just,
And lovest to the end.*

*Heaven and earth shall pass away,
But thy word shall firm abide;
That’s thy children’s steadfast stay
When all things fail beside.*



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Much Rubbish

By David M. Green
of Mansfield, Ohio

“But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before

♦ (Continued on page 22)



Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #12 EVE

TEXT: Gen. 3:20

DEVOTIONAL READING: Gen. 2:18-25

AIM: An Over-view of the Life of Eve

INTRODUCTION— We now take a look at Eve, Adam's wife.

I. FACTS: Eve is the first woman (I Tim. 2:13). She was created by God (Gen. 2:22). There is no record of her death. She was married to Adam (Gen. 2:23, 3:20). She had 3 sons that were named: Cain, Abel, Seth; yet we are told that she had other sons and daughters (Gen. 5:4). Eve means "life" or "living".

II. MADE TO BE THE FIRST WIFE: Eve's special place in creation was as an help meet for Adam (Gen. 2:15-24). She was made to be especially and particularly suitable for the man, to be both compatible with him as well as intimate with him. She was made to share life with him, its toils and labors, as well as its joys and blessings. As man was the crown of God's creation woman was the crown of man (Prov. 12:4; I Cor. 11:7-9). Matthew Henry wrote: "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."

Notice, that marriage was instituted before the fall of sin. Jesus stated that marriage is between a man and a woman; supersedes all other earthly relationships; is for life; and that it is considered a covenant in the eyes of God (Matt. 19:3-12). We should seek God's will in marriage: if we marry; who we marry; and when we marry. Marriage is the foundation of a home and family; is God's creation, and, when entered in obedience to God and blessed by God, is the happiest human relationship that can be known in this life (Heb. 13:4; Prov. 18:22; Eccl. 9:9). Following the commandments to honor one's parents, and to do no harm nor injury to another, is the commandment to uphold the fidelity of marriage (Exo. 20:12-14)—showing the Divine regard for the marriage covenant, and the regard which all should have for it.

III. FIRST IN TRANSGRESSING: Gen. 3:1-13; I Tim. 2:13-14—Eve was deceived by the devil, who lied to her. The devil attacked Eve with falsehood in order to cause her and Adam to stumble. We must be careful that we are not the cause of others stumbling in sin—for our influence is a responsibility before God (Rom. 14:7-13; Matt. 18:7-14). God will hold us accountable for leading others astray or discouraging others from doing what is right.

Eve followed her own reasoning (Gen. 3:6). The devil often appeals to our reasoning with his lies. Thus, our reasoning must always be surrendered to God's Word (Prov. 3:5-6, Ps. 19:12-13; Prov. 14:12; II Cor. 5:7; Ps. 119:105-106, 128). When the devil appealed to Christ's

reasoning, Christ replied with the Word of God: "**It is written**" Matt. 4:1-11.

Because of sin, the joy of child-bearing is now accompanied with pain and sorrow, and the wife has a natural inclination to get out from under the subordination to her husband (Gen. 3:16). Eve had led her husband to sin. Since that time, women have sought to get out from under their Divinely appointed place (Eph. 5:23-24; I Timothy 2:11-15). The world has declared that it is a dishonor to women that they should be subordinate to men; but doing what God says with a humble, cheerful, and obedient heart always results in honor from Him (I Pet. 3:1-6). In child bearing/rearing, bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, training them up in the way they should go and teaching them to set their hope in God is also a blessing when done God's way.

IV. FIRST TO RECEIVE A DIVINE PROMISE: Gen. 3:14-15—Connected with the curse was the promise of redemption. Through the seed of the woman, one who would be born, would come deliverance from sin and death (all the effects of following the serpent's lies). Though child-bearing would be accompanied by pain and sorrow, yet it was thru child-bearing that God would bring forth the One who would bruise the serpent's head (Isa. 7:14, 9:6-7; Gal. 4:4-5). Just as Eve relied and claimed the promise of God, so ought we. She counted her children as having come from God, and she wanted them to know God and trust Him (Ps. 127:3) (and not just for salvation either). Too many mothers have been content to merely give birth to children, and have not brought their children up in the fear and love of God. Too many stop after salvation and do NOT teach their children to live/walk by faith or worship the Lord as Eve did.

