

The Domino Effect

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

Imagine with me that long line of dominoes is almost set up to perfection. They criss-cross each other and go up and down a myriad of bridges and stairways. It is a work of art, and has taken six months of dedicated work, a focused talent and a commitment of dedication to get to this point of virtual completion. Just about ready to go on display for the world to see.

Imagine also with me, Beloved Reader, that on this last day, some child of a friend that has come to witness this event *accidentally* bumps the middle dominoes and *ruins* the whole piece of art--- dominoes, thousands of dominoes start falling! Unstoppable horror watches on. What would the reaction of both creator and friend be? After all, he *was* just a child that knew no better!



Let's change gears and imagine now for an instant that the person who knocked over the display was not a friend, but a cold-blooded rival that came in surreptitiously at night and knocked them over maliciously while the creator was elsewhere? How terrible! Six months of pain-staking labor and thousands of dollars investment *gone---ruined!* Now what is the reaction? A little different, eh?

Well, you don't have to imagine. This is precisely what happened in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve! Eve as we read in I Timothy 2:13-14 was the friend that "accidentally" ruined the perfect

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The Young Visitor; or, The Deceiber Reclaimed

Editor's note: Browsing through the many books in my father's library, I came across this little book. It is a joy to read and the many things that can be gleaned from it by both young and old are numerous. The last few chapters I find extremely good. The entire book is small and we will publish the entire story in the Banner over the next few issues. I hope you enjoy this simple story as much as I have.

Its publication was in the 1800's. The inscription in the front of the book is as follows:

"This interesting book is affectionately dedicated, by the Publication Society, to the Sunday-School of the Eleventh Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by whose liberality it has been stereotyped, and thus perpetuated."

CHAPTER ONE

The ride in the cars---Annie's guest

One morning, as Mrs. Taylor was sitting at breakfast, a letter was brought to her. The direction showed that it was from a child. "A letter from Annie!" she

exclaimed. "What can she have to write about, when in three days she will be home for the vacation, and can tell us every thing herself." She broke open the somewhat clumsy seal, and read as follows:

"My dear Mamma, I want to ask you a very great favor. There is a dear little girl here at school, and her papa and mamma are away off in India. She has no nice home to go to, as I have, in vacation; so, when the other girls are gone, she will be left here all alone with the teachers. She cries about it all day long. Now do, dear mamma, write and tell me I may bring her home with me to spend the vacation. I am sure you will love her very much. She has beautiful black hair, and it curls all round her head. She is always kissing me, she is so affectionate. Her name is Octavia. It will make her so happy, if

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Christ's Use of the Gospel Divine and Moral Will in Salvation

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles,



unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:12-19).

My text is the words of the Apostle Paul before King Agrippa. The apostle never seemed to become weary of telling others about his conversion and call to the ministry. What a remarkable experience Saul had on the Damascus road! Christ called him to salvation and

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By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

When it comes to discussing the will of man, and the will of God, it always seems that salvation is at the center of the debate. What I would like to do is discuss the will of God, and the role that it plays in salvation, and also to discuss the will of man, and the role that it plays in salvation.

DIVINE WILL

The first thing that I would like to make clear is that our God is omnipotent; Our God is sovereign; our God is immutable; our God is self-existent. All of these statements go hand in hand. He is not subject to the will of man, nor is it necessary (or even possible) that puny man should understand the will and disposition of our All-Mighty God.

An Omnipotent God must have an



Omnipotent Will. As we consider this God that is all powerful, we must remind ourselves that if He is truly omnipotent, and if He is truly sovereign, then

it must be that His will is omnipotent and sovereign as well. Therefore, He cannot be thwarted on any level, nor can He be surprised or disappointed in the way that people or events are played out. If His will is ever successfully opposed, then He must of necessity cease to be God. To men this is a very fundamental aspect of God that is largely misunderstood even today amongst religious people.

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The lives of ministers oftentimes convince more strongly than their words; their tongues may persuade, but their lives command.

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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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Domino Effect

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Creation- “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

God's Creation was more perfect than any setup of dominoes could ever be. He pronounced it so at the end of His creative work- **“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good”** (Gen. 1:31). And Adam with the knowledge of what he was doing, disregarded the perfection and deliberately took of the fruit handed to him by his dead wife and with a single bite, *destroyed* himself and God's creation of perfection. The briars and thistles, the sickness and plagues, the depravity of heart and mind; murder, fornication and evil in every imagination of every heart of universal man--Yes, it was a thorough destruction!

THE PROBLEMATICS OF “GUILTY” VS “GUILTIER”

Both are guilty! But my question to you, Beloved Reader, is this: Is Adam “guiltier” than Eve? Is the enemy rival “guiltier” than the child of innocence? Surely the motives of the rebel would make the crime worse. But, is he guiltier?

Okay, let's look at the problem from another viewpoint. From the domino's perspective there is not *one* single difference! Destroyed! The *perfection* is *gone*! Not one guiltier, just both *equally* guilty... Adam and/or Eve. Doesn't matter who/what/why/when/where---the result is the same---just destruction!! The lion or the otter knows no reason or motive, just that the world just got to be a tougher place to live in---Paradise lost!

THE PENALTY VERSUS THE OFFENSE

What about the Creator's perspective? Hardest of all to figure, since we know/comprehend so little about Him! (If!) sympathy or mercy enter the picture, surely there is a difference between the judgment of Adam and Eve. But *can* it enter? Since the result was the same (i.e., destruction!), *can* the motives enter into the picture?

As far as the penalty goes, the motives *are* taken into consideration. Luke 12:47-48: **“And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”** But does that really matter when the stakes are so high? I mean, Hell is HELL! An eternity spent at the mouth of Hell (less stripes) would only

be only infinitesimally different from the pits of Hell (many stripes)! Ask the soul suffering at the mouth of Hell if it could be any worse and she'll tell you--screaming hoarsely throughout the tortured halls of agony---“NO! It is far worse than any have *ever* suffered!”

So that's the mercy of God for sinners of ignorance. Grim picture, huh? But after all, who could dare cast blame or cry foul? The destruction of the Creation *did* occur and *can't* be remedied!!

Justice has been rightly carried out... Upon the unfaithful Israelites, and unto the faithless in Judah as well. Jeremiah 7:13-15, 20: **“And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. ...Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.”** “Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. ...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. 9:11, 14). Justice *must* have its day or God is not Holy!

HOW DO YOU MAKE REPARATIONS UNTO A HOLY GOD?

Okay, leaving the Penalty as hopeless adjustments of torment, let's get back then to the offense. My question to you, Beloved Reader, is this: *How do you make reparations against an Infinitely Holy God?*

Let's set all the dominoes back up, okay, little boy? Did you catch that incredulous look? It's a look we need to comprehend---He can't and you can't! We don't have the skills, talents, abilities, etc.

So what do we do? Pay for the damage? The price in time alone is inestimable! How do you give time back? The cost is *infinite*! **“Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught**

him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity” (Isa. 40:12-17).

How do you make Reparations unto a Holy God? His Creation *was* perfect! It is now destroyed! Look at it! Examine it closely! Who destroyed it? Eve? No. Your eyebrows perhaps rise? Adam! No. Well, who then?

You did---last night when you let someone think you were okay with the little deception they were pulling off. Or your little lie to make things look better. When you put something else in your life ahead of God's service.

Naw! That wasn't *nothing* compared to the abortion doctor at the clinic in Huntington. Or compared to the two men that shot the clerk at the all-night store who was on his way to his second job to pay for his wife's pregnancy.

Let me inform you Beloved Reader, that your lil' ol' sin did *just* as much to destroy God's *perfect* Creation as *anybody else's* sin you want to compare to. From Stalin to Eve. From Hitler to Abraham. The penalty might be different, but the destruction/offense is *exactly the same!!!*

You see, one broken law conveys upon you the exact same title as *all* of humankind --You're a *sinner*. ---and you can't do a thing about it. **“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law”** (James 2:10-11).

You've been told this before, haven't you? That you are a sinner? “How sad”, you've murmured softly and moved on with scarcely a second thought. After all, *everybody's* a sinner.

But hold on now; please give it a second thought right now, while we've still got these images in front of us. Say the following statement with me---“God sees me equally as bad a sinner as Judas Iscariot.” “How horrible” you shiver as you start to connect. Yes, the penalties may differ between the two of you, but the offense is the *same*---to a Holy, Infinite God. You've both destroyed the dominoes.

“I don't want to think about that”, you say. Oh, but you must! You see, you are but one step away from the black-robed figure of Death coming to separate you

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From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Baptist Church Discipline

During the past fifty years of this permissive age Baptist churches in general have slowly, but surely, deserted the old landmark of church discipline. The craze for new church members and additional money to oil the denominational machinery has prompted Arminian preachers to relegate the moral purity of the church to the background. The sad neglect of plain preaching and teaching on the subject of an ordered, disciplined church has brought into the churches a generation which knows not the Lord, nor the faith of our Baptist fathers. Today public press reports crimes committed by ordained ministers, yet no action is taken by the church where that person holds membership. The churches which are guiltless of laxity in discipline are few and far between. They are independent churches which have not been affected by the main stream of denominational Christianity.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE HISTORICALLY

Types and shadows of church discipline are to be seen from a study of **"the church in the wilderness"** (Acts 7:38). The Old Testament records instances of divinely ordained acts of discipline within the camp of Israel, sometimes by divine intervention through nature (Num. 16:31-35; Lev. 10:1-2) and sometimes through human instrumentality (Ex. 32:25-35; Josh. 7). The law of Moses prohibited admission to the assembly of Israel of those who had committed certain sexual offenses or were from among Israel's enemies (Deut. 23:1-6). Compare Deuteronomy 23:1-6 with I Corinthians 5:9-13. Immoral persons were stoned in Israel in order to **"put evil away from among you"** (Deut. 13:5; 19:19-20; 22:21-24). Likewise, the church is to **"purge out therefore the old leaven"** that she may be **"unleavened"** (I Cor. 5:7).

James Garrett in *Baptist Church Discipline* well relates:

"The Babylonian Talmud contains references to the practice of the *shammetha* or ban with three degrees in Judaism. First, there was a "reprimand" (*neziphah*) for a period of seven days. This was to be followed by a "separation" or exclusion (*niddui*), which in Babylon lasted for seven more days but in Palestine for thirty days. A third and most decisive action was "full excommunication" (*ohherem*) of indefinite duration. There is also evidence of Judaism's recognition of three cardinal sins (heathenism, incest

and related acts, and homicide). The Jewish practice of excommunication serves to clarify the reluctance of the parents of the man blind from birth whom Jesus healed to precipitate their excommunication from the synagogue" (John 9:22).

Neither the Apostles nor the primitive churches attained perfection in the flesh (Phil. 3:12-14), yet students of the Bible admit that the strict precepts of the Apostles were more faithfully observed by the early churches than they have seen by any succeeding churches. The New Testament church, feeling herself to be the bride of Christ, earnestly sought to show her love for her Lord by keeping His commandments. She exercised strict discipline to guard against the infection of pagan immorality. She did not treat those whose life contradicted the laws of Christianity as a Christian brother. The Apostolic churches practiced strict discipline and it did not hurt their church attendance or offerings.

God Himself directly interposed in the case of the first offense in the Apostolic church (Acts 5:1-11). The church at Corinth excluded the incestuous man (I Cor. 5) and later restored him upon repentance (II Cor. 2:6-8). It seems Hymeneus, Alexander and Philetus were excluded for heresy (I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:17-18). Pergamos was censured for her lack of discipline, and Thyatira was censured for her looseness in discipline (Rev. 2:14, 20).

True Baptist churches have always practiced church discipline. Novatian, a post-apostolic father, in the third century contended for this doctrine. "... Novatian maintained that, purity and holiness being one of the essential marks of a true church, every church which, neglecting the right use of discipline, tolerates in its bosom, or readmits to its communion, such persons as, by gross sins, have broken their baptismal vow, ceases by that very act to be a true Christian church, and forfeits all the rights and privileges of a true church" (*Neander's Church History*, Vol. I, page 344).

Dr. Mosheim, Chancellor of the University of Gottingen, says of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century: "Those who had no other marks of peculiarity than their administering baptism to adult persons only, and their excluding the unrighteous from the external communion of the church. . ." Again the learned Doctor says of them:

"The rules of moral discipline that were formerly observed by the Mennonites, were rigorous and austere in the highest degree, and thus every way conformable to the fundamental principle, which has been already mentioned as the source of all their peculiar tenets. It is somewhat doubtful whether these rules still subsist and are respected among them; but, it is certain, that in the times of old their moral precepts were very severe. And, indeed it could not well be otherwise; for, when these people had once got it into their heads, that sanctity of manners was the only genuine mark of the true church, it may well be imagined, that they would spare no pains to obtain this honorable character for their sect; and that, for this purpose, they would use the strictest precautions to guard their brethren against disgracing their profession by immoral practices. Hence it was that they unanimously, and no doubt justly, exalted the rules of the Gospel, on account of their transcendent purity. They alleged, that Christ had promulgated a new law of life, far more perfect than that which had been delivered by Moses and the Prophets; and they excluded from their communion all such as deviated, in the least, from the most rigorous rules of simplicity and gravity in their looks, their gestures, their clothing and their table. . ." (*Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. II, page 128, 122).

The confessions of faith of English Baptist churches and associations reflect a concern for order and discipline. The London Confession of 1644, Article 42, reads: "Christ has likewise given power to his whole Church to receive in and cast out, by way of Excommunication, any member; and this power is given to every particular Congregation, and not one particular person, either member of Officer, but the whole." The Second London Confession printed in 1677 says in Chapter XXVI, Article 7: "To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind, declared in his word, he hath given all that power and authority, which is any way needful, for their carrying on that order in worship, and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe; with commands, and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power." The oldest Baptist association in the United States, the Philadelphia, adopted this article in 1742. The Charleston Baptist Association, the oldest in the South, adopted this same article in 1767. After this Baptists all over America adopted similar articles concerning discipline. An example of this is seen in the Mississippi Baptist Association's adoption of article 7 in the year 1807 which declares: "We believe it to be the duty of every regular organized church, to expel from her communion all disorderly members, who are immoral in their lives---or that hold doctrines contrary to the Scriptures."

THE NECESSITY OF IT

Common sense and mere logic teach the neediness of church discipline. Could any man be successful in the world without practicing self discipline? What would happen to our nation if the executive branch of our government ceased to punish the offenders of our country's laws? Would not lawlessness and anarchy everywhere prevail? What would be the results of parents declaring that their children would go unpunished for the most hideous mischief? Would not the home become a madhouse? What would be the consequences of the commanding officers of our armed forces telling their soldiers that the army was going to run on a "happy go lucky" basis and that no one would ever be put in the guardhouse? Would not desertion and disobedience be seen everywhere? What would be the outcome of public school teachers saying that no student would be punished even for the greatest wickedness? Could any school keep from becoming a place of uproar, noise and confusion? But what if churches discontinued to practice church discipline? Would not the church forfeit its moral influence, lose its spiritual power and become a lodging place for hypocrites? Yes, it most certainly would! While some would admit that discipline is an essential element in homes, schools, nations, armies and fraternal organizations, they at the same time deny it is essential to the well-being of the Lord's church. But to do so is irrational and illogical.

The necessity of church censures grows out of the Lord's injunction to the church to practice such (Matt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5:9-13; 14:37). It is the duty of the church to **"observe all things whatsoever"** Christ commanded her (Matt. 28:19-20). The church is not at liberty to set aside even one jot or one tittle of the law of Christ (Matt. 5:18). We, like Joshua of old, should **"observe to do according to all that is written therein"** (Josh. 1:8). The Lord is telling His church today what He did the church in the wilderness: **"Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command"**

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Church Discipline

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you” (Deut. 4:2). Those who would attempt to set aside church discipline are trying to take from the Scriptures. This is a serious matter (Rev. 22:19). Any time we dare to set aside one of the Lord’s commandments, we virtually say that He unwisely commanded that thing. It is a very serious matter to break even one of the least commandments (Matt. 5:19). The church which persists in laxity of discipline is encouraging people to sin and is endangering her candlestick.

Christian discipline is the denial of one’s self and the taking up one’s cross (Mark 8:34), taking the yoke of Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:28-30), and becoming as humble as a little child (Matt. 18:3). Christians are **“the salt of the earth”** and **“the light of the world”** (Matt. 5:13-15). They are children of light and are to walk in light rather than darkness (I Thess. 5:4-8; Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:7-14). They **“hunger and thirst after righteousness”** and their righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:6, 20). Those who have been buried with Christ in baptism have been raised to **“walk in newness of life,”** knowing **“themselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Rom. 6). In conversion those who **“were the servants of sin”** become **“the servants of righteousness”** (Rom. 6:17-18). In regeneration **“the children of disobedience”** (Eph. 2:2) become **“obedient children”** (I Pet. 1:14). Believers are to be characterized by **“the fruit of the Spirit”** instead of **“the works of the flesh”** (Gal. 5:15-26). A Christian’s manner of life ought to be such as **“becometh the gospel of Christ”** (Phil. 1:27). This holy standard is required of all Baptist church members!

Christian liberty is not to be used **“for an occasion to the flesh”** (Gal. 5:13) or to put a stumbling block before weaker brethren (I Cor. 8:9-13; Rom. 14:13-23). A child of God **“no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God”** (I Pet. 4:2). True Christians are such as put **“on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof”** (Rom. 13:14). They are those who **“walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** (Rom. 8:4). Those

made alive with Christ do not **“live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again”** (II Cor. 5:15). Those who persist in unrighteousness shall not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:5).

“Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever” (Ps. 93:5). I Timothy 3:15 reveals that **“the church of the living God”** is **“the house of God”** during this age. To the Corinthian church Paul said: **“for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are”** (I Cor. 3:17). Thus the Scriptures teach that holiness is the beauty of the Lord’s church for ever. Nothing so ill becomes the worshippers of an Holy God than unholiness. But if a church is composed of a membership which is largely guilty of immorality, is it reasonable to think that God’s Holy Spirit would dwell in her? Certainly not, for He, being pure and holy, will only dwell in a clean temple. If a church desires the Holy Spirit to reside in her, she must keep herself as **“a chaste virgin to Christ”** (II Cor. 11:2). The chief reason why the twentieth century church has lost its spiritual power is because the worldliness of its members has driven the Holy Spirit outside the church (Rev. 3:14-22).

Churches are composed of saved, yet imperfect, human beings. These are liable to misunderstandings, strifes, contentions, errors and immorality. Hence even punitive discipline is necessary in the government of the church. Exclusion from the church is the highest judicial act of the church to be done by the authority of Christ in accordance to the teaching of the Scriptures. It is to be exercised upon all, without fear or favor, who violate the sacred injunctions of the Bible relative to Christian conduct.

The bad example of a man is very contagious. One scabbed sheep infects the whole flock. **“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?”** (I Cor. 5:6). As a little leaven will quickly spread the ferment through a great lump, even so scandalous sinners will destroy the purity of the church. Hence it is necessary to **“purge out therefore the old leaven** (referring to the putting **‘away from among themselves that wicked person,’** v. 13), **that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened”** (I Cor. 5:7).

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good

for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Matt. 5:13). Here Christ tells His church that their thoughts and affections, words and actions, are to be **“seasoned with salt”** (Col. 4:6). By being such they will create in men a taste and relish for the gospel. Mankind, lying in ignorance and wickedness, is unsavory and ready to putrefy, so Christ sends forth His disciples to season the world with knowledge and grace. But what if the church herself becomes void of spiritual life? Salt is a cure for unsavory meat, but there is no remedy for unsavory salt. A church which has wicked persons in it has lost its influence for good, it is as an unsavory salt, unprofitable and good for nothing. The church must either practice discipline or she will become **“good for nothing.”**

There are two kinds of evil dispositions which give offense to a church--the personal and public offenses. First, I want to discuss

THE PERSONAL OFFENSE.

In Matthew 18:15 Christ said: **“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”** The offender mentioned here is a Christian brother, a fellow member of the same local church. If one brother offends another brother, the Lord taught that the offended person should go and tell the offender of his fault. The offended must not let his resentment of the offender ripen into secret malice, nor is he to go out and rail against him behind his back to the general public. Instead the offended must make the offending person mindful of his wrong by a private rebuke. This proves the offended desires his brother’s repentance, not his reproach. Solomon said: **“Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away”** (Prov. 25:8-10). When the offending party will hear the offended party, there will be an end to the controversy. When this rule is followed the apparent falling out among one another will be the occasion of the renewing of friendship.

Christ went on to say: **“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”** When the offending brother does not admit his fault, do not despair or give him up as an incurable case. Take two or more to witness what is said and to join with you in reasoning with the offender. If he is a reasonable person, he will hearken to the pleas of the disinterested party. But what if the offender will not hear either the

disinterested party or the offended?

Christ answered this question by saying: **“And if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church; let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican”** (Matt. 18:17). Observe that a personal offense is not to be introduced to the church for action until the aforementioned steps have been taken by the offended party. Now notice that Christ said that after the proper steps had been taken, the matter was to be made known to the church. That is the offended should tell the pastor, deacons and the whole assembled church of this matter. Then let the church examine the matter. If the church finds the complaint groundless, let her rebuke the complainant. If she finds it well founded, let her rebuke the offender and call him to repentance.

But what if the offender will not even hear the church? Are they just to forget the matter lest they offend some bigwig? Certainly not. Christ declared that the church was to let him be unto them a **“heathen and a publican.”** He who slights church admonitions is to be cast out of the church, excluded from the Lord’s Supper, deprived of the dignity of church membership and put under disgrace. This is done that the guilty person may be ashamed of his sin and that the church may not be chargeable with it.

If the teaching of Christ on the subject of personal offenses among Christians was observed there would be very little trouble in the church. Most churches of this age have ignored the teaching of Christ on this matter. They have foolishly set aside the law of the Lord for the sake of expediency. The results have not been the peace and harmony which Satan promised these compromising Christians. Instead of this peace and harmony that the liberals hoped for, there is envy, strife and every evil work in the churches. This is all because Christ’s words have been ignored and the wishful thinking of sinful men substituted in their place.

THE PUBLIC OFFENSE

Some offenses are personal and are committed against a particular person in the church. Others are public and are committed against the whole church in general. This is sometimes called a church offense because no one member is wronged more than another. The whole church suffers from the public offense because Christ’s law has been transgressed (I Cor. 12:26).

Any church member who is guilty of a public offense should have enough of the grace of God in his heart to prompt him to go to the church and acknowledge his guilt and seek forgiveness before charges are brought against him. But when an offender fails to do this, it is the church’s duty to charge the guilty member and

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Tune in to the

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WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
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WCTT, Corbin, KY.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680.....	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA.....	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.....	550.....	5,000 AM
DXRA, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.....	783 Khz.....	10,000 AM

Church Discipline

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deal with him according to his conduct.

The Scriptures nowhere authorize the church to send a committee of three to visit a member who is guilty of a public offense and to try to get him reconciled to the church. When such is done, it is just an act of mercy on the part of the church.

HERESY GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE

Heresy or the spreading of false doctrine is a public offense and requires exclusion from the church in many cases. In Titus 3:10 it is written: **“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject.”** Here Paul directs Titus what to do with heretics and heresy in the church. The heretic mentioned is not just a person poorly instructed in the faith who can be shown the error of his way. This person Paul calls an heretic is a self-willed individual who teaches what he pleases, independent of the teaching of the Scriptures and the practice of the church. He is a person who has forsaken the truth as it is in Christ Jesus and cannot be converted from the error of his way. Such a person is first to be admonished, instructed, warned and rebuked sharply that he may be sound in the faith by the pastor of the church (Titus 1:13). If the heretic proves to be obstinate and irreclaimable, the pastor should lead the church to sever such a corrupt member from the fellowship of the church.

In Romans 16:17 Paul warned the Roman Christians: **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”** First the Apostle urges the church to sense the danger of heresy, to watch for those who propagate dividing doctrines which are contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Observe the blessing of the discerning eye, for a danger discovered is half prevented. Second he tells them to **“avoid”** these heretics, that is, to shun all unnecessary communion and communication with them lest they be infected. This strongly indicates exclusion from the church. Certainly the church could not avoid such false teachers if they were permitted to hold membership in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures disclose that a heretic’s **“word will eat as doth gangrene”** (II Tim. 2:17 margin reading) and cause division in the church. The church who continues to allow within its membership such false teaching will soon learn to their sorrow that such persons must not be permitted to lodge in the Lord’s church. In most churches today heretics are able to get a following which will finally divide the church. The best way not to have the church wrecked is to put the wrecking

crew out of it before they wreck it.

CHURCH DISTURBANCE GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION

The Word of God teaches that there should be peace and harmony in the church. Psalms 133:1 says: **“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”** A church is to be of one mind (Phil. 1:27) and of one accord (Acts 2:1). In I Corinthians 1:10 we are told: **“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”** How can this be in a church? It can only be when each parishioner follows the Word of God and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Each member must have **“the mind of Christ”** (I Cor. 2:16). Any act or spirit which affects the church in a hindering way should be looked into and the person or persons dealt with.

Those who persist in tattling and backbiting are to be excluded from the church: **“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”** Here we read of men whose minds are corrupt because they will not stick to **“the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.”** They suppose that material **“gain is godliness,”** they use religion to promote their secular interest. Thus when men are not content with the words of Christ and the doctrine which is according to godliness, they will frame their own notions and try to impose them upon others. By this action they sow the seeds of all mischief in the church. Of such doting about questions comes envy, strife, evil surmisings and perverse disputings. When ever churchgoers leave the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, there will always be wrangling and quarreling in the church. Those who stir up trouble in the church are to have fellowship withdrawn from them--- **“withdraw thyself.”**

DISORDERLY CONDUCT GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION

In view of the numerous blessings promised to the harmonious church in the Bible, more than a few churches have sought a peace-at-any-price. They have watered down the Word of God so as not to offend hypocrites and immoral persons who hold membership in the church. But the pretended harmony they seem to enjoy is like that of one of the churches in Asia Minor. Sardis had no internal quarrels because the devil would

not waste his time on a church that was “dead.” On the other hand, the peace-at-any-price route has produced every thing but peace and harmony in churches which still have a few Bible-believing Christians left in them. There can be a false peace and harmony in a church where only Bible-deniers are found, but there cannot be any true peace and harmony in a church which tolerates evil and which has some devoted Christians who dare to **“earnestly contend for the faith”** (Jude 3). The Lord’s sheep will not always continue to tolerate every form of immorality being swept under the rug so as to have a peace-at-any-price and to not injure some bigwig’s social prestige! A true church of the Lord Jesus Christ can only have real harmony when its members live right and the church as a whole follows the Word of God.

Disorderly conduct is an expression used to refer to a public sin committed by a church member which exposes the church to shame and contempt in the eyes of the unconverted and to sister churches. It includes all sins which require severe corporal punishment by human law (Prov. 8:15; Rom. 13:1-4; I Pet. 2:13-14), provided those laws are not contrary to the laws of God (Acts 5:29). Any church member who through carelessness and indifference habitually absents himself from the regular services of the church is guilty of disorderly conduct (Heb. 10:25; Jas. 4:17).

In I Corinthians 5 Paul instructs the church at Corinth on the matter of dealing with a male member of their membership who had committed incestuous fornication. In verse 2 he condemns them for not taking **“away from among”** them the man responsible for such conduct. In verses 3 through 5 he tells them to take action against the offender **“in the name of Christ”** and in a full church assembly---**“when ye are gathered together.”** This proves that church censures are Christ’s ordinances and should be done in His name. In verses 9 to 10 Paul shows that church members cannot avoid association with ungodly persons in the markets of commerce. But he then declares that the church is not to permit in its company---membership---**“any man that is called a brother”** who is **“a fornicator, or covetous. . . or a drunkard, or an extortioner.”** Then in verse 12 and 13 he reveals that God will judge those outside the church, but it is the church’s duty to **“judge them that are within”** her fellowship. He concluded by urging the church to **“put away from among”** themselves the incestuous man (I Cor. 5:13).

We read in II Thessalonians 3:6 these words: **“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”** First,

I note that in the church at Thessalonica there were some brothers who walked disorderly and not after the precepts of the Apostles. Second, I observe that Paul urged the church to **“withdraw”** fellowship from every one who did this and afterwards to mark that person and **“have no company with him”** in the sense of church fellowship (II Thess. 3:14).

Some have asked for what particular sins are people to be excluded? I answer this by referring the reader to the Old Charleston Baptist Association’s Summary of Church Discipline which says: “There are some crimes so highly and pernicious in their own nature as to call for a speedy excommunication, unless the most evident marks of repentance appear in the offender, as (1) all sins that are against the letter of the Ten Commandments (Rom. 7:12; Matt. 5:17); (2) all that call for severe corporal punishment from human laws, provided those laws are not contrary to the laws of God (Prov. 8:15; Rom. 13:1-4; I Pet. 2:13-14); and (3) all such sins as are highly scandalous in their nature and expose the church to contempt (I Tim. 5:24; I Cor. 5:2). We find a black catalog of sins which call for this censure (I Cor. 5:11; 6:9-10).” To this I can only say, “Amen.”

SOME FINER POINTS MADE CLEAR

“Excommunication is a censure of the highest degree; it is a judicial act of the church in which, by the authority of Christ, she cuts off and entirely excludes an unworthy member from union and communion with the church and from all the rights and privileges there. . . . This censure, awful as it is, respects only the spiritual concerns of a man, as related to the church, and does by no means affect his temporal estate or civil affairs; it does not subject him to fines, imprisonment, or death; it does not interfere with the business of the civil magistrate; nor does it break in two the natural and civil relations between man and wife, parents and children, masters and servants; nor does it forbid attendance on the external ministry of the Word” (John Gill 1769).

Who is to do the excluding? No man can exclude either himself or some other church member. One can enter and leave the church only with the consent of the majority of the body. The act of excluding the incestuous man in I Corinthians 5 is called a **“punishment. . . inflicted of many”** (II Cor. 2:6). The Apostle Paul did not expel the incestuous man from the Corinthian church. He urged the church to do it in a regular service (I Cor. 5:3-5). The power to withdraw fellowship lies in the church alone.

What is the Scriptural motive for church discipline? Certainly it is not to gratify selfish passions and resentments (Isa. 66:5; II John 9-10). It is such unscriptural abuse of church discipline

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Church Discipline

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which has caused many to turn completely against it altogether. The ultimate end of all church actions is the glory of God (Eph. 3:21). Disorderly practices of church members bring dishonor upon God's Divine institution. Corrective discipline is the most open and effectual way to remove the disgrace that an offender has brought upon the church. A disorderly member is not glorifying God nor is a church who fails to exclude immoral persons for its membership. She glorifies her Head when she expels such and carries out Christ's law.

Corrective discipline is to be done to restore to the bride of Christ. The church---the bride of Christ---is a **"pure virgin to Christ"** (II Cor. 11:2 R.V.). To be a part of the bride of Christ one must be saved, Scripturally baptized and in fellowship with the local Baptist church he is a member of. Thus not all who have their names on Baptist church rolls are actually a part of the bride of Christ.

Church censures are intended to bring about an orderly walk before the world. The church that lets immorality have free course among its members soon discovers that its members have no respect for an organization which does not live up to its rules. In times past a church member knew better than to live immoral. He knew the church dealt with scandalous sins. Because of the church's indifference to matters of punitive discipline, she has lost the respect of the world.



Domino Effect

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eternally from the Offended Creator. You must comprehend the danger here!

"How terrifying!" you collapse as the mind's eye can feel his cold touch upon your elbow and you are escorted toward Hell's gates. "Stop! STOP!" come the shrieks that came from my own heart twenty-five years ago. But you see, it can't be stopped. It *must* be! It is the *right* thing! It is again, but justice.

WHAT CAN ALTER THE FATE OF BEING DRAGGED OFF TO HELL?

What can alter the fate of being dragged off to Hell? There is no hope, is there? Cast your mind over every person, power or politic that might be able to save you from your approaching fate.

What about *love*? What of the powerful love of God? Surely a loving God won't send me to that terrible place! Beloved Reader, love can't change the facts. Love can't change the rules for you. I love my little boy, but the destruction is there. He still *has* to be punished. I wouldn't truly love him if I disregarded

his guiding discipline. REMEMBER: *The ONLY thing EVER taught in Love is TRUTH!*

What about *mercy*? He's just a little boy! And you didn't *really* mean to defy God with your actions, did you? Let me ask you, what is merciful about perverting justice? Could God really change His nature, just to let a rebel go, only to revert back to our pig-sty as soon as He dropped us back into our depraved mire?

As you look frantically around for any hope, your eye catches sight of the word "grace." Ah, yes, *grace*! That's what you need to have! Why is He shaking His head? It's GRACE!

My dear sinner, what does unmerited favor have to do with you? By its very nature---You can't earn it---You can't make it---You can't swindle it! So all hope is gone? Nothing else left?

"But you can ask for it," a voice whispers.

What? What did you say?

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen. 6:8).

"I said, you *can* ask for it."

HOW? How, how, how?

You remember that I asked if maybe we could pay for the damage, the destruction.

Yes, Yes! What can I do? How much? You can have *everything* I own!!

Huh-uh. Remember? The cost is *Infinite*---and you are not. Only an *Infinite* payment can atone for an Infinite offense.

It would take the Son of God... And He'd have to die in Hell---for that's the penalty.

WHAT? The Son of God would have to die for me? Why would He do that? He was the Offended One---the Creator!

But only He can infinitely restore the dominoes to their original position of perfection. And *only* He could make one of Gehazi's sons pure again... That's why I called Him the Son of God. It will take Deity!

But why would He? Why would He suffer untold/unspeakable/incomprehensible HELL for me? I've got no hold on Him. No leverage. No good works that I can submit. No plausible excuse. No, not *nothing*!

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). The Godly for the ungodly. The Infinite for the finite.

You see, it *does* come back to Love, Mercy, Holiness, Justice, etc..., because God, of His Own free will *chose* in eternity past to save/rescue some for His Own purpose.

Not me. I'm not the reason. No, don't make Eternity laugh in disgust or shiver at some horrible jest. He never saw a lick of good in this sinner---no, nor in you.

But you see, His grace is glorified by the act of, Infinite, Intolerable Atonement.

"Having predestinated us ... according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace... ..being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory... That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 1:5-6, 11-12; 2:7-10).

The Son of God, *of course*, is exalted in this chain of glorification we've noted here in the first two chapters of Ephesians. *And* the Faithfulness of the Eternal Electing Father is exalted. *And* the Perseverance of God the Holy Spirit is forever lifted up on High for His Amazing Effectual Grace! *And* that's it: **"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"** (Phil. 2:9-11).

IN CONCLUSION:

You are helpless---He is not.

You have no hope---He freely gives it! You are constrained by your finite filth--
-He can *Infinitely* restore you!

Flee to Christ---the Infinite Son of God!



Use of the Gospel

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to service all in one day's time! From the Damascus road until his departure from this world, the Apostle Paul gave himself to preaching the glad tidings of Christ throughout a pagan world.

