

What Does Revival Look Like?

By Raymond Bennett
 of Ithaca, New York

Psalms 85:6, "Wilt thou not revive us again."

Matthew 3:8, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

There are many of us praying for revival. There are also many preachers, well known, itinerate, influential preachers, who make it their business to "preach" revival. We have made revival a frequent subject in these devotions.

But what does revival look like? How will we know that God has answered our prayers?

The Psalmist cried, "Wilt thou not revive us again." The word "again" indicates that there had been revivals in the past. Most of the preachers who I know that are preaching on revival look back to either the 1904 Welch revival or the Hebridean Revival in 1949-53. These two revivals in "our" time can give us a quick summary of what revival looks

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Religion in Reverse

By Milburn Cockrell
 (1941 - 2002)

Depraved man has altered and changed the religion of the New Testament until it no longer resembles the religion of Jesus Christ. Today fashionable religion is every thing but God's truth. The modern religionist with all his ecclesiastical machinery and all his social graces has corrupted and perverted the simple truths of the gospel. He has twisted and turned the Scriptures until religion has been made to fit into his own scheme of things.

With all his gainsaying of the Word, he has produced a religion which the carnal mind can accept and the wisdom of the world approve. He has removed the embarrassment of gospel truth and caused the offense of the cross to cease. The twentieth century religion-monger has turned the truth of God's Word backward! He cannot tolerate the plain truth in any other position. The modern church-goer is happy when he denies

what the Bible teaches and teaches what it denies.

GIVE YOUR HEART TO JESUS

One good example of religion in reverse is the Arminian's plea for the lost sinner to give his heart to Jesus. This is the exact opposite of what the Bible teaches. Yet, far and wide, Sunday after Sunday, from pulpits throughout the length and breadth of the land, the impassioned plea goes out: "Just give your heart to Jesus, if you want to be saved and live in Heaven one day." Those who do this never give any Scripture which calls upon the sinner to do this. The reason being there is none to give. The Bible teaches the reverse.

In an attempt to justify their perversion of the Word, they quote Proverbs 23:26 which says: "My son, give me thine heart." But this text is addressed to the saved. Notice the words, "My son." No one is a son of God unless he has been born again. This Scripture teaches that a saved person is

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Christ Crucified

By Paul Stepp
 of Indore, West Virginia

My text is found in I Corinthians 1:23-24, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." You know it is important to notice in our text verses that the focus of Paul and his preaching was not only Christ, but Christ "crucified." Now I know that even just to proclaim the Name of Christ (the Name which is above all names) is glorious and wonderful in and of itself. However, what Paul understood and what we should understand as well, is that you cannot properly proclaim Christ, without proclaiming "Christ crucified."

I want us all to think about "Christ crucified." And, in the course of this message, I want to point out man's four responses to Christ crucified as they are found in our text verses.

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The Redeemer's Return

By A. W. Pink
 (1886 - 1952)

The Redeemer's Return! Here is a theme which in this day is regarded by many well-meaning people as an ideal of visionaries or as the pet hobby of certain cranks. So grievously has the study of Prophecy been ignored, so little place is given in the modern pulpit to the exposition of eschatology, and so generally is the daily reading of the Bible neglected by those in the pew, that it is an easy matter to persuade the average church-goer that the subject of the Second Coming of Christ is impractical and one that had better be left alone. Moreover, this subject has suffered so grievously at the hands of those who are the enemies of the Cross, that many Christians have been prejudiced against it. Satan has not been slow to avail himself of the wild

and unscriptural teaching of such men as Irving and Joseph Smith, and more recently, Dowie and Pastor (?) Russell; nay, he has employed them to cast reproach on those who do seek to search and interpret the Prophetic Scriptures. Yet, notwithstanding, it is the imperative duty of every believer to seriously and prayerfully examine the Scriptures for himself and see what the Word of God has to say about Coming Events. In that Word we are plainly warned that in the "last days" (of this age) there should arise those who ridicule and mock at the very doctrine of which we are now speaking (see II Pet. 3:3, 4). Therefore we need not be surprised if we hear and read of those who seek to cast reproach upon this blessed theme; instead, as the Dispensation draws to a close, we should expect just what we now hear and see on

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The Living Redeemer

By Christmas Evans
 (1766 - 1838)

"Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:23-27).

It is the common opinion of learned divines, that Job was an ancient prince in some part of Arabia, known in his day by the name of Uz. His three friends also--"Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite"--were neighboring princes. In their visit

of condolence, they were accompanied by Elihu, who seems to have been a young man of extraordinary intelligence and virtue. The occasion of this visit was the apparent judgments of God upon the patriarch. They held a long controversy with him, in which they insisted his unparalleled calamities and sufferings proved him the chief of hypocrites. Job as strenuously maintained his innocence and integrity, and argued that his providential afflictions were intended only for the proof and the improvement of his piety; and that when this purpose should be accomplished, he would come forth as gold purified from the furnace. God, answering out of the whirlwind, settled the dispute, deciding in favor of his servant Job; his three friends were required to offer sacrifice for their faults, and Job must pray for their forgiveness.

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"The most powerful sermon in the world can make nothing more than a natural impression; but when God works through it, the feeblest word makes a supernatural impression. Many a poor sermon has been the means by which God hath converted a soul." Robert M. McCheyne

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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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to give his love and affection to God.

It is foolish to believe a sinner can give God his wicked heart in exchange for salvation and eternal life. The Bible says: **"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool"** (Prov. 28:26). The unsaved man cannot know God: **"Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him"** (Matt. 11:27). Therefore, he must be given a heart to know God: **"And I will give them an heart to know me"** (Jer. 24:7).

It is God Who gives the sinner a new heart: **"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"** (Ezek. 36:26). The unrenewed man cannot open his heart and let Jesus come in: **"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life"** (John 5:40). Instead, the Lord opens the alien sinner's heart. Of Lydia in Acts 16:14 it is written: **"Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."**

The modern revivalist has New Testament truth in reverse. It is not the sinner who gives his heart to the Lord, but the Lord Who gives the sinner a new heart. He has the cart before the horse, or perhaps I should say the cart without a horse.

CHOOSE CHRIST

The Arminian preacher cries out from his pulpit: "Choose Christ as your Savior today before it is too late." He implies in this statement that the alien sinner has the capacity to choose Christ at any moment apart from the help of sovereign grace. That men are obligated to choose Christ as Savior I firmly believe. But that the natural man has the power to choose Christ apart from efficacious grace I firmly deny.

The unrenewed man is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7). He cannot understand or seek God. Romans 3:11 declares: **"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."**

Never do you hear the modern minister read and explain John 15:16. In this verse Christ says: **"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."** This is just the reverse of what modern preachers say. Other Scripture makes it plain that the sinner does choose Christ by efficacious grace, but Christ's choice is prior to the sinner's choice, and it is Christ's choice that directs and determines the sinner's choice.

Of all those chosen to grace and glory it may be said: "They have not chosen Christ, but He has chosen them." Ephesians 1:4 reads: **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world."** This is the

truth of God's Word though hated by the religious world. We did not choose Him; He chose us. The religion-monger of our day does not bother with Scriptures like John 15:16 and Ephesians 1:4.

Such Scriptures do not draw a great crowd, or put your name in the newspapers across the country, or bring in large offerings. And he is more interested in crowds, headlines, and money than Bible doctrines.

CHRIST OFFERED TO THE SINNER

Sunday after Sunday, service after service, Christ is offered to the sinner for his approval or disapproval. The precious Lord Jesus is offered on the bargain counter of the human will. But my Savior is not some cheap commodity offered on the Sunday morning bargain counter for the price of "I will." Such preaching is attempting to crucify Christ afresh and to put Him to open shame.

The Bible says on this matter: **"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"** (Heb. 9:14)? Hebrews 9:28 read: **"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."** My Savior was once offered on the tree of the cross to God. We must never degrade our Lord to the point of making merchandise of Him.

RECEIVE CHRIST

Almost daily the soul winner tells the lost sinner: "Receive Christ into your heart." It seems to matter little to the Arminian if the Bible says the very opposite. I Corinthians 2:14 declares: **"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."**

How can the sinner be expected to receive that which is foolishness unto him? If he cannot know Christ, how can he receive Christ? So long as he sees no beauty in Christ, he will be void of any desire to receive Him as Savior. Until the eyes of his understanding are opened by the Spirit of God, he cannot receive Christ.

ACCEPT CHRIST

Another common expression is: "Accept Christ as your Savior." Men can and do accept Christ as personal Savior by the Lord working in them both to will and to do His good pleasure. But strictly speaking, it is not we who have accepted Him, but He Who has accepted us. **"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved"** (Eph. 1:6).

If He had not accepted us as His people in eternity past, we would never have accepted Him as our Savior in time. The question is not whether God is pleasing and acceptable to us, but whether we are accepted by Him. We are not the judges

of God; God is our judge.

GOD HAS DONE ALL HE CAN DO

The Arminian evangelist tells his hearers: "God has done all He can do. The rest is up to you. God has exhausted His power and used up His wisdom. It is in your hands to add the finishing touch. Such a preacher points the sinner to himself rather than the Savior. He tells the sinner that man is greater than God. Any intelligent person would know if God cannot save a man unless man gives permission, then neither could God send the sinner to Hell without his permission.

Such a little god may suit such a preacher. It is not the God of the Bible they are talking about. It is a humanly invented god of their own imagination. The god of the Arminian is not dead like the modern religious liberal's god is, but the Arminian ought to send his god a get well card. The Arminian would make God a servant to man. The Bible makes man a servant to God.

The Bible knows nothing about an unable God. Instead it says: **"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"** (Eph. 3:20). To ascribe any amount of inability to the omnipotent One is the height of folly and the depth of ignorance. The Almighty is able to do anything He chooses to do. If Omnipotence cannot do something for the lost sinner, then puny man certainly cannot do anything for himself.

If God is as weak as some claim, He may not be able to raise the bodies of the saints from the grave. He may not be able to judge the unsaved and cast them to Hell. He may not be able to preserve the church and the Bible as He has promised. I am glad that I do not believe in such a little god as some, for such a little god is no god at all.

I have a book in my study at home which says that God will weep when lost sinners are turned into Hell. This Arminian says angels and the redeemed of God will weep. I assume he means that God will weep because Hell is a monument to the inability of God to save sinners.

This is a good example of the modern perversion of God's Word. Instead of the Savior weeping over lost souls at the last judgment, the Bible says He will laugh at them. Christ said in Proverbs 1:26: **"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."** The saints present at this judgment will not be crying either. The psalmist said of the destruction of the wicked: **"The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him"** (Ps. 52:6).

GOD NEEDS OUR MONEY

One of the favorite sayings in our generation is "God needs your money." These people make it sound like God is

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bankrupt. They say if we do not rescue Him, He will surely go under and be compelled to take bankruptcy. They make people believe that God is destitute. How far removed this is from the truth.

While it is a Christian obligation to give your tithes and offerings to the local church, we must never do so with the belief that God actually needs our money. Paul said: **“Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things”** (Acts 17:25). The Lord says in Psalms 50:10-12: **“For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.”**

We are to honor the Lord with our substance as the Scripture commands. Not because He needs it, but because we love Him and He commands us to do so. All we have we received from Him. If He is able to provide for us, then surely He is capable of taking care of Himself without our help.

I often wonder if some who are always begging for money to oil the denominational machinery do not have a covetous spirit. I have a suspicion they may be wanting more money for themselves, not God and His cause. Isaiah said: **“Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter”** (Isa. 56:11).

BE BAPTIZED AND BE SAVED

The water Salvationist constantly preaches: “Without water baptism no man can be saved.” Those who teach this make water the door to Heaven. They make the minister who baptizes a person that persons Savior. This gives water the glory which belongs only to Jesus Christ.

Again religious people have reversed God’s Word. Baptism is not essential to salvation, but salvation is essential to baptism. The whole matter hinges upon whether the person being baptized is righteous or unrighteous. Baptismal regenerationists hold that the one being baptized is unrighteous. But they ignore that for the sinner to repent, believe, and confess Christ as the Son of God are righteous acts. The Bible says: **“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him”** (I John 2:29). In the light of this Scripture you can see the person who is being baptized is already righteous.

They often quote Romans 6:4 to prove their theory: **“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that**

like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

But observe that the one being baptized is buried with Christ, not in order to find Christ and His blood in the water. Baptism is called a burial here, and anyone knows you bury people who are dead in the physical realm of life. Likewise, we are to bury in baptism those who are already dead to sin (Rom. 6:11). Baptismal regenerationists bury people to kill them. As Bible-believing Baptists we bury people dead to sin with Christ in baptism as Paul said in Romans 6:4.

Water Salvationists baptize one dead in sins, and even after baptism, he has no life according to them. They say he has life in prospect offered on his obedience. This is not what Paul says in Romans 6:4. He says the baptized **“walk in newness of life.”** He does not say they find spiritual life in baptism. But if as some teach, the baptized man has life only in prospect, then it would be impossible to walk in newness of life. They simply do not possess the new life to walk in. This belief of theirs is religion in reverse.

CALL UPON GOD

Those who have a mourner’s bench in their church tell sinners to “Call upon the Lord in prayer and be saved.” This belief in salvation by prayer originated in modern revivalism, not the Scriptures. The mourner’s bench came from the lumber yard, not God and the Bible. Men are saved by repentance and faith, not praying through.

Romans 10:13 is their proof text. It reads: **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”** Then never go on to read verse 14 which says: **“How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?”** When you compare Scripture with Scripture, you can see the one who calls upon God believes in Him as Savior. What a difference between what men say and what the Bible really says!

The Bible teaches we are saved by God’s calling upon us, rather than our calling upon God. **“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began”** (II Tim. 1:9). If Christ had not called us effectually by the gospel and Spirit, we would have never called upon Him in prayer.

CONCLUSION

The truth turned backwards is no truth at all. It is to call evil good. Proverbs 19:3 says: **“The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord.”** The modern religion-monger reverses the truth of the Bible, but I say let God be true and every man a liar.

Truth is too precious to be reversed or denied. We need the simple, pure, unaltered Word of God, just as it springs

forth from the Divine Spirit. The truth is all that can make us free from the errors of men. **“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:32).

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass” (Ps. 37:7).



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every side.

The Redeemer’s Return! Is there anything that can be compared with this momentous and stupendous prospect? Excepting the Cross of Calvary, the greatest event of all in the past history of the world was the Advent of God’s Son to our earth. The Divine Incarnation was the theme of Old Testament prophecy. The very first promise ever given to fallen man was that the woman’s Seed should come and bruise the Serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). When the Divine revelation was committed to writing, numerous passages recorded the promised descent of God’s Son to this earth. The prophets of Israel made known the fact that the Coming One was to be of the stock of Abraham and a lineal descendant of David, and thus for fifteen centuries the Hope of Israel was the Messianic Hope. And, when the fullness of time was come God sent forth His Son born of a woman.

It is impossible for us to fully estimate the tremendous importance of the first Advent of Christ to this earth, The Divine Incarnation is without a parallel in the annals of the human race. Heaven itself was stirred at the miraculous birth of the God-Man. Unto the angels was entrusted the honourous commission of announcing the birth of the Saviour. Heathendom was affected, the good news being conveyed to Chaldea by means of a mysterious “star” which heralded the birth of the King of the Jews. The Coming of Christ to this world changed its chronology, for all civilized time is now by common consent dated from the Bethlehem manger. As the result of the first Advent a new era was inaugurated, a new prospect was set before the sons of men, the door of mercy was flung wide open, and command was given that the glad tidings should be made known to every creature.

But wondrous and blessed as was the first Advent of our Lord in many respects, His Second Coming will be even more momentous. At His first appearing He was here in weakness and humiliation, but at His second He shall come in power and glory. When He was here before He was **“despised and rejected of men,”** but when He comes back again every knee shall bow before Him and every tongue

confess His Lordship. When He was here before He paid tribute to Caesar, but when He returns He shall reign as King of Kings and Lord of lords. When He was here before His personal ministry was confined to the land of Palestine, but when He returns **“the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”** (Hab. 2:14). Who can comprehend or enumerate the blessings which shall attend the Return of our Redeemer! Then will it be that the **“dead in Christ”** shall be raised from their graves and the living saints **“changed,”** so that every believer will then be **“conformed to the image of God’s Son.”** Then it will be that the Lord’s servants will be rewarded for their labors and those that were despised and hated by the world shall be recognized and honored by the Christ of God. Then it will be that Israel shall repent of their sins, receive Christ as their Messiah and Saviour, and be restored to the Holy Land. Then will the promise made to the patriarchs be literally and completely fulfilled. Then it will be that that old Serpent the Devil shall be removed from these scenes where he has wrought such havoc and produced such misery, to be chained for a thousand years in the Bottomless Pit. Then it will be that a groaning Creation shall be delivered from its present bondage, when the Curse which now rests upon all Nature shall be removed, and when the wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose (Is. 35:1). And, best of all, then it shall be that Christ Himself shall enter into His blood-brought inheritance, when He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Therefore, ought not such a subject, which presents such a glorious prospect, gladden our hearts and secure our most diligent attention!