V. FIRST TO EXPERIENCE A BROKEN HOME: Gen. 4:25—No doubt Eve's heart was broken when her son forsook God and slew his brother Abel. Many mothers blame themselves when their children do wrong. Yet, Eve did not add sin unto sin by forsaking God herself; but continued to trust in Him, and look for His promises (Gen. 4:25). While we must repent of our failings in child-rearing, we must also take our broken-heartedness to God, for He heals the broken-hearted (Ps. 147:1-3, 11).

VI. FIRST TYPE OF BRIDE OF CHRIST: Gen. 2:23—As the church is the body of Christ, so too Eve came from the body of the 1st Adam. Observe as well, that Eve was espoused to Adam by God; so too the church to Christ (Eph. 5:23-27; II Cor. 11:2-3; Rev. 19:7-10). As Eve bore children, so the church by the power of Christ brings forth God's children through the preaching of the Gospel, the seed, the Word of God (Matt. 18:19; Mark 4:14) accompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit. With no record of her death, we find a type of the church's perpetuity (Matt. 16:18).

(Nathaniel Hille is pastor of the Bible Baptist Church of Plant City, Florida.)





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Session of Christ

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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" (Rom. 8:32-34).

The present ministry of Christ in Heaven is known among theologians as His session. At present He performs certain vital ministries which provide completely for the believer's security. For some unknown reason, the portion of Scripture bearing upon this subject is sadly neglected by ministers and expositors. Due to this failure, the Christian public has been deprived of the knowledge of Christ's present work. The Scriptures declare that Christ is now engaged in a ministry in Heaven for the benefit and blessing of His people.

UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY

The fact that authority is committed by the Father to the Son is one of the great mysteries of the Bible. Since the Son is equal in His person with the Father, it is difficult to understand how authority could be committed to the Son which was not properly His to begin with. Regardless of the solution to this, it is a Bible fact that **"all power"** is given unto Christ (Matt. 11:27; 28:18; Luke

10:22; John 3:35; 5:22; 13:3; 17:2).

Christ exercised this power beginning from the creation of all things in Heaven and earth. Now it is being exercised to hold all things together. **"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist"** (Col. 1:16-17).

It is written that the Father has put all things under the feet of the Son, excepting Himself (I Cor. 15:27). This power will be exercised in the coming kingdom age to bring about the destruction of every enemy (I Cor. 15:24-28).

How comforting to realize all things---angels, men, and world events---are put into the hands of our Savior. He makes all things serve His interest and the interest of His people (Rom. 8:28). Such a truth brings freedom of fear from all spiritual and mortal foes.

HEAD OF THE CHURCH

In this present age, Christ is Head over all things to the church. In Ephesians 1:22-23 we read: **"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."**

Since the ascended Christ was made head over all things to the

church, this teaches that the church was in existence at least 10 days before Pentecost. There could be no head without a body.

Christ is the intelligent director of church affairs, just as the head is the director of the human body. He is the head of every local church in the sense He is the head of every man (I Cor. 11:3). Religious hierarchies that direct church affairs are usurpers and supplanters. They would deprive Christ of His resurrection glory.

BESTOWER OF GIFTS

The first gift of the ascended Christ to the church was the Holy Spirit. The First Baptist announced this event before it came to pass: **"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire"** (Matt. 3:11).

Some of the last words of Christ on earth were: **"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high"** (Luke 24:49).

The Holy Spirit could not come into the world until Christ left the world: **"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you"** (John 16:7). The Spirit would only be given after Jesus Christ was glorified: **"...for the Holy Spirit was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified"** (John 7:39).