Why did Christ make Paul a minister of the gospel to the Gentiles? What reason is stated in my text by Christ Himself? According to my text, Christ made Paul a minister of the gospel to the Gentiles **"to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith. . ."** In these few words Jesus reveals the reason why He calls and commissions men to preach the gospel.

It is as though Jesus Christ said to Saul, "Men throughout the world are blinded by sin; they cannot see their need of a Saviour. So go out as my servant and preach the glad tidings of salvation by my death, burial and resurrection. Go at once for they cannot hear without

a preacher. I will use your preaching to open their blinded eyes and to turn them from Satan's power to my saving power. I will cause those who believe your preaching to have their sins forgiven and to enjoy a heavenly inheritance."

Paul never doubted for one single moment of his life but what Christ used the gospel as an instrument in the salvation of sinners. His epistles are filled with his missionary endeavors. He hazarded his life in preaching because he longed to see sinners saved. He knew that efficient Divine power resided in Christ, and that Christ used the medium of the gospel to exert His power in saving believers (Rom. 1:16). He was fully persuaded that **"it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"** (I Cor. 1:21).

But did not the Apostle Paul believe in unconditional election? Yes, he most certainly did. Yet his belief in the doctrines of grace did not make him anti-missionary. Instead, it caused him to undergo untold sufferings for the sake of the gospel of Christ. To Timothy he wrote, **"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"** (II Tim. 2:8-10).

Ponder these words of the Apostle Paul carefully. He did not believe election was salvation. Rather, he believed that election was unto salvation (II Thess. 2:13). He believed by gospel preaching, the elect still in a state of nature, were to be caused to obtain salvation in Christ. Paul did not confine his ministry to the elect. Like gospel preachers of today, he could distinguish the elect from the non-elect only by their belief of the truth. To him the gospel was the means that God used to call out the elect to obtain salvation by the atonement of Christ (II Thess. 2:14).

The apostle did not view election as placing one out of danger. The impenitent elect, according to his view of things, had no more obtained salvation than other sinners. The reason Paul suffered so much was that the elect might obtain salvation by the grace of God and thereby become entitled to eternal glory. The doctrine of election was to him no discouragement in the preaching of the gospel to the lost world. Only when election is perverted by unholy hands does it have an anti-missionary effect upon the free proclamation of the gospel.

The object of the gospel is the salvation of lost souls. There is enough Scripture in Acts 26:18 and II Timothy 2:8-10 to justify the missionary enterprise of our day. If the salvation of God's elect was of

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CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

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

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



BOUNDARIES???

Greetings, grace and peace to you, dear reader, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, Yeshua HaMashiach, the Messiah. May He bless you abundantly!

If not for the wicked rope-like scar emblazoned down the center of my chest it would be hard to guess I had open heart surgery just a few short months ago. The Lord has indeed blessed me with a speedy, and as far as I can tell, full recovery.

Thank you again for all of your prayers during my illness and beyond.

Toward the end of April my doctor released me to work and I received a job in the Jester III Unit (J3) Garment Factory sewing "inmate sheets." Texas prisoners are required to work even though we receive no compensation, but as far as prison jobs go Semi-Automatic Sewing Machine Operator isn't a bad gig.

I sit at an industrial sewing machine while an inmate material handler stacks sheet clanks on my left. I then hem each end of the sheets and stack them on a sawhorse to my right, from which the material handler collects each bundle of twenty-five I sew and carries them off to be clipped, folded, and palletted for shipping. I average 300-400 sheets a day.

Some of the guys ask me why I work so hard for "free." I just tell'em I have to be working anyway, might as well do the best I can. Besides, I'm not working for the man in the front office anyway---I work for the Man on the Throne.

However, my job is on hold for the next six months. I just started an Automotive Technology college vocational course here at J3. Oh how I wish this was my full-time job! I'm no new boot in a garage. I went to an automotive mechanics school in the free-world years ago and love working on cars and trucks.

Call me crazy, but I'd much rather be in the hot garage getting greasy and sweaty all day than sitting in an air conditioned warehouse sewing inmate sheets. Go figure.

Please continue to pray for me, dear reader, as I face the daily struggle that is prison life and juggle the automotive class, HVACR correspondence course, various Bible studies, and continue to write this column.

The subject this month is: Boundaries.

Boundaries help us determine what we are and what we're not, what we're responsible for and what we're not responsible for. Boundaries or the lack thereof, are taught from birth and affect us greatly throughout life.

I think it's safe to say that those of us behind bars were not taught good, healthy boundaries, if any at all, as a child. Therefore we fear them as adults. And because we were taught the wrong kind of boundaries or none at all, we abuse those of the people around us---or allow others to abuse us.

One area where I have boundary problems is in relationships. My childhood was rife with mistrust and abandonment. When I was nine I found out by a surprise phone call that I was adopted: "Hello, David, I'm your mother. . ." Quite a shock for a young boy who was watching cartoons with "mom and dad" sitting right there.

My trust for mom and dad died that day. And if I couldn't trust them who could I trust?

Then when I was in the fifth grade, not long after I found out I was adopted, I got an "F" on my report card and was afraid to take it home so I threw it in the gutter. A week or so later my teacher called the house. The savage beating I received at the hands of my dad bruised my ribs on one side and kept me out of school for a month.

I was terrified of dad but he was so traumatized by his loss of control that he withdrew from me both physically and emotionally. He never corrected or punished me from that time forward.

His withdrawal was so complete that I would do things that I knew deserved punishment just to try and get his attention. But it never came.

These two events changed the entire course of my young life and still haunt me in my adult years. Instead of good, healthy boundaries I learned to distrust everyone. I learned it was okay to hurt someone if they did something wrong or something you didn't like, and then after you hurt them it was okay to abandon them because if they were bad they weren't worthy of being loved.

I learned these lessons well. I can't tell you the people I've hurt out of anger at their supposed wrong done to me, or the number of relationships I've destroyed because I didn't know how to be mad at someone and still care about them. If I got

mad at the other person I'd deep-six the relationship because they were no longer worthy of my love, or if things were going well and the other person wanted a solid commitment I'd sabotage the relationship out of fear of being abandoned by them. If I abandoned them first they wouldn't get the chance to leave me.

These are an example of how messed up my boundaries were and to a lesser extent, still are. I still fear relationships, still fear being discarded like yesterday's trash. No, boundary issues are not easily overcome and being a Christian doesn't make them magically disappear.

But through steady studying of God's Word, and a very patient and loving mentor, I'm learning to replace my wrong, or lack of, boundaries with good, healthy boundaries. And I've found a great book that I believe is a good starting point for learning about boundaries:

Boundaries: When to say YES, when to say NO to take control of your life by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend. It provides a biblical view of boundaries: what they are, what they protect, how they're developed, how they're injured, how to repair them, and how to use them.

I've read this book twice and will read it again. It has a lot of information in it for those of us who have boundary issues and want to overcome them. This book, along with your Bible, will go a long way in helping you replace bad boundaries with good ones and build good, healthy boundaries where you never had any.

I believe this book should be in the locker, or on the shelf, of every one of my readers---prisoner and free-world alike. I don't believe there is one person who would not benefit from the wisdom in this text.

You can order this book from Christian Book Distributors (CBD), P.O. Box 7000, Peabody, MA 01961 (Christianbook.com). The price as of January 2007 was \$18.94 (including S&H). If you're unable to purchase a copy, please ask your unit chaplain to order it for the chaplain's library. If that's not possible contact the unit librarian and see if they will order a copy for the general library.

The difference the wisdom in this book will make in your life is well worth the effort it takes to obtain a copy.

The Apostle Paul implores us to **"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"** (I Thess. 5:21). I believe this book is worth proving and holding fast.

Until next time. . . **"Grace be with all of them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen"** (Eph. 6:24).

Krystal Ruthann, I love and miss you dearly. May the grace of God be upon you. The Lord willing this separation will not be forever.

Bro. Jeff, y'all are in my thoughts and prayers daily. Don't work so hard you don't take time to enjoy the beauty of a

wildflower or the joy of a sunset. . . both the handiwork of our Lord.

Bro. Harold, thank you and Sister Ann for the new typewriter that enables me to continue writing this column. Your fellowship and ongoing encouragement are greatly appreciated.

Bro. Luther, you remain in my thoughts and prayers. I'm woefully behind in my letters to you but haven't forgotten you. Your fellowship and encouragement are greatly appreciated as well.

Bro. Danny, I'm hearing encouraging things about you, so keep up the good work. I miss you and the Wednesday night Bible study over there tremendously. Tell everyone I said, Hello!

Bro. Kevin, I love you, man! I can't put into words how much I miss you and wish you were here. Keep your head up and keep fighting the good fight---you are not alone, brother.



Use of the Gospel

(Continued from page 146) ♦

sufficient importance to render it proper for Paul to endure so much to accomplish it, is it not sufficiently so to justify the missionaries of this day going to far off lands to preach the gospel? Certainly it is. If the salvation of men demanded such self-denying labor and sufferings on the part of Paul, surely the salvation of the elect should engage our attention today.

Christ did not send forth Paul to be some kind of a dead instrument or some play actor. Christ purposed to bless the preaching of Paul to open the eyes of blinded sinners and to bring them to faith. Paul was not sent to beat men's ears with empty words. Rather, Christ would make his preaching effective to bring life-giving light to the blind, to give liberty to those enslaved by Satan and to confer the grace of salvation.

Acts 26:18 discloses God's purpose in calling men to preach the gospel of grace. Gospel preaching is used by Christ to turn the sinner "from" two things and "toward" two things. By the preaching of the gospel Divine grace turns the sinner **"from darkness"** and **"from the power of Satan."** Also the sinner is turned **"to light"** and **"unto God."** The second portion of the verse describes the privileges obtained in conversion. These are pardon and the inheritance. The gift is twofold. It removes from the sinner what he deserves and bestows upon him the merits of Christ.

"TO OPEN THEIR EYES"

Christ sent Paul to preach to the Gentiles to open their eyes. In the Bible spiritual ignorance is represented by the eyes being closed, and the instructions of the gospel by the opening of the eyes (Eph. 1:13-18). The great design of the gospel is to instruct the ignorant and to bring men

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Use of the Gospel

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to know the things which belong to their everlasting peace. This preaching is used by the Holy Spirit as the vehicle by which divine grace and power enlightens the understanding of the sinner.

“TO TURN THEM FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT”

By nature the heart of man is darkened by sin (Rom. 1:21). Ephesians 4:18 says: **“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”** The natural man loves **“darkness rather than light, because”** his deeds are evil (John 3:19). Such a poor, lost sinner is encompassed with impenetrable darkness. He is ignorant of God and the perfections of His nature. He is so ignorant in some cases he dares to say, **“There is no God”** (Ps. 14:1). He does not see what an awful sinner he is before God (Prov. 14:9, 12). He knows nothing about the way of salvation by Christ, nor of the Spirit’s work in regeneration. He is totally blind to the sufferings which await him in the fires of Hell.

Through means of the preaching of the gospel the sinner is turned to God, Who is light in essence and to Christ, Who is the Light of the World. Of such an enlightened sinner it may be said: **“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined”** (Isa. 9:2). Paul said of the Ephesians who had believed the gospel: **“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light”** (Eph. 5:8).

God is the efficient cause of any sinner being brought to see the Light of the World. But it must not be denied that God operates in doing this by the preaching of the Word. What Divine power rests in the Word of God, since Christ uses it not only to bestow light, but to give the very spiritual eyes by which the light is received. Psalm 19:8 declares: **“The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”** Psalm 119:130 reads: **“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”**

“FROM THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD”

Only a casual meditation on this striking statement should greatly alarm us. It reveals that the great mass of the people on this earth are the subjects of Satan’s kingdom (I John 5:19). The Evil One rules over the souls of men by the power of darkness. This makes the Devil **“the prince of this world”** (John 12:31; 16:11). All unsaved men are the subjects of Satan’s kingdom. In Ephesians 2:2 Paul said: **“Wherein in time past ye walked**

according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

Some are ready to concede the drunkard, the dope-peddler, the murderer and the infidel are the captives of the Prince of Darkness. But this is as far as they are willing to go. Nevertheless, Ephesians 2:2 goes farther than this. This verse shows that upright men and virtuous women apart from the new birth are under the power of the Evil One. Yea, even the elect of God are under Satan’s power before Christ saves them through the preaching of the gospel. Thousands of unbelievers who are kind to their neighbors are none the less bond slaves of the Devil. They are being led step by step by the Evil One into eternal ruin.

Jesus Christ made it plain in Acts 26:18 that it is His purpose in the gospel to liberate men from the tyranny of Satan. Christ uses the preached Word to break Satan’s power and to end his rule over a sinner. The gospel **“proclaimed liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound”** (Isa. 61:1). The power of God is exerted through the gospel which “delivers us from the powers of darkness” and **“translates us into the kingdom”** of Christ (Col. 1:13). In salvation a person is taken from the kingdom of darkness and brought over into the kingdom of light---transferred from one kingdom to another. The believer becomes a subject in the kingdom of grace and renders willing obedience to the laws of Christ. Thank God for saving grace which removes sinners from the kingdom of sin and misery and places them in the kingdom of holiness and happiness.

“THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS”

The forgiveness of sin is an act of God’s free and sovereign grace through the shed blood of Christ. The gospel is the glad tidings of how a believing sinner receives the full forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:43). This is the purpose of the gospel ministry in the world. Enlightened souls desire forgiveness of sins above all else. This pardon of sins cannot be purchased by money. Rather, it is the gift of God which is received by the hand of faith into the conscience of the enlightened sinner.

A gospel minister is bidden like Paul to preach the forgiveness of sins only in the name of Christ. Paul preached in Antioch: **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”** (Acts 13:38-39).

First the gospel declares all men to be sinners and thus in need of forgiveness. Second, it announces no one can obtain forgiveness except through Christ’s

atonement. Third, it shows plainly that the only way of forgiveness is by faith in Christ.

“RECEIVE. . .AND INHERITANCE”

Pardon of sin and the inheritance go together. The unforgiven have no inheritance, and those who have no inheritance are unforgiven. The blessings of grace cannot be separated nor can Christ be divided. The forgiveness of sin makes way for the inheritance by removing that which hinders it. Hence all who have remission of sins have a heavenly inheritance reserved for them (I Pet. 1:3-5). The indwelling Holy Spirit is the pledge of their future inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14).

The believer in Christ has an inheritance because he has been born into the family of God: **“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ”** (Rom. 8:17). We cannot be heirs of God except with Christ, through Christ and in Christ. A son of God is an heir of all that God possess (Rev. 21:7) and all that Jesus has as the God-man.

“AMONG THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED BY FAITH”

The forgiveness of sins and the inheritance is enjoyed by no one except such as are sanctified. Some read it here **“among those sanctified by faith,”** connecting **“by faith”** to sanctification. I honestly believe that faith is the instrumental cause of sanctification and that all believers are sanctified. But I feel to limit faith to sanctification alone is wrong. Faith covers the whole series of clauses in this verse. Therefore, the meaning is that it is by faith we come to possess all the blessings which are offered in the gospel. This is not just any faith, but faith in the Person and work of Christ. This faith must be in Christ because in Him are included all the aspects of our salvation. Faith fastens upon Christ and His saving work.

The Bible teaches that faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). But how does God give faith? Does He give it supernaturally apart from gospel preaching, or through the means of gospel preaching? What says the Scripture? In His highly priestly prayer in John 17 Christ said: **“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word”** (V. 20). **“Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed”** (Acts 4:4). Romans 10:17 declares: **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** These verses mean what they say. God’s book is not in error!

No honest man can deny that God gives faith through the preaching of the Word of God if he takes the Bible seriously. God uses the preached Word to convey faith into the hearts of His people. Gospel ministers are mighty instruments by whom other people believe in the Christ of the gospel. **“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even**

as the Lord gave to every man?” (I Cor. 3:5). Because God uses the preached Word to bring men to faith the gospel is called in the Bible **“the word of faith, which we preach”** (Rom. 10:8).

When I say faith comes by hearing the gospel, I do not mean to say that all who hear the gospel believe it (Rom. 10:16), for this is not true. I understand that faith does not exist unless the gospel is heard and believed. A thing must be made known before it can be believed. Faith comes from something heard and that which is heard is the gospel of Christ. Hence we see men are converted by the instrumentality of the preaching of the gospel of God’s glorious grace.

There are some who contend long and loud that men are saved without the preaching of the gospel. To me this has always been a strange view. The gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Cor. 15:1-4). I find it most difficult to believe that God saves a sinner apart from the death, burial and resurrection of Christ! How can men teach such when the Bible says faith comes through the hearing of the Word? How can they put an unbeliever in Heaven when Christ said: **“He that believeth not shall be damned”** (Mark 16:16)? How can they declare some of the elect will not believe the gospel when the Bible says in Acts 13:48 the elect are ordained to faith? How can they contend some of the elect will never believe when the Bible says God chose His people **“to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”** (II Thess. 2:13)?

CONCLUSION

Let those men called of God and sent forth by a New Testament Baptist church preach the gospel of Christ to every creature. Let them, like Paul of old; preach remission of sins by faith in Christ and by faith alone. Let every gospel minister be assured God gives faith through the hearing of the Word, and where the Word is not preached men die in unbelief still under the power of Satan. Furthermore, let all ministers of the Word know that every sinner who believes the gospel will be gloriously saved by Christ.

