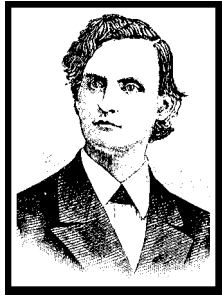


# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## God's Appreciation of Humble Service

By J. B. Hawthorne  
(1837 - 1910)



"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mark 9:41).

To me everything that belongs to Christianity is precious, but there is no feature of it which I admire and love more than its sympathy with the weak and lowly. When Jesus Christ entered upon His mission He sought neither favor nor recognition from men of authority and influence. Herod sat in his golden palace at Tiberias in dissolute splendor, but of him He took no notice except to say to His disciples: "Go ye and tell that fox." He wanted Herod to understand that He neither courted his favor nor dreaded his frown. He despised him, not for the office he held, but for the corrupt life which he lived.

The Pharisees were the dominant religious party of Judea and were recognized as the religious aristocracy of their time. They swept through the temple courts in their fringed robes

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## The Testimony of God Concerning Christ Crucified

By Raymond Spann  
of Columbus, Mississippi



"Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in this teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

◇ (Continued on page 463)

## When the Rich Man Opened His Eyes in Hell

By Larry Ellis  
of Livermore, Kentucky



(Read Luke 16:19-31)

Hell is a real place prepared for the devil and his angels. For those who die in their lost condition, Hell awaits them. Down through time, there have been those who have tried to explain it away, yet that does not erase the fact of its existence. The idea of Hell is usually attacked along three lines of thought.

1. Rationalism: The rationalist says, "There is no God, therefore there can be no Hell." Charles Darwin said, "This (referring to Hell) is a damnable doctrine." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14:1).

2. Ridicule: Those who ridicule the doctrine of Hell say, "There may be a God, but it is ridiculous to think about millions of disembodied spirits burning in a lake of fire somewhere." Or, "This is the twenty-first century! Wake up!" Romans 3:4 says "God

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## The Blood of Jesus Christ

By Frank B. Beck  
(1921 - 2007)



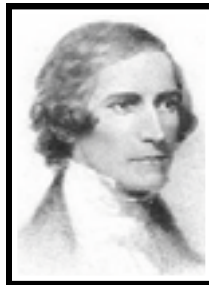
Scripture reading: Exodus 12:1-14.

It is said that more than half the flowers in the world are red, or some shade of red. It is hard to find any doctrinal flower blooming in the garden of sacred Scriptures that is not bloody red, or at least shaded with the color of Christ's atonement. The unbelieving modernist minister who walks through the garden of Scriptures plucking up the doctrinal flowers of Christ's blood atonement soon creates a barren wilderness void of any spiritual life or faith. Remove the

◇ (Continued on page 467)

## Stand in Thy Lot

By Ephraim Peabody  
(1807 - 1856)



"Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13).

The phraseology of the text has reference to the Jewish custom of deciding doubtful matters by lot. Thus, when the chosen people entered Canaan, it was by lot that the Promised Land was divided between the tribes. So, in some important offices, the different duties were assigned to different persons by lot; and this method of assigning to individuals their respective places was supposed to have the sanction of religion. Each man entered on the duties allotted to him with the feeling that they were allotted by Providence. He stood in his lot as in a place providentially appointed for him in which to serve God. In the text, the Prophet "should stand in his lot, and rest." The words may have a universal application. The infinite variety

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## The Dangers of Sin - A Poor Testimony

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia



"And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law" (Gen. 19:12-14).

Today I want us to think about the adverse affects that

sin can have on the witness and testimony of those that are the saints of God. In the passage that we have just read, we discover that the man Lot, living in the wicked city of Sodom, was

so adversely affected by sin that he no longer had a testimony of godliness that any would believe. In fact, when he testified to his sons-in-law that judgment from God was coming, verse 14 tells us, "But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law."

In the New Testament Lot is referred to as "just Lot" (See II Pet. 2:7-8). Now, if we did not have this New Testament reference as to the saved condition of the man Lot, based only upon the Old

◇ (Continued on page 472)

*It is better to deserve praise than to receive it.  
The noblest characters can be formed by missing deserved honor; but to receive praise is perilous even when it is our due.*

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to 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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address.