In Acts 2 we see the Holy Spirit coming to empower the church for its world-wide witnessing ministry. During the course of his Pentecostal sermon, Peter said: **"This Jesus hath God raised up,**

whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:32-34).

Our Redeemer ascended far above the airy and starry heavens, into the Heaven of heavens, that He might fill all the members of His church with gifts and graces. **"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men"** (Eph. 4:7-8). **"Having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us"** (Rom. 12:6).

A gift is a Divine enablement wrought in and through the believer by the Spirit Who indwells him. The Spirit works through him to accomplish certain Divine purposes. These gifts are given in great detail in Romans 12:1-21 and I Corinthians 12:1-31.

The ascended Christ has placed certain men in the church as His gifts unto men. Ephesians 4:11 says: **"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."** As the context indicates, these men are for the spread of the gospel and the edification of the church.

The Head of the church equips His body with the various workers needful to her work in the world. The making of missionaries and ministers is the work of the ascended Christ. Our positions of service are not incidental things, or a matter of our independent choice, or the church's choice. Christ makes His own missionaries and ministers (Acts 26:16; I Tim. 1:12; Heb.

◊ (Continued on page 21)

Session of Christ

(Continued from page 20) ♦

5:4). With reference to church officials, Paul told the Corinthian church: **"And God hath set some in the church..."** (I Cor. 12:28).

INTERCESSOR

Another ministry of Christ in Heaven is that of intercessor for the saved. The Apostle said: **"...who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"** (Rom. 8:34). This work of His has to do with the weakness, the helplessness, and the immaturity of His children who are on earth.

Christ began this ministry while on earth (John 17:1-26; Luke 22:31-32), and He will continue it in Heaven as long as His own are in the world (John 17:9). He intercedes only for those who come unto God through Him (Heb. 7:25), not the unbelieving world. One of the four reasons assigned in Romans 8:34 for the believer's safe-keeping is that Christ now **"maketh intercession for us."**

ADVOCATE

The child of God is often guilty of sin in his fleshly body, which would separate him from God, were it not for his heavenly Advocate. I John 2:1 declares: **"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."** What a most wonderful and most comforting doctrine is seen in this text! But only true believers can claim this blessing, for Christ is an advocate for His people only.

"Advocate" is translated from the Greek word "paraclete," and it is the same term applied to the Holy Spirit in other Scripture. Here the reference is to Christ Who is our Intercessor, Pleader, Proxy, Helper, and Advocate in

Heaven. When applied to the Holy Spirit, it designates Him as our Helper and Comforter. Christ is our Advocate with the Father, the Holy Spirit is Christ's Advocate with us.

A sin committed even by a child of God has a germ of Hell in it. If the work of Christ did not continue to avail for the believer, the justice of God would consign him to perdition for sins committed after conversion. We are saved by the death of Christ, and we are kept saved by His effectual advocacy for us in Heaven (Rom. 5:10). Christ is now in Heaven to appear in the presence of God for the sins of His people (Heb. 9:24).

The sins of saints may seem insignificant, but a holy God can never treat them lightly. What may be a secret sin on earth is an open scandal in Heaven (Ps. 90:8). Satan constantly accuses the sinning saint before God (Rev. 12:10). But our Advocate claims our acquittal on the grounds of His obedience to the law and endurance of its full penalty for us. This frees the erring child from the condemnation of the law and every accusation of Satan and men, since Christ through His death became **"the propitiation for our sins"** (I John 2:2).

Christ is not a mere supplicant petitioner. He pleads for us on the ground of justice and righteousness, for He is **"Jesus Christ the righteous."** In all His work for sinning saints, He studies the interests of righteousness, and identified Himself with the cause of righteousness. The Advocate is on the side of the law, and so the Father regards the Advocate's plea.