If Paul was not used of Christ in witnessing to turn men **“from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,”** then Christ sent Paul on a fool’s errand. If the gospel is only food for those already forgiven while in a state of unbelief, then Christ lied to Paul in Acts 26:18. This cannot be said of Christ. Let us be assured that if Christ wanted Paul to preach the gospel so sinners could be positionally sanctified by faith over 1900 years ago, He still wants men to preach today. Christ is still saving men by the foolishness of preaching. This has been His age-old plan, and He will never change it.



Divine & Moral Will

(Continued from page 141) ♦

I hear preachers on the radio, and I read messages that are written by men of today and yesterday, and so many of these preachers (and therefore, so much of Christianity today) brazenly misstate God's ability to save. Let me read a Scripture to you that is often misused, and give you something to think about concerning this Scripture. **"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"** (II Pet. 3:9). Men today take this verse to mean that God is *willing* that every single man should *come to repentance* and should not *perish*. Brethren, if this is God's will, then it must be accomplished. And since it has not been accomplished up to this point, then we must assume that God is a miserable failure and really no God at all.

Please, do not put yourself in this position! Do not let your understanding of the Scriptures ever cause you to, in essence, blaspheme God and deny His omnipotence! If your understanding of any Scripture leads you to this conclusion, then let me tell you plainly that your understanding is flawed---for God cannot fail, nor can He have His will successfully opposed, and He is certainly omnipotent in will, purpose, and in deed. I believe that this verse in II Peter 3:9 does not have the power of God in mind at all. Rather, if you read the context, you can get a better understanding of this verse. Peter says in the previous verse, **"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"** (II Pet. 3:8). The *long-suffering* of God that is mentioned in verse 9 does not have anything to do with the power or ability of God, but is rather aimed towards time itself. He is long-suffering in that He allows time to continue so that we can be saved, and can be kept from judgment, and not (as some men believe) long-suffering towards men themselves in that He is tolerating their sins and only waiting for them to finally acknowledge the truth.

Consider this also: the *promise* that is mentioned in verse 9 is not a promise unto salvation, but rather is a promise unto **"... judgment and perdition of ungodly men"** (v. 7). Therefore, His long-suffering is not some patient waiting for men to come to their senses, but is rather His will and purpose being fulfilled in that He has determined that the World of Men would continue until He has redeemed all that are His.

With these thoughts in mind, I believe that we all must come to the

conclusion that the *any* and *all* that are mentioned in verse 9, must certainly intend the elect of God---those that would be certainly saved. Do not forget that Peter says that God is long-suffering to usward. The *usward*, I believe, is not intended to include all of humanity, but only those that are elect of God. There will not be *any* of those that are His that will ultimately perish. **"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled"** (John 17:12). Also, *all* of those that are chosen from before the foundation of the world will come to repentance. **"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed"** (Acts 13:48).

The Potter has Power over the Clay. In addition to the fact that God is omnipotent, and has an omnipotent will, let us never forget that He is also the Creator. This is something that men today so often forget to take into account. We are merely a part of the creation that God has made. We have no more right to dispute His sovereign will than does the beast of the field or the tree in the forest or the rock on the mountain. Sure, we are created higher and more noble than these, but we are no more able to dispute His authority and His prerogative than the natural beasts or the inanimate objects of creation. Even though we like to think of ourselves above the beasts and the inanimate portions of God's creation, still we are only created beings. We did not have anything to do with our physical creation, nor do we have any say over what we are created for. We had no purpose in mind when we were created---for we had no mind. Therefore, let us bow humbly before our God, and acknowledge that as part of His creation we must glorify Him as the only omnipotent and sovereign Being. **"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"** (Rom. 9:20-21). Men hate to see themselves as *the thing formed*, but that is exactly what we are.

Even as David said, **"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them"**

(Ps. 139:14-16). We are made by God. Even in our natural conditions, this is something that we know right well. We know that we are not the creators, but we are the created. And yet we refuse to give God the glory. But, let me assure you, there is never a chance that the will and purpose of God can be altered, nor has it ever been changed in the past.

MORTAL WILL

Now, let's think about man, his will, and his desires, and the rule that he plays in salvation. If you and I understand and believe that our God is part or all of the things that we have just discussed, then it only goes to follow that the role of man is at the least vastly reduced, and at the most non-existent.

Mortal Will is Depraved. Natural man is born into this world in a depraved state. David said, **"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me"** (Ps. 51:3-5). In this passage David speaks of the constant existence of the depravity of man. We read also in Genesis 6:5, **"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."** In this verse, Moses speaks of the thoroughness of the depravity of man. In other words, David tells us that man is *born depraved*, and Moses tells us that man is *thoroughly depraved*. I believe that the verse that we have just read in Genesis is sufficient to describe to us the total depravity of man. This is a depravity that does not just make man somewhat bad. Nor is this a depravity that makes some men evil, but others not so evil. No, this is a depravity that affects every man, right down to the center of his being. His mind, his heart, his soul, is completely and totally wicked. There is no good thing in him, that the Lord would desire him. We read in Ezekiel 16 about the city of Jerusalem, and how that the Lord God chose them out of the other cities, and showed great favor upon them. What He says about Jerusalem could be said about us as well. **"And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee: thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these things unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live"** (Ezek. 16:4-5). In our natural state, we

are people that are worthy of *loathing*. In our natural state, we are people that are *polluted*. There is nothing in us to cause God to desire us. Romans 5:6-8 says: **"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."** Christ gave Himself for sinners. Christ died for the ungodly. There was nothing in and of ourselves that caused us to be appealing in the sight of God. He only did what He did because of His own will and purpose---and not because of our will.

And, in fact, there is no good thing in man that would cause him to ever desire the Lord. Job 21:14 tells us concerning the wicked, **"Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"** The will of man is so depraved that he cannot even desire the things of God. Man, in fact, is at constant enmity with God. **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:7-8). I believe that the natural enmity that occurs between man and God must include man's will. If His nature is depraved, then His will must also be depraved. If he cannot please God, then it must be that he does not desire to please God.

The Will of Man is Free, but Subject to His Nature. It is the claim of men, that they have the choice to either serve God and be obedient to Him, or to ignore Him and live in disobedience to Him. I suppose, that humanly speaking, this is hypothetically possible. However, I want to tell you today that the choice that seems to be available, is really not available at all. God says, **"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil"** (Jer. 13:23). Even though it may seem to the mind of man that he has some choice in doing evil or good, in the mind of God we find that He considers it just as likely that an Ethiopian would change his skin, as that one of mankind would do good. God considers it just as likely an occurrence that the leopard would change his spots, as it would be for one that is accustomed to do evil to suddenly choose to do good.

Remember the words of Joshua, as he challenged the Children of Israel. In one of his final sermons to the Children of Israel he said, **"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What is your best advice to not becoming a back-slidden Christian? - Mississippi

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"But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear" (Zech. 7:11).

I suppose this is one of the best verses of Scripture to picture what a child of God is doing when backsliding. Backsliding is the refusal to exalt God and obey Him.

Backsliding can only be accomplished by those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. All things considered, one may backslide but shall never utterly fall (Ps. 37:24). Thank God for His Love and care for His precious jewels.

The best advice I can give you for a Christian not to become backslidden is God's Word. Man's advice is good but God's is infinitely better. Christ has said, **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John. 14:15).

I was told by a preacher a few years back that you won't get into a bar fight if you don't go to a bar. Seems a little extreme but it drives the point home.

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (Jas 4:8). Live a godly life attentive to your behavior and what proceeds from your mouth. Pray often, and meditate upon God's Word. Study why Israel is called a backsliding heifer and ask God to give you wisdom and understanding as to how to overcome the flesh's bent to drawing away from serving God. May God guide you in your endeavor to understand. I thank God for your concern; that's a good step forward to serving God acceptably.

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I goofed in the last issue of the Berea Baptist Banner. I answered this question instead of "What things can a church member do to help encourage their pastor and missionaries? After reading

my answer, it definitely has an application to both questions!

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of they feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil" (Prov. 4:23-27).

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psa. 19:13-14).

"With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:10-11).

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139:23-24).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?...Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Cor. 6:14, 17).

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:23-25).

Memorize and meditate on the Scriptures you just read. Stay close to God. Separate yourself from evil influences that defile your relationship with God. Read the Word, pray, witness, tithe, attend church faithfully, be a blessing to others, and follow the holy example of Jesus Christ. Live every day with a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving for the grace of God in your life. Be determined to not allow anything come between you and the Lord. **"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which**

also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:14-17).

Remember God's promise of old: **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"** (II Chron. 7:14).

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I suggest these steps that should become habit.

First, there must be a personal commitment and dedication on your part to keep yourself pure. Daniel 1:8: **"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself..."** If you let yourself sin and/or desire to sin you will become the servant of sin. **"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"** (Rom. 6:16).

Second, make prayer and Bible study a habitual part of every day.

Daniel 6:10: **"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."** Daniel's strength was in his prayer life and personal dedication. Cf. Ezekiel 14:14 & 20: **"Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD."**

Third, study and obey the Word of God. Psalm 119:9: **"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."**

Fourth, be faithful in attending the preaching and teaching services of a good

local church. Jesus was faithful in church attendance. Luke 4:16: **"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day..."** We are exhorted to be faithful in assembling together. Hebrews 10:25: **"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."**

The fellowship of a good local church membership, united in love, doctrine, practice and faithful in assembling is a major help in maintaining a balanced and pure spiritual life. A good accountability partner is a real blessing. Galatians 6:1-2: **"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."**

RAY BENNETT



Divine & Moral Will

(Continued from page 149) ♦

your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt: and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Jos. 24:14-15). These verses are very important in teaching the ability of man, and the realistic choices that he has. Some seem to believe that Joshua is here giving a choice to the Children of Israel to either serve God or not to serve God. I don't believe that that is what is happening at all. I believe that Joshua is encouraging the Children of Israel to serve the Lord, but he is not giving them a choice. He is telling them that it is their responsibility to serve the Lord and to leave the idols behind. However, he is not giving them a choice to either serve God or not. He tells the Israelites, **"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD. . . ."** He is telling them, if you do not worship God, then choose whom you will serve. Those that the Lord makes willing will serve Him. Those that are His will not find it **"evil. . .to serve the LORD."** Those that are wicked and disobedient, (those that are not the redeemed and chosen vessels) however, must now choose their false god, and make their allegiance known. Let those of you that are wicked now **"choose you this day whom ye will serve."** The choices that are before you are limited by your own wickedness. You cannot choose God, without

♦ (Continued on page 151)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. When and where did the practice of blessing babies in a Baptist church start? – Mississippi

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I have no idea. I assume this practice, if it has actually become a common practice in true Baptist churches, probably came in within the last two or three hundred years as a substitute for baptizing babies in order to pacify some members who were not fully convinced of the Baptist position of not baptizing babies.

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I am not exactly sure what is meant by blessing babies in Baptist Churches. I have never witnessed a baby blessed, especially in a Baptist Church. I reckon a Baptist Church ought to be extremely careful with this practice.

I have read a few books in my short time on this earth and do not recall ever reading of the subject. I'm no expert on this subject, although I must say that any baby that enters into one of the Lord's Churches will be blessed, how can they not! I even see that anybody, baby, child, woman, man, bond or free, Jew or Gentile would receive a blessing by sitting down and listening to one of God's called preachers preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Bible has much to say about blessings, and those that have blessed others. Is the practice of saying "May God bless you in your lifetime or in your endeavors," or "May God bless you," a bad thing to do? No, it is a wonderful thing to do.

We are even commanded to bless those that persecute us and curse not. So why not bless babies or adults that are of our own Baptist people when we are commanded to bless those that hate us.

My only reserve would be to make a practice of this in one of the worship services of the Lord's Church. Baptist preachers the world over ought to strive to bless the saved and lost alike with

God's Word.

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Through the years I have read many volumes of Baptist History by such authors as Christian, Orchard, Jones, Semple, Benedict, Ford, Armitage, Carroll, Cathcart, Goadby, and Crosby and I cannot recollect any references to the unscriptural practice of blessing babies in Baptist churches. I went to perhaps the best Baptist History Website available that has been put together by Elder James DuVall at http://www.geocities.com/baptist_documents and typed in "blessing babies in Baptist Churches" in the search engine and could not find any references to the practice. More importantly, there is not a single reference or example found in the New Testament regarding the subject.

The practice of blessing babies is a compromise with the antichristian

heresy of infant sprinkling as practiced by the Roman Harlot and her Protestant offspring. As such it has no place in a Baptist Church. My guess is that liberal Baptists and Arminians who are always looking for something new to attract people to attend their church services started the practice. It sickens me that Baptist preachers would want to imitate the actions of a Catholic priest and practice a tradition that has its roots in paganism. Revelation 18:4 declares: **"... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."**

There is nothing wrong with fervently praying that God would bless new parents and their children. From the time our children were in the womb my wife and I have earnestly prayed for God's blessings to be showered upon them. Our greatest desire has been to see them saved by sovereign grace and serving in a true New Testament Baptist church. Do we need a special service for that? No, just a lifetime of dedication to the glory of God. May God give us all grace to provide a consistent testimony of grace to our children and grandchildren.

TOM ROSS



Divine & Moral Will

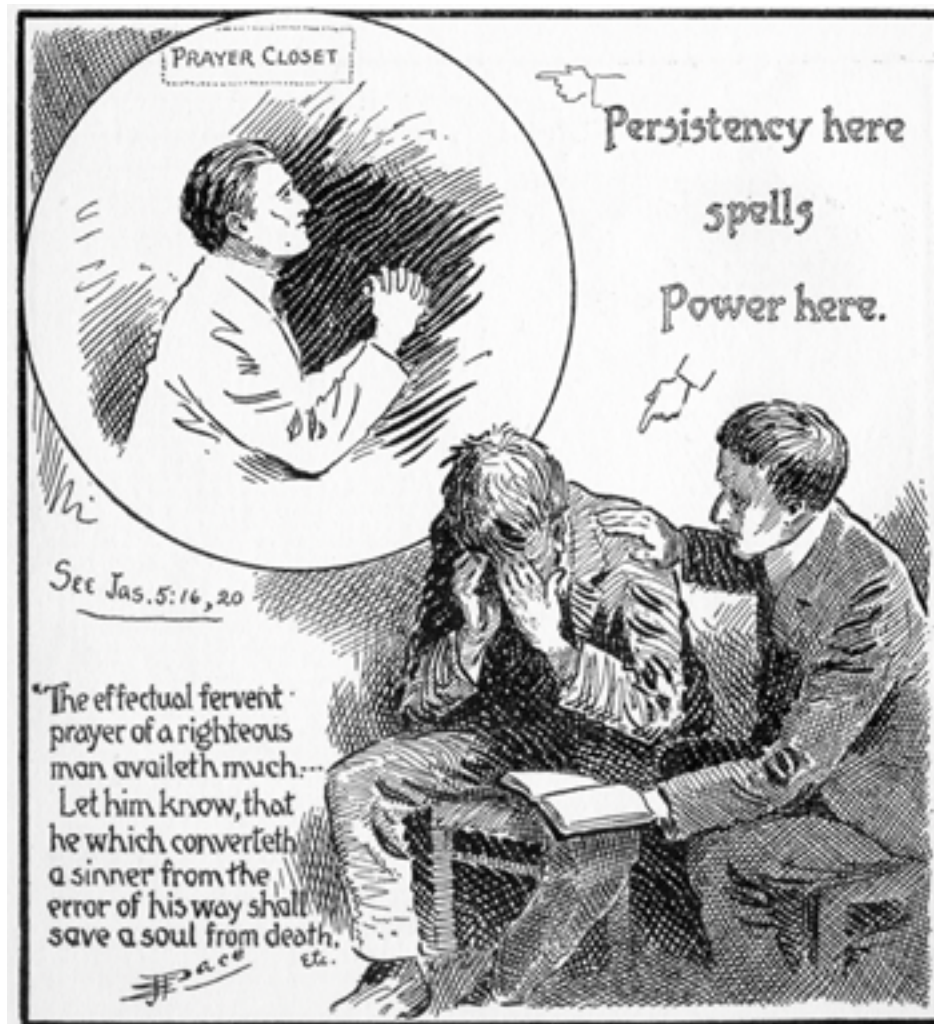
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that He would first choose you (John 15:16). The choices that were before the Israelites this day, (at least those that were not obedient servants unto God) were to either serve **"the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell."**

Man's free will is subject to his nature. If his nature is depraved (and it is) then his will is also depraved. He will not desire or choose anything that is outside of the restrictions that are placed upon him by his own wicked and depraved nature. It is not possible that his will can rise above his own wickedness. Natural, depraved man may do many noble and heroic and even seemingly selfless things. But all of these things that are done are not done above the depraved nature, but they are done in agreement with some desire and purpose that is within that one. This desire or purpose has at its heart an intent to please either one's own self or some other being---but it is not done with the intent to please God and to be obedient unto Him.

CONCLUSION

How then are men saved? If the will of man is not capable of choosing God, or of coming unto Christ, then how are men ever saved? Well, I do not want you to think that it is impossible that any man would ever be saved; nor do I want you to think that I am teaching that men are saved against their will. I do want you to know that salvation is not a naturally occurring thing in the lives of men---salvation is supernatural. It cannot be accomplished by men, and indeed, men would not even desire it in their natural state. The Lord told Nicodemus, **"... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"** (John 3:3). Then we read also in John 1:12-13, **"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."** So, men are not **"born again. . . of the will of man, but of God."** This is it in a nutshell. No man, in his natural state, is willing to be saved---but God is willing to save some men. What He wills, He accomplishes. And He makes men willing, too. David tells us, **"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. . ."** (Ps. 110:3). So, salvation is of the Lord. He wills to save some, He quickens and makes those alive; and those that are born again come unto Him, and they are His willing servants. Their will is made conformable to His.