## God's Appreciation

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with supreme haughtiness and with sovereign contempt for everybody who did not belong to their sect. For them Christ has no words but rebuke and reprobation. Their smiles and patronage He did not covet.

The dreaded emperor was all-powerful at Rome. To him Jesus sent no appeal; of him, He sought no favor. He had no more regard for his influence than for that of the humblest subject of his empire. For worldly pride and display, for despotic power and cruelty, for extravagance and lust, He had nothing but frowns. But for suffering, weakness, and humble fidelity, He had infinite compassion and love.

To the haughty and self-sufficient He was wrathful as the storm, but to the feeble and lowly He was gentle as the summer's breeze.

He pitied and loved the sick and the poor. He loved children, He loved sinners, and of all sinners He loved most those who had suffered most and those who were divorced from human respect and sympathy.

True Christianity stretches out its hands, not to the mighty, but to the weak, and its victories have been won, not only without the help of the world's power, but in utter disregard of it.

Christianity and not philosophy has taught us the inherent dignity of man. Christianity and not philosophy has taught us to appreciate man for those faculties which connect him with God and a boundless future.

He who did not blush to sit at the banquet of the publican, Who shrank not from the white touch of the leper, and Who felt no pollution from the harlot's tears, has done more to secure for man the respect, sympathy, and affection of his fellows than all other people combined.

From the life and teachings of Christ we learn the lesson that each man is as great as he is in God's sight and no greater. This thought is full of consolation to those who are obscure and who feel that their individuality is lost in the multitude.

God is no respecter of persons. Before Him the world of mankind is but as the small dust of the balance. Is it anything to the ocean whether one foam speck upon its great bosom be larger or smaller than another? Gradations and eminences among creatures infinitesimal are not regarded by Him whose vision sweeps the infinite.

The chief of a nation dies and cities drape themselves in mourning; the great bells toll, requiems are sung, solemn processions march through the streets, and a thousand other things are done to signalize the fact that a great man has fallen; but to the great God, before Whom his soul passes in all of its nakedness, he is of no more importance than the little

waif who dies on the street unpitied and unnoticed. Let us thank God that in His sight all are equally great and equally small.

When we die the few who love us may build us a humble monument and write upon it a brief epitaph. But in a few years the monument will decay, the inscription will be illegible, and we shall be forgotten. But let us not be unmindful of the counterpart to this sad truth. Within each one of us there dwells an immortal spirit which is akin to God and infinitely precious in His sight. To Him this is neither common nor obscure.

God appreciates everything for the purposes for which He gave it existence. Every drop of rain has its mission. The shadow made by the tiniest insect's wing has its mission. For every human being upon this planet there is a divinely appointed mission, and in proportion to his fidelity to it he is worthy of approbation and honor. The only real and permanent greatness possible to us is in the line of duty and usefulness, and this is as open to every one of us as sunlight and air. When Jesus Christ says, "**Whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name. . . shall not lose his reward,**" He teaches that God's eye is upon His humblest servant, that He accepts the most inconspicuous service, if inspired by benevolent motives, and that He will as truly reward the little gift of the pauper as the great gift of the millionaire.

The same lesson is embodied in the parable of the talents. That parable teaches us that God values us, not for the magnitude and splendor of the gifts which He has bestowed upon us, but for the fidelity with which we use them. It teaches us that, however small our talents and however meager our opportunities, if we faithfully use them our reward shall be infinite.

To the man who had wisely employed the two talents he gave the same plaudit which he bestowed upon him who had rightly used the five talents: "**Well done, good and faithful servant.**" He received the same honor and was bidden to enter the same joy. The same reward would have been bestowed upon the man who had received one talent if he had been as true and loyal as those to whom greater gifts were given.

My friends, every man among you has a divinely bestowed talent, and by the wise and faithful use of it he can honor God, bless his fellow-men, and win for himself a joyous welcome to the skies.

In the light of this truth everyone should aspire to usefulness here and blessedness hereafter. O ye humble, feeble, hidden, unrecognized ones, look up and bless God that there are eyes above you that do see the light that is in you, and that your gift, though it be but the widow's mite or a cup of water, is registered in Heaven.

Tonight, if you will lift your eyes to the sky, you will see some stars pre-eminent

for their magnitude, while others in the far-off milky way are almost lost to vision. But though "**one star differeth from another star in glory,**" all are of the same pure essence, all are the offspring of the same eternal sire.