The work of Christ as our Advocate does not make it easy for the Christian to sin. On the contrary, these very truths are

written **"that we be not sinning"** (I John 2:1, Greek). No believer will sin carelessly who considers the necessary pleading which his sin imposes upon his Advocate.

MEDIATOR

The ascended Christ is the only Mediator between God and man. The Apostle Paul declared: **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (I Tim. 2:5). The Apostle reminds us of this truth in connection with our duty to pray for all men (I Tim. 2:1-2).

A mediator is a go-between or a person who stands between parties who are at variance. These two parties are in nature and dignity so widely separated that they can communicate only through an intermediate person. The word is applied to Moses in the Old Testament (Ex. 20:19-22; Deut. 5:22-31; Gal. 3:19-20), but elsewhere of Christ (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).

No saint can approach God in prayer except through the great High Priest of his profession. In John 14:6 Christ said: **"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** All acceptable prayer must be offered in His name. In John 14:13 our Lord said: **"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."**

What an encouragement to prayer the mediatorial ministry of Christ is! The writer of Hebrews said: **"And having an high priest over the house of God: 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."** Again he said: **"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).

THE BUILDER

In John 14:2 Christ said: **"I go to prepare a place for you."** It seems from this that Christ is engaged in building a future home for the church. While there were already many mansions prepared for the Old Testament saints (Heb. 11:10; 12:22) in the Father's house, not one of those abodes in His estimation was suitable for His bride. It seems that He is preparing an abode which will be more glorious than all within God's creation at present.

The bride will not occupy this beautiful home until the Second Coming: **"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"** (John 14:3). The prepared place must not remain without the people for whom it is prepared.

The place Christ is building for the church is **"the holy city, new Jerusalem"** (Rev. 21:2). It is **"prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,"** because it will be the future home of **"the bride, the Lamb's wife"** (Rev. 21:9). Its complete description is found in Revelation 21:10-27.

CONCLUSION

During this present dispensation, Christ is performing the work of a priest at the Father's right hand. This attracts the believer heavenward. To the Colossians Paul wrote: **"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"** (Col. 3:1-2).

We who believe on Him are already seated in Heaven in the Person of our covenant Head. He

♦ (Continued on page 22)

Session of Christ

(Continued from page 21) ♦

“hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places” (Eph. 2:6). Therefore, heavenly things must be the objects of our aims and efforts. Our thoughts and treasures should be there.

Sinner, have you ever thought about Christ and the heavenly country? Are you minding earthly things? Remember, earthly things pass away, while heavenly things endure. Paul said: **“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal”** (II Cor. 4:18).

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face.
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*



Gleanings

(Continued from page 18) ♦

thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. And Judah said, The strength

of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease” (Neh. 4:1-11).

Here we find a passage of Scripture telling of a time when God’s people had a mind to work, but there was much rubbish. (Rubbish – waste, garbage...not useful at all. Something that needs to be thrown away.) Is it not the same today? Every time that God’s servants have a mind to work, Satan throws the rubbish in our way. Let us notice some of the rubbish we have to deal with today.

THE WORLD’S RUBBISH

“Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia” (II Tim. 4:9-10).

Demas was a man who could have been a great help to Paul the Apostle. Yet, he enjoyed the world’s rubbish too much. Does not this hinder the Lord’s work today? Far too much of the world’s rubbish has entered into the Lord’s churches and it gets in the way of those who have a mind to work! **“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in**

them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:14-18).

The Bible teaches a life of separation for the child of God. I know, we are in the world. That is a fact, but we are not of the world! Unfortunately, we live in a day and age when people will come to church and sing *Just As I Am* only to go to live just as they were! What agreement do we have with the world? What fellowship can we enjoy? On what grounds? We are as different as night and day. **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”** (Rom. 12:1-2).

We are warned not to be conformed to the image of this world. To conform to something means we are like them. When we learn to live by these verses, the rubbish of the world will be greatly reduced and we can concentrate on the Lord’s work so much better.