God does not desire His dear people to remain in ignorance of His future purposes concerning them, concerning His Son, and concerning this earth. Said the apostle as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, **“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts”** (II Pet. 1:19). If then we give diligent heed to the Prophetic Word, if we will prayerfully study that which God has been pleased to reveal unto us concerning things to come, and if we will believe in our hearts all that the prophets have spoken, then shall we be like the Thessalonians of whom it could be said - **“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with**

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child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thess. 5:1-6).

The Redeemer's Return! This was the great hope of the early Christians. In the first century of the Christian era it was the normal and regular thing to find that the expectation of the returning Saviour filled the vision and hearts of His followers. The apostles themselves taught their converts to look for the appearing of Christ. Writing to the Thessalonian saints the apostle Paul reminded them how they had **“turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven”** (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). Writing to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, the apostle James bade them be patient and stablish their hearts, basing his exhortation on the fact that **“The coming of the Lord draweth nigh”** (Jas. 5:8). Writing to **“the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia who were in heaviness through manifold temptations,”** the apostle Peter expressed the wish that the trial of their faith **“might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ”** (1 Pet. 1:7). Writing to his **“little children”** (a term of endearment) the apostle John lovingly exhorted them to abide in Christ so that when He should appear they might have confidence and **“not be ashamed before Him at His coming”** (1 John 2:28). Writing of the apostasy which was to come, the apostle Jude quoted the prophecy of Enoch, who declared, **“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all”** (Jude 1:14, 15). Thus we find that it was the uniform practice of the apostles to hold up a returning Saviour before the children of God.

Right at the close of the first century A. D. when the time had come for the Sacred Canon to be completed, our Lord Himself sent His angel to communicate a special message to each of the seven Churches which were in Asia, and in five of them, namely, in the Epistles addressed to the Churches in Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia (see Rev. 2:5, 16, 25; 3:3, 11). Christ makes distinct reference to His imminent appearing, while His last words to His loved disciple were, **“Surely I come quickly”** (Rev. 22:20).

We have thus shown that this Age began with a ringing testimony to the truth of our Lord's Return. Each of the apostles, of whose writings we have any

inspired record, taught their converts to look for their Saviour's appearing. Alas! that this testimony was not maintained. Alas! that this Blessed Hope should ever have become dim. Alas! that it should, for more than a thousand years, have been almost totally lost to the Lord's people. Yet so it was. The immediate successors of the apostles turned their attention to other things: as it was with the Pharisees in the days of our Lord, so these tithed anise and mint but **“omitted the weightier matters.”** Instead of expounding the Prophetic Scriptures and setting before the Church its one great Hope, the early “Church Fathers,” for the most part, spent their time in wrangling among themselves. Even before the apostles themselves had left the earth, false teachers crept in and began to devour the flock, and within three centuries the whole professing Church had become Paganized. Then followed the Dark Ages - aptly named, for the lamp of Prophecy had ceased to shine and the prospect of the speedy return of the Morning Star had completely disappeared. As our Lord Himself had foretold, the virgins all slumbered and slept: no longer were His people looking for the Coming of the Bridegroom (No doubt the parable of the Bridegroom in Matthew 25 refers primarily to the Jewish remnant in the tribulation period as its opening word **“Then”** indicates, but, like all prophecy, this has a double fulfillment and unquestionably applies to the Christian profession).

We need not remind our readers it was during this period known as the Dark Ages that the Roman Catholic Church sprang into prominence and the power, holding sway over all Europe and binding burdens on the souls of men which were grievous to be borne. The Bible was withheld from the laity and the vain traditions of men were substituted for the living Oracles of God. Instead of proclaiming salvation by the finished work of Christ, the multitudes were taught that heaven could only be obtained by penance, legal works, priestly mediation, and purgatorial fires. Instead of teaching her people that the hope of the saints was the appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Rome taught that the hope of humanity lay in the subjugation of the entire world

to the imperial rule of the Pope. Instead of exhorting believers to **“look up”** (Luke 21:28), the Roman Pontiff sought to dazzle the eyes of his devotees with the gorgeous ceremonialism of an earthly ritual.

After a thousand years of spiritual darkness the Sun of Righteousness shone forth over Europe with healing in His beams. During the sixteenth century God raised up a number of mighty men who, by the power of His Spirit, were delivered from the iron shackles of the Papacy and made to rejoice in the freedom into which, the Lord Jesus brings His people. Under God, these men brought about what is known as the great Reformation. During this Reformation the Holy Scriptures were restored to the people and given to them in their own native tongues. The glorious doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, was sounded forth throughout Germany, Switzerland, Italy and the British Isles, and multitudes were **“added unto the Lord.”** Many precious truths, which for long centuries had lain buried beneath the rubbish heap of human traditions, were recovered and given out to the masses. But the Reformation, glorious as it was, witnessed only a partial recovery of long lost truths. The Hope of the Church was not yet restored! The prospect of a soon returning Redeemer was not yet set before God's people again. Three more centuries passed by before the third part of our Lord's prophecy in the Parable of the Virgins received its fulfillment. It was not until the nineteenth century that the midnight cry arose **“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him”** (Matt. 25:6). Then it was that God raised up another band of witnesses, sent forth by Him to herald the approach of His Son. The result has been that an ever increasing number of the saints have given studious attention to the prophetic portions of the Word, until, to-day, in every section of Christendom, there are companies of believers who are eagerly waiting for the Shout of the Lord which shall call them away from this earth to be for ever with Him. It is our humble desire to unite with these witnesses of God in testifying that the Coming of the Lord **“draweth nigh.”** The Signs of the times speak plainly to those who have ears to hear, and singly and collectively bear

witness to the fact that this Dispensation of Grace is now almost ended. The prophecies of the New Testament show clearly that we are living in the **“last days”** of this Age, and by the help of the Spirit of Truth we would herein call attention to those Scriptures which make known to us the stupendous events which shall surely and shortly come to pass.



The Living Redeemer

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Then the wheel of fortune turned in his favor, and he was restored to his former prosperity.

Job and his friends evidently had a clear understanding of the evil of sin, the wickedness of hypocrisy, the importance of the fear of God, and the doctrine of an all wise superintending providence; and knew how to approach Jehovah through sacrifice, in anticipation of the promised Messiah.

We shall offer a few general remarks on Job's faith in a living Redeemer, as expressed in our text.

I. Our minds are struck with wonder and pleasure, in beholding the patriarchs and prophets of ancient times, moved by the Spirit of God, searching diligently for the person and grace of the Messiah; like miners, opening an entrance to a precious treasure, which is to redeem them and their brethren from bondage.

Job has no reference here to any temporal deliverer, nor to any other than the Messiah Himself. He evidently saw what he needed, when he was speaking of the Daysman, the Umpire, one that might argue and settle the case between him and his Maker, one that might lay his hand alike on God and man. With the eye of faith, he saw the Messiah, setting one foot on the continent of eternity, and the other on the sea of human misery, and lifting up his hand and saying--- “Time and eternity are mine! I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour!” Elihu also speaks of the same person, under the name of **“a messenger,” “an interpreter,” “one of a thousand,”** that might commune with both God and man, concerning atonement, and justifying righteousness, and deliverance from the pit of eternal destruction.

The promise of a Redeemer descended from Eden like a precious ark, containing, for all mankind, the bread of life, and the unsearchable riches of Divine grace. It was conveyed from the house of Adam to the house of Seth, from the house of Seth to the house of Noah, from the house of Noah to the house of Abraham, and thence down through successive generations to the time of Messiah's advent. The patriarchs, before their departure, received from this ark invaluable spiritual blessings,

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Tune in to the

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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).



Have You Seen God Today?

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. First of all let me apologize for the time I've missed getting this column in. College finals, work, and a broken typewriter have all contributed to my tardiness.

Well, I'm one step closer to starting the Culinary Arts program at the Eastham Unit. I was called into the office the other day and shown a fax stating I'm approved and my class starts August 25th.

I'll probably be transferred around the beginning of August, and, boy, am I anxious to get started!

Also, my dear friend and brother, Bro. Jeff, has enrolled me in the Stratford Career Institute's Cooking and Catering correspondence course, which is very good. It is a lot more in-depth than I had imagined it would be.

A friend of mine asked me how one learns to cook through the mail. Well, back in the "Good Ole Days," you couldn't, you had to learn through two and three year apprenticeships and work your way up through the ranks of the kitchen. However, today every technique, method, and recipe known to man is written down somewhere. One chef/author I've read recently put it this way:

"As a teacher, I always tell students, especially the ones who want to become chefs, to read, read, read. There is very little I've learned in my years as a cook that isn't written down somewhere. And if it wasn't written down before, it's written down now in this book." ---Chef James Peterson in *Cooking*, Ten Speed Press, 2007.

Reading and correspondence courses won't make me a great cook, but they will help lay a solid foundation of basic knowledge from which I can grow into one. A cook never stops learning.

My job on the "Cook's Floor" (my work area in the kitchen) helps solidify the basic principles I'm learning through the Stratford course. And my co-worker and the kitchen officers are exhibiting more and more confidence in my cooking ability, which in turn makes me want to continue improving my skills.

This semester of college is going well, too. Algebra still has me scratching my head but the Intro To Business class is a

lot of fun, not to mention informative.

Please keep me in your thoughts and prayers, dear reader, as I continue to expand my horizon and struggle through this thing called prison.

Now to my thoughts this month: There is a song on Country radio---yeah, I know, not usually a bastian of virtuous music, but this song will make you stop and think a minute.

The name of the song is, "I Saw God Today," and I think it's by George Strait (but I'm not sure). Anyway, it starts off with a guy going for a break from sitting with his wife all day in a hospital room. On his way to the corner coffee shop he spots a flower growing up through the sidewalk and says that God put it there just for him to see among the concrete and steel to show that even in the tough times, God is still there. The man in the song saw God in the flower.

The singer goes on to describe several more examples of seeing God in the things around him: in the glow of the faces of a couple he passes on the sidewalk who it's obvious she's just starting to show, in the sunset, and in his brand new baby girl (that's why his wife was in the hospital).

One of the most incriminating lines in the song for me is: "I go to church, I read the Book, and I know He's here but I just don't look as often as I should, oh, I know I should."

Yeah, I know I should, but sometimes I get caught up in the daily grind of prison life, working in the kitchen, studying to be a chef, going to college and I'm moving too fast to see God on a daily basis. It's easy to take God for granted. Like my window, for example, I was in a concrete box for six years without a window and now I have one at the foot of my bunk and I hardly even look out of it for more than a few seconds a day. But when I do God is right there, in the green grass that needs to be cut, in the chirping birds who sing and play just a few feet away, in the baby blue sky and puffy white clouds, and here lately, in the angry black storm clouds and replenishing rain.

Have you seen God today, dear reader? As the song says, "His fingerprints are everywhere if [we] just slowed down enough to stare." This song has convicted me and caused me to take time daily to see God in all the little things He has placed in my life. I've begun to see God in the attitudes of the guards who

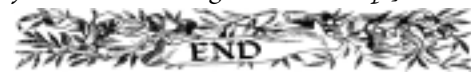
work on my unit, one of which reads this column on a regular basis and seeks me out to find out what's wrong when I miss a month. (You know who you are, and your encouragement is greatly appreciated.) I also see God in some of my fellow prisoners; the Lord has put some pretty amazing people in my life---in both grey and white. Not to mention the ones on the outside who continue to encourage and support me even though they have busy lives, too.

Take the time to stop and seek out God and you will see Him all around you, but you have to take the time to look. And when you do, the joy and peace that fills your heart will be overflowing.

Until next time, open your eyes---God is right there. Please continue to pray for me, dear reader, and may the Lord bless you abundantly.

May the grace of God be upon all those who love the Lord sincerely.

[Author's note: Due to work and school commitments, I will be going to a bi-monthly schedule with this column. Thank you for your understanding and readership.]



The Living Redeemer

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and a passport to the everlasting city; but the ark itself they left behind for the benefit of their posterity, who found therein the balm of life, and died in the faith of a Saviour to come, according to the promise.

Job's living Redeemer is none other than the promised **"Seed,"** that should "bruise the serpent's head"---Jacob's **"Lion,"** **"stooping down"** to the **"new tomb hewn out of a rock,"** aiming at the King of Terrors, and on the third morning leaping and "rushing upon the prey," and becoming the plague of death, and the destruction of the grave---the **"Jehovah-jireh"** of Abraham---the **"I Am,"** Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush---the **"Wonderful,"** the **"Counsellor,"** the "Child-born," and **"the Everlasting Father,"** predicted by Isaiah---Jeremiah's "Jehovah our Righteousness"---the **"Branch"** and **"Fountain"** of Zachariah---the **"Shiloh,"** to whom should be **"the gathering of the people"**---the **"Governor,"** Who should "come out of Bethlehem"---Malachi's "Son of Righteousness"---Paul's "Captain of our Salvation," **"bringing many sons to glory,"** opening a tunnel under the river of His own sufferings, and the seas of human guilt and woe, through which His redeemed might go home to their Father's house---Peter's **"Prince of Life,"** "slain and hung on a tree"---John's **"Word,"** that "was in the beginning with God, and was God," but "was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."

II. The word here rendered Redeemer;

is Goel in the original; and in the book of Ruth, is translated kinsman, one who has a right to redeem. The Redeemer is our near kinsman; for **"he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."**

An individual in this country returned from India so rich that he conferred upon all his relatives an independent fortune. To us also a brother was born against the day of adversity, Who is able to enrich us all with eternal riches. You know not what hardships your brother endured in the East, while gathering the wealth you now enjoy; but we know that our brother, "though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich."

When Naomi returned from the land of Moab, Elimelech, her husband, was dead, and the inheritance greatly involved in debt. According to the law of the tribes, the nearest kinsman of the deceased debtor was obliged to marry the widow, and redeem the inheritance, so as to retain it in the same tribe. The purchaser was sought in the land of Bethlehem. One was found, sufficiently rich, but unwilling. He preferred to take off his own shoes, before the elders, at the gate of the city, rather than stand in the shoes of his deceased brother. It was done, however, by another, of the name of Boaz. But who will stand in the place of sinners, who have forfeited all claim to the heavenly inheritance, and deserve eternal damnation? Let Heaven and earth meet in council, and see who is able and willing to "redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him." Each replies---**"There is no such person here."** All the angels around the throne answer---"There is none in the celestial city." Search the streets of Jerusalem; go to the garden of Gethsemane; inquire on the hill of Calvary. Who is willing to die for sinners today? There is the tree. There is the executioner, with hammer and nails. Who will offer himself a sacrifice there, for the redemption of man? None but Jesus. None but Jesus was able; none but Jesus was willing. **"Here am I,"** said He; if **"ye seek me, let these go their way."** And without the gates of Jerusalem, He honored the law, spoiled principalities, and redeemed His people. He suffered the curse in the sinner's stead, and swallowed up all its plagues in Himself. As your representative, He endured all the agony and ignominy you justly deserved." And when you by faith lay hold of His atonement, you shall be made the righteousness of God in Him---shall be dealt with, not according to your deserts, but according to His merit and His mercy. He was humbled that you might be exalted, impoverished that you might be enriched, bound that ye might be released, punished that you might be spared, condemned that you might be

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acquitted, wounded that you might be healed, cursed that you might be blessed, and slain that you might live for ever.

III. Job's faith anticipated a Living Redeemer. **"I know that my Redeemer liveth"**---is the Living One---He that has life, underived and independent, in Himself---the agent and source of all life in the universe, Who will at last quicken the dead.

The first woman was called Eve---that is, Life---because she was the mother of all living---the mother of Him Who is the life of the world. This was fulfilled four thousand years afterward in one of her daughters, a virgin, who brought forth a son, whose name is Jesus, Emmanuel, the Living God, the true God, and eternal Life. He is the Lord of life, and the life of all that believe. **"Because I live, ye shall live also."** With the flame of one candle you may light many others, and the light of all is the same. Christ is the source whence all His people derive their light, the great central luminary of His church. **"In him was life, and the life was the light of men."**

When the prophet stood in the valley of dry bones and prophesied, there was a wonderful agitation, and the bones came together, and formed themselves into skeletons, and sinews and flesh covered them, and each form was enclosed with a skin; but they were still dead, and it was not till the breath of God blew upon them, and kindled the flame of life within them, that they **"stood up an exceeding great army."** So Christ is the resurrection and life alike of the soul and of the body. **"He that believeth on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live."** He is the bread and the water of life. **"He that cometh unto him, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on him, shall never thirst."** **"He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."** **"We are dead; and our life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."**

IV. The Living Redeemer of Job was to appear in this world. **"He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."**

A woman who is traveling, and has no money to bear her expenses, obtains credit on her husband's account, who afterward passes that way, and discharges the obligation. So ancient saints went home to glory on credit: and in the fullness of time, Christ came and paid their debt; not by installments, but all at once; and the virtue of His own offering went up to the gate of Eden, and down to the end of the world. As on both sides of the altar of burnt-offering, were pipes, conveying the blood into the basins, till they were full; so the great altar on Calvary communicates

with past generations, and generations yet to come; and the saving merit of the one sacrifice runs back to Abel and to Adam, and forward to the last believer.