So it is in the kingdom of grace. There we behold towering men, kingly men, men upon whom God has lavished His richest gifts, men who shine with dazzling effulgence; and there we behold obscure men, men endowed with but one talent, and whose light is as dim as that of the scarcely discernable star. But they are children of the same father and servants of the same master. Their lights were kindled at the same fountain of glory. Each is fulfilling the mission to which he was called, and in the end they shall receive the same rapturous plaudit and be crowned with the same imperishable honor.

I thank God when a rich man is truly converted and brought into the church. Houses of worship cannot be built without money. Colleges for the education of our children cannot be established without money. The preaching of the gospel cannot be sustained without money. Missionaries cannot be sent to China, Africa, Italy, and Mexico without money. Homes for the aged, retreats for the sick, and asylums for the poor cannot be erected without money.

I praise God when He puts His grace into the heart of a rich man and makes him a true disciple of Christ, because that man, inspired by the love of God and humanity, may enlarge and multiply the agencies for the extension of Christ's kingdom and the redemption of lost souls.

But let me assure you that poverty is as truly a talent as wealth. Some are called to be rich and others are called to be poor. In respect to the acquisition of worldly possessions, "**there is a divinity which shapes our ends.**"

There are two kinds of poverty. One is envious and idle. It sits down in dirt and wretchedness, bemoans its hard fate, and curses the man of enterprise and thrift. Such a poverty deserves neither sympathy nor respect. The other kind is manly, noble, and helpful. Having little besides daily bread, it possesses also the virtue of contentment, which makes happy the humblest lot.

If any have come up to this house from homes of poverty, if any who have recently put on Christ in baptism and been admitted to fellowship in this body of Christians are struggling with the inconveniences of penury, I would say to them that there is no disgrace in honest poverty and that they can make it a beautiful and happy lot.

There are some men and women in this world whose estimates of other people are not only unjust, but disgustingly vulgar. They look with contempt upon self-denial,

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## God's Appreciation

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whatever be the motive behind it. They sneer at the scant table and the threadbare garb of the honest laborer, forgetting that such a man may be rich in every element of a noble life; forgetting that our divine Lord placed on the pinnacle of human greatness one whose raiment was coarse camel's hair and whose meat was locusts and wild honey; forgetting that some of the greatest of the apostles were poor fishermen of the Galilean lake, and that their divine Lord and master was so poor that He had not where to lay His head. I would rather have the virtues of such men than the wealth of "Twenty seas, whose shores were pearl, whose waters were crystal, and whose rocks were gold."

Poverty is no barrier to usefulness. The lips of contemptuous Pharisees might curl when the poor widow dropped her two mites into the temple treasury, but in the eyes of Him who sees the hearts of men that poor widow gave more than all the Pharisees.

Those whose intellectual gifts are meager and feeble, and who realize their incompetence for great and conspicuous undertakings, I would exhort to work on without discouragement and without one thought of the inconspicuous character of their service. Fidelity is better than greatness and fame.

Do your best, assured that God would not love you more if you had the genius of a Milton or a Newton. Work with the same manly self-respect that you would have if you knew that senates were listening to your words and empires were being molded by your counsels. Work hopefully and confidently, knowing that God approves and angels applaud, and that when your task is done the gates of glory will open to receive you. The secret of success and happiness in this life is to be just where God would have you and to do just the work which God has committed to your hands. Before Him,

*Honor and fame from no condition rise;  
Act well your part; there all the honor lies.*

There is a Christian ceremony which signifies that those who submit to it have merged their wills into the will of God, their thoughts into the thought of God, and their lives into the life of God. This is what is meant by being "**buried with Christ in baptism.**" The man who has thus identified himself with the limitless resources of the Infinite cannot fail to be good and great. The possibilities of such a man's life cannot be measured by any human mind, and neither the highest art nor the highest eloquence can depict the glory of the immortality to which he is destined.

(An Unshaken Trust & Other Sermons, 1898).



## Testimony of God

(Continued from page 461) ◊

**And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli Eli la-ma sa-bach-tha-ni? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"** (Matt. 27:38-46).

**"And I, brethren, when I come to you I come not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified"** (I Cor. 1-2).