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

U.S. SUPREME COURT SAYS TEACHER UNION POLITICAL SPENDING HAS RESTRICTIONS

(EP News)--The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that teachers' unions must first get permission before spending money it collects from non-union members on political activities.

The unanimous decision reversed a Washington state Supreme Court ruling that overturned a state law. It paves the way for other states to pass similar laws.

The Supreme Court avoided the question of whether unions should be allowed to take money from non-union members in the first place.

The Washington Education Association (WEA) has spent 15 years fighting the law that would take away part of its prized political purse. The WEA and its parent, the National Education Association, almost exclusively support Democrats and liberal causes in spite of that fact that their money comes from teachers with a broad range of perspectives.

Tracey Bailey, a spokesman for the Association of American Educators, said the Supreme Court's ruling means "a teacher's rights are more important than a union's political desires."

Justin Hakes, a spokesman for the National Right to Work Foundation, said he expects other states to follow Washington's lead.

"States can theoretically go further in terms of trying to establish additional hurdles for the unions," he said, "to provide even more safeguards than that ruling does."

Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute, said the decision also could apply to other public sector unions.

"That door is wide open now based on the language in the majority opinion by Justice (Antonin) Scalia," he said. "We're optimistic that we're going to see that kind of a broader reclaiming of the rights of individual workers against authoritarian practices of labor unions."

DOJ RAMPS UP RELIGIOUS PROTECTION

(EP News)--As attacks on religious expression have increased in the last seven or eight years, so has the response by the Department of Justice (DOJ). First under former Attorney General John Ashcroft and now under Alberto Gonzales, the DOJ has made a concerted effort to protect the religious liberties of Americans.

Cases of racial and sexual discrimination as well as national origin all have been targets

of DOJ resources since the '60s. But the department's Special Counsel for Religious Discrimination Eric Treene said the DOJ realized one group had been left out.

"It started in 2002 under Attorney General Ashcroft and grew out of a recognition that there had never really been any focus on coordinating and bringing religion-related cases," he said.

And, Treene added, the department has been remarkably successful.

"We have increased, as a percentage basis, our religion cases very dramatically," he said. "We have won just roughly more than 90 percent of the cases that we've brought."

The DOJ has brought cases involving religious discrimination in housing, education, employment and zoning. In the last six years, the DOJ has prosecuted 82 cases of religious discrimination in education.

The Justice Department often partners with Christian organizations to defend faith. Mike Johnson of the Alliance Defense Fund has brought several cases to DOJ.

"Sometimes you have to go on offense to defend those rights," he told Family News in Focus. "That's what the Justice Department has been doing with great success."

Johnson said the escalation over the last several years in attacks upon the free exercise of religion has brought the government into the fray.

"It's by necessity, I think, that the government is paying more and more attention to this," he said. "Religious discrimination is a big problem, and, because of that, it should be a high priority for the Department of Justice."

N.Y. ASSEMBLY OKS GAY- MARRIAGE BILL

(EP News)--The New York state Assembly voted 85-61 on June 18 to legalize same-sex marriage. The Republican-led Senate is not expected to consider the bill this session, which ended on June 20.

The legislation, sponsored by Manhattan Democrat Daniel O'Donnell, the openly gay brother of Rosie O'Donnell, and supported by Gov. Eliot Spitzer, was approved after an emotional three-hour debate, The Associated Press reported.

Same-sex marriage is legal only in Massachusetts.

In a memo to all Assembly members, the Catholic Conference of New York said "marriage is not some political term of art that can be re-imagined or redefined according to the whims of the popular culture."

"Recognizing same-sex unions will only serve to devalue marriage even more than what has already occurred in recent years. ... Same-sex 'marriage' furthers a societal disconnect between procreation and marriage while promoting the notion that a nontraditional family structure serves a child as well as a traditional one. We believe this will have disastrous implications for society," the group wrote.

Jenny Tyree, associate marriage analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said marriage is really about what kids need, not what adults want.

"Social science studies continue to show that seemingly minor changes to marriage have profound consequences -- mostly negative -- for the next generation," she said. "Homosexual unions are not a minor change, but a radical redefinition of the one institution we know to be best for children. A legal redefinition of marriage would require an endorsement of motherless and fatherless families."

"The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves" (Isa. 3:9).

EU WANTS COMPENSATION FROM U.S. FOR GAMBLING BAN

(EP News)--The European Union told the U.S. on June 22 that it wanted compensation for its ban on foreign online gambling sites, The Associated Press reported. Last year's Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) prevents U.S. banks and credit card companies from processing payments to online gambling businesses outside the country. The global online gambling market is estimated to be worth \$15.5 billion. According to reports, about half of those gamblers are based in the U.S.

HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATE REMAINS HIGH

(EP News)--An estimated 1.2 million students dropped out of high school in the last year, which means only 70 percent of students who started high school four years ago earned a diploma. Lynn Olson with *Education Week* said the future of kids who drop out looks increasingly bleak. "These kids are looking at the prospects of earning, on average, \$13,000 a year," she said. "That's certainly not enough to support a family and to thrive in today's economy." The drop-out rate has held steady for about five years -- a fact that Bill Ziegler with Teachers in Public and Private Schools called "alarming."

--CitizenLink

PHILADELPHIA COUNCIL DUMPS "PRO-CHOICE CITY" TITLE

(EP News)--Just a week after adopting a resolution declaring its city "pro-choice," the Philadelphia City Council voted 13-4 on June 14 to rescind the proclamation. Nine council members originally supported the plan. "The members who supported today's resolution are to be commended

for reflecting carefully upon this issue and showing the courage to revisit it," Cardinal Justin Rigali said in a statement. "In a city where so many people vigorously defend life at every stage, proclaiming Philadelphia 'pro-choice' is inconsistent with reality. It unfairly saddles those who support life at all stages with this shameful label." The resolution was introduced by Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown at the request of Planned Parenthood, which helped her craft the document. Philadelphia would have been the largest U.S. jurisdiction to adopt such a resolution, joining the California cities of West Hollywood, Berkeley and Santa Cruz.

GAY PUBLICATION PULLED FROM GROCERY STORE SHELVES

(EP News)--A gay newspaper will no longer be displayed in Nashville Kroger stores because it doesn't meet the grocery chain's criteria for publications. Distributech, which manages the free publication racks in most Kroger stores, said it put *Out and About* in the stores before reviewing the content. Kroger's policy is not to display free publications that promote "political, religious or other specific agendas." Neither Kroger nor Distributech would grant interviews, but in a statement, Distributech said it reserves the right to approve or disapprove every publication on its free racks.

MICHIGAN JUDGE SAYS CHURCH CAN USE PUBLIC BUILDING

(EP News)--A Michigan judge has ordered a community center to allow New Life Family Church to hold worship services. Welton Smith, pastor of New Life, had been renting the community center every Sunday. When members of the commission realized the nature of the activity, they took action to stop the worship services at the center. A Wayne County Circuit judge blocked the decision Friday until the matter could be addressed at a June 28 hearing. Richard Mack, attorney for the plaintiffs, said the commission's decision is a clear violation of the constitutional protections of religious worship. "This is 2007, and this blatantly lawless behavior is truly shocking," he said in a statement. "The very first amendment in our nation's Constitution was written with this exact situation in mind: preventing politicians and the government from suppressing religious worship."

FOX, CBS REFUSE CONDOM ADS

(EP News)--Planned Parenthood is mobilizing activists nationwide after Fox and CBS refused to run condom ads from Trojan. The No. 1 abortion provider is urging its supporters to write the networks, demanding airtime. According to *The New York Times*, the commercial will run on ABC, NBC and nine cable networks. In its rejection, CBS wrote, "We do not find it appropriate for our network even with late-night-only restrictions."

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MISSOURI MAY FORCE CHANGES AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(EP News)--Republican Gov. Matt Blunt is expected to sign a bill that would place new regulations on abortion clinics and could cost Planned Parenthood \$1 million per site. Under the legislation, any clinic that performs more than five first-trimester abortions per month, or any later-term abortions, would have to comply with the specifications for an ambulatory surgical center. The new requirements would take effect Aug. 28. According to news reports, Planned Parenthood is still weighing whether to challenge the legislation in court, comply with the standards or stop conducting abortions at its Columbia and Kansas City clinics. Peter Brownlie, chief executive officer of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri, told The Associated Press that it could cost substantially more than \$1 million to make the necessary changes at each of its abortion clinics.

11TH CIRCUIT RULES AGAINST SEXUALLY ORIENTED BUSINESSES

(EP News)--The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that Daytona Beach and other cities can use zoning and nudity ordinances to limit sexually oriented businesses. Local law enforcement said the businesses are responsible for a rise in crime. Scott Berghold, an attorney who specializes in zoning ordinances, called the outcome a major victory. The court made it clear where the law draws the line. "In addition to that, it also dealt a pretty strong blow to the main experts that adult businesses use all over the country," he said. Lawyers for the sexually oriented businesses are threatening to appeal all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but Berghold said their efforts will likely be in vain. "The big reason the Supreme Court is not likely to take the case," he said, "is that now this court of appeals is in line with all the other courts of appeals in the country in rejecting similar claims and rejecting these particular experts." Pat Trueman of the Alliance Defense Fund said the city now can enforce its ordinances freely. "There's no question," he told Family News in Focus, "that particular strip club will have to relocate to the area that the city feels is the only appropriate area for them to be located."

NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARD IMPLEMENTS FREE SPEECH POLICY

(EP News)--The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) dismissed a lawsuit against a New Jersey school board after officials agreed to institute a policy that will allow Christian students to express their faith. Jason Aufiero, a student at Northern Highlands Regional High School, was told he and other members of the school's Christian Club could not participate in the Day of Truth – even though officials were in full support of the Day of Silence, which

expressed support for homosexuality. The Day of Truth is an opportunity for Christian students to respectfully present a different viewpoint than students participating in the Day of Silence, which is sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network. Jeremy Tedesco, litigation counsel for ADF, said he is satisfied school officials will respect free speech. "We are pleased the school will now honor the rights of students like Jason Aufiero," he said, "by allowing them to speak on current issues, including those related to the Day of Truth."

HIGH COURT REINSTATES CHRISTIAN CIVIC LEAGUE SUIT

(EP News)--Following its ruling last week in favor of Wisconsin Right to Life and free speech, the U.S. Supreme Court has reinstated a similar suit by the Christian Civic League of Maine (CCLM). In its June 25 decision, the court held that "blackout periods" prior to elections could not be applied to genuine issue ads. CCLM filed suit in April 2006 asking to be allowed to broadcast an advertisement in support of the federal Marriage Protection Amendment during the "blackout period." The ad mentioned a senator who was running for re-election, but who was unopposed in her primary. The district court, which dismissed the case in September 2006, must now take it up again. "It looks like the Supreme Court is strongly suggesting that the lower court hold the marriage amendment ads, which in that case were constitutional exercises of free speech," said Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for Focus on the Family Action. "At the end of the day, this should be another incremental victory for free speech." James Bopp Jr., lead counsel in both cases, said it was a welcome development. "It gives the lower court the potential opportunity to quickly apply the (same) rationale," he said in a statement, "and provide further guidance on what ads can be run during future blackout periods."--*CitizenLink*

LAWMAKERS HEAR TESTIMONY ON TV VIOLENCE

(EP News)--Lawmakers summoned media experts to Capitol Hill on June 26, requesting their professional opinion on how media violence affects children. The request comes as legislation intended to regulate violent programming is debated in Washington. One of the organizations offering testimony was the Parents Television Council (PTC). A few heads turned away, and eyes shut, as a video montage prepared by the PTC showcased some of the gruesome scenes that air during family hour programming. Sen. John Rockefeller said such content should not be easy for kids to access. "These images are inherently disturbing to adults," he said. "So imagine what they might be for children." Peter Liguori, with Fox Broadcasting, said: "Three reports produced by our government have concluded there may be a connection between television violence, but no causal link has been established." But Jeff McIntyre with the American Psychological Association said there's medical consensus that media

violence is harmful to kids.

YOUNG AMERICANS HOLD CONSERVATIVE VIEWS

(EP News)--On controversial social issues like abortion and same-sex marriage, America's young people continue to track conservative, according to a poll by *The New York Times*, CBS and MTV. The survey collected opinions of 17- to 29-year-olds. Sixty-two percent said abortion should be outlawed or restricted. Danielle Huntley, a student at Boston College Law School and president of Students for Life of America, said she's proud her peers are not buying into liberal rhetoric. Fifty-four percent of young adults expressed opposition to same-sex marriage.

SUPREME COURT TURNS DOWN CHALLENGE TO FAITH-BASED OFFICE

(EP News)--The U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 25 that a group attempting to stop the federal government from giving federal funds to religious groups lacked the standing to bring the law suit. The closely watched decision overturned a federal appeals court decision. "It has long been established ... that the payment of taxes is generally not enough to establish standing to challenge an action taken by the federal government," Justice Samuel Alito wrote for the 5-4 majority. "If every federal taxpayer could sue to challenge any government expenditure, the federal courts would cease to function as courts of law and would be cast in the role of general complaint bureaus," Alito wrote.

ACLU CHALLENGES ARIZONA TUITION TAX-CREDIT PROGRAM

(EP News)--The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is trying to get a court to declare Arizona's tuition-credit program unconstitutional because it allows tuition scholarships to be used at religious schools.

This is the fifth attempt by the ACLU and its allies to get School Choice Arizona declared unconstitutional. The program, which helps parents get their kids out of failing schools and creates competition in education, is funded by private donors who get a tax credit for supporting education.

"It's private money all the way through," said Gary McCaleb, an attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund. "Because it affects taxation in a very indirect fashion, they think that's some sort of direct funding of religion. There is simply no case law out there that agrees with them."

A trial court dismissed the ACLU's allegation, but the group is back shopping for another court that will be more amenable to its charges. McCaleb has filed a motion to intervene on behalf of School Choice Arizona.

"This complaint is about one step away from frivolous," he told *Family News in Focus*. "The ACLU should find something better to do with its time."

Dan Lips with the Heritage Foundation is thankful the courts are, so far, allowing

school choice for parents and their kids.

"School-choice programs in states like Arizona and Florida and cities like Milwaukee and Cleveland are succeeding in boosting test scores, improving parent satisfaction," he said, "and even causing public schools to improve, because of the risk of losing students."

"CHRISTIAN" NATIONS MORE FREE, REPORT SAYS

(EP News)--Countries with Christian roots are the most religiously free domains in the world, according to the Center for Religious Freedom at the Hudson Institute in a forthcoming report.

The report ranked more than 100 countries according to the quality of religious freedom based on the country's religious background. The only countries to receive an ideal score were the United States and Estonia, both with Protestant backgrounds, and Hungary and Ireland, both with Catholic backgrounds.

The results of the report were announced July 9 in a briefing at the Hudson Institute in Washington. A six-member panel, which included Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, spoke on the importance of securing religious liberty in countries where such freedom is most violated.

"Our founding documents do not declare something that is an American truth," Land said. "It is a universal truth that we believe that all men are created equal and they are 'endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights,' and 'among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'"

Panelist Paul Marshall, a senior fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom, said religious oppression is most often found in Muslim countries with extreme religious parties, such as Iraq, Iran, Sudan and Saudi Arabia.

"Radical Islam is probably the largest growing threat to religious freedom around the world, including in the Muslim world," Marshall said.

Panelist Zainab Al-Suwaij, co-founder and executive director of the American Islamic Congress, knows firsthand about religious oppression in Islamic countries. Born in Iraq under Sadaam Hussein's regime, the Shiite Muslim endured intense religious persecution before fleeing a country where, in 1991, Sunni Muslims were favored.

"As a person who was under this kind of lack of freedom practicing my religion in Iraq, I can feel and also understand how people have been suffering under these different regimes," Al-Suwaij said. "People are not aware of the suffering or do not care enough about the religious suffering of others to do anything about it."

Many Muslims in radical Islamic countries experience oppression because of their government's blasphemy laws, which implement punishment, including death, to any person who defiles the name of Muhammad.

Land commented: "The people who are

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suffering the most from the radical Islamist jihadism are followers of Islam who refuse to knuckle under to this particularly virulent brand of ideology that is being propagated in their name.”

The panelists cited the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a standard that all countries, regardless of religious affiliation, should uphold. Adopted by the United Nations in 1948, the declaration obligates the international community to treat its citizens humanely, which Land said should also apply to radical Islamic countries.

“If a government wants to declare that Islam is the official religion of that country, as long as they democratically choose to do that, that’s their choice. We don’t have the right to say that they can’t do that,” Land said. “But we do have a right to say that there is a universal freedom, a universal right, a freedom of conscience, a freedom of belief, a freedom to change one’s faith and to practice one’s faith, and that cannot be denied to citizens in countries that want to be a part of the civilized community of nations.”

The Center for Religious Freedom report also found that countries with the least religious freedom were the most likely to suffer economically, naming Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Sudan as examples.

Marshall said the survey results indicated religious freedom as the missing link for economic growth in religiously oppressed countries.

“Now we have proof that closed religious systems foul economic development and actually stunt economic growth,” Marshall said. “Closed economic systems are unkind or worse to religious segments and practices. You need both to sustain human flourishing.”

In echoing Marshall’s observations, Land cited comments by the late Pope John Paul II, saying, “Religious freedom or soul liberty is the freedom without which all the other freedoms are meaningless. This is the deepest longing of the human soul. I think it shows that when people are free in one area it buttresses freedom in other areas, and the most important freedom is the freedom of conscience.”