Whom do I see in the garden yonder, in such agony of soul, prostrate in prayer, and sweating great drops of blood? Job's Living Redeemer. Why is His heart thus wrung with anguish? Is there a dark register of sins in His conscience, like the fiery handwriting of God upon the wall? No, He has not a single crime to confess. He has done no iniquity, neither is guile found in His mouth. Why then does He suffer? He is bearing our griefs, carrying our sorrows, and receiving the chastisement of our peace. Behold Him on the mountain, **"wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities."** **"All we like sheep have gone astray we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."** **"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."** **"Who shall declare his generation?"**

Who shall give us His pedigree, His history, His character? Will none of the angels of Heaven make the air of Calvary ring with the sufferer's name? Behold! The darkened sun and quaking earth proclaim Him God! Hark! He speaks---"I am the true God, and eternal life. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning of the creator's way, or ever the earth was. When there was no depths, nor fountains of water; before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the deep; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the foundations of the deep; when he gave the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he established the foundations of the earth; then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men; and therefore I am here, hanging on the cross today?"

V. Job's Living Redeemer was to deliver him from the power of death.

Job anticipated the coming of **"the last enemy,"** who should give his flesh to be food for worms. The Sabeans had taken away the oxen and the asses, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword. The fire had fallen from Heaven, and burnt up the sheep and the shepherds. The Chaldeans had robbed him of his camels, and murdered his domestics. The whirlwind had killed his sons and his daughters in the house of their feasting. His body was covered with putrid ulcers, from head to foot.

His best friends turned against him, and even his wife tempted him to **"curse God and die."** But amid all his calamities, he saw another enemy, ready to assail his body, and drag it away to the tomb, and reduce it to dust and ashes. At the same time, his faith beheld the Messiah swallowing up death in victory. He saw the Son of Mary in the house of Jairus, where the lion had just slain his victim; and on the street of Nain, where he was taking prey to his den; and at the grave in Bethany, where he was banqueting with worms in the joy of victory. Death could not stand before the Prince of Life. The spoiler yielded up his spoil. Christ sailed on the open channel like a man of war, delivering the hapless captives of the great pirate Death, to the astonishment and joy of the people, from Samaria to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. But on a certain day, ever to be remembered, as He drew near the ramparts of Sinai, all its batteries were opened upon Him. He stood in the fire all night, and fought till He sweat great drops of blood. He threw Himself between His friends and the fort, and sustained the shock of its heaviest artillery, which played upon Him without intermission, especially the old cannon of Eden---"Dying thou shalt die"---until three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day, when He received a shot in the heart, and, crying, **"It is finished!"** gave up the ghost. The whole creation trembled when He fell, and was swallowed up in the horrible abyss. But on the morning of the third day, the earth was seized with new spasms, and He that was dead came forth to be the life of His people; and the cable of faith, the anchor of hope, and the sails of love, ascended with Him from the deep, never to go down again. He is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death.

VI. Job speaks of the period of Messiah's advent, under the term of **"the latter day."** This may refer, either to the end of the Jewish dispensation, or to the end of the world.

Christ has already once appeared on earth, fulfilled the types and shadows, made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness; "and to them that look for him, he shall appear the second time, without a sin-offering, unto salvation." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." Then shall God have finished His work in mount Zion, and the trumpets of the gospel shall cease to sound, and the great net shall be taken up from the sea, and the laborers in the vineyard shall receive their wages, and the tares shall be cast into the unquenchable fire.

Wonderful shall be the glory and the terror of that day; **"when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his**

mighty angels, in flaming fire; taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." What a glorious army shall attend Him down the sky---myriads of His saints, and all the celestial powers and principalities! **"Fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people."** His throne shall be "like a fiery flame, and his wheels like a burning furnace." He "shall descend with a shout, and the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God." The sound of the trumpet on Sinai was long and loud, and "exceeding terrible;" but how much more powerful shall be the voice of "the last trumpet," penetrating the cold ear of death, and awaking into immortality the dust of the grave! Then the Messiah shall not appear **"as a root out of dry ground;"** but shall stand forth before heaven and earth **"in the glory of the Father, and of his holy angels;"** in addition to the glory of His own person as God-man, and the glory of His work as Mediator. Before Him, **"the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up;"** and death and hell shall deliver up their dead; and all men shall stand and receive their sentence from Him Who was an infant in Bethlehem---**"a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"**---condemned by Pilate, mocked by the multitude, and nailed upon the cross. This is Job's living Redeemer, the resurrection and life of all who believe.

VII. Our text contains Job's confession of faith. It is brief, but very comprehensive, and may be called an epitome of the gospel. Here we have the Divinity and the humanity of Christ, His work of redemption, His victory over death and hell, His second advent, and the resurrection of the dead.

The Athenians mocked when they heard of the resurrection of the dead; and the Sadducees greatly erred on this subject, **"not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God;"** and many of the Corinthians imbibed the same poison of unbelief. But the patriarch of Uz thought it not **"a thing incredible that God should raise the dead."** He firmly believed the doctrine, and gave it a promised place in his confession. He knew that God is able to watch and preserve the dust of His saints; has His eye upon every particle, throughout all the periods of time; and through the Divine Mediator, **"will raise it up at the last day."** This doctrine was to him

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a great consolation in his unparalleled afflictions. “Though my skin,” says he, “is a tissue of disease and corruption---yea, though my body sink into the earth, and be eaten up of the worms, and my very reins be consumed within me---yet in my flesh, in this same body, reorganized, reanimated, and made immortal from the tomb, I shall see God---shall see him for myself, with these self-same eyes.”

Yes, brethren; the souls and bodies of all the human race shall be reunited; and with our own eyes, we shall see the judge of quick and dead, with His fan in His hand, thoroughly purging His floor, gathering the wheat into His garner, and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. In that day, the tares and the wheat shall be for ever separated, and there shall be no more foolish virgins among the wise. “For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that we may receive the things done in the body, according to that we have done, whether it be good or evil.”

How vast the difference between Messiah’s first and second advents! When He “tabernacled and dwelt among us,” He appeared **“in the form of a servant;”** but when He shall come again, He shall come as a judge, and **“sit upon the throne of his glory;”** and “all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” “For the Son of man shall send forth his angels; and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

VIII. I call your attention to one other topic suggested by the text--the confidence with which Job speaks of his interest in the living Redeemer. **“For I know that my Redeemer liveth.”** It was not a mere conjecture. There was no doubt in the case. The patriarch had reached the assurance of faith; and so perfectly satisfied was he of the fact, that

he expressed an intense desire that his words might be recorded on the most durable materials, that they might be read by generations to come.

How may we acquire the same confidence? What is the evidence of our interest in Job’s living Redeemer? The nature and effects of the change which has taken place in our hearts. You that **“were sometime darkness, are now light in the Lord;”** have been **“called out of darkness unto his marvelous light;”** and can say---**“One thing I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I see.”** **“The carnal mind is enmity against God;”** but those that are born of the Spirit love God; and love and hatred are not so much alike, that you cannot tell by which principle you are governed. While the strong man armed kept the palace, his goods were in peace; but when a stronger than he came and cast him out, there was a warfare commenced between the old man and the new. You were formerly dead in trespasses and sins; but are now alive to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. You were once destitute of faith in the Redeemer; but now you believe in Him, and rely upon His righteousness alone, as the ground of your acceptance and salvation. How can you experience such a transformation, and know nothing of the matter? As well might the sick, when Christ healed them---as well might the blind, when Christ opened their eyes---as well might the dead, when Christ raised them to second life from the bed, the bier, or the grave---have been ignorant of the mighty change.

In the Word of God, we have the testimony of many who had obtained the assurance of faith. “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand upon the earth at the latter day”---was a testimony of Job. “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, and the horn of my salvation, in whom I will trust”---was the testimony of David. **“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness”**---was the testimony of Isaiah. **“I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day”**---was the testimony of the apostle Paul. **“We know that we are of God; we know that we have passed from death unto life; we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”**---was the testimony of John, **“the beloved disciple.”**

“These things,” saith the apostle, **“have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye might know that ye have eternal life.”** This is the design of God, in revealing His will to the church. We may---we should know that we have eternal life. **“He that**

believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” But this assurance of faith is not a mere imagination of the brain. It is not founded on a vague notion of your being one of the elect, without any other evidence. It is not founded on a voice from Heaven, bidding you be of good cheer, and go in peace, because your sins are forgiven you. It is founded on the fruits of the Spirit, and the testimony of Divine Revelation. True believers are “created anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works;” evincing the reality of their love to God by keeping His commandments.

Let us, therefore, give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. Let us examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith. Let us compare our religion with the precepts of the Bible, and the example of ancient saints. But as our hearts are so wicked and deceitful, let us not trust them, but pray to God for the aid of His Holy Spirit, in this important work of self-examination. Behold “the Sweet Singer of Israel,” praying---“Search me, O God, and try me; prove me, and know my heart.” The Holy Spirit has given you a rule by which you are to examine yourselves; and He works in you a conformity to that rule, and bears witness with your spirit that you are the children of God. In proportion to His operation upon the heart, will be the assurance of faith; and in proportion to the assurance of faith, will be your spiritual comfort and joy. The Lord grant us that “faith which worketh by love, and purifieth the heart!”

Are you stript of property, bereft of children, afflicted in body, forsaken of friends, persecuted and insulted by relatives? Think of Job, and of Job’s living Redeemer! Imitate the patriarch’s patience and confidence amid all the troubles and conflicts of life! Go your way until the end; for ye shall rest, and stand in your several lots at last!



What Does Revival

(Continued from page 381) ♦

like.

One of the better known revival preachers wrote, “When revival comes evangelism happens but evangelism is not revival.” As we pray for revival each night at 9 PM, or at any other special prayer times we may have scheduled, it is important that we keep that fact in mind. Neither is revival a spectacular, boisterous, emotional extravaganza.

But having said that I think we can turn to Jonah and see that revival is not necessarily confined to the traditional church setting. Jonah preached in Nineveh, God moved in the hearts of the people, and there was a revival that affected the land for about 100 years.

“So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put

on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not” (Jonah 2:5-10).

John, the Baptist, told the religious leaders of his day to **“Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.”** These Pharisees had physically come to hear John preach, and the implication is that they expected to be baptized. They didn’t differ a whole lot from the rich young man who came to Christ asking, **“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”** They had “kept the law” according to their concepts but wanted to “make sure” by adding another item to their self-righteous resume. But obviously there was no evidence of repentance or John wouldn’t have challenged them in that way.

Instead of looking for, or expecting shouting or some other showy signs, we should be looking for signs of genuine repentance. Using what is probably the most well known “revival” verse in the Bible (II Chron. 7:14) and the report from Nineveh and the Wales and the Hebridean revivals, let me suggest a few things that I look for as evidence of revival among the people with whom I move.

“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.”

The people of Nineveh “humbled” themselves. The people of Wales and the Hebridean Islands humbled themselves. They didn’t care who saw them kneel in tearful repentant prayer. How about you, dear reader? Are you ashamed, embarrassed or otherwise unwilling to kneel in prayer? Or do you pray like so many that I’ve heard, even in public restaurant, so that it calls everyone’s attention to you – like the Pharisees who Christ castigated? **“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray**

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THE FINAL & LAST ISSUE

Look at your mailing label on the front page of this month’s paper. If you see above your name “Expires 8/2008” then this will be your last issue. So don’t miss an issue! Renew now so you won’t miss next month’s Banner.

THE FINAL & LAST ISSUE

What Does Revival

(Continued from page 387) ♦

standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men" (Matt. 6:5).

The men of Nineveh, Wales and Hebrides prayed. They sought God's face! The Hebrides revival came about in answer to the heartfelt prayers of a man called Hector McKennon. I asked a considerable number of people – here – in the two churches I have some association with – to set a time and date and I would meet with them to pray for revival. Only one man responded. Dear readers, how earnest are your prayers and how import is your time of prayer?

The men of Nineveh, Wales and the Hebrides turned from their wicked ways. They repented! They turned the nearest rock, or their church pew, into an altar. They didn't run off to the nearest hamburger place – or even to the fellowship hall – for some after service refreshments. So often today, our congregations are up and socializing before the echo of the last amen dies out.

Revival affected the whole social structure. Nineveh was a far more decent and peaceful country for about the next 100 years. Secular history bears that out! In Wales, the Hebrides – and history records right here in New York State (Houghton on the Genesee River) – the bars closed, the "houses of the night" closed, even otherwise good entertainment closed. They didn't close because the "Religious Right" got some laws passed. They closed for lack of business. Revival had come! People were in the house of worship, and their language and habits had changed.

May God be pleased to send us one more revival! We are a desperate and needy people. Can "you" sense that? Or is your Christianity "business as usual"?



Paul Disputed

By Dave Hunt

One need not read far in the Bible to realize that it is definitely not an ecumenical book. In "the Great Commission," Christ commanded His disciples to make disciples of **"all nations. . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. . ."** (Matt. 28:19-20). This is a sacred trust from Christ Himself that places a grave responsibility upon everyone who claims to be a Christian.

If language has any meaning, then every true disciple today must be a disciple of a disciple of a disciple. . . all the way back to the original disciples, and obligated to obey the same commands

Christ gave to them. No one was ever authorized by Christ to change this commission---and yet this has been and is being done. What must our Lord think of church leaders despising His Word?

Truth is independent of time, space, and matter; and never changes. It has no location in the physical universe; it exists in the nonphysical realm of the soul and spirit. The indisputable fact that the brain is not the mind, with which we understand truth, provides one of the simplest proofs that we are nonphysical and eternal beings living temporarily in physical bodies. This solemn fact raises a question that most do not like to face. Preferring to give their attention to pleasures and plans related to this temporal world of the five senses, that which is of paramount importance is put off to **"a convenient season"** (Acts 24:25; which never comes). Every person must answer the great question; Where will my soul and spirit (the real "I" that is my unique self) be when this temporary dwelling in which I have lived these few years lies "moulding in the grave?"

To deny the existence of soul and spirit, materialists (which all atheists are) attempt to identify mind and all thought and ideas with the physical brain. Declaring that "materialism is dead," physicist Sir Arthur Eddington proves that fact quite simply: "In science. . . law. . . means a rule which is never broken. . . Thus in the physical world what a body does and what a body ought to do are equivalent; but we are well aware of another domain where they are anything but equivalent. We cannot get away from this distinction. . . The laws of logic do not prescribe the way our minds think; they prescribe the way our minds ought to think. . . However closely we may associate thought with the physical brain, the connection is dropped as irrelevant as soon as we consider the fundamental property of thought---that it may be correct or incorrect.

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is **"the way, the truth, and the life."** Truth does not change, thus **"Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever"** (Heb. 13:8). Yet many church leaders in our day (like multitudes of others throughout history) have taken it upon themselves to change almost everything. Some have done so by rewriting the Bible, as did Eugene Peterson in *The Message*; others, such as Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller, by "positivizing the gospel," and others by "modernizing" Christianity. The Emergent Church movement has done so under the guise of restoring "original Christianity." They have only restored earlier traditions of men, which, in the days of the apostles, were already far from the truth. Only the New Testament---not "early church history"---gives the record of true biblical Christianity.

There is no justification to say, "Times

have changed" so we now need "new truth" to meet the challenges of today's post-modern world. It is a delusion to imagine that going back to the thought and practice of the "early historic church" will make us more spiritual or restore first century Christianity. Searching through "ancient church history" is not going back far enough. We need to go all the way back to the Bible.

Each true disciple has been given a sacred trust, having received in an unbroken line of succession through earlier disciples Christ's original "commission" to His first followers: to obey and to teach others to obey everything Christ taught them. No research is needed---only a simple understanding of, and faith in, God's Word---to recognize the brazen revision of the Great Commission underway. This is seen in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of many Protestant denominations, and especially in the Roman Catholic system, which the original humble fishermen-disciples would denounce were they here today.

Incredibly, John Hagee, in a letter dated May 12, 2008, to Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League for Civil and Religious Rights, "apologized for calling the Roman Catholic Church 'the apostate church' and 'the great whore.'" But that's what Luther and all the Reformers called it in keeping with God's Word! Now was this a recent off-the-cuff remark but a consistent declaration over many years. In a shameful "about-face," Hagee declared, "I want to express my deep regret for any comments that Catholics have found hurtful." Isn't Christ a **"rock of offence"** (Rom. 9:33) and His cross an **"offence"** to unbelievers? Must we apologize for offending with the truth? Must we withhold the truth of the gospel to avoid offending those who need it? Isn't the Bible (not the hurt feelings of sinners) our unchangeable standard?

Let's be honest---Hagee's apology that denied the truth was political fence-mending by "one of John McCain's highest profile supporters from the religious right." It was not for the sake of Christ but for the presidential hopes of McCain. In apologizing, Hagee called the use of these terms in Revelation "a rhetorical device long employed in anti-Catholic literature and commentary." Now he must apologize to the Lord for calling **"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him"** (Rev. 1:1) "anti-Catholic rhetoric"! It is only fitting that on May 22 McCain distanced himself from Hagee, who then withdrew his endorsement.