Declaring with you the testimony of God concerning Jesus and Him crucified. It is great to have God's testimony, concerning what took place when Christ was crucified. God's testimony is true and worthy to be trusted. Also, it is so wonderful to have preachers sent among us to preach and proclaim God's testimony.

All through the Bible, God gives testimony to this event in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. As we have a vision in our minds of Christ willingly laying down His life, God gives testimony to the fact that He was giving His Life a ransom for sinners. He was making propitiation for sin on behalf of those that God brings to believe on Him and His sacrifice, and that He was putting away sin, and that He was redeeming sinners unto God.

As we hold the vision in our minds of Christ being crucified, we see God's testimony of the wages of sin being death, and the gift of God being eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. In Romans 6:23 we see the two thieves being crucified, put to death, as the wages of sin. We see Christ being made sin, that God hath made Him to be sin for us. That He was bearing our sin in His own body on the tree.

Also, as we hold this vision in our minds of Christ being crucified, we see the truth of the natural man not seeing the need for a sin sacrifice. **"And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross"** (Matt. 27:39-40). The natural man thinks he can be saved by religious practices, the keeping of ceremonies and living by certain rules. He hates to be told that he is a sinner that needs a sin sacrifice offered on his behalf. Also, we see that the religious do not see the need of a sin sacrifice. **"Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him"** (Matt. 27:41-42). Thank God, He didn't come down! If He had

come down we would still be under the condemnation of sin. We see in verse 46 that when God laid our sin upon Christ, that He was forsaken of God, and we would have been forsaken for eternity if Christ had not become sin for us and bore the penalty for it, **"... my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"**

As we think on our text, the testimony of God concerning the meaning of Christ crucified, buried, and raised again, we see that God gives His testimony throughout the Word of God that Christ crucified, buried and raised again is salvation unto sinners who come by the Spirit of God, to believe and trust in it.

Let us at this time look at God's testimony from His Word. **"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son"** (I John 5:9). God is about to give us His testimony concerning Christ crucified and those who believe on it. **"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"** (I John 5:10-11). In verse 11, we find God giving testimony that He has given us eternal life in Christ redeeming us from our sin by dying for our sins on the cross and being raised again. In verse 10, God is telling us that he that believeth on the Son of God, as being crucified for our sins, putting away our sins, hath the witness of that in himself. God is saying that the one who believes on that has spiritual vision of that being true. He has been brought by the Spirit of God to see that as truth. Faith is a spiritual vision that God gives us. **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"** (Heb. 11:1). Faith is the reality of things God tells us, even though we have not seen them with the fiscal eye.

Concerning I John 5:10, when he says that he that believeth on the Son of God hath the vision in himself--let us think upon this truth. Of having the witness---if we were to stand on a street corner and witness two cars run together, we would have the witness in our self of that which happened. We would have conviction of what happened. So it is with those who believe God concerning God's testimony of the meaning of Christ crucified--they believe and have reason to believe that their sin has been put away. **"... He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."** Many hear God's testimony of it but do not believe it.

**"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God"** (I John

5:13). God says that those who believe His testimony concerning Christ dying for their sins might know that they have eternal life.

As we continue to look at God's testimony concerning Christ being crucified, let us look at the Old Testament Scriptures. **"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed"** (Isa. 53:5). This verse speaks of how it was for our transgressions that He was crucified, and that by His stripes and suffering, believing sinners are healed and saved from their sins.

**"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"** (Isa. 53:6). The Lord's testimony that all have sinned, and that He laid on Christ that sin and that Christ has bore it for those that believe.

**"He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"** (Isa. 53:7). Christ went willingly, He did not resist!

**"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of my people was he stricken"** (Isa. 53:8). Christ was crucified for the transgressions of His people. God says this is the redemption of those who believe.

God continues to give testimony to Jesus and Him crucified in the New Testament. Heb. 10:10 **"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"** (Heb. 10:10). God's testimony in this verse is that those who believe are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, and are set apart from their sin and made free from their sins.

**"Who needeth not daily, as those high priest, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself"** (Heb. 7:27). There is no need for any other offering to be made for sin, the one offering satisfied God.

God says that Christ put away sin. **"... But now once in the end of this world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"** (Heb. 9:26).