INTERNAL RUBBISH

“And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove

against the LORD: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign” (Num. 26:9-10).

Dathan and Abiram were troublemakers against Moses and Aaron. They caused much rubbish to come in. Yet, in this text it says “when they strove against the Lord.” When you rise up against someone who has a mind to work for the Lord, you had better be careful. You do something against one of God’s servants it is the same as if you are doing it against the Lord! **“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not”** (III John 1:9).

Diotrophes loved to have the preeminence. He was the type of man who was not the pastor, but loved to make people think he was in charge. He obviously did his best to undermine the church and the church’s stand. This is pure rubbish! **“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men”** (Matt. 16:21-23).

Notice the rubbish the Lord had to deal with here, coming from Peter. Satan can so influence

♦ (Continued on page 23)

Gleanings

(Continued from page 22) ♦

people that a servant of God can be, at least for a time, the servant of the Devil. He still does this today. Oh, the times when a church has been split because of internal rubbish! When a member of one of the Lord's churches is influenced by Satan, very bad things will happen and there is much rubbish! **"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work"** (James 3:14-16).

Church disagreements, arguing and bickering are all forms of internal rubbish we often have to deal with. It is not from God, but is very much from Satan. God is not the author of confusion. Let us watch out for such garbage. **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve"** (John 6:70-71).

Sometimes a lost man will get into the church and even become a member. Nothing good comes of that, and much rubbish can come as a result.

PERSONAL RUBBISH

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is,

in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:14-25).

The biggest pile of rubbish that Satan uses in our lives is right between our two ears, for this is where he can hit us the hardest! In every child of God there is a battle of two natures. Temptations and memories from your old nature will come at those times you have a desire to work for the Lord. Your mind is like a video camera always recording and it will often bring up images from your past that will cause harm to your work for God. We need to watch out for this rubbish!

CONCLUSION

"So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days" (Neh. 6:15). In spite of all the rubbish we have to deal with, the Lord's work should still be done. The work of God must continue!



The Short Pews



Brief Articles
by Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

WHAT DOES GOD THINK OF WHAT YOU LOVE?

Few will take time during this hectic Christmas season to think seriously about what is really going on. People are just too busy to consider what God thinks about things. Church members are busy with programs, living nativity scenes, choirs and all sorts of religious fun this time of the year.

But consider the principle Jesus laid down in Luke 16:15: **"...for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."** The dictionary definition of abomination is, "something regarded with disgust or hatred." The principle stated by the Lord Jesus here is that God hates and is disgusted by those things that the world considers important and to which the world is devoted.

Now "the world" is used in a multitude of ways in the Bible, but here it means those outside His sheep. Of His little traveling congregation of spiritual sheep Jesus said, **"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you"** (John 15:19). And again in John 17:14 when praying to His Father said of this little church **"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"** (John 17:14-16).

The Lord's true churches are most certainly not held in high esteem by

♦ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

2-1-2020 to 2-29-2020

Beginning Balance	\$2,382.65
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Carol Willett, Cottonwood Shores, TX	60.00
Citrus M. B. C. Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI	100.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace Missionary B. C. Tulsa, OK	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
MS State Tax (added back in)	99.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway L. B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wellington, KS	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	26.00
Anonymous	1,220.00
Sub Total	\$3,230.00
TOTAL	\$5,612.65
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	572.25
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Total Expenditures	\$3,538.21
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,074.44



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

2-1-2020 to 2-29-2020

Beginning Balance	\$2,705.05
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Sumas, WA	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	3,230.05
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
Program production	195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	558.98
.....	2,671.07
Interest	+0.02
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,671.09

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brother Tom Ross is reprinting a revised and enlarged version of Cultivating Christian Character which includes 7 new chapters. He is also doing a reprint of Teachings on the Local Church.

Both books must be ordered and prepaid by May 15th. Cultivating Christian Character is \$14 plus postage. Teachings on the Local Church is \$16 plus postage. On orders of 25 books or more there will be free shipping. On orders of 50 books or more there will be a discount of \$2 per book and free shipping.