Instead of remaining true to Christ's commands, many of today's church leaders teach and practice "Christianity" as though the Great Commission were, "Go into all the world and try to find as much agreement with the major religions as possible, being careful not to

criticize any 'faith,' but join with them in ecumenical union to abolish poverty, hunger, and disease." That sounds so appealing and it seems such a worthy cause that entire denominations have been swallowed up by this satanic heresy.

Isn't "satanic" a bit strong? No. Satan was the first to ask, **"Yea, hath God said?"** (Gen. 3:1). His followers are identified by ignoring, defying, or changing God's unchangeable truth. One might be put in jail for such harsh language. Not now, but that day may yet come sooner than we imagine.

To claim to know what God has said, to follow it, and to boldly oppose the errors taught by those who diverge from God's truth, is today's unforgivable sin both in the world and in the church. The mood worldwide is definitely toward both political and religious unity at any cost. As this movement gathers increasing momentum, anyone who has the moral and spiritual integrity to uphold the Bible will be seen as worthy of imprisonment and eventually death for standing in the way of global unity, the one hope to which the world and church still cling in desperate partnership.

As for true Christians, any compromising ecumenical agreement is rendered impossible by Christ's firm declaration, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"** (John 14:6). There is no way to soften that statement. True to their Lord, the apostles declared: **"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12). As their successors, we must proclaim the same.

In contrast, Satan's religious lackeys, true to their master, cry, "You can't say that!" His many other servants in legislative bodies and courts are determined to make it an international crime to suggest that any recognized "faith" (no matter how contradictory to every other) could possibly be in any error. The Bible could soon be outlawed as condemnatory of all non-Christian religions. But this is the nature of the Bible, and for that we make neither apology nor "religiously correct" adjustments. Simon Greenleaf, one of America's greatest legal minds, who turned from agnosticism to faith in Christ, declared nearly 180 years ago:

"The religion of Jesus Christ aims at nothing less than the utter overthrow of all other systems of religion in the world; denouncing them as inadequate to the wants of man, false in their foundations, and dangerous in their tendency. . . these are no ordinary claims; and it seems hardly possible for a rational being to regard them with [merely] a subdued interest; much less to treat them with mere indifference and contempt."

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Paul Disputed

(Continued from page 388) ♦

We do not follow anyone except our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles. Paul declared, **"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. . . even as I also am of Christ"** (I Cor. 4:16; 11:1). Our Lord continually referred to and quoted the Old Testament, the only Scriptures that existed in His day and all that was needed to proclaim the gospel then and now: **"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself"** (Luke 24:27).

We should follow His example in witnessing for Him, as Paul did. He preached **"the gospel of God (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)"** Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:1-4). The true gospel is founded upon "hundreds" of prophecies that "cannot" be changed. Woe to those who tamper with **"the gospel of God"**!

Declaring that the gospel he had preached was **"according to the scriptures"** (I Cor. 15:3, 4), Paul affirmed once again that the gospel is so firmly founded in the entire Old Testament that it could not be altered without destroying the Scriptures. This is the testimony of the entire Bible. Those who dare to change God's Word in any way have denied God Himself. They are saying that God did not know the future, that His plan of salvation is no longer adequate for modern man, and that today's theologians must patch up the mess in which Christ has left His church. In other words, the God of the Bible is not the true God. As T. A. McMahon has pointed out (02/08; 03/08), the Emerging Church leaders have declared that everything must "be reinvented" to arrive at a new theology adequate for our day.

Paul did not seek religious or political "rapprochement" with anyone. He and Silas were accused of having **"turned the world upside down"** (Acts 17:6). The apostles made no alliances; they followed the orders Christ had given them. They knew and uncompromisingly proclaimed **"the truth [as it] is in Jesus"** (Eph. 4:21) with boldness and great power and with much disputation.

Disputation? Yes! That word describes much of the apostles' life and ministry, and especially Paul's, but is being trampled under the boots of the marching "seeker friendly" ecumenists. The fact that Paul and the early church leaders and martyrs spent so much time publicly disputing tells us much about what is lacking among

Christians today, or shall we just call it "Christianity Today"? Consider these religiously incorrect, uncompromising, "negative" declarations---founded upon prophecy:

"STEPHEN: 'Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. . . Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it'" (Acts 7:51, 53).

PETER: 'Thy money perish with thee. . . Thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness. . .'" (Acts 8:18-24).

PAUL: 'But Saul. . . confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ'" (Acts 9:22).

PETER: 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins'" (Acts 10:43).

PAUL: 'Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus. . . For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day. . . fulfilled them in condemning him. . . And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree. . .'" (Acts 13:23, 27, 29).

PAUL: 'Paul, as his manner was. . . reasoned with them out of the scriptures. . .'" (Acts 17:2); "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him" (Acts 17:17); **"He reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and Greeks"** (Acts 18:4, 19).

APOLLOS: 'mightily convinced the Jews. . . publicly, shewing [proving] by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ'" (Acts 18:28).

PAUL: 'went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading. . .'" (Acts 19:8); **" . . . disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus [for] two years"** (Acts 19:9, 10); **"I. . . by the space of three years. . . ceased not to warn [about coming apostasy] every one night and day with tears"** (Acts 20:31); **"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled"** (Acts 24:25); **"Persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets"** (Acts 28:23).

I recently engaged in three debates in Toronto: with a Hindu leader of a large temple, with an atheist philosophy professor, and with a Muslim imam, who debates Christians worldwide. Is this what Christians are supposed to do? Is it productive? How can we obey **"live peaceably with all men"** (Rom. 12:18) while disagreeing with opposing beliefs?

The Scriptures above show that

disputing with unbelievers was Paul's life and ministry. He said we are to follow him. How else can we faithfully fulfill our commission?

"There is no revelation more affecting than this, that God is of such a nature that the misery of fallen man has constrained Him to lay aside His heavenly glory, to become man, to bear all our sin and sorrows, and by death vanquish death and give to dying sinners eternal and divine life. Everyone who by faith receives this life is under the same necessity as He from whom he derives it, so that, on this account, every Christian is naturally

a missionary. He hears in his soul as an impelling command, the words: **"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."** (E. M. Broadbent, from *The Pilgrim Church*)."

Each true disciple must heed the Great Commission to **"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you"** (I Pet. 3:15). The Lord will give those with willing hearts the opportunities, wisdom, humility, grace, and power to be true to His calling. (*The Berean Call*, June 2008).



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Proud Sinner

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts" (Ps. 10:4).

In Christian Theology there are two very important truths that we must never lose sight of in this world. The first is that God is good and all good is from Him. Whatever good there is in men or the world is from God, and all glory belongs to Him as the source of all good. The second truth is that the evil and the misery of man are of himself, and that all the blame of his wretchedness and ruin is his own fault.

This is often exhibited to us in holy Scriptures. In Isaiah 65:12 the Lord said to the Jews: **" . . . when I called, ye did not answer: when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not."** The Apostle Paul wrote: **"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"** (Ga. 6:7). God stretches out His hand to offer help and to confer a blessing, but man pays no attention to the offer. Nevertheless, God's hand is **"stretched forth. . . unto a disobedient and gainsaying people"** (Rom. 10:21).

In my text there are three distinct things. First, a character to define--- **"The wicked,"** Second, there is a line of conduct which must be explained--- **"will not seek after God."** Third, there is the cause which is assigned to that conduct--- **"through pride of his countenance."**

I. A CHARACTER TO BE DEFINED.

My text begins with the title **"The wicked."** We are often prone to apply this term to murderers, rapists, drug pushers, or some other notorious criminal. But in the Bible the title **"the wicked"** is used in a much broader sense. In the Biblical

sense any man who never thinks of God is a wicked man. When the moral disposition is corrupt, the tendency is for man to exclude God from all his thoughts. So in God's sight he is a wicked man indeed who never considers God in all his labors and enjoyments of life. According to this definition, millions live in our world who are wicked men and women. They do not recognize God and have no regard for the teachings of the Bible as final and authoritative.

The wicked man thinks much about many things in this world, but God is not in any of his thoughts. In all his plans and projects, he never takes God into consideration or consultation. He goes about all his activities as if there were no God. He is in no wise swayed by any thought of a God. How amazing! The only place that God is not in the whole universe is in the thoughts of a wicked man! Man is enchanted by an utter forgetfulness of God; he is drunk with pleasure; he is mad with fame and fortune. He lies **"without God in the world"** (Eph. 2:12); he continues on as if there were no God to take notice of him and to judge him for his sins. Oh, my friend, a forgotten God is no God at all!

There are whole systems and philosophies in our world that reject any notion of a God. Atheism is made the bottom, the groundwork, and the foundation of all their proceedings. I refer to Communism, evolution, socialism, humanism, etc. Those in these systems will not acknowledge God. They worship creation instead of the Creator. Some of these worship "noble man," or the "inner consciousness of man," or "the starry heavens above," or the god who is "a spirit working within the cosmos," or what they

♦ (Continued on page 390)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. In reading Luke 4:5-7, is Satan controlling this present world? – Mississippi

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I'm not at home this month but I think I can still give a short easy answer to this question in three points.

First, in nether this account nor in Matthew's account does Jesus challenge Satan's claim. Later, in John 14:30, Jesus acknowledges that Satan is the "prince of this world": "...for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

Second, Christ made it clear to Pilate that "his" power was merely delegated or permitted power. "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." (Italics RB.) The well known dialogue between God and Satan in the first two chapters of Job demonstrates that point. Satan has a free run on the earth but he can still do nothing without God's permission, whether that permission is verbal and direct as in the case of Job 1-2, or tacit as it generally seems.

Finally, we have observed already that Satan's power and authority is limited according to the limits of delegated authority. In addition to that, Satan's power is temporary.

In "this" life Satan has power to attack believers, interfere with their ministries and otherwise harass believers. He will often tempt believers in the same manner as he tempted Christ but: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) and "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). assure the faithful believer victory.

"And he (Christ) laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:2), promises not only a "limitation" on his power such as there is now, but a full, albeit temporary, restraint on his power yet to come. Revelation 20:7, "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison" and Revelation 20:10, "And the devil...was cast into the lake of fire...for ever and ever" assure us of his final and total defeat.

RAY BENNETT

The context of this passage of Scripture is in the midst of Satan tempting the impeccable Christ in the wilderness. Satan is a master at deception, lying, and temptation but he met his match against the Lord Jesus Christ who quoted Scripture after Scripture to repel the attacks of the adversary. Jesus soundly defeated Satan in this conflict.

Now to answer the question. No, Satan is not controlling this present world, God is as He always has. Ephesians 1:11 declares: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Romans 11:36 states: "For of him and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Included in the all things being ultimately directed to the glory of God is the activity of Satan in this present evil world. Satan could do nothing except by decreed permission from the Almighty. A prime example would be in the case of Job who could not be touched by Satan except for God's sovereign permission (Job 2:1-7). God does not prompt men or devils to sin as the Almighty is of purer eyes than to even behold iniquity. God does, however channel the wicked desires of men and devils to carry out His own sovereign purpose in the overall scheme of Providence as evidenced by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-24).

What Satan proclaimed in Luke 4:5-7 was a lie. We must remember that Satan has always been the ultimate deceiver. Jesus commented on Satan's mastery of the art of deception in John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." Satan's most coveted prize is to usurp the authority and dominion of God. This is the very reason why he was cast out of the immediate presence of God by the Almighty long ago. Satan falsely asserted that he possessed ultimate power and

the glory that belongs only to God. Satan desired that the Messiah would bow before him in act of worship. Instead, Jesus quoted Scripture and soundly defeated the deception and temptation of Satan.

What lessons we can learn from this encounter! Satan will say anything to anyone in an attempt to deceive others and fulfill his wicked desires. We must be very alert to detect and deny Satan's temptations. Jesus gave us a perfect formula in dealing with the devil. Have the Scriptures hidden in your heart by way of memorization and meditation. Use the Scripture as an armed sentinel guarding your mind and heart. When the deception and temptation of Satan attempts to enter, fire off a round of Scripture you have stored in your heart (Psalm 119:9-11).

TOM ROSS



The Proud Sinner

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call their "theories, speculations, and hypothesis." In fact this is nothing more than old pagan pantheism. The ancient heathen who worshipped some man, or some idol, or even the sun, was as well off as the modern evolutionist!

These wicked men are not merely content to acknowledge no allegiance to a personal Creator, but they are determined at all costs to banish God from the thoughts of others in public and private. In some cases the arm of the state is employed to imprison or murder Christians. When the state is not so favorable to their program of atheism, they seek to banish any thought of God from public schools, state colleges, courts, coins, stamps, and all public places. These men seek to remove from the minds of people any thought of the God of Heaven. They want to banish God from this world so the lord of Hell can reign and rage. They do not care who they ride over in their warfare to establish the kingdom of darkness.

Wickedness is the absence of real piety. We are not to judge by the opinions of men or human laws as to the identity of a wicked man. Rather, we must go to the law and the testimony of Jehovah. Don't ask the judge or your neighbors---not even your friends or family who a wicked person really is. Inquire of the oracles of eternal truth. Ask a person if he believes in Christ and the Bible. Ask if he enjoys and obeys the influence of the Holy Spirit. Ask him if he loves God supremely. Ask him if he seeks the kingdom of God and the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. If one does not do these things he belongs to the class of the wicked. By this rule are you a wicked person? Or, have you been saved from your wickedness?

Religious liberals wish there was no

God. They practically believe there is none. God is not in their thoughts; they do not seek God. To them evangelism is "social uplift." Missions is no more than "educational opportunity." The church is a medium of financing their evolutionary program. The Bible is a book of fairy tales. Marriage is a domestic convenience, but holds no moral obligations. The Lord's Day to religious liberals is little less than a social nuisance. God is not in their thoughts, and they no longer even disguise their attempts to rule God out. Many Baptist schools and colleges are filled with such professors who teach young preachers lies out of Hell while conservative church members pay their salaries.

Some church members are practical atheists. They profess to know God but in works they deny Him. They have a name to live while giving no evidence of spiritual life. They never attend church or give to the church. They never pray or read the Bible. They never witness to the lost. They have a do-nothing religion---faith without works. Even their unsaved friends know that God is not in their thoughts or plans. Such persons are wicked hypocrites! Hebrews 3:12 warns: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

II. A LINE OF CONDUCT WHICH MUST BE EXPLAINED.

Truly if God is not in all the thoughts of a wicked man, it stands to reason that a wicked man "will not seek after God." How deep and dark is human depravity! Men are "alienated and enemies in" their "mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21), "having not the Spirit" (Jude 19). They have forsaken the God that made them (Deut. 32:13; Jer. 2:13). "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:1-3). Wicked men have no desire toward God, no communion with Him, no dependence upon Him. There is no submission to Him and no aim at His glory (Jer. 2:6).

There is every reason why a man should seek God. Man is weak; God is Almighty. Man is a needy creature; God possesses all things. Man is ignorant and foolish; God knows all things that are knowable. The Bible encourages man to seek God. Hosea 10:12 says: ". . . it is time to seek the LORD. . ." Amos 5:6 commands: "Seek ye the LORD, and ye shall live." Isaiah 55:6 commands: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found. . ." Man is responsible to seek the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33), to seek the Bible for

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Could you please explain Ephesians 2:10? – Mississippi

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“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

This verse is part of one of the most glorious expositions of God's free grace bestowed on His elect as revealed in sacred Scripture. In keeping with the theme of grace showered upon unworthy sinners the verse in question reveals the manner in which sovereign grace is bestowed on the elect.

The Greek word for workmanship is *poiema* denoting that which is made. *Poiema* is elsewhere used to describe God's creation or making of the physical universe in Romans 1:20. I find it interesting that the same power used to create the universe is exercised by God to create a spiritual nature in God's elect through the life giving power of the Holy Spirit. We were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), without spiritual life or any connection to the life of God (Eph. 4:18). We were in the flesh, henceforth unable to please God in any way (Rom. 8:7-8). We were in bondage to the dictates and direction of Satan who conspired with our flesh to lead us in the ways of sin and acts of depravity (Eph. 2:2-3). But God, who is rich in grace created us anew in Christ Jesus by imparting spiritual life through the power of the blessed Holy Spirit in the new birth (cf. John 3:3-8; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; James 1:17-18).

The very moment the elect are translated from darkness to light (Col. 1:13; I Peter 2:9) they exercise the gifts of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. From the moment of the new birth the Holy Spirit indwells God's elect illuminating, teaching, and leading them in paths of righteousness and good works according to God's eternal plan. Sanctification and the practice of maintaining good works is according to Divine appointment. Walking in good works demonstrates, proves, and gives evidence that the elect are partakers of God's sovereign grace (James 2:17-18). The absence of good works produced by the fruit of the Spirit calls into question whether or not an individual has ever been prepared to walk in good works by the regenerating power of the Holy

Spirit. Those who are truly saved by sovereign grace are exhorted to maintain good works (Titus 2:7, 15; 3:1, 8, 14). Our love for God's commands and the practice of gracious obedience to them proves that we have truly been born of God and gifted with saving faith (I John 5:1-3).