The panelists did not mention a new charge that China had expelled more than 100 foreign workers from April to June because of alleged illegal religious activities. The China Aid Association, which issued the report July 10, said the effort is suspected to be part of the government’s campaign to restrict Christian missions prior to the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.

The panel also included Michael Novak, director of social and political studies at the American Enterprise Institute; Brian Grim, a senior research fellow in religion and world affairs at the Pew Forum; and Theodore Malloch, chairman of the Spiritual Enterprise Institute.

The full report, titled “Religious Freedom

in the World 2007,” will be released in early 2008. The final manuscript will include surveys, background information, essays and appendices on the religious freedom trends in 102 countries.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Ps. 33:12).

MISSOURI BANS PLANNED PARENTHOOD FROM CLASSROOMS

(EP News)--Legislation signed July 9 by Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt means abortion providers will not be allowed to present information about sexual health in the state’s public schools, The Associated Press reported. The law also requires abortion clinics to become ambulatory surgical centers and makes the Missouri Alternatives to Abortion Services Program permanent.

“All life is precious and needs to be treated with the utmost dignity and respect,” Blunt said. “I will continue working with the Missouri General Assembly to pass strong pro-life legislation that respects the sanctity and dignity of all human life.” Rep. Therese Sander and Sen. Delbert Scott, sponsors of the bill, said they’re relieved that organizations like Planned Parenthood won’t be pushing their agenda in public schools. “Missourians can be proud we have again passed, and the governor has signed, legislation that respects the sanctity of life,” Scott said. “This legislation is a positive step forward for Missouri families, Missouri women and for Missourians’ shared pro-life and pro-family values.”

“We are ecstatic,” said Jim Sedlak, vice president of American Life League. “A new law just signed by Missouri’s governor will keep Planned Parenthood away from the children in that state, and that is a great victory for Missouri parents.”

Newly enacted legislation in Missouri says: “No school district or charter school, or its personnel or agents, shall provide abortion services, or permit a person or entity to offer, sponsor, or furnish in any manner any course materials or instruction relating to human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases to its students if such person or entity is a provider of abortion services.”

“The elected officials in Missouri understood the conflict of interest that exists when Planned Parenthood is allowed to teach or provide material for sex education classes,” said Sedlak. “To have an entity that profits from the sale of birth control and abortion teaching our children about sex is ludicrous.

“We encourage every state in the nation to follow Missouri’s example and implement similar laws,” said Sedlak. “We look forward to the day when Planned Parenthood is not allowed access to the children in any school district in the nation.”

NAACP IGNORES ABORTION RESOLUTION

(EP News)--The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People wrapped up its annual meeting today after

refusing to hear a resolution submitted by its Macon, Ga., chapter addressing abortion’s negative impact on the black community. Dr. Alveda King, niece of Martin Luther King Jr., urged the NAACP to read the resolution.

Clenard Childress, the New Jersey director of the Life Education and Resource Network, said sweeping the matter under the rug goes against NAACP policy.

“This is a violation of its own bylaws,” he told Family News in Focus. “This is why it’s clear in my mind — and anybody else that’s looking at this objectively — that it’s censorship.”

According to the Guttmacher Institute, black American women are nearly four times more likely than white women to have an abortion. Childress said the NAACP needs to stop playing politics.

“We find it deplorable that an institution that was founded to ensure the rights of African-Americans and our voices being heard is choosing to censor one of their own chapters,” he said.

Day Gardner, president of the National Black Pro-Life Union, said the NAACP rejected a similar proposal in 2004 due to an alleged “technicality.”

“We have to face the fact that they take an abortion stand,” she said. “They are basically saying that we are for civil rights — except for the fact that you are an unborn child.”

FEWER AMERICANS VIEW CHILDREN AS IMPORTANT TO HAPPY MARRIAGES

(EP News)--Children were ranked next to last in a list of nine qualities for a happy marriage, in a survey from the Pew Research Center Americans.

Even sharing household chores ranked as more important. Only 41 percent of those polled said children are important to a successful marriage, which is down 24 percent since 1990.

Cary Funk, a Pew Research spokesman, said more than six in 10 said marriage was for personal happiness and fulfillment.

“So, we’re thinking about marriage in terms of the satisfaction of the couple and less as the purpose being to have children,” he told *Family News in Focus*. “People are thinking differently about marriage — especially about the role of children in marriage — than they did 15 or 20 years ago.”

Carrie Gordon Earll, senior director, issue analysis at Focus on the Family Action, said the survey is an alarming indicator that our culture is too inwardly focused. “If society doesn’t see marriage and the raising of children as a greater good and a higher virtue,” she explained, “we’re headed down a very dangerous path.”

If there’s any good news, it’s that a healthy majority still said they believe a traditional two-parent home is the best environment in which to raise children. Earll added, “Some of this comes down to ‘I want to live my world the way I want to live it, but I still see there’s a purpose in society for something contrary to what I’m doing.’

“Lo, children are an heritage of the

LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate” (Ps. 127:3-5).

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE COULD EXPAND

(EP News)--Proponents of physician-assisted suicide increasingly are advocating extending the practice beyond the terminally ill to the chronically depressed, *The Baptist Press* reports. Jacob Appel, who teaches at Brown University in Providence, R.I., wrote in the May-June issue of the Hastings Center Report that the arguments used to defend assisted suicide for the terminally ill can be applied “in many cases of purely psychological disease,” including “repeated bouts of severe depression.” Bioethics specialist Wesley Smith, a lawyer for the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, was concerned about the article, but said “the natural trajectory of assisted suicide advocacy leads” inevitably to advocating assisted suicide for the disabled and chronically ill, to the ‘tired of life’ elderly, and eventually to the mentally ill.”

“Thou shalt not kill” (Ex. 20:13).

LOUISIANA JUDGE SAYS PORTRAIT OF JESUS CAN STAY

(EP News)--A Slidell, La., judge announced that despite an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawsuit, a portrait of Jesus hanging in the city courthouse can stay unless a federal judge orders it removed, The Associated Press reported. The ACLU filed suit on July 3 against Slidell City Court seeking the removal of the painting and the message underneath, which reads, “To Know Peace, Obey These Laws.” Judge Jim Lamz said June 30 the ACLU is using bullying tactics to intimidate him — but he’s ready for the suit. “Due to the display’s historical place in the courthouse, I explored options to obtain a definitive ruling on the constitutionality of the display without an adversarial court battle,” he said. “I could find none.” Supporters claim that the portrait, which has been on display since the building opened in 1997, has never posed a problem and fairly represents the majority of residents in their largely Christian community. In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, “Simply having religious content or promoting a message consistent with a religious doctrine does not run afoul of the Establishment Clause.... Examples of monuments and buildings reflecting the prominent role of religion abound.”

SAN DIEGO SCHOOL SCHEDULES MUSLIM PRAYER BREAK

(EP News)--After Muslim students were given a scheduled prayer break each day, the Pacific Justice Institute (PJI) is calling for the same accommodation for other students who wish to pray. Officials at San Diego’s

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Carver Elementary allow Muslim students a 15-minute prayer break each afternoon. Non-Muslim students are instructed to read or write during the break. Attorney Pete Lepiscopo, a PJI-affiliated attorney, sent a letter in June to the San Diego Board of Education that explains numerous statutory provisions that affirm students' rights of religious equality. Lepiscopo requested that classrooms be set aside for students and employees of all faiths to meet their religious obligations to pray – as is being done for Muslim students. Brad Dacus, president of PJI, said voluntary, student-initiated prayer in schools should not be controversial. "The federal courts have held that schools do not endorse everything they fail to censor," he said. "This could be a terrific opportunity for a whole community to recognize the importance of faith in our youth, without government involvement or interference."

STUDY CALLS LOTTERIES A TAX ON THE POOR

(EP News)--State lotteries are a hidden and unfair tax on the poor, according to a study from the Tax Foundation. The report also found the money isn't going where promised and costs states a bundle in social services to take care of problem gamblers. For example, Virginia officials boast that the state gets \$432 million a year in lottery proceeds. As in most of the 42 states with the games, the money is said to be earmarked for schools. But, Chris Friend of The Family Foundation in Virginia said that's not the entire balance sheet. "At the end of the day, what amounts basically to a couple of hundred dollars per kid," he said, "is probably costing far more than that in broken families and in broken homes." And Alicia Hansen, the report's author, said while lawmakers like to say the proceeds go toward education, what they don't explain is that other funds are taken away. "They know that the lottery revenue is coming in, they know it's earmarked for education and they're counting on that money," she explained. "So then, they can take the money that they would have otherwise spent on education, and they can spend it on other things."

EDWARDS, OBAMA PLEDGE ABORTION SUPPORT

(EP News)--At the Planned Parenthood Action Fund presidential candidate forum in mid-July, the John Edwards and Barack Obama campaigns promised to include abortion coverage in their universal health care plans.

Elizabeth Edwards said her husband's plan would cover "all reproductive health care, including pregnancy termination." Obama said his would cover "reproductive health services," which his campaign later confirmed includes abortion.

Kelly Shackelford, chief counsel of Liberty Legal Institute, said the Edwards and

Obama plans could void state pro-life laws.

"Under the U.S. Constitution, there's what's called the Supremacy Clause, which says that the federal law is the supreme law of the land – that if the federal government has authority under the Constitution, their law will trump the state law," Shackelford said.

That could include parental-notification laws, clinic regulations, informed-consent laws and laws that require women be offered ultrasound services. Pro-life legal organizations would have their hands full.

"There would be an absolute explosion of lawsuits over something like this," Shackelford said.

Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America, said the candidates' proposals point out the inconsistencies in many pro-abortion candidates.

"The same candidates who are claiming they want to reduce the number of abortions are promoting a plan that would increase the number of abortions and would require that every American taxpayer be an accomplice," Wright said.

".. and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness" (Jer. 23:14).

GAY ACTIVISTS TRY TO STOP TV REPORT ON LESBIAN GANG ATTACKS

(EP News)--The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) has apparently threatened to sue a Tennessee TV station for airing a report on lesbian gangs attacking students.

Jack Peck, general manager of WPTY in Memphis, said the station agreed to make some rewrites before the story aired in February, but that wasn't enough to satisfy GLAAD.

The story featured an interview with Shelby County Gang Unit specialist Beverly Cobb, who said girls are being attacked in high school bathrooms and stairwells by members of a gang called GTO or "Gays Taking Over."

"They are forcing themselves on our young girls in all our schools," Cobb said in the televised report.

The station gave GLAAD an advance viewing of the story. The group declared it "sensationalistic and homophobic."

Peter LaBarbera, with Americans for Truth, said the station manager told him the group definitely did not want the story to air.

"A SENIOR STAFFER TOLD HIM SEVERAL TIMES, 'WE'RE GOING TO TAKE YOU TO COURT IF YOU AIR THIS REPORT,' TRUCKERS HAUL SEX SLAVES ON MIDWEST HIGHWAYS

(EP News)--Trucks in Kansas and Missouri are carrying more than corn and wheat. Human-trafficking victim support groups say truckers that voyage north and south on Interstate 35 are hauling women and children trapped in the sex trade.

"Not only the Midwest but I think the country as a whole has an unrecognized problem concerning the trafficking of U.S. citizens into the commercial sex industry," said Lisa Thompson, liaison for the abolition of sexual trafficking for Salvation Army.

The State Department estimates that 100,000 children in the U.S. are at risk of becoming trafficking victims.

"They are in every city," said Linda Smith, founder of Shared Hope International and a former member of Congress. "They are being sold at truck stops, strip joints, massage parlors and often out of homes, marketed online or on the streets. But they are our little girls" he said.

Similar gang activity is reported in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. Linda Jernigan, a former homosexual, said that's why GLAAD is making such an issue of the Memphis story.

"They don't want this type of information to get out," she said. "They know people's eyes will be opened, they'll begin to see this whole situation for what it really is."

LESBIAN PARTNER GRANTED PARENTAL STATUS

(EP News)--An Oregon woman whose lesbian partner gave birth will be listed on the child's birth certificate as the second parent, *The Oregonian* reported. Multnomah County Circuit Judge Eric Bloch ruled July 13 that Jeana Frazzini has a legal right to be declared the second parent. K.D. Parman, who conceived by artificial insemination, is the birth mother. In his ruling, Bloch said the state constitution does not allow same-sex marriage, therefore does not provide a remedy for same-sex parents. Oregon lawmakers passed a domestic-partnership law this year that will take effect Jan. 1. Bloch said that would solve the so-called inequity. Defense of Marriage and Family is collecting signatures in Oregon to place a measure on the 2008 ballot challenging the domestic-partnership law.

MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNOR CUTS ABSTINENCE-EDUCATION FUNDING

(EP News)--On July 12, Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick vetoed \$41 million in spending approved by the Legislature, including funding for an abstinence-only education program, *The Boston Globe* reports. Among the cuts, Patrick excised a provision that would have allowed the state to spend \$712,000 in federal money on abstinence ed. Massachusetts has received the grant since 1998, but public health officials in the administration decided they no longer want the money, because it can't be used to teach birth control. Rebecca Ray, director of Healthy Futures, which teaches abstinence classes to about 7,000 students, said losing the money would slice her organization's budget in half. "I think it's tragic that these communities and all these students are going to miss out on this opportunity," she told *The Globe*. "It's money that is free to our state, and I know the administration is certainly

looking for other funding from the federal government, yet they're turning down these funds."

BIBLES LEAD TROOPS TO FAITH

(EP News)--Following a Fourth of July campaign, Revival Fires Ministries will send another 2,500 Bibles to soldiers stationed in the Middle East. Already the ministry has donated 140,000 to U.S. troops, the American Family Association reported. Tim Todd, president of Revival Fires, is asking people to consider assisting the ministry in its mission. "Bibles are better than bullets in Iraq and Afghanistan," he said. "That is the life-changing power of the Word of God — and it's making a difference in the lives of our soldiers." Lt. Brian K. Waite, a command chaplain, told Revival Fires that when people are faced with their own mortality, they turn to the Word of God. "I saw more than 60 combat-hardened men come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ," he said. "In fact, I had the privilege of baptizing them in the Tigris River on Easter Sunday."

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

WEST VIRGINIA CHRISTIANS UNITE TO OPPOSE GAMBLING

(EP News)--United Methodists, Southern Baptists and other members of the West Virginia Council of Churches are starting a month of intense lobbying against the expansion of gambling at Tri-State Racetrack & Gaming in Nitro, W.Va. OneNewsNow.com reports that yellow signs urging residents to vote against the measure on Aug. 11 are common across the county. Churches from a variety of Christian traditions have found common ground opposing proposed casino-style games such as poker and blackjack. They warn about the dangers of addiction to gambling and the negative impact it can have on families.

LOUISIANA BANS PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION

(EP News)--On July 13, Louisiana became the first state to outlaw partial-birth abortion since a federal ban on the procedure was upheld this year by the U.S. Supreme Court. "The Louisiana Family Forum and the Louisiana Legislature wanted to be first on record to state we're opposed to this procedure and to have it on the books," said Gene Mills, executive director of the Louisiana Family Forum. "Basically (the law) mimics or models the national ban, which says that this particular procedure shall be outlawed within the borders or the jurisdiction of the State of Louisiana." Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said his home state is setting a bold precedent, and he expects "other states are expected to follow suit."

ABSTINENCE FUNDING GRANTED THREE-MONTH EXTENSION

(EP News)--The U.S. House passed legislation that extends funding for Title

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V abstinence education for three months – until the end of the fiscal year. The Senate passed the bill last month. It now goes to the president. Section 510 of Title V of the Social Security Act – established in 1996 – allows money for abstinence-only education to be distributed to states that apply for it. Bush submitted a budget reauthorization proposal in 2002, but Congress failed to act. Title V funding has continued under a series of temporary reauthorizations and was set to expire on June 30. The three-month extension buys lawmakers little time to save the program.

MORE MOMS SAY THEY'D RATHER BE HOME

(EP News)--More and more working moms say full time is not ideal. They'd rather be at home with their kids. What's more, 48 percent of stay-at-home moms say they wouldn't change a thing, according to the Pew Research Center. Although nearly 71 percent of American women work outside the home, it appears many of them aren't happy about it. Some of the compromises suggested by experts include job sharing, more time off under the Family Medical Leave Act and flexible part-time arrangements. Cary Funk, one of the authors of the Pew study, said juggling work and family time is a tough act for most moms to pull off. "What I'm seeing is that people are expressing the difficulties of combining work and childrearing responsibilities," she said.

"... keepers at home, ..." (Titus 2:5).

HOMOSEXUAL CONFERENCE ENCOURAGES ACTIVISM

(EP News)--About 1,500 homosexuals from 25 countries learned at a conference this month how to get their governments to favor homosexuality. The conference, held in Scottsdale, Ariz., and sponsored by the Metropolitan Community Church, hosted delegates from countries where homosexual behavior is outlawed, such as Jamaica and Nigeria. Peter LaBarbera, president of Americans for Truth, said he doesn't like the idea of a conference in America influencing other nations to embrace homosexuality. "There's certainly no reason why immoral American standards should be exported to the developing world," he said. "If a country like Jamaica criminalizes homosexual behavior, that's their right."

ALABAMA ABORTIONS DOWN NEARLY 50 PERCENT SINCE 1980

(EP News)--Abortions in Alabama have been cut nearly in half over the past two decades, public health records show, dropping from 21,000 in 1980 to 11,656 procedures last year, *The Birmingham News* reports. The article said enforcement of incremental pro-life laws like parental consent, 24-hour reflection period and

mandated ultrasound before an abortion is performed have contributed to Alabama's drop in abortions. A third of women receiving abortions in 2005 had already terminated at least one pregnancy, according to state statistics.