For more details you may contact Bro. Ross via Facebook Messenger, or email tomross@zoominternet.net; or text message at 304-617-6843 to get an order form with postage rates. Send all checks or money orders payable to Tom Ross to 6339 County Rd. 15; South Point, OH 45680.

The Beauty Mountain Baptist Church of Edmond, WV has called Bro. Jonathan Bailess as pastor. Please remember this church and their new pastor in your prayers.

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will be having their Annual Fellowship meeting April 4th. Service time is 10:00 a.m. Scheduled speakers are Elders Paul Stepp, and George Kelly. A meal following the service will be provided by the church.

All are invited to attend.

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Temperance, MI, and pastor Joe Sidders would like to announce Revival Services for May 28th -31st.

Service times are Thursday thru Friday at 7:00 p.m., Saturday Fellowship meal at 5:00 p.m.

followed by services, Sunday 10:00 a.m.

Speakers are: Thursday, Elder Michael Jackman; Friday, Elder Justin Meier; Saturday, Elder David Green; Sunday, Missionary Nathan Long and Elder Matthew Stepp.

Should you need accommodation options or more information please contact pastor Sidders at (567) 686-7853.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Cortland, Ohio, is in need of a pastor. The Church believes and teaches the doctrines of grace and local church truth. If any man is interested please contact Brother Bill Davis at 330-770-1610 or Wayne Waddell at 330-979-8828 or Sean Fellows at 330 638-0269 for additional information. Please remember this church in your prayers.

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs is in search of a pastor.

For a statement of faith you can visit the church website at <http://GraceBibleBaptist.webhop.org> or <http://gracebbc.dyndns.org:81/>.

You may contact any of the following for more information: Keith Laurence (225) 664-3557, Lucien LeSage (225) 803-9710, or

Charlie Andrews (225) 200-1171.

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible. If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church you can call Brother Lonnie Edwards at (859) 629-1413 or write the church at: Stephens Branch Baptist Church, 1025 Stephens Branch Road, Martin, Kentucky 41649.

The Lord's Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist

Church of Caldwell, KS is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact the church in writing at SGBC, 400 N. Main St., Caldwell, KS 67022, or by phone Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

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 Short Pews

(Continued from page 23) ♦

the world. But a great many things are “**highly esteemed among men.**” Consider the things on which the population spends the most money – things beyond necessities. Lumped all together they can all be seen to be pleasures. While some people take great pleasure in one thing, others are given over to near addiction to another, etc. So it is seen that the natural man is a pleasure-seeking animal bent on pleasing himself. Look around! You can compile your own list of those things that are “**highly esteemed among men.**” And when you have made your list of these things you can say as the Lord Jesus did, these things and such like things are an “**abomination in the sight of God!**”

This preacher is well aware that few will bother to read these few lines and fewer still will agree with them. How dare anyone to bring into suspicion the things that the majority of people hold dear and in which they take great pleasure! Old stick-in-the-mud! Old foggy! Bible thumper! Religious fanatic! Dinosaur! And worse names than these! But it matters not what either you or I say. What is important is what God says: and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, said, “**...that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.**”

ARTICLE INDEX

Brief Truths by Randy Johnson	p. 9
The Evidence of Discipleship by Robert Fleming	p. 1
Forum	pp. 12-13
Gleanings	p. 18
Light Contemplations by Luke Austin	p. 16
Little Hills by Nathaniel Hille	p. 19
Little Valleys by Timothy J. Hille	p. 11
The Session of Christ by Milburn Cockrell	p. 20
The Short Pews	p. 23
Small Drops by Joseph Sidders	p. 7
Misplaced Trust by Paul Stepp	p. 1
Narrow Paths by Doug Newell IV	p. 5
The World is Getting Hostile Toward Christians by Matthew Stepp ..	p. 1