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“For We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that ye should walk in them.” (Italics mine for emphasis.)

Verse 10 is a continuation of the same thought started in verses 8 and 9. The clause **“For** (or because) **We are his workmanship**” is in contradistinction to the “works” of verse 9. In other words, our salvation is “His” workmanship, not “our” workmanship. We are **“created in Christ Jesus”** (italics mine for emphasis), the product of Christ's finished work on the cross on behalf of those whom **“he hath chosen...before the foundation of the world”** (Eph. 1:4).

The verse then goes on to point out that God's work was not just idle or purposeless activity! **“...For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created”** (Rev. 4:11). There is a purpose for our existence; a purpose that transcends our enjoyment or peace!

That purpose is stated in greater detail in Romans 8:29: **“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son....”** That “conforming starts with the changed life, the “new creature” of II Corinthians 5:17, exhibited by the **“good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”**

The question we must ask ourselves from this: Is there evidence of the workmanship of God in Christ Jesus in us? Those “good works” are not optional! Neither are they legalistically commanded as in works to be credited to your account. They are “evidential!” That is to say that good works are “evidence” of salvation not the “means” of salvation. The **“good works” “before ordained”** of God.

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truth (Isa. 34:16), to seek righteousness and meekness (Zeph. 2:3), to seek the honor which comes from above (John 5:44), and to seek those things which are above (Col. 3:1).

If men seek God they shall find Him. In II Chronicles 15:2 we are told: **“...if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.”** In Jeremiah 29:13 the Lord Himself tells us: **“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”** Our Savior declared: **“...seek, and ye shall find”** (Matt. 7:7). Proverbs 8:17 informs us that those who seek God early shall be found of Him. These promises of God are true. The problem is not in God, but in the wicked man who refuses to seek God. The Apostle Paul lamented: **“For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's”** (Phil. 2:21). Isaiah complained of Israel: **“...neither do they seek the LORD of hosts”** (Isa. 9:13).

Men will not seek God because they think they have no need of Him. They will accomplish their plans and programs by their own hands and brains. They are sufficient of themselves they think. In their opinion it is a thing below them to go to church or to read the Bible. To them religious people are few and despised. They do not want to be identified with the people of God or the offense of the cross. So they will in no manner and by no means seek the Lord their God. Like Pharaoh, they ask: **“Who is the LORD that I should obey his voice?”** And, like the king of Egypt, they answer their own question by saying: **“I know not the LORD”** (Ex. 5:2).

If a man was made but to eat, drink, and sleep---but to build, plant, and move about on the earth---but to have his will over others and his fleshly pleasure and then die, then the wicked man is a wise man. But this is not the case. Man was created to enjoy God and to live for ever with Him. Man is placed on earth to know, to love, and to live to God. A wicked man does not know why he was born and what he is made for. He is like a car that will not run, a ship which will not endure water, a house not fit to live in. He is ignorant of the Author of his being, the purpose of his existence, and the source of his true joy. Thus he is to be pitied as a moral idiot!

Wicked men will seek after all other kinds of knowledge, but not the knowledge of God. They labor and spend money to gain worldly knowledge. They seek it at all costs. They often speak of the importance of scholarship, the intellectual attainments of the time, the need of a good education, and the must of the wisdom of the day. They would be ashamed to be ignorant of

letters, mathematics, general science, or literature. But they know not God and they will not seek God. They will not seek in the volume of eternal truth to attain this knowledge. No time, talent, or treasure is given to this. They devote much to created things, but nothing to the Creator. **“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?”** (Job 21:14-15).

Obstinate sinners will not seek after reconciliation with God. They have rebelled against the moral government of God. Job 24:13 says: **“They are of those that rebel against the light.”** They have **“rejected the word of the LORD”** (I Sam. 15:23) and have trampled under their unholy feet His holy commandments. The God of Heaven is not pleased with such conduct. Psalm 7:11 says that God **“is angry with the wicked every day.”** Such persons are under the wrath of a sin-avenging God: **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. . .”** (Rom. 1:18). But despite these facts, wicked men act and live as though they are secure. They are not even anxious to enjoy God's favor!

The wicked do not seek conformity to God's likeness. It is a trait of human nature to desire to resemble some one of some class. Some desire to be like the rich and famous. The proud and profane, the great and mighty, but they have no desire to be conformed to the image of Christ. They have no concern to resemble the Holy One of God. There is no concern about being good Christians. They do not love or admire spiritual purity; therefore, they will not seek to possess it. **“Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes”** (Ps. 119:155).

III. THE CAUSE OF THIS CONDUCT.

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (text). The pride of a wicked man's heart appears in his very countenance. Proverbs 6:17 speaks of **“A proud look. . .”** Undue self-esteem keeps the sinner from the Savior. His pride causes him to refuse to recognize his dependence on any being outside of himself. Arrogant estimation of his own power makes him unwilling to pray or to seek the aid of God even in affliction. In proportion as pride prevails in the heart of man, it makes him wish to see nothing above himself, to acknowledge no law but his own will, to follow no rule but his own lusts. Such pride led Satan to rebel against God (Ezek. 28:17; I Tim. 3:6) and our first parents to want to be as gods (Gen. 3:5-7).

God is a disagreeable object of contemplation to the wicked mind.

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They find a knowledge of God very undesirable. Pride is an exalted opinion of one's self. It does not like rivals, hates a superior, and cannot endure a master. Each carnal heart would rule---hold the reins---sway the scepter. The very thought of having to be subordinate in everything to a Supreme Being is to a wicked man utterly repulsive.

"Since such are the effects of pride, it is evident that nothing can be more painful to a proud heart than the thoughts of such a being as God; one who is infinitely powerful, just, and holy; who can neither be resisted, deceived, nor deluded; who disposes, according to His own sovereign pleasure, of all creatures and events; and who, in an especial manner, hates pride, and is determined to abase and punish it. Such a being pride can contemplate only with feelings of dread, aversion, and abhorrence. It must look upon Him as its natural enemy, the great enemy, whom it has to fear. But the knowledge of God directly tends to bring this infinite, irresistible, irreconcilable enemy to the view of the proud man. It teaches him that he has a superior, a master, whose will he must obey, or be crushed before Him, and be rendered miserable for ever. It shows him what he hates to see, that, in despite of his opposition, wherein men deal proudly, God is above them. These truths torture the proud unhumiliated hearts of the wicked, and hence they hate that knowledge of God which teaches these truths, and will not seek it. On the contrary, they wish to remain ignorant of such a being, and to banish all thoughts of Him from their minds. With this view, they neglect, pervert, or explain away those passages of revelation which describe God's true character, and endeavour to believe that He is altogether such a one as themselves.

"How foolish, how absurd, how ruinous, how blindly destructive of its own object, does pride appear! By attempting to soar, it only plunges itself in the mire; and while endeavouring to erect a throne, it undermines the ground on which it stands, and digs its own grave. It plunged Satan from heaven into hell; it banished our first parents from paradise; and it will, in a similar manner, ruin all who indulge in it. It keeps us in ignorance of God, shuts us out from his favour, prevents us from resembling him, deprives us in this world of all the honour and happiness which communion with him would confer; and in the next, unless previously hated, repented of, and renounced, will bar for ever against us the door of heaven, and close upon us the gates of hell. O then, my friends, beware, above all things, beware of pride!" (Edward Payson, 1783-1827).

Human pride rejects what the Bible says about human depravity. The Bible says that

man is totally depraved, without strength, poor, miserable, blind, and naked---that man is a sinner and deserves to burn for ever in the fires of Hell. But proud men will not confess that they are sinners. They are unwilling to repent, to believe, to submit to God's commandments, and to acknowledge His sovereignty over them. They will not seek the favor of God, for this act would dethrone man!

Intellectual pride rejects the way of salvation by sovereign grace. The Bible teaches that a man is saved by free grace, not free will. Eternal life is the gift of God through Christ to the sinner (Rom. 6:23). The gospel of grace teaches that it is not by man's works but by the finished work of Christ that a sinner is saved. Intellectual pride cries out: "Not so. Let me do something. Let me excel and win the prize. Let me strive and conquer for it. Let me suffer and earn it. Let me work and pray." Men are unwilling to be justified by free grace. They want to do good works in order to obtain their peace and pardon. Thousands will die and be damned rather than to have pardon of their sins upon the merits and obedience of Christ.

Oh, foolish pride! When will you cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord! Do you think you are wiser than God? Why not be content to be saved by the blood of the everlasting covenant? Shall the clay dictate to the Potter? Will you die in your sins rather than to receive the plaster of free grace? Will you be damned to Hell if you cannot be your own savior? Will you deserve, or have nothing? God help you! You are poor and proud of it! In truth you have nothing to be proud of but your sins and wickedness. James 4:6 says: "**God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.**"

CONCLUSION

1. Pride is the root of all atheism, theoretical or practical, on earth. It is at the root of all the reluctance which there is to seek the favor of God. It is the cause of all the misery and wretchedness in the world.

2. Have you sought after the Lord? sought after Him in truth and with all your heart? Earnestly and prayerfully? Or, are you indifferent? Why is this? It is your pride and undue self-esteem. Oh, examine yourself, consider your ways. Don't seek a respectable religion. Meditate on the threats God has made to the proud. You will be brought low and covered with shame if you go on in your foolish pride. In Hell there is no distinction of rank or favor for talent.

"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7).



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.

GAY ACTIVISTS OPPOSE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR RETIRED GENERAL

(EP News)--Two homosexual-rights groups are criticizing President Bush's decision to award the Medal of Freedom to retired Gen. Peter Pace, CNSNews.com reported. Pace is being criticized for comments he made during an interview with the Chicago Tribune in May 2007, when the general remarked: "I believe homosexual acts between two individuals are immoral, and that we should not condone immoral acts," including adultery. In honoring Pace, Bush said: "As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Pete Pace was a skilled and trusted adviser in a time of war. He helped transform our military into a more efficient and effective force in America's defense. For his selfless service to his country and for always putting the interests of men and women in uniform first, I am proud to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Gen. Pete Pace."

NEW PHARMACIES PROTECT LIFE

(EP News)--Pro-life pharmacies are opening across the country to protect the religious beliefs of their pharmacists, The Washington Post reported. The pharmacies choose not to stock certain contraceptives. Some also refuse to sell tobacco and pornography. "This allows a pharmacist who does not wish to be involved in stopping a human life in any way to practice in a way that feels comfortable," Karen Brauer, president of Pharmacists for Life, told The Post. The new drugstores come in response to a growing number of lawsuits against pharmacists who refuse to fill prescriptions for the morning-after pill, birth-control pills and other forms of contraception.

"Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13).

EXXONMOBIL RESISTS HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA

(EP News)--For the ninth time, shareholders of Exxon Mobil Corp. have made what pro-family advocates call "the commonsense decision" to give all employees the same rights. ExxonMobil is the only Fortune 50 corporation and the only major oil company that has not adopted special rights based on sexual orientation and "gender identity." It also does not provide benefits for same-sex partners. Caleb H. Price, research analyst at Focus on the Family, said, "Homosexual activists have strategically targeted Fortune 500 companies and applied unrelenting pressure to force them to radically redefine gender and the family in their corporate policies," he said. "Thankfully,

shareholders at ExxonMobil have held steady against this onslaught by wealthy gay groups and powerful major pension funds and refused to capitulate to the homosexual corporate agenda."

COHABITATION BECOMES MAINSTREAM AROUND THE WORLD

(EP News)--An analysis of cohabitation, marriage and divorce data from 13 countries, including the United States, shows living together has become mainstream, USA Today reported. The National Marriage Project study of a sampling of Western European and Scandinavian nations, Australia, Canada and New Zealand found 15 percent to 30 percent of couples live together, compared with about 10 percent in the United States. A previous study by the same group showed that since 1970, the number of Americans living together has increased from about 500,000 heterosexual couples to more than 5 million. In the United States from 1995 to 2005, the marriage rate declined almost 20 percent.

BARACK'S BUNGLED HISTORY

(EP News)--For a Harvard-educated constitutional law professor, Barack Obama frequently manages to get his facts wrong. Now, I've let a lot of his slip-ups go, like his statement that he had not yet visited all 57 states of the union during the campaign. But I am increasingly concerned that his worldview demonstrates a gross misunderstanding of our history and our enemy, and such naivete in the Oval Office could have devastating consequences.

For example, several weeks ago, Barack Obama defended his call for unconditional talks with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad by suggesting that such diplomacy had been practiced by great leaders like Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy. Columnist Jack Kelly corrected Obama's revisionist history by pointing out that Roosevelt never met with America's World War II enemies and his policy was not "unconditional diplomacy," but unconditional surrender -- a policy that Truman continued by ending the war "not with negotiation, but with the atomic bomb." Once upon a time, not that long ago, America was a serious nation.

"Professor" Obama is at it again, this time trying to defend his support for the Supreme Court's recent decision granting foreign terrorists access to U.S. courts. Last

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week, Obama tried to compare the thugs in Guantanamo Bay, captured on the battlefield, with the Islamofascists who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993. Obama said we had captured, tried and convicted those men in civilian courts. But the fact is not all of them were caught and prosecuted.

In fact, Andrew McCarthy, a former assistant U.S. attorney who was involved in those prosecutions, recently wrote, “While the government managed to prosecute many people responsible for the 1993 WTC bombing, many also escaped prosecution because of the limits on civilian criminal prosecution.”

Obama also pointed to the Nuremberg trials after World War II as an example to follow in the prosecution of terrorists. Writing in today’s *New York Post*, Scott Johnson, an attorney and contributor to the Power Line blog, examines that comparison and finds it lacking.

For example, the Nuremberg trials did not take place in civilian courts. The court that tried them was called, at the time, the International Military Tribunal, and, like our military tribunals at Gitmo, it had been formed for the specific purpose of dealing with Nazi war criminals. The German defendants were not given access to any civilian court. Moreover, they had no right to an appeal. The reality is that the procedures at Guantanamo Bay that the Supreme Court just rejected were certainly comparable to, if not better than, those at Nuremberg.

Mr. Johnson concludes, “Obama’s unfavorable comparison of the legal treatment at Gitmo with that at Nuremberg suggests either that he doesn’t know what he’s talking about – or that he feels free to exploit the ignorance of audiences that don’t know the truth of the matter.”

MICHIGAN GOVERNOR AGAIN VETOES PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION BAN

(EP News)--For the second time, Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm has vetoed a bill that would ban partial-birth abortions. The bill would make it a felony for a doctor to perform the gruesome procedure, resulting in two years in prison and/or a \$50,000 fine. A similar federal law upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court last year prohibits the procedure, but Brad Snively, executive director of the Michigan Family Forum, said a state law is necessary. “Having a state law strengthens enforcement of the federal ban,” he said, “and makes it clear that partial-birth abortion will not be allowed in our state.” Snively is working on an override, which would require two-thirds support in the House and Senate.

PRO-LIFE T-SHIRTS GET SIXTH-GRADER IN TROUBLE

(EP News)--K. B., a 12-year-old Hutchinson, Minn., middle-schooler, is in

trouble with his principal and one of his teachers after he wore pro-life T-shirts to school every day in April. Brian Rooney, an attorney and spokesman for the Thomas More Law Center, is suing the school, alleging viewpoint discrimination. “Every day, his teacher and his principal harassed him, threatened him with suspension, told him to turn the shirt inside out, told him to take the shirt off, told him to go home — all in front of his fellow classmates,” Rooney said. School policy allows messages on clothes, as long as they aren’t lewd, pornographic or disruptive. “The school is saying that it was disruptive, but the only one that made it disruptive was the principal and one teacher,” Rooney said.

TEXAS LAWMAKER PROPOSES TOUGHER DIVORCE LAWS

(EP News)--Texas couples seeking a divorce would be required to either wait two years or take a class designed to save their marriage, under legislation proposed by state Rep. Warren Chisum, a Republican. It currently takes 60 days to finalize a divorce in Texas.

Chisum, who has been married for 50 years, attempted to pass similar legislation in 2007, but it was defeated in committee. Last year, Chisum authored a law that waves the \$60 marriage license fee for couples who take an 8-hour premarital class. “We’re going to attack it at both ends -- marriage and divorce -- in an effort to keep families together,” Chisum told the Austin American-Statesman. “If this just saves one marriage, it’ll be fine with me.”

INDIANA CONSIDERS BROADER FETAL-HOMICIDE LAW

(EP News)--Indiana is considering an expanded law to allow for separate murder charges for harming a preborn baby during a crime against a pregnant woman. Currently, the law allows for separate charges only in later stages of pregnancy. The legislation follows a recent Indianapolis bank shooting that injured a teller and killed her preborn twin girls. Because the mother was five months pregnant, the shooter is not facing murder charges.

Sen. Jim Merritt, a Republican, said he plans to introduce a bill that would amend the murder statute to include a preborn baby at any state of development. “The expectation of a child is a remarkable feeling -- to have that stolen from you is just tragic,” he told The Associated Press. County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi also is calling for longer prison sentences. “This is not a reproductive-rights issue,” Brizzi said. “This is protecting unborn children at conception.” Twenty-five states have fetal-homicide laws that allow homicide charges at any stage of gestation. Several states, including Indiana, have laws protecting preborn babies only at later stages.