EVANGELICALS URGED TO DEFEND ISRAEL

(EP News)--More than 3,000 evangelicals met in Washington, D.C., in July for the Christians United for Israel Summit, where they heard about the increasing pressures against the historic and biblical country. Gary Bauer, president of American Values, said the Bush administration's pressure on Israel to give up land is a move in the wrong direction. "Our message is, 'Quit pressuring to give up land,'" Bauer said. "That has never worked; it's not going to work now." Summit attendees also lobbied Congress this week, urging them to stand with Israel.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS COLOMBIA'S CONGRESS GIVES MARRIAGE-LIKE RIGHTS TO GAYS

(EP News)--A measure to give same-sex couples rights similar to married couples passed Colombia's Congress last week, a move seen as the biggest advance for homosexuals in the Roman Catholic country. According to Reuters, the measure grants gay couples living together for more than two years the same social security and estate inheritance guarantees as heterosexuals in common law marriages. The bill had failed to get through Congress four times since 1999. President Alvaro Uribe has said he will sign the bill.

NORTH KOREAN EVANGELIST FACES DEATH FOR HIS FAITH

(EP News)--Son Jong Nam awaits public execution because of his faith. For more than a year, the former North Korean Army officer who became an underground evangelist has been beaten and tortured. His younger brother, Son Jong Hoon, was on Capitol Hill on July 12 pleading for his brother's life. He spoke through a translator. "He really wants to know if he is still alive or not," the translator said. "What he doesn't understand is why North Korea treats Christians as criminals." Todd Nettleton with Voice of the Martyrs said Son Jong Nam's journey has been tragic. "He was captured at one point in China where he was being disciplined and forcibly repatriated to North Korea," he said. "He was locked in prison for three years and brutally tortured during that time." Five U.S. senators have joined his cause. Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., called on U.S. and international officials to save his life. "I would hope we would intervene," he said. "It's just almost unbelievable that in 2007 he would be executed simply for being a Christian."

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29).



Mini-Edition by Joseph Harris

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A Question of Responsibility

A few years back, a news report came out of Orlando, Florida about a new craze for local teenagers: garage jumping. Thrill seekers were jumping from one parking garage roof to another, with some roofs as high as six stories or 80 feet. As expected with such lunacy, some fell and were injured.

The family of one boy who fell and fractured his shoulder, filed a lawsuit against the city and parking garage for not having a fence to keep jumpers from jumping. The city has since erected some length of fence, but a jumper can still get around the fence and jump. The suing family stated that the garage should "take responsibility" before another jumper jumps. Huhhh? How about this for a solution: put up a sign that says "Don't Jump, Idiot," but then that would be too common sense of an approach. Plus, it may offend idiots.

If anyone is crazy enough to take such a risk, that individual will go find an unfenced building somewhere else and jump anyway. Where does responsibility begin? It begins with the individual. Where does the placing of blame stop? Should we place fences on streets and highways to keep people from walking in front of moving vehicles? If not, can local or state governments be sued for not restricting walkers who may get struck by automobiles? When the door to lunacy is opened, when do you shut it?

Remember the individual who sued McDonalds over the hot coffee? After placing a hot cup of coffee between the legs while driving, this person received burns from splashed coffee. McDonalds then began placing on each cup, warning signs of "Hot Coffee" (which is tantamount to "Cold Ice") when they should have spent a few cents more and also printed "Don't Place Between Legs or Knees While Driving, Genius" on each cup. By the way, isn't coffee supposed to be hot, otherwise, it is called cappuccino?

The shirking of responsibility is nothing new. In the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve both did their share of placing blame. Eve told God the serpent gave her the fruit to eat, so it was his fault. Adam placed a double blame with one stroke and told God the problem was the woman He (God) gave to Adam. When Aaron, the brother of Moses, was asked where he got the golden calf, his answer was, "Well we

put our gold in this fire, and out came this calf," like the calf made itself. And last but not least, King Ahab called Elijah the one who "troubleth Israel," yet Israel's real problem was Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel, for it was their wickedness that demanded the judgment of Jehovah.

When people refuse to take responsibility for their actions, then everyone else is fair game to blame. Couples divorce with a no fault divorce. If it was not the fault of either involved, then how did it happen? A young person robs a store, but it's not his fault. His defense attorney later claims society has failed all youth. The list could go on and on. There are sometimes external circumstances that contribute to, or influence individuals to make certain decisions, but ultimately each individual has to be held accountable for his or her own actions. Accountability, followed by acknowledgment and confession of wrong doing, reduces problems and paves the way for making right decisions in the future.

Acceptance of personal sin is necessary for salvation.

Revolt or Revival?

The revolt has arrived! The coup has come! The truth is finally beginning to come out. After YEARS of enduring a liberal dominated media (and government), the winds of change have blown in like a hurricane. Conservative talk radio continues to grow by leaps and bounds and this phenomenon has even filtered down to television via the Fox News Network (I know they are not as fair and balanced as they think, but it's a start). Reasonable, sane, common sense minded, conservative Americans have had enough.

We the people are tired of being told what to think and what we should tolerate, condone and endorse. We are tired of seeing Christianity bashed, God blasphemed, perversion praised, and prayer and religion expelled from public and government life. We are fed up with Greenpeace, animal rights and all manner of environmental wackism. We are disgusted with so called racism, "inequality" of rights and multi-culturalism. We are sick of government programs funded by over taxation that reward the lazy and immoral and perpetuate misery, ignorance and crime. We have simply had it with crooked politicians who refuse to accurately represent their constituents, but pander to lobbyists while padding their pockets. We want the ACLU, NEA, NOW and every other liberal, God-hating, freedom destroying group to back off and realize they DO NOT speak for the backbone of this country, but represent a liberal

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fringe minority. We are at the end of our patience with appointed judges who rewrite the Constitution, then shove their distorted interpretation down the collective American throat, through the "omnipotent power" of their federal bench. We are going broke paying through the nose to support a government education program in public schools, that falls more behind each year, educates few, disciplines none, and frustrates the majority.

Talk radio has led this revolution in the electronic media. Many are the voices and pundits crying aloud day and night. Each is a voice crying in the wilderness and their success is due to the fact that there is an audience for their message.

But let's not lose focus of this hard truth which is bittersweet news. Their message is refreshing for the political conservative, but morally and spiritually, there is a void. The conservative Bible believer realizes this hard truth. There is no real national conservative, Bible-believing voice (Biblically known as a prophet) that hits at the crux of the problem, giving the real solution. Conservatism as a philosophy can only go so far and only do so much. Morality can contribute to the solution, but is not the solution (hey, even lost people can be moral). The real solution is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, preached and lived by God-called preachers in true New Testament churches, backed up by church members who are born again believers. Soul winning, intercessory prayer and holy living will do more to change culture, affect society, empty prisons, close abortion clinics, shut down dope dealers, transform homosexuals, clean up government and kill pornography than any other one thing or combination of things.

The conservative revolt has been welcome and refreshing, true enough, but are we as true Bible believers willing to lay hold on the real solution as just described? Probably not, because it will cost. Jesus never said following Him would be easy. He likened it to taking up a cross and dying. The solution requires believers to die to self, die to the world, and live for God. Until we are willing to pay the full price, do not expect any real changes.

Here is the answer: "If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14). You are either playing or praying. Which is it? Work for the night is coming.



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The Young Visitor

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I may tell her she can come home with me; but it will make me still happier, dear mamma.

"Your dutiful and affectionate daughter,"

ANNIE TAYLOR

"P.S. She will be my guest, you know; so she need not give the least trouble to you or to my sisters."

Mrs. Taylor smiled as she read this postscript; she wondered how Annie's little guest would fare, if she gave herself not the least trouble about her. But she was a very kind mamma, and she did not consider any thing a trouble that could make her children happy. So she wrote Annie the consent she so much wished, and enclosed in the letter a pretty little note of invitation to Miss Octavia, that made both the little girls almost wild with delight.

She then gave directions that another bedstead should be put in Annie's room, so that the children might be constantly together; and made many other arrangements for the reception of her other children. Annie's elder sisters, Maria and Julia, were also expected home for the long summer vacation. They were very busy, studying hard at Logic, Natural Philosophy, Algebra, and Latin--- finishing up drawings, practicing difficult pieces of music, all in preparation for the examination.

But there were not many lessons learned at the school where Annie was. Even the teachers felt a sympathy with those little girls whose heads were so full of anticipations of the coming holidays, that they were too restless to fix their attention on any thing. And they were but lightly reprov'd for inattention.

Monday comes at last, and with the first train arrives brother Arthur, who has been commissioned to escort home the little ones, for papa has gone for his older daughters. Arthur is pleased with his trust, and gives himself all the airs of a man, though he is fourteen. It is a short distance to the depot, so they go there on foot, while a boy precedes them, wheeling down their baggage on a wheelbarrow. Their glee is damped for a few moments, as they take leave of their young companions, for some of them are

not coming back to school again. Octavia clings to them and kisses them with such warmth and felling, that they all exclaim: "What a dear little creature!" Then she is hugged and kissed by the teachers. Annie exchanges many hearty kisses with all around, while Arthur stands by with a quizzical smile. At last he inquires: "Is not that kissing nearly done! I never did see any thing like you girls."

What a happy ride that was in the cars! Arthur puts them into a seat, while he gets their tickets, and looks after the baggage. He soon returns, with his pockets filled with apples and gingerbread, to treat his traveling companions. They find incessant subject of merriment the whole way. They laugh at everything, and at nothing. It is so very funny to see Arthur stick the three tickets all around his hat, for the conductor's inspection whenever he passes through the car. There is a sleepy gentleman opposite, who grumbles very much at being waked up every ten minutes, to dive into his pockets, and produce his. Then little screams, as they find themselves in the dark, then flash into light again, as they pass in and out of a tunnel. Octavia is continually putting her face under Annie's bonnet, to whisper to her some profound secret, but the rattle and noise of the cars prevent her from hearing a word; this causes fresh bursts of laughter from both. The journey lasts but two hours. As they reach the end of it. Annie begins to recognize every house and tree, and to exclaim, as she points them out to her companion: "There is Mr. Green's, and that is Mrs. Mason's orchard; and the other side of the hedge is old nurse's cottage."

If you look sharp, girls, you will see our house in a minute," said Arthur; "the track cuts right through our meadow."

"There, there it is!" said Annie, eagerly, jumping up, and putting her arm out of the window to point to it; her brother pulled her back, and at the same instant an engine came puffing along in a glow of heat, and a long train of cars went whizzing by with dazzling speed. Both little girls turned pale.

"Now, Sis, I hope that will be a warning to you," her brother said, very gravely; "if I had not caught back your arm, your hand would have been cut clean off." Annie began to cry, and her loving little friend tried to kiss and comfort her. In a few minutes, however, all was forgotten. The shrill whistle announced that they were coming into town. The conductor put in his head, and shouted, "Jackson!" the door slapped to after him, then there was a jerk as the engine slackened speed, and in another moment they stopped. "Come now, girls, make haste; the cars will be off again in a minute. Stick close by me. Have you got all your little parcels?" Arthur said this as he hurried them out of the cars, and lifted them off the high steps.

"Oh, there is the carriage waiting for us," cried Annie, clapping her hands; "and there is Horace, looking on the baggage-car for our things. How do you do, Horace?" The black man's good-natured face expanded into a broad smile as he answered: "I am well, I thank you, Miss Annie; and how are you miss? You are welcome home miss."

"How is Peter, Horace?"

"Pete's well, miss; nothing never ails little Pete."

"Who is little Pete?" said Octavia, laughing; "what a funny name!"

"Oh, he is the little boy that waits at table, and weeds the garden, and does all the little odd jobs."

"Come now, let us climb into the carriage," said Octavia, "before Mr. Arthur comes up; and he will wonder what has become of us."

"No, no; you must not, Octavia. The horses might run away with us."

But Octavia got in laughing, and nestled herself into a corner. Annie was afraid to follow, and stood at a respectful distance from the horses, calling out, "Wo! wo!" whenever they moved their ears, or whisked off a fly with their long tails.

She was very glad to see her brother and Horace coming, and it was fortunate they arrived when they did. The cars were again in motion, making the ground tremble; the whistle sounded more shrilly than before, and one of the horses pricked up his ears, and gave a sudden start. Octavia screamed, and was going to throw herself out of the carriage, when Arthur stopped her, and Horace, at the same moment, caught the bridle of the restless horse.

"I must say it is no easy matter to bring two young ladies safe home from school," said Arthur. Annie nearly lost her arm, and now you have been within an inch of breaking your neck. I shall bring a large bag with me another time, and tie you both up in it, like kittens."

"Don't tell," said Octavia.

This was always her first word when she had done anything for which she feared she should be blamed. And now they are off along the dry level road. Beechwood is but a mile from Jackson, and they soon turn in at a pretty cast iron gate, and come by a winding road through the trees up to the house.

"You are welcome home, Miss!"

"Welcome home!" is heard from several voices as they alight. Annie is a favorite with all the servants, she always speaks so pleasantly to them, and never gives them more trouble than she can help.

"Where is mamma, Phoebe?"

"She is up-stairs, Miss with baby. Your papa is not home yet with the young ladies."

"Come then, Octavia, we will run and find mamma."

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The Young Visitor

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Octavia held her back to whisper, “Mind you don’t tell her about my getting into the carriage. Are you sure Mr. Arthur will not tell? he did not promise.”

“Never mind that,” said Annie, “mamma will not be angry with you, I know, and papa will only laugh, and say we must not do such things again. Come now, quick, I want so much to see mamma, and little Dodo.”

Mrs. Taylor was sitting in the rocking chair, with baby in her arms, when the little girls came running in. She kissed them both, and told Octavia she was glad to see her, and that she hoped she would enjoy her holidays very much.

“What a sweet little baby,” said Octavia; “it has such clear blue eyes that I can see my face in them. Look Annie, I really do, when I shake my curls.”

A stray lock, however, got into one of these novel looking-glasses, and baby immediately shut them up, and prepared for a cry. Octavia tried to stop its mouth with kisses, but Mrs. Taylor sent them both away, saying, “Go now, my loves, you will have but just time to get yourselves ready for dinner. Annie, take your friend to your room; you will find every thing prepared for her there, for I supposed you would prefer that arrangement.”

“Thank you, dear mamma, that will be nice. But, mamma, where is Dodo?”

“Mary has taken him out in his little carriage; you will see him after dinner. Run away now, and make haste.”

They skipped off, Annie leading the way.

“Here is my room,” she cried, “oh! how nicely everything is fixed! Look at this snug little bed, put up here on purpose for you. And here are three empty drawers for you to lay your things in, and fresh row of pegs. I declare mamma has thought of every thing. Let me hang up your bonnet. We can unpack our things after dinner.”

Octavia began brushing out her curls; this took the little lady a long time.

“Where is your pomatum, Annie?”

“I have no pomatum of my own. Mamma puts a little to my hair now and then, but she does not trust me to use it myself.

“Oh dear! how tiresome; I cannot make them shine at all.”

Octavia said this very pettishly, but the next moment she turned it off with a laugh, as she saw Annie look surprised.

“You have no trouble with curls as I have,” she said gayly; “I think I must do my hair as you do, all brushed down plain. I wish my curls were cut off.”

“You cannot really mean it, Octavia. I would give any thing to have such beautiful ringlets.”

“I do mean it though, when dinner is ready.”

For at this moment the bell was heard. Octavia still lingered several minutes at the glass, while Annie good naturedly waited for her.

“Don’t tell that it was my curls that kept us,” said Octavia, as they hurried down stairs, “your brother Arthur would laugh at me.”

“What shall I say, then?”

“Just say that we were unpacking our things, or that we did not hear the bell directly, or any thing.”

“Why, Octavia!” said Annie, stopping short, and looking full in her face. “It is very wicked to tell stories.”

Octavia colored violently.

“I know that as well as you do; of course I only meant it in fun. I think it very unkind in you, Annie to speak so to me.”

She was just going to cry. Annie, in great alarm, begged her not to do so; assuring her that she did not intend to be cross. So they both agreed to kiss and be friends.

“Come, children, I was afraid you would be late,” was all Mrs. Taylor said; but Annie was silent and thoughtful for some time. She wondered at Octavia being so ready to invent a falsehood. She had been taught that is was a great sin in the sight of God to tell an untruth. Though Octavia had turned it off, and pretended it was all in play Annie could not help feeling sure that she had told the stories in real earnest; why else had she told them at all? And why did she blush so?”

“A dollar for your thoughts, Annie!”

This sudden exclamation from her brother, made her start violently, she was so absorbed, and this set them all laughing.

CHAPTER II OCTAVIA'S WONDERFUL STORIES---THE EAU DE COLOGNE.

The little girls have a merry afternoon, playing with Dodo, a child of two years old, who has given himself this name, in his attempt to say Otho. They wheeled him about in his carriage; they ran races with each other; and played at hide and seek among the trees, till they were tired.

Toward evening the carriage was sent in again to Jackson, to meet the train that was coming from the opposite direction, and which was expected to bring Mr. Taylor and his daughters. The children were summoned to the house, that they might change their frocks, and make themselves neat before their arrival. They now began to unpack their clothes. Mary was helping them.

“What shall you wear, Annie? I intend to put on my blue barege,” said Octavia.

“Oh, that will be too smart,” replied Annie; “you should keep that for when we have company. You know it is made with flounces, and all trimmed off with lace; it is quite a party frock.”

“Oh my, what a lovely dress, miss!” Mary exclaimed, admiringly, as Octavia withdrew it from her box.