“If men strive, and hurt a woman with child , so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him; and he shall

pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life” (Ex. 21:22-23).

MEN ACTIVE AT CHURCH ARE BETTER HUSBANDS, DADS

(EP News)--Christian communities continue to report happier marriages, fewer divorces and better fathers, according to a report from the Institute for American Values. Brad Wilcox, sociology professor at the University of Virginia, credits the family success in part to churches’ affirmation of strong family values. “It situates men in friendship networks, where they see other men who value family life,” he said. “It encourages them to step up to the plate and be better husbands and better fathers.” The report shows 65 percent of men who attend church regularly and are involved in ministry activities enjoy happier and more stable marriages than their secular peers. In addition, religious fathers are more likely to devote time and attention to their children.

POLL: MANY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THERE IS MORE THAN ONE ROAD TO GOD

(EP News)--More than half of self-identified evangelical Christians believe there is more than one path to salvation, according to a poll released Monday by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. More than 35,000 Americans were surveyed. Luis Lugo, director of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, said Christians may be reinventing their beliefs. “Americans seem to be fashioning their own beliefs on many of these things,” he said, “because it doesn’t seem to correspond to the official teachings that they’re getting from their own church.” The U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, released June 23, also said 92 percent of Americans believe in God and 79 percent believe in miracles. Only 14 percent say their religious beliefs are the main influence on their political thinking.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way , the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT REINTRODUCED IN SENATE

(EP News)--Following the California Supreme Court’s decision to legislate from the bench, Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., has reintroduced a constitutional amendment in the Senate to protect marriage from redefinition by state and federal judges. The Senate amendment states: “Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman.” It mirrors House legislation sponsored by Rep. Paul Broun, R-Ga. “Invariably, couples from that state will now move to states like Mississippi, or the other states that have prohibitions on same-sex ‘marriage,’” Wicker said, “and they will ask that those ‘marriages’ be recognized.” The amendment needs a two-thirds majority in the House and Senate. It then would go to the states for approval.

MAN SUES BIBLE PUBLISHERS OVER VERSES ON HOMOSEXUALITY

(EP News)--A Michigan man is suing Zondervan Publishing and Thomas Nelson Publishing, claiming biblical references to homosexuality as in violation of his constitutional rights and have caused him emotional pain and mental instability. Bradley LaShawn Fowler, 39, is seeking \$60 million from Zondervan and \$10 million from Thomas Nelson, The Grand Rapids (Mich.) Press reported. He is representing himself in both claims. Fowler claims the Bible has made him an outcast and contributed to physical discomfort and periods of “demoralization, chaos and bewilderment.”

KENTUCKY PURSUES “IN GOD WE TRUST” LICENSE PLATE

(EP News)--Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear, a Democrat, is seeking legislation authorizing “In God We Trust” license plates at no additional cost. Joe Prather, Beshear’s transportation secretary, sent a letter July 14 asking the state House and Senate transportation committees to pass legislation to create the plates. Similar legislation passed the House this year, but failed in the Senate. “In God We Trust” is essentially our national motto,” Beshear told *The Courier-Journal*. “And that national motto belongs to every American and indeed every Kentuckian. In my opinion, nobody should have to pay extra to have that national motto reflected on their license plate.”

Several states, including Indiana, South Carolina and North Carolina, offer “In God We Trust” license plates.

OKLAHOMA SUPREME COURT REJECTS GAY ‘DIVORCE’ CASE

(EP News)--The Oklahoma Supreme Court has sided with a lower court that refused to grant a “divorce” to a lesbian couple who were never legally married in the state. The women were married in Canada in 2002. Four years later, one of them filed for “divorce” in Tulsa, Okla. Voters amended the state constitution in 2004 to define marriage as between one man and one woman. A state statute prohibits recognition of same-sex “marriages” that take place out of state. Alliance Defense Fund litigation counsel Jim Campbell said the courts were correct to respect the will of the people. “Recognizing a same-sex divorce would mean recognizing a marriage that doesn’t exist under the laws of most states, and specifically, in this state,” he said. In November, voters in California, Arizona and Florida will decide on the definition of marriage in their states.

NATIONAL BRIEFS U.K. SETS A LOW STANDARD WITH SCHOOL “SEXUAL HEALTH” CLINICS

(EP News)--Students as young as 11 can receive free condoms, birth-control pills, morning-after pills, pregnancy tests and abortion advice at the new “sexual health”

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clinics in the U.K. And their parents will never find out. The clinics, housed at hundreds of schools throughout the U.K., are part of a government strategy to reduce teen pregnancies. Yet researchers — who studied 16 clinics over 15 months — reported 213 pregnancy tests and 55 morning-after pills were handed out. “Encouraging pre-teen sexuality by introducing powerful chemicals into children’s bodies is an experiment that may well contain lifelong health consequences,” said Linda Klepacki, sexual health analyst for Focus on the Family Action. “Setting health expectations at the lowest level is a dangerous practice that no country should consider.”

CANADIAN PASTOR FINED AFTER SPEAKING AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY

(EP News)--A Canadian human-rights tribunal has ordered a Christian pastor to never again express moral opposition to homosexuality, WorldNetDaily reported. The Alberta Human Rights Tribunal ordered the Rev. Stephen Boissin to stop expressing his biblical perspective of homosexuality and to pay \$7,000 in “damages for pain and suffering.” The decision came after Boissin wrote a letter to the editor of his local Red Deer, Alberta, newspaper in 2002 that included this statement: “Children as young as five and six years of age are being subjected to psychologically and physiologically damaging pro-homosexual literature and guidance in the public school system; all under the fraudulent guise of equal rights.”

AUSTRALIAN WEB SITE TELLS KIDS: “DIE TO SAVE THE PLANET”

(EP News)--Planet Slayer, a Web site of the Australian Broadcasting Corp., features a greenhouse calculator that tells kids when to die in order to save the planet. The site instructs users to take a quiz to “find out what age you should die at so you don’t use more than your fair share of Earth’s resources.” Typically, your cartoon character -- a pig -- blows up at the end of the quiz, leaving a puddle of blood. If your answers are “green,” the site tells you, “You will live forever.” Wesley J. Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, took the test and was told he should have died at age 7.4. “This is being sold to children, and it is shameful and profoundly nihilistic,” he wrote on his blog. “It illustrates again how profoundly anti-human and pro-death certain aspects of our culture are becoming.”

U.K. ADOPTION AGENCY TO QUIT OVER SAME-SEX PLACEMENTS

(EP News)--The Catholic Children’s Rescue Service will be the United Kingdom’s first adoption agency to stop placing kids because of the country’s homosexual “equality” law. The U.K.’s Equality Act, which outlaws “discrimination” on goods

and services based on sexual orientation, goes into effect in January. Thomas Atwood, president and chief executive officer of the U.S. National Council for Adoption, said kids will pay the price. “It’s tragic that children will not have families as a result of this tyrannical law,” he said. “The law ought to allow conscientious-objection exemptions for faith-based organizations.” Adoption agencies in the U.S. are facing the same dilemma. At least 15 states have laws similar to Britain’s. Catholic Charities of Boston quit the adoption business in 2006 rather than place children with same-sex couples.

SPAIN SET TO EXTEND HUMAN RIGHTS TO APES

(EP News)--Spain’s environmental committee approved legislation June 25 that would grant apes the right to life and freedom. The Great Apes Project would extend human rights to chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans and bonobos. Wesley J. Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, said human beings are being replaced as the premier species. “Now, we are merely one great ape among several others, each with minimum rights based on individual capacities rather than due to being members of the human species,” he wrote on his blog. “This is a disaster for universal human rights.” Under the legislation, it would be illegal to keep apes for TV commercials, filming or circuses. Zoos would be required to drastically improve their conditions.

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS BAN FATHER’S DAY CARDS

(EP News)--Thousands of students in Scotland were told they couldn’t make Father’s Day cards at school this year for fear of embarrassing classmates who live with single mothers or lesbians. School officials said the policy was adopted “in the interests of sensitivity,” and local authorities said teachers must adapt to the “changing patterns of family life.” Pro-family groups say Scotland’s tactics devalue fatherhood. “Fatherhood is just as essential to healthy child development as motherhood,” said Glenn Stanton, director of global family formation studies at Focus on the Family. “A father brings unique contributions that no one can replicate.”

CANADIAN ABORTIONIST RECEIVES NATION’S TOP CIVILIAN AWARD

(EP News)--Henry Morgentaler, the abortionist who led the way to legalized abortion in Canada two decades ago, has received the Governor General’s Order of Canada -- his country’s highest civilian award. “It’s a sign of recognition for all the work I’ve done over the years and the sacrifices I’ve borne,” Morgentaler said at a press conference at his Toronto clinic. Pro-life advocates immediately expressed outrage. “Canada’s highest honor has been debased,” Roman Catholic Archbishop Thomas Collins of Toronto said in a statement. “We are all diminished.” Joanne Byfield, president

of LifeCanada, told Reuters: “It is hard to believe that the queen’s representative and our government can ignore the beliefs of the majority of Canadians by bestowing what was such a prestigious honor on a man who has spent his life denying the most fundamental human right, the right to life for all human beings.”

HUMAN-PIG EMBRYOS GET THE OK IN BRITAIN

(EP News)--A license to create human-pig embryos has been issued by a fertility watchdog in Britain -- the first since the House of Commons voted in favor of the controversial research in June. Justin St John, a professor at the University of Warwick, wants to create human-pig clones to produce human-only embryonic stem cells.

BRAZIL REJECTS BILL TO LEGALIZE ABORTION

(EP News)--A committee in Brazil’s lower house of Congress rejected a bill July 9 that would have legalized abortion. The Justice and Constitution Committee voted 57-4 against the bill, which has been stuck in Congress for 17 years. Brazilian law defines abortion as a crime punishable by jail time. “Pro-life advocates in Brazil have much to celebrate,” said Carrie Gordon Earll, senior bioethics analyst for Focus on the Family Action. “Yet, they also have work to do in helping Brazilian women realize that abortion is never the answer to challenging pregnancies.” The vote comes at a time when Central and South American countries face increased pressure to repeal long-standing abortion bans.

REGISTRAR’S RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES UPHELD

(EP News)--The Central London Employment Tribunal has sided with a Christian registrar whose job was threatened when she requested permission to opt out of performing same-sex ceremonies. The tribunal upheld Lillian Ladele’s claims of discrimination, harassment and victimization. “It is a victory for religious liberty, not just for myself but for others in a similar position,” Ladele said after the ruling. “Gay ‘rights’ should not be used as an excuse to bully or harass people over their religious beliefs.”

DIVORCE CONTINUES TO DAMAGE KIDS, U.K. STUDY SHOWS

(EP News)--A decades-long U.K. study shows divorce remains damaging to children, despite a greater social acceptance. The National Child Development Study tracks 17,000 people born in Britain during the same week in 1958. Comparing those individuals with those born years later, the study revealed those in both generations with divorced parents were more likely to suffer from depression and do poorer in school and careers than their peers. They also were more likely to go through a divorce of their own.

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Christ Crucified

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A STUMBLING BLOCK

Our text says, “**But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block. . .**” (I Cor. 1:23). To some folks, this is what Christ crucified is---“**a stumbling block.**” In the case of the Jews, we find that they were always looking for a sign. We read in I Corinthians 1:22, “**For the Jews require a sign. . .**” Now the Jews looked for a “sign,” but they stumbled upon the only sign that was given them--Christ crucified.

Twice in the Gospel of Matthew, the scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus asking a sign of Him. (See Matt. 12:38-40; Matt. 16:1-4.) In both cases the Lord tells the Jews that the sign which will be given to them is, essentially, Christ crucified. We read in Matthew 12:38-40, “**Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**”

And it is also true, that even in the Old Testament the Jews had always been prone to seek after a sign. In the time of Noah, we do not find where the Lord God ever offered him a sign of the judgment which was to come upon the earth--the Lord simply commanded him, and Noah obeyed. In the time of Abraham, we do not find where the Lord ever offered him a sign--the Lord simply commanded him to go, and he went. (Now, after these events took place, in the case of Noah, I suppose that we could look at the Rainbow as it is mentioned in Genesis 9:12-13; and in the case of Abraham, I suppose we could look at Genesis 15:5, and consider the stars of Heaven to be a sign of the promise that the Lord would bless and multiply the seed of Abraham. However, remember that both of these men were originally obedient, even before any sign was offered to them.) But, in the cases of many of the Old Testament children of Israel that would follow Abraham, it appears that it became habitual for them to seek after a sign of the Lord’s promises to them. Later, we read about a conversation which took place between the LORD God and Moses, His servant: “**And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he**

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Christ Crucified

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cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land” (Ex. 4:1-9).

Though we don’t often consider this passage in this way, it seems to me that Moses is asking for a sign from God before he is willing to proceed. We usually think of these signs as something which was meant for the children of Israel. And, certainly, we can see the Lord is providing these signs unto Moses so that the children of Israel would believe. However, I think these signs were also meant to cause Moses to trust in God and in His power.

But, primarily, I want you to notice this: These signs were effective in causing the children of Israel to believe in Moses and in Aaron, and in the fact that they were sent by God. And these signs were also effective in causing the children of Israel to believe in God Himself, that He had come to save them. In fact, later on we read, **“And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped”** (Ex. 4:28-31).

So, we see that signs were very important to the children of Israel. We

could go on to notice the man Gideon, and the signs that the Lord gave him (See Judges 6:11-21, 36-40). And we could notice King Hezekiah and the sign of the sun dial (See II Kings 20:8-9). And we could go on to read about the prophets of Israel and the many signs that they delivered to the children of Israel. However, what I want to point out is that the children of Israel relied very heavily on outward signs. In fact, if we return to our account in Exodus 4, we find that sight was necessary before they would hear. We read again in Exodus 4:30-31, **“And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed. . .”** Let me also remind you of the fact that these same signs (and many more) were shown unto Pharaoh, and yet he did not believe. We read in Exodus 4:21, **“And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.”** You see, even the greatest of signs is not enough to provoke belief. Only the blessed hand of God, and the faith that comes from Him, can allow us to truly believe in our God and our Savior.

The Jews desired a sign, and it was there before them. If they would only have read and understood the prophet Isaiah! (See Isa. 7:10-16). But, as we have already noticed, the sign itself, though that sign (Jesus Christ) was walking in their midst, was not enough. But surely only the quickening and drawing power of the Holy Spirit was sufficient to bring belief and faith in wicked sinners. (See John 3:5; John 6:44.)

FOOLISHNESS

If we again go to the verse that precedes our text verses, we read this: **“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom”** (I Cor. 1:22). There are certain people (and the Greeks were considered in this number) that think that human wisdom is the pinnacle of enlightenment and accomplishment. Their greatest desire is to learn and search out human wisdom. Luke tells us about some of these folks when he tells us about the Apostle Paul’s contact with the Greeks that dwelt at Athens. **“Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoiks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were**

there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing)” (Acts 17:18-21). Notice that Paul preached unto the Athenians, **“ . . . Jesus, and the resurrection. . .”** So we must understand that he was preaching the same thing that we are talking about today---“Christ Crucified.”

The response of the Athenians, and those that were strangers there, was to seek to understand through human wisdom, the things that Paul spoke of. However, man cannot understand the things of God through the mere use of human wisdom. So, the result is, that the human wisdom of this world determines that Christ crucified is only foolishness. Just like the scientists and scholars of our day, these men, too, thought that Christ crucified was only foolishness!

The philosophers and poets and epicureans and stoiks may want to hear about Christ crucified, but they will never believe it, unless God would intervene. These people only want to say that they have heard about these doctrines and teachings, so that they can, in a sense, expand the horizons of their humanistic wisdom. Then, as they hear and learn about these doctrines, such as the resurrection of Jesus, they feel that they are qualified to give forth their opinion. And their opinion always is, that Christ crucified, and Jesus resurrected, is foolishness.

Even those from among this type of peoples that, perhaps, exhibit some religious or moral tendencies, imagine that their salvation can be found in the successful attainment of human wisdom. They do not comprehend the spiritual matters of the salvation that God has performed, and instead, they scoff at a religion that is based on a Christ that was crucified, and a Jesus that was resurrected. To these folks, “Christ Crucified” is utter foolishness. They believe that human wisdom and the worth of man must play some part in any salvation. Therefore, Jesus, the Christ that was crucified for sinners, is utter foolishness to them.

POWER OF GOD

There are other men and women, though, whose response to the preaching of Christ crucified, is not found in either of the classes that I have mentioned previously. In other words, though most will determine that Christ crucified is foolishness, or Christ crucified becomes a stumbling block to them; the people that I want to talk about now, believe that Christ crucified is the power of God.

We read just previous to our text verse, **“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God”** (I Cor. 1:18). Any person that is ever saved must believe that the gospel of Christ is the power of God. Paul said about himself, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that**

believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). If a person does not believe in the power (effectiveness) of the salvation that Jesus Christ performed on our behalf, then how can that person be saved?

WISDOM OF GOD

You know, if men could gain sufficient wisdom to save themselves, then there would be no need of the salvation of the Lord as it was given to us in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if the wisdom of men could save men, then it would glorify mankind and the wisdom of man. Just previous to our text verses we read this: **“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”** (I Cor. 1:21). And just after our text verses we read this: **“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men. . . But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. . . That no flesh should glory in his presence”** (I Cor. 1:25, 27, 29).

The salvation that is found in “Christ crucified” is manifestation of the wisdom of God as opposed to the foolishness of men. Men foolishly imagine that they can save themselves. But, the only salvation that exists for any man is found in “Christ crucified.” The salvation that God has provided does not in any way glorify or exalt man; instead, the salvation that God has provided only exalts and glorifies “Christ crucified.”

Do you see the wisdom of God in salvation? Do you see how man is abased and God is exalted? Any salvation that incorporates the goodness or worth or ability of man, is a salvation that implies some inherent goodness, worth, or ability in man. And, if man has some inherent goodness, then, essentially, he doesn’t need a Savior. Do you see what I am saying? The wisdom of God is expressed in “Christ crucified” because it shows man his worthlessness and his utter inability to save himself, while at the same time identifying God, and His Son Jesus the Christ, as the only salvation for any man. When a man will turn from the wisdom of this world, and the wisdom that he thinks that he possesses; and when he turns unto something (or someone) that the world considers foolish; then this is when he is saved; this is when true wisdom (the wisdom which comes from above---see James 3:17) is imparted unto him.

And I might say this also: Man prides himself on his learning and on his human wisdom. But, no matter what man might learn or express, when it comes to salvation, there is no wisdom, but the wisdom of God. There is no wisdom in salvation, except to ascribe all glory, power, and wisdom unto God.

CONCLUSION

The Jews sought after a sign; the

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Greeks sought after wisdom; but, the people of God, those with whom He has dealt in a miraculous way, turn from these human desires, and they seek only Christ crucified. To the people of God, Christ crucified is the very power of God. To these same people of God, Christ crucified is also the wisdom of God. The Jews wanted to see a sign from Heaven, or a sign from God. What they were really after, was a demonstration of the power of God. Well, it is given to them in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, they did not see that sign and power of God. The Greeks desired to learn and grow wise in the wisdom and learning of men. They sought to understand "Christ crucified" through their own innate human ability to learn. However, when they couldn't understand "Christ crucified," then they saw Him and the salvation that He provided, as only foolishness.

But, you and I, and all of the people of God, do not come to God based upon our own abilities or our own wisdom; instead, we see "Christ crucified" as the power of God, and as the wisdom of God in the salvation of men.



One Million Reasons For Radical Education

By Anthony B. Bradley

More than 1.23 million high school seniors will fail to graduate in the class of 2008, according to a new study conducted by the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center. Now that the drama over the Democratic nominee has subsided, the presidential candidates must return to issues that threaten to hobble America in a global economy: namely, millions of future adults who are not acquiring the skill sets that will enable them to compete.

Results for the class of 2005, the most recent year available, show a national graduation rate of nearly 71 percent, an increase of about half a percentage point over the prior year. According to the report, that figure drops for historically disadvantaged groups: 58 percent for Hispanics, 55 percent for African-Americans, and 51 percent for Native Americans. Males in these groups fare especially poorly.

Iowa, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Vermont lead the nation with graduation rates of more than 80 percent. The District of Columbia, Georgia, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, and South Carolina lag the nation with rates under 60 percent.

The new data are highlighted in a report, "Diplomas Count 2008: School to College: Can State P-16 Councils Ease the Transition?," which explores the graduation crisis for every U.S. district and state. "The nation and many states face severe challenges in graduating students from high school. The crisis disproportionately strikes poor, minority, and urban youths. With the graduation rate rising less than one percentage point annually in recent years, we still have much work to do," says Christopher Swanson, Director of the EPE Research Center.

What reports overlook, and all the political rhetoric during the presidential campaign will miss, is that high school graduation rates are tied to a stable family life, a sense of self-efficacy, and moral agency, rather than to money spent per pupil or the number of standardized assessments given from kindergarten through grade twelve.

Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school as their classmates who live with two parents. Children whose fathers are absent consistently score lower than the norm in reading and math tests.

When I taught high school, I noticed a trend semester after semester for years: students from the most stable families and loving communities usually were the most successful. I lamented the fact that some of my brightest students were not free to perform well because of chaos at home. Kids from abusive homes and children of divorced or absentee parents did not normally perform well regardless of aptitude. I had students who regularly received low marks but would score high on aptitude and IQ tests.

Self-efficacy is built when a child believes that his or her life has meaning and that he or she can make a difference in the world. What better incentive to learn about the world and learn a skill set than the knowledge that someday one will make a contribution to making the world a better place? Materialism and consumption as motivators eventually fail to provide incentives for struggling kids to persevere. A high school student who is depressed, abusing drugs, suicidal, and nihilistic couldn't care less about the threat of "flipping burgers" for life.

Moral agency refers to a kind of maturity, the capacity of a child to exercise virtue by making good decisions in his or her interests. Agency often requires a long-term view of the world cultivated from the wise counsel of parents, and other supportive adults and peers, who seek to direct children to the best long-term holistic health. Struggling adolescents making decisions that sabotage their own progress will not make it.

Regardless of race or class, education reform will only be successful in concert

with other needed reforms. Family, self-efficacy, and agency work in concert like one of Bach's Brandenburg concertos. We have over one million annual reasons to stop playing rhetorical political games and ignoring the fact that educational success is forged outside of the classroom. (via EP News)

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck" (Pro. 1:8-9).



Mini-Edition

by Joseph Harris

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The Right Foundation

A good foundation is always important. A solid foundation is essential in the construction of a building. A strong academic background is important for success in higher education. The parable Jesus told about the wise man and the foolish man is more than just a children's Bible story. Rock is always preferable to sand for a foundation.

America's "multi-cultural diverse" society is built upon the sand of man's wisdom and not the rock of God. Our public government education system is built on the sinking sand of humanism and relativism and not the solid rock of absolute truth. American politics is built on the sand of public opinion instead of principles based upon God's wisdom. Many modern churches are built upon marketing to the consumer's needs with no regard for what pleases God. I could go on with examples, but you get the picture.

Though it sounds too simple, the basic "why" of man's problems is traced directly back to the exclusion of God. Now don't go to the illogical conclusion that the presence of God means the absence of all problems, or you might get initiated into the "name it and claim it" club and begin your own program on TBN. **"Man . . . is born unto trouble,"** according to a wise man who well knew by experience.

Notice, the Bible does not begin with a plea for salvation or how to live a holy life or how to be victorious over sin. It begins with the foundation of the existence of GOD. Genesis 1:1 does not even try to prove the existence of God. It assumes His existence. The Scripture simply says, **"In the beginning, GOD . . ."** Belief in God as Creator is foundational because if you do not accept the existence of the Creator, nothing else matters. Acceptance of

God as Creator precedes acceptance of God as Savior. The foundation must precede the building. This fact explains why Satan tries to supplant the Creator and creation with evolution. If there is no Creator, there is nothing, zero. No beginning, no ending and nothing in between, hence we are all animals with no purpose for existence and no destination but the grave. Wow, what hope and comfort evolution gives!

Christianity supplies something no other religion, philosophy or world view can completely give: (1) beginning; (2) purpose, and (3) destination. Christianity provides a perfect trinity of explanation of: (1) origin of everything (God), (2) the meaning of life (glorify God), and (3) the conclusion of it all (eternity with or without God). Notice, God is the center of the threefold explanation.

God is essential. Man is not capable of ultimate success apart from God because of depravity, and real success is more than having money or things. Man, left to himself, apart from God, will always degenerate. Since Adam, every person has entered this world with a predisposition to turn away from God and commit sin. Every society in human history that ignored God eventually crumbled.

When it comes to your life, don't just include God. Build your life around Him. Place God at the center. Put Him first in your life, first in your marriage, first in your finances, and first in your work. **"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 3:11).



Marriage Madness and Why It Could Destroy America

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

"Civilizations die from suicide, not by murder," wrote the great 20th-century historian, Arnold Toynbee. This is precisely what is happening in America--and in the West. What the late Pope John Paul II called the "culture of death" is slowly but relentlessly taking root. Last week's onrush of gay couples being issued marriage licenses in California is a clear symptom of America's moral decay.

Last month's decision by California's Supreme Court to overturn the state's ban on same-sex marriage marks a watershed in our raging culture wars. It is a tremendous victory for social

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Marriage Madness

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liberalism---the ideology that seeks to smash the traditional family and the bourgeois moral order. The court decision took effect last week. Hundreds of gay and lesbian couples have been getting married in civil ceremonies across the Golden State. The only other state that recognizes same-sex marriage is Massachusetts.

The difference, however, is that California's decision allows out-of-state nonresidents to be granted marriage licenses. This sets the stage for future court battles in the other states where same-sex marriage is forbidden. Gay and lesbian couples are already tying the knot in California, so they can return to their home states and demand that their unions be legalized there as well.

New York state has declared it will recognize same-sex marriages performed in California. Gay activists are on the offensive. They are pushing the radical homosexual agenda onto the national stage.

Will Americans fight back? The answer is yes---at least, in the short term. In November, a ballot initiative in California will ask voters to amend the state's constitution to uphold the ban on same-sex marriage, thereby effectively repealing the court's decision. Polls show 55 percent support the initiative. Proponents of same-sex marriage will likely be defeated.

But relying on the will of the electorate is a double-edged sword: Future majorities may decide to again amend California's constitution and revoke the protection for traditional marriage. Conservatives rightly decry the state Supreme Court's decision as a classic example of judges usurping their prerogatives and legislating from the bench. For liberal cities, social engineering trumps majority rule.

The issue of same-sex marriage is more than anti-democratic, judicial activism run amok. It concerns defending the basic institution of society: The family. There is a moral line that, once it is crossed, threatens to unravel the fragile bonds of civilization.

Since the 1960s, the West has undergone a sexual revolution. At its core, this revolution champions personal liberation and social permissiveness. Its goal has been to privatize morality; to remove traditional moral constraints, such as duty, family and responsibility.

The result has been corrosive---sexual promiscuity and pornography is now rampant; teen pregnancy is rife; illegitimacy rates are soaring; divorce has sky-rocketed; tens of millions of families have been broken; millions have died from sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS; and nearly 50 million innocent unborn babies have been murdered since

Roe v. Wade legalized abortion. In short, the sexual revolution has destroyed as many people as the Bolshevik or Nazi revolutions.

But this has not stopped its defenders. Homosexuality is also a form of destructive sexual behavior. If you engage in sodomy often and long enough, it slowly destroys your health. The gay lifestyle is innately promiscuous---and dangerous.

The advocates of same-sex marriage do not seek tolerance for homosexuals. They have already accomplished this. Sodomy laws have been struck down. Gays and lesbians are free to engage in sexual activity in the privacy of their bedrooms.

What they now seek is something different: The legitimization of their lifestyle. By pushing for gay marriage, they are demanding that society give its stamp of approval to homosexuality. The homosexual agenda therefore is not about "civil rights." Rather, it is about taking the sexual revolution to its logical, dystopian conclusion---the creation of a new social order based on moral relativism, hedonism and individual gratification.

Ultimately, however, the purpose of marriage---and of sex---is not to be "happy," "satisfied" or "fulfilled." It is to sustain our civilization by reproducing. A society of homosexuals cannot perpetuate itself; it is doomed to extinction.

Hence, same-sex marriage is an oxymoron. Marriage is about having children and reproducing---one generation is transmitted to the next. The crisis of our age is that we no longer understand this---or care to. Most European countries do not have birthrates necessary to maintain their populations. They are gradually dying. America's birthrate is slightly higher but has been trending downward for decades.

Abortion, contraception, gay marriage, permissiveness and pornography---these are the poisoned fruits of the sexual revolution. They all lead to one tragic end: a future without children. Cultural liberalism is the ideology of suicide. America must pull back from the brink before it is too late. (*The Washington Times*, June 30, 2008)



Longsuffering

By J. Harvey

*'Now see the man immortal; him I mean
Who lives as such; whose heart, full bent on
heaven,*

Leans all that way; his bias to the stars.

*The world's dark shade in contrast set shall
raise*

*His luster more; though bright, without a
foil.*

Observe his awful portrait, and admire:

Nor stop at wonder---imitate and live.

The longsuffering of God has been marvelously extended towards mankind in all ages. This is a truth not only recorded in the Bible, and attested in the history of all nations, but is also incorporated with our own experience.

The testimony of inspiration, the dictates of reason and experience combine to ratify this truth. It was manifest in the preservation of our first parents after their transgression. When Moses, in obedience to the divine command, stood, early in the morning, on the top of Mount Sinai, with the tables of stone in his hand, the Lord descended in a cloud, and as He passed by before him, He proclaimed, "**The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin**" (Ex. 34:6-7). The apostle Peter evidently alludes to the exercise of the divine forbearance anterior to the deluge, when he says, "**Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water**" (I Pet. 3:20). The same apostle further states, "**The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**" (I Pet. 3:9).

It is manifest in sparing us and in deferring the execution of His threatenings. Such exhibitions of goodness, mercy, and longsuffering are powerful inducements to adoring gratitude for this part of the divine conduct. But in many instances the patience and compassion of God are inconsiderately abused and made the occasion of rebellion against Him. Because sentence against evil deeds is not executed speedily, the children of men become more daring in their opposition to God, and reckless of their salvation.

But we have to consider longsuffering in relation to the Christian character. It is a fruit of the Spirit, another essential link in the believer's golden chain, or interesting feature in the portrait of the Christian. We will notice---

I. WHAT IT IMPLIES

According to the definitions of acknowledged authorities longsuffering and patience are synonymous terms; the one implies the other; the one involves the other. It implies resignation and forbearance. Resignation to the will of God, and a disposition to bear insults, injuries, and provocations, without seeking revenge, or manifesting resentment. An individual who imbibes this spirit, and contributes to promote it in the minds of others, not only furnishes evidence of self-government, but exemplifies conduct worthy of general emulation. It is commended in Scripture: "**In your patience possess ye your souls**"

(Luke 21:19). It implies---

1. *Submission and resignation to the Divine will.* God is a Sovereign, and requires universal obedience to His laws, and constant submission to His authority and government. His laws are holy, wise, and just; they prohibit nothing but what is injurious to our temporal and spiritual interests, and enjoin nothing but what is reasonable and advantageous. If a child be required to submit to his parent, a pupil to his teacher, a servant to his master, a soldier to his general, a subject to his sovereign, we must acknowledge the equity of the Divine claims upon us. We are under His immediate and constant protection. He directs and controls all events for our good; and to His rightful and universal sovereignty we must submit.

When Nadab and Abihu were consumed for offering strange fire before the Lord, Aaron held his peace, and he, Eleazer, and Ithamar were forbidden to mourn for them. When Samuel informed Eli of the destruction of his house, however painful the intelligence, Eli exclaimed, "**It is the LORD: let Him to what seemeth Him good**" (I Sam. 3:18). This disposition produced acquiescence in the will of God in the case of the Shunamite, when deprived of her child. Elisha, seeing her afar off; sent his servant to meet her; and Gehazi said unto her, "**Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? It is well with the child? And she answered, It is well**" (II Kings 4:26).

There are many persons who imbibe a repining and murmuring spirit, especially if their purposes are frustrated, their hopes blighted, and their schemes prove ineffectual. But every real and intelligent Christian sees the wisdom and propriety of submitting patiently to the unerring administrations of Him Who "doeth whatever He will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of men"; and Who also "**worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will**" (Eph. 1:11).

Some are highly dissatisfied with the order and arrangements of Divine Providence in reference to their position and connections in life. They observe others who, in regard to their worldly circumstances, and the circles in which they move, are considerably superior to themselves. This, to them, is a source of uneasiness, or an event at which they bitterly complain. They desire at least to be equal to them in point of influence, wealth, and respectability. They argue for equality, and not a few are aspirants for pre-eminence. It is to them a mortifying thought, that they are of low and undistinguished origin, and that their position in life is far from being affluent. They complain that some are high, and they are low; that some are rich, and they are poor; that some are illustrious, and they are obscure; that some are gentlemen, and they have to labor for a livelihood.

♦ (Continued on page 398)

Longsuffering

(Continued from page 397) ♦

Others repine at the seasons; and have presumption enough to conclude, that if they had the reins of government in their own hands, they could regulate affairs and control events to better advantage. For them, days are either too long or too short--too hot or too cold--too wet or too dry. But the Christian, in taking a view of the past, in relation to the Divine procedure, can bear his grateful testimony that the Lord **"hath done all things well."**

Many pious people cannot boast of high parentage, extensive possessions, or distinguished abilities; but higher objects attract their attention, and themes of richer interest occupy their thoughts. Their state of mind is similar to that of the apostle Paul, when he said, **"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"** (Phil. 4:11). Whether it be a state of prosperity or adversity of sickness or health, they are confident that **"all things work together for good to them that love God"** (Rom. 8:28). Christian patience does not arise from the abundance of wealth possessed, but from the degree of holiness attained. A good man is often more content in his humble cottage, garret, or cellar, than those who reside in stately mansions, and are attired in the most elegant costume; for true piety sheds a ray of light and comfort on the domestic hearth. **"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"** (I Tim. 4:8).