I don’t think it at all too fine,” said Octavia, who was now more than ever bent upon putting it on. Mary hooked it up for her, and then she put on a pair of white satin shoes, and a pink silk apron, fancifully trimmed. She looked like a splendid doll, as she prepared herself on a chair, to get a complete view of herself, and twisted herself round before the glass.

Annie, meantime, put on a clean, white crossbar frock, with a blue sash, and narrow blue ribbons in the sleeves. She looked far more becomingly dressed than her smart little friend. But Octavia’s toilet was still not quite complete; she was busy fastening in her hair an artificial rose.

“Did Clara French give you that?” exclaimed Annie. “How very funny that she should have forgotten all about it. She thought she had lost it, and we had such a hunt for it together. I do believe we took every thing out of her deck to find it.” Octavia’s back was turned, so that Annie could not see that she changed color. After fidgetting with it a little longer, she pulled it out of her hair, and fastened a string of large blue beads around her head instead.

“There, that matches with my frock,” she said, with a satisfied look: “Now I only want my handkerchief, and my Indian fan, and then I shall be ready.”

Arthur looked very quizzical when the little girls came into the parlor; but Octavia was such a recent acquaintance, and looked so very dignified, that he could not tease her. He contented himself with asking Annie to introduce him to that stranger, doubtless some lady of rank, and Octavia made him a spirited courtesy in return for his formal bow. His attention was soon called off from her, however, by the sound of carriage wheels, and directly after, Mr. Taylor and his older daughters were in the hall.

The evening passed very pleasantly. Octavia soon made friends with them all. Maria and Julia were fine girls, full of animation and good humor. They played, and sang, and laughed, and romped with Dodo. They were like birds uncaged; or, rather what they really were, two very nice, cheerful girls with none of affected airs of young ladies just released from severe studies at school. Octavia was just the child to be hugged and kissed; and she received her full share of petting at Beechwood. During a great part of the evening, she was perched on Mr. Taylor’s knee, “just as if,” as she said, “you were my own papa.”

She told him stories about India, and the number of coolies they had to wait on them, and how she once had a ride on a elephant, and about all her ventures on shipboard. She was delighted to have a grown-up gentleman listening

so attentively to her stories and in great wish to entertain him, she sometimes exaggerated a little.

“I was under the captain’s care, you know,” she said, with great gravity, “so he always took me with him to every part of the ship.”

“Up in the rigging, hey?”

“Yes, up in the rigging, and away up on top of the great high masts, and everywhere. I was a little afraid sometimes, but not much; only when the ship was tossed about very much indeed.” “Come, come, you must have dreamt that story of going up to the mast-head with the captain,” said Mr. Taylor, good-naturedly.

“No, indeed, I did not,” said the child; “he took me up to the very top of the highest mast, where there is a long, red streamer.” Octavia had never been up there in her life; but she liked to excite astonishment, and to be thought a very wonderful little girl. So she invented this anecdote; and having invented it, she told more stories to maintain it. But Mr. Taylor liked truthfulness so he quietly set her down from his knee.

“Don’t you want to hear some more stories?” asked Octavia, in astonishment.

“No I thank you; no more stories.” Mr. Taylor laid a stress on the last word, that made the color mount to Octavia’s cheeks. It was a bad sign that she did not blush to do wrong, but she only blushed when she was found out. She danced gaily away, however, and was soon amusing herself with something else.

The days of that summer vacation passed very pleasantly away. There was constantly some delightful plan to look forward to. A picnic in the woods, or a child’s party, or an expedition for black berries. Sometimes, but very seldom, there came a rainy day; but this, too, made a pleasant variety there were so many amusements in-doors.

One of their amusements was to look over each other’s pretty things. Octavia had a great variety. Many of them were curiosities which she had brought from India. She gave away two or three little things to Annie, and Annie gave her a number of her treasures in return. But Octavia was not a generous little girl. After giving these things, she was constantly talking about them, and asking to see them, and telling Annie she hoped she would take care of them. Annie felt sure Octavia begrudged having given them to her, so she resolved to slip them all back into her trunk before they returned to school, without saying a word about it.

It was Octavia’s great delight to be allowed to put in order somebody’s work-box. Maria and Julia both entrusted her with theirs; and they showed her all their trinkets, and made her a number of little presents. Soon after this they both missed a number of things that they were constantly using at their work.

♦ (Continued on page 159)

The Young Visitor

(Continued from page 158) ♦

"Where can my emery cushion be?" Maria exclaimed one day. "Did you see it, Octavia, when you arranged my work-box?"

"What was it like?" asked Octavia.

"It was made to imitate a strawberry and it had a bow of ribbon at the end."

"No, it was not there. And I do think you must have eaten it up by mistake for a real strawberry."

Maria laughed at this funny idea, and said it would have been a very tough morsel.

Julia had lost her ivory needle-book, and her pencil-case, besides some little mother-of pearl silk-winders. Where could they be! They were afraid Dodo had been meddling with their work-boxes, and that he had taken them to play with. Or could it have been Mary who had taken them? It was so dreadful to suspect any one of stealing, that they did not like to say any thing about it.

"I do wish Mary would not crib my pomatum," Julia said, one afternoon; "I really shall have to keep it locked up. The child uses more than I do myself."

I think Mary is honest as far as your pomatum pot is concerned," Maria answered laughing; "for her hair looks as rough as a young pony."

They were all going out to drink tea with a friend. Octavia was the last to come down. She had dressed herself out very fine, and was daintily holding, in the tips of her fingers, a pendant, embroidered pocket-handkerchief.

"Who has been to my eau-de-cologne bottle?" Mrs. Taylor asked, as they were seating themselves in the carriage, "Annie, you know I do not allow it."

"It was not me, indeed, mamma."

Octavia crumpled her handkerchief hastily into her pocket. Maria observed it, and she and Julia exchanged glances; they knew now how the pomatum had gone. They were sure that a child who would steal eau-de-cologne, would not scruple to help herself to other things.

Octavia who was very observing, noticed their looks, and knew that she was detected. She began to sob and cry violently, and said she wished to get out of the carriage, and to go to her room.

"What is the matter, my dear?" Mrs. Taylor asked, with some anxiety; "are you ill?"

"I'm sure I did not know, ma'am," said Octavia, in a voice broken by sobs, "that there was any very great harm in putting one drop of eau-de-cologne on my handkerchief; or I am sure I would not have touched it."

"It was you, then, who took some," said Mrs. Taylor. "Well, do not cry about it. You are quite welcome to it; only, another time, I wish you to ask me for it, instead of helping yourself."

But though Octavia was spoken to so kindly, she continued to cry, and to say nobody loved her, and that she wished to go back to India to her own mamma. Annie pitied her very much, when she heard her talk in this way, and she began to cry, too. They had a very dull ride, and it was not till they alighted at their friend's house that they recovered their spirits.

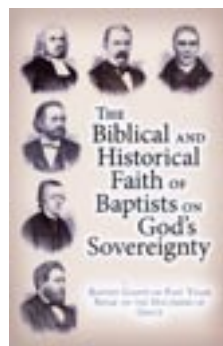
Soon however, all was forgotten, when they saw a large party of children playing in the garden, and on the green slope in front of the house. There were swings, and merry-go-rounds, and velocipedes, and all sorts of games. No one would have thought to have seen Octavia, laughing and enjoying herself with all her heart, that she was the same child who, half an hour before had been crying so bitterly.

♦ (Continued in the next issue)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Grace Baptist Church of Rural Hall, NC will be hosting their annual Bible Conference, Labor Day Weekend. There will be pastors from many states as well as two young men from Romania (Lord willing) with us this year.

The conference will begin on Friday, August 31st, with a meal provided by the church at 5:30 PM. Services will begin at 7:00 PM on Friday. Saturday at 9:30 AM with services all day and meals provided by sisters of the church. Sunday will begin at 9:30 and end around mid afternoon with lunch provided by the church.

Please pray for these men of God, singers, and all who attend the conference.

All are invited. Should you need any assistance or information concerning this conference please contact Pastor Gene Kiger at (336) 377-2154 (Church) or (336) 377-9808 (home).

Providence Baptist Church and Pastor Kenneth Long will host a Bible Conference September 29-30, 2007. Services will begin each day at 10:00 a.m.

Speakers will be Elders Joe Collins, Lonnie Bennett, Larry Lafferty, Mark Minney, Billy Holbrook, Nathan Long, Dan Gordon, and Garner Smith.

All readers in the Louisville, KY area are invited to attend.

For more information contact Pastor Long at (812) 967-1321.

Elder Tom Ross would like to announce that he still has several copies of his book *Abandoned Truth* available for purchase as well as a limited number of the workbook/study guides.

Costs are as follows: 25 books for \$375.00 which includes shipping. Or you can order individually for \$20.00 each plus shipping (1 book add \$4; 2-6 add \$8; 7-14 add \$14; 15-24 add \$20). The Workbook/Study Guide is \$7 each.

Send check or money order to Tom Ross; 6339 County Rd. 15; South Point, OH 45680.

Attention Ladies! We now have three new veil styles. We are completing the colored page that has both the current and new styles. If you would be interested in one of these please contact us by phone at (662) 282-7794 or Email at bbchurch@intop.net or mail at Berea Baptist Bookstore, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855.

We will have a special next month on our current book publications and also on some other publications as well as some new prepublication titles. Please watch next month's Banner. This will be a one time special to help us clear out storage space for more books.

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 6-1-2007 to 6-30-2007

Beginning Balance\$6,996.76
RECEIPTS:

B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	33.03
Berea B. C. , Mansfield, OH	100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	125.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay WV	50.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	50.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL	100.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
F. W. Howard, Kansas City, MO	5.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
James Swindell, Russell, KY	14.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL	25.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Leston Farrell, Des Allemands, LA	100.00
Lord's C. of Beverly Hills, Goose Creek, SC ..	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	500.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
New Testament B. C., Leivasy, WV	100.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC ..	100.00
Tom Hysell, Ironton, OH	25.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Walnut Creek B. C., Grove City, OH	50.00
Subscriptions	187.00
Postage refund	13.00
Dividing Checks	259.00
Sub Total	\$3,851.03
TOTAL	\$10,847.79

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	609.96
Postage	851.82
Supplies	442.48
Wages	2,000.00
FICA	153.01
Dividing Checks	259.00
Total Expenditures	4,316.27
.....	6,531.52
Order of checks	63.07
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,468.45

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 6-1-2007 to 6-30-2007

Beginning Balance\$10,163.99
RECEIPTS:

Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	75.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
.....	450.00
TOTAL	10,613.99

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time	450.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	450.00
.....	\$10,163.99
Interest	+3.17
.....	\$10,167.16
Less Corbin, KY des.	-651.52
ENDING BALANCE	\$9,515.64

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance\$851.52
RECEIPTS:

.....	851.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	200.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$651.52



WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans USCG (Ret.) - Norfolk, Virginia

A Petition to the Supreme Court to Restore Religious Rights



Abraham Lincoln once said, "It is the duty of all men to recognize the truth."

For years, the Supreme Court has repeatedly trampled the religious rights of Americans:

* In 2000, liberals on the Supreme Court proclaimed that voluntary prayer was banned at school---even at school graduations and sporting events.

* In 2003, liberals on the Supreme Court discovered a "Right" for homosexuals to commit sodomy, opening the door wide for homosexual "marriage."

* And in 2005, liberals on the Supreme Court voted to remove a display of the Ten Commandments from a Kentucky courthouse.

But now, President Bush has appointed two *solid conservatives*, John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court.

It's especially important that people fight to restore religious rights in America---*now that anti-religious liberals have taken control of the leadership of the U.S. Congress!* I want to make absolutely sure that these two new Supreme Court Justices don't follow the path of Justices David Souter and John Paul Stevens!

Souter and Stevens were both appointed by Republican Presidents, and touted as conservative justices, but when they joined the Supreme Court, they both almost immediately sided with the liberals on key issues!

We simply cannot allow that to happen with new Supreme Court Justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito.

The first couple of major cases are encouraging. Anti-military liberals have been forcing the ROTC off college campuses but the new Supreme Court sided with our military and put the ROTC back on campus!

Liberals have also been trying to give Al Qaeda terrorists every legal right imaginable in our courts. However, the new Supreme Court stood up for the security of Americans and ruled that these terrorists should not be given any special rights!

Liberals on the judiciary committee tried to convince John Roberts and Samuel Alito that they must accept "*stare decisis*." That's lawyer talk for: "*We demand that you accept all of the liberal court rulings that were made before you, when liberals had total control of the Supreme Court.*"

These same liberals are in charge of Congress, and are sure to pressure justices Roberts and Alito to intimidate the Supreme Court into doing what the liberals want!

You and I need to let new Supreme Court Justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito know "we the people" request that they *restore our religious rights*, protected by

the first amendment to the constitution, no matter what the liberals in congress say!

For years, left wing radicals have waged a ceaseless campaign of attacks against the traditional Judeo-Christian values you and I hold dear. These radicals have used the Supreme Court to impose *their will*---trampling over the will and desires of the American people---for years. Now these same radicals have the *leadership in congress* to do their bidding.

These liberals know that Justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito want to uphold traditional constitutional values. That's why these liberals are pulling out all the stops to pressure Justices Roberts and Alito---to *prevent* the restoration of religious rights in America.

The Supreme Court is the most powerful branch of the Federal Government because it has the last word on every major controversy. We can trace its profound influence both on immorality and on the declining quality of public education, as follows:

* In 1947, the Supreme Court issued its famous ruling on separation of church and state; a decision not supported by the constitution which, in the first amendment, merely prohibits a *state* religion.

* In 1962, the court ruled against Bible reading in school.

* In 1977, the court recognized atheism as a religion.

* In 1980, the court prohibited the posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools.

* In 1986, the court recognized secular humanism as a religion.

As for the Supreme Court, we can only pray for a change in membership. It is unlikely that current members will have a change of heart.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John

Roberts and Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito---will they have a change of heart?

"How others treat me is their path, how I react, is mine." ---Anonymous

(Excerpts are from previous writings of Captain Evans.)

Hillary Has An Ingenious Strategy to Win Over the White House

Brace yourself for the most ferocious Presidential election in modern memory.

"Human Events," a conservative newspaper, published weekly, has featured a book "The Extreme Makeover of Hillary (Rodham) Clinton," author Bay Buchanan. Some excerpts are included in this article.

What Bay Buchanan has done is expose the inner workings of Hillary's "Extreme Makeover" campaign, perhaps the most cynical, cold-blooded deception of American voters in the history of Presidential elections!

Bay Buchanan has uncovered the undeniable, bedrock truth about Hillary Clinton, which is. . . She will not be elected President if the voters know the truth about who she REALLY is. . .and what she REALLY believes, and Hillary and her strategists know this!

Indeed, by the time Hillary, the biggest campaign staff ever amassed in U.S. election history is finished, their "product" will be kinder, more thoughtful, a person of faith, a politician with beliefs and values that reflect those of middle America, and a leader tough enough to be the Nation's Commander-in-Chief.

Imagine! The long-time, anti-war, anti-military Hillary Clinton as "The Best Choice to Defend the American Homeland!"

As soon as this book hits the bestseller list, as it assuredly will, Bay Buchanan knows she will be attacked personally and savagely in every print and TV news outlet by wave after wave of Clinton's shock troops.

But she wrote the book anyway, and having just finished reading it, I can promise you that you have never read a more enthralling (and alarming) book about top-level, high stakes, political scheming in your life!

In *The Extreme Makeover of Hillary Rodham Clinton*, Bay Buchanan reveals:

* The name of the greatest historical leader Bill Clinton believes Hillary must "transform herself into" in order to be elected President.

* How Hillary is using easily duped Republican leaders to help her change her icy, hard-left image (the list includes Lott, Graham, Gingrich, and even one GOP superstar who could run against Hillary for President!).

* Why the Clintons truly fear Barack Obama and how they will try to "neutralize" his charm and charisma (when they're finished with him, the "boy-wonder" from Illinois will smile and go away quietly!).

* Who told Hillary she would become "the most important woman in human history," as the first woman President, political and psychological pressures on Hillary as Commander-in-Chief could plunge the world into disaster.

* How Hillary will mold her stance on abortion to satisfy the feminist sisterhood and fool religious conservatives.

* A preview of life in America under "President Hillary Clinton." . . .massive fines for failing to sign up for socialized medicine, jail terms for doctors who treat patients privately.

* It is truly a breathtaking strategy---given the fact that Hillary Clinton's public recognition factor is virtually 100%, as is voter awareness of her lifetime of left-wing activism, radical feminism and the countless scandals in which she and her husband have been involved in both Arkansas and Washington.

Faced with the reality that Hillary cannot win the Presidency if she runs as *herself*, the Clintons have amassed the biggest campaign staff in U.S. history to mastermind the "makeover of all makeovers" as told by Bay Buchanan in this all-too-real political potboiler that will trigger a storm of controversy. Packed cover to cover with never before published revelations, including the most ambitious "triangulation" strategy the Clintons have ever planned.

Hillary Clinton's character is not a pretty sight. In stride she can lie, cheat, threaten, obstruct justice, malign reputations, and destroy the lives of innocent people. Driven by ambition, arrogance, greed, elitism, power, and entitlement, Hillary's road to the top has been an ugly one. Reputations and lives of real people have been left in the dirt along the way.

But it has worked for Hillary. She made it to the top---and if her devious strategy works---may do so again.

"We can't take any credit for our talents, it's how we use them that counts." ---Madeleine L'Engle

(Excerpts are from a book review by Tom Winter, editor "Human Events," titled "The Extreme Makeover of Hillary Rodham Clinton," and published by Regnery Publishing, Inc.)

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