Many are dissatisfied with the term and trials of their probation. This probationary state is one of unspeakable importance. Here we form our character for eternity; on this life hangs eventful issues of weal or woe. Life is sweet, it is precious. **"All that a man hath will he give for his life"** (Job 2:4). To some, however, life seems to be a burden; they appear weary of it; not in consequence of any affliction or calamity which has befallen them, but simply because they cannot accomplish some object they desire to realize, and frequently in a fit of displeasure, they terminate their earthly career--occurrences very common in our day. And there are not a few whose affections are so fully fixed on earthly things, that even in advanced life they are reluctant to let go their eager grasp of this sublunary state.

But the Christian duly appreciates life, with all its joys and sorrows, its difficulties and blessings; and in seasons of severe trial, conflict, and bodily afflictions, his language is: **"All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come"** (Job 14:14). He is not weary of life, neither is he unwilling to leave this world at his Maker's bidding. He is ready to glorify God either by his life or by his death. The apostle Paul, during his imprisonment, said: **"So now also Christ shall be magnified in**

my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil 1:20-24). The apostle was willing to remain out of Heaven for a time, if by continuing on earth he could be instrumental in bringing souls to Heaven.

The Christian does not murmur at the length of the journey, nor repine at the ruggedness of the way, nor complain at the difficulties he has to surmount, nor the duties he has to perform, nor the sacrifices he has to make, nor the enemies he has to encounter, nor the toils and inconveniences he has to endure. Our chief concern, our principal business here is to do the will of our heavenly Father; to be content with such things as we have, for **"godliness with contentment is great gain"** (I Tim. 6:6). **"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"** (Heb. 13:5). It implies---

2. *Forbearance.* **"When ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God"** (I Pet. 2:20). Life is a chequered scene; and there are circumstances in our history which summon all the patient longsuffering we possess to bear up under them. Religion does not destroy our sensitiveness, nor dim our vision, that we cannot perceive when we are injured or insulted; yet it teaches us to exercise forbearance towards all men. Christians are often insulted by those whose aversion to religion is visible, such as infidels, atheists, and scoffers. Insults sometimes arise from members of the same family. **"A man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, the the daughter in law against her mother in law"** (Matt. 10:35). Injuries, too, are often inflicted on them; they have suffered both in body and mind. But in what light should these things be viewed, or the estimate we should form of them? May we not regard them as trials of our faith, and tests of our patience, but as harmless to our moral character? **"Marvel not. . .if the world hate you"** (I John 3:13). And how should they be endured? I answer, unwaveringly, this is requisite to our safety; forgivingly, this is manly and honourable; patiently, without retaliation, for this is praiseworthy and Christlike. If this spirit was cultivated to a greater extent by professing Christians, the cause of God would sustain less injury, and many misunderstandings and much controversy might be avoided. Although the shade of imperfection may be seen at times even in the most exemplary Christians, yet the altitude of their station renders them conspicuous; and their conduct and virtues cannot fail to exert an influence on the

minds of those around them. As there is a diversity of gifts and degrees of holiness, so there are degrees of patience. All Christians possess it in kind, but differ in extent of attainment. It is, however, the duty of all to cultivate a submissive, contented, and forbearing spirit. The apostle prayed that the Colossians might be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power; unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. Observe---

II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THIS TEMPER IS MANIFESTED.

It should be exercised at all times; but there are special occasions when this Christian virtue is tested; and when it is apparent under such circumstances it greatly redounds to the honour of its possessors. To remain calm and unmoved when there is nothing to afflict the body, nor to lacerate and perplex the mind, is no very arduous task; but to be patient under persecutions, chastisements, and difficulties, renders the character doubly illustrious. It is manifest---

1. *When persecuted for righteousness sake.* It is not unusual for the people of God to suffer persecution. **"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. . .If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf"** (I Pet. 4:12-14, 16). The Saviour, in His inimitable sermon on the mount, said, **"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"** (Matt. 5:11-12).

All Christians are subject to persecution and reproach while in this evil world. The strength of their faith, the firmness of their attachment to religion, their courage and temper, are often tried. Some try them designedly, by inflicting injury upon their persons and slandering their character; they frequently spread nets to entangle them, and gins to entrap them. Their motives are misrepresented; and, in many instances, they are subjects of calumny and contempt. But Christianity teaches its possessors to bear all this unmerited treatment with patient longsuffering, and suppress every inclination which would lead to irritation and resentment. **"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"** (Rom. 12:21). Let no provocations irritate you; let no signs of impatience be observed in your conduct.

Longsuffering was strikingly manifested in the conduct of the Saviour towards

His bitterest enemies; for, **"When He was reviled, he reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"** (I Pet. 2:23). The same spirit was evinced towards the men who crimsoned their hands in His blood, when they nailed Him to the cross; when the sun withdrew his light, and the earth trembled, and the rocks over which the storms of ages had swept impressively were torn asunder; and while the purple stream flowed from His mangled body, and the pains of death were upon Him, His prayer was, **"Father, forgive them!"** (Luke 23:34).

Look also at the conduct of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. He was falsely accused of blaspheming against the law and the temple, against Moses and against God; he was condemned, dragged out of the city, and then stoned to death. But observe the triumph of longsuffering exemplified on the solemn occasion. They stoned Stephen while in the attitude and act of prayer: but his dying accents were, **"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep"** (Acts 7:60). **"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Jesus Christ"** (Rom. 15:5). It is manifest under---

2. *Divine chastisements.* **"Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"** (Heb. 12:5-7). This passage clearly proves that Christians are not exempt from afflictions. They are undoubtedly designed for their benefit: hence David said: **"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word"** (Ps. 119:67). **"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby"** (Heb. 12:11).

This life is composed, so to speak, of joys and sorrows, struggles and triumphs, tears and smiles, storms and calms, prosperity and adversity, of health and sickness. Job had his afflictions, but he endured them with extraordinary resignation. Hear his language: **"When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"** (Job 23:10). Again we read, **"and I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, the LORD is my God."** The apostle James remarks: **"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that she may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"** (Zech. 13:9).

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Longsuffering

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Affliction is a school in which many have learned important lessons: such as their own unworthiness, their frailty, and the necessity of a preparation for death and eternity. Affliction is a furnace, through which the children of God are sometimes conducted, that they may be purged from all impurity of heart, attain to a higher state of grace, and a more perfect likeness to Him Who is the **“brightness of the his glory, and the express image of his person.”** We have frequently too many drossy particles---drugs and tin about us; too much imperfection and worldly mindedness. **“Thy silver is become dross, I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin”** (Isa. 1:22, 25).

The furnace may at times be heated to an unusually high temperature; but the Refiner sits to inspect the process, and knows when we are sufficiently purified. He will not allow the heat to rise one degree higher than we are able to endure; He will lay no more upon His people than they can bear. Relative and bodily afflictions are circumstances which afford ample scope for the development of Christian patience. We must receive the corrections of our heavenly Father with cheerfulness and docility; His singular chastisements without murmuring; submit to his dispensations without complaint; yield to His appointments with willing resignation; receive His blessings with thankfulness; and in seasons of severe trial exclaim, **“Not my will, but thine, be done”** (Luke 22:42).

*When I can trust my all with God,
In trial's fearful hour---
Bow, all resigned, beneath His rod,
And bless His sparing power;
A joy springs up amid distress---
A fountain in the wilderness.
Then there are---*

3. Difficulties which often perplex the mind. We cannot find out the Almighty unto perfection. His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. **“Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take”** (Job 23:8-10). **“He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.”**

Much is concealed from our view, and many of His ways are past finding out. Partial, however, as is the revelation given to man, it is sufficient to answer all the purposes with reference to his salvation. In consequence of our limited knowledge we are unable to comprehend the designs of His unerring administration. The dealings of God with His people are often mysterious, their privations and sufferings

are sometimes complex and protracted. The affectionate mother weeps over her expiring child: the afflicted widow, with symbols of bereavement fresh upon her, laments the loss of him who was the partner of her joys and the lightener of her sorrows: but why this sudden and unexpected bereavement this shattered reed of humanity is at a loss to know. The church frequently mourns over the loss of a useful and devoted pastor, who ministered at her altar, cut off in the midst of his zeal and vigour; but she cannot comprehend the designs of the Almighty Sovereign of the universe.

*‘God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.’*

“He made darkness his secret place; His pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies” (Ps. 28:11).

But religion teaches its possessors to acquiesce in the inscrutable mysteries of divine Providence. David said, **“I was dumb; I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it”** (Ps. 39:9). Paul said, **“For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”** (I Cor. 13:12). He has not thought proper to furnish us with the reasons for His conduct; but we may comfort ourselves with the assurance that “What we know not now we shall know hereafter.” The period is coming when there shall be a full solution of all that is now involved in impenetrable mystery; when all the faithful shall simultaneously acknowledge---**“Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest”** (Rev. 15:3-4).

(To be continued in next issue)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Indore Baptist Church has begun sponsoring a mission work in Charleston, WV. The Charleston Baptist Congregation is now meeting in our newly purchased Church building, on Sissonville Dr., just one mile north of Washington St. Services are held weekly on Thursday's at 7:00 PM.

Please visit indorebaptistchurch.org to find a map and other information about the Charleston Baptist Congregation. Or contact the pastor at (304)587-4660 or prstepp@indorebaptistchurch.org

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS is in the process of updating links to other churches of like faith and order on the website. Any church who would like to be listed on our website need only request such and send the necessary information.



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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 6-1-2008 to 6-30-2008

Beginning Balance \$8,690.56

RECEIPTS:

B.C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	54.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ...	150.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
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
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA	150.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	75.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Mary Myers, Fossil, OR	30.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	500.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testamnet B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA	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
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Walnut Creek B. C., Grove City, OH	50.00
Subscriptions	209.00
Anon	205.00
Dividing Checks	248.00
Sub Total	\$3,436.00
TOTAL	\$12,126.56

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	581.71
Postage	764.63
Wages	2,000.00
FICA	153.01
Dividing Checks	248.00
Total Expenditures	3,747.35
ENDING BALANCE	\$8,379.21

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 6-1-2008 to 6-30-2008

Beginning Balance \$11,975.44

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ...	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	475.00
TOTAL	12,450.44

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time	410.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	410.00
.....	\$12,040.44
Interest	+ 1.37
.....	12,041.81
Less Corbin, KY des.	-690.92
ENDING BALANCE	\$11,350.89

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance \$850.92

RECEIPTS:

.....	850.92
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EXPENDITURES:

WCTT	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$690.92



WORLD SCENE

By
Capt. G. Russell Evans USCG (Ret.)



Proposed North American Union Threatens Constitution

In virtual secrecy, efforts are underway to combine the United States, Mexico and Canada in a North American Union similar to the European Union---and perhaps even combine the dollar and peso into one currency. Believe me, this is not some pipedream that will never come to pass.

Advocates of a North American Union include the academic, political, and business elites of our continent.

Even the highly respected *Wall Street Journal* has spoken in favor of a North American Union. Former editor Robert Bartley wrote, "I think the Nation-State is finished, and NAFTA should evolve into something like the European Union, with open borders not only for goods and investments, but people."

Three years ago, the highly influential Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) published a report that calls for the formation of a North American Union overseen by an interparliamentary group with power over our elected members of congress.

One of the signers of this CFR report, Robert Pastor---President Carter's National Security Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean wrote a book toward a North American community, where he advocates replacing dollars and pesos with a new currency he calls "Ameros."

These "Ameros" could be used throughout the continent---just like Euros are used throughout the European Union.

Although not well known with the general public, the liberal and "Globalist" Council on Foreign Relations is undoubtedly the most powerful, private group directing U.S. foreign policy today.

The Vice Chairman of CFR is none other than Robert Rubin, Bill Clinton's Secretary of the Treasury and CFR's board members include a "Who's Who" of academic, business, media, and political elites including Clinton's Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, Tom Brokaw, and various powerful 500 CEO's.

CFR's Building a North American Community Report" advocates an integrated continental court system and developing a North American Border pass with Biometric identifiers so that Mexicans can have "full labor mobility."

It also supports a Social Security totalization agreement that jeopardizes the solvency of our Social Security system by giving billions of dollars away to illegal

aliens not entitles to the money.

In addition to liberal democrat Robert Pastor---the Father of the idea to merge U.S. and Canadian dollars with third world Mexican pesos---former Massachusetts Governor William Weld is co-signer and advocate of the North American Union proposal.

Under the North American Union, laws passed by congress or state legislators could be overturned and unelected bureaucrats would have more power than elected officials---just like they have in the European Union!

Of course this proposal would be opposed overwhelmingly by the public, so the sponsors of the North American Union seek to make this happen incrementally and without media attention.

The first step to forming a North American Union is to repeal or ignore American immigration laws and border security. This has already happened! In 2003, only four businesses were prosecuted for hiring illegal aliens in the whole country. Recently, the government has stepped up efforts in this area, but it's still mostly window dressing.

Unbelievably, the ACLU and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) say requiring voters to show their driver's license, or some other form of identification, is a "poll tax" that is "discriminatory."

Of course this is just a smokescreen. The ACLU's and MALDEF's real goal is to make it easier for illegal aliens to vote.

Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF) is also assisting Hazelton, Pennsylvania in defense of its law, which prohibits businesses from hiring illegal aliens and landlords from renting to them.

Hazelton lost the first round in this case when a liberal judge ruled in favor of the illegal aliens who sued the city but MSLF is assisting Hazelton in its appeal to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in

Philadelphia.

Given the success laws restricting illegal immigration have had in Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arizona, I remain optimistic that we can win the Hazelton case on appeal.

All combined, MSLF has over forty cases that address critical constitutional and public policy issues such as illegal immigration, property rights, energy exploration, the use of public lands, and American sovereignty. MSLF is also busy opposing U.N. treaties---and this proposed North American Union---because they compromise the Constitution and our sovereignty.

Recently, MSLF filed a brief (one of only two) in support of the State of Texas' right to execute Mexican National Jose Medellin who was convicted of rape and murder of two teenage girls while living illegally in Houston in 1993.

The Mexican government argued that the ruling of the International Court of Justice, or "World Court," against executing Medellin should overrule the laws of Texas. Fortunately, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against this violation of Federalism and State Sovereignty, but will we be so lucky the next time?

The proposed North American Union goes far beyond the trade and security agreements we currently have with our neighbors. It seeks the cultural, political, and eventually the monetary integration of our three countries. It would be a disaster for the United States.

"Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might and in that faith, let us, to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it." ---Abraham Lincoln

(Excerpts are from a letter, President and Chief Legal Officer, Mountain States Legal Foundation.)



Bible & Newspaper

(Continued from page 394) ♦

NAFTA SUPERHIGHWAY FIGHT NOT OVER YET IN TEXAS

... An outpouring of citizen resistance

to the scheme throughout Texas, and even into neighboring states, has forced the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to rethink at least part of what is being planned. ...

So, TxDOT claims to have rethought TTC-69. While that might be welcome news, what about TTC-35. . . If constructed as planned, this massive roadway from Laredo to the Oklahoma border would actually cut the state in half and take millions of acres of farm and ranch land.

Texas Congressman Ron Paul, who opposes this entire project, saluted the tens of thousands of Texans who had voiced their resistance to TxDOT's plan. . . He nevertheless warned that it was not "time to rest on our laurels." Many justifiably concerned Texans remain worried about the projected land grabs that would destroy their livelihoods, homes, farms, and ranches. Reasons for their concerns have not disappeared. Ron Paul knows this and he stated, "If I had to guess, they will probably try to implement the NAFTA Superhighway again sometime in the future."

Linda Stall, a leader of the privately run Corridor Watch organization that has doggedly reported on all aspects of this plan, heartily agreed. Pointing to TxDOT's announced backing down regarding TTC-69, she cautioned, "TxDOT has only conceded the footprint, not the concept, and [its leaders] are proceeding with the concept in other places." She added: "In fact, they will move ahead with TTC-35 unless significant changes are made in Austin next session." . . .

Many Texas officials from Governor Perry on down throughout the state's government are carrying the ball for federal officials, including President Bush, who are determined to create an entity that would function as a North American Union. Their ultimate goal is a sovereignty-compromising entanglement of Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The various highway systems being considered are merely part of the plan.

Linda Stall summarized: "Bottom line---this leopard has not changed its spots. Nothing has changed. The Trans Texas Commission and TxDOT are. . . to sign deals and give away the farm before the legislature can rein them in." Texas should be mighty glad that the Corridor Watch organization not only exists but that it capably puts down the notion that many Texans' justifiable fears are mere "urban legend."

Nineteenth-century poet William Cullen Bryant knew of the need for eternal vigilance when he wrote, "Not yet, O Freedom! Close thy lids in slumber; for thine enemy never sleeps." Not a Texan, Bryant was a New Englander who understood that government must always be watched. TxDOT's announcement that TTC-69 would not involve a huge land grab---for now!---is evidence that the people's voice has been heard. (*The New American*, July 21, 2008)



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