God calls sinners to the faith that Christ has put away their sins. It is something to believe and trust that has been done for you. It is not something you have to do to get Him to do for you, but something to trust that He has already done.

God gives great and wonderful testimony to Jesus and Him crucified

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## Testimony of God

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in Acts 13:38, **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto the forgiveness of sins.”** God’s testimony is Christ crucified, the forgiveness of sin unto sinners who believe and trust in Him.

**“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”** (Acts 13:39). God’s testimony is that all that believe (not some that believe) but all that believe are justified from all things. Satan loves to try to convince believers that we can’t be sure that we are forgiven for all of our sins, but God says that believers are justified from ALL things. God also says that we could not be saved by the keeping of the law. God gives testimony that those who believe His testimony concerning Christ have passed from death unto life. **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”** (John 5:24). The believer has experienced repentance, in that he has been brought by God’s Spirit to believe that he is a sinner and that can’t save himself. He has been enabled to hear and believe that Christ has put away his sins and that he is set free from his sins. He also has repentance toward sin and ungodliness the rest of his life. This is known as repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. May God’s testimony continue to go forth. May God’s testimony always give encouragement to believe. May God’s testimony bring rest to those who are burdened about their sins.

God hath given us assurance in that He has raised Christ up from the grave. **“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation”** (Heb. 9:28). **“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). **“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).

When one who has been brought by the Spirit of the Lord, to be convicted and burdened about his sins, it is the Lord’s work in his life that he may see by faith that Christ has put away his sins and paid the full price that God required. It is God’s will for that one to know and believe God’s testimony, that he has forgiveness of sin in Christ dying for sinners, and that God was satisfied in Christ dying for sinners and raised Him from the grave. It is God’s will for that

one to know that it is his very own sins that Christ put away when He died for sin on the cross. If you are a believer, may you always have this witness within yourself that it was your very own sins that Christ put away when He died on the cross as a sacrifice for sin.

If you are still under conviction of sin, then may God bring you into peace about your sins by bringing you to believe that it is your very own sins that Christ put away.

May God bless His Word to us always.



### Making A Mock of Sin

There are few words which we hear more frequently than the word sin. We meet with it again and again in the Bible. We hear it from the lips of our ministers and teachers and parents, and they all speak of it as if it were something very dreadful. Sin is the source of all our misery, the cause of sorrow, unhappiness, and remorse. It is a disease which leads to death; it is like the darkness which conceals the sun and the stars from our sight; it is a blight and a curse upon life; it provokes the displeasure and anger of God: it brings after it anguish and distress; it shuts men out of Heaven and sends them to Hell.

Now anything which can do this must be unutterably dreadful. What, then, is sin? It is the selfishness which leads us to prefer our own way to God’s; it is the rebellion which rejects God’s authority and disobeys His commandments; it is lawlessness and transgression: a turning away from the good and a delight in evil. It is a self-seeking, self-pleasing, self-indulgent spirit, which tells us that, when we can, we may do what we like, whether God has forbidden it or not. All that we need care for is our own pleasure. And though that may sometimes seem to be a very harmless principle, it leads to all manner of evil, to lying and swearing, to dishonesty and drunkenness, to craft and cruelty. Yes, sin is the germ of all evil.

Some people make light of sin. They speak as if it were not so wrong after all, as if there were no real harm in it, and it could not bring desolation and woe. Such ideas are set down as old wives’ fables, and are scorned as nonsense. These people treat it as a mere surface trouble--a sort of accident, which results from

unfavourable circumstances, and not from the faithlessness and evil of the heart. They imagine that they can leave it off at any time, can cast it away like a worn-out coat, and will not admit that it is the master of men, and makes them its slaves; a hard and cruel despot, who holds his victims in a grip from which they cannot shake themselves free. They laugh at the idea that the Ethiopian, or any other African Negro, can sooner change his skin and become white than the men who are accustomed to do evil can learn to do well. And they also think that we make too much to do about the forgiveness of sin. They can see no difficulty in the way of it. A kind and merciful God will, so they say, forgive it any time.

It is easy to make a mock at sin, but they are “fools” who do it, and you, dear children, should not be like them. Have nothing to do with sin, but pray God to keep you from it, for you cannot keep yourself from it, and ask Him to give you His Holy Spirit to make you true and good. Before sin could be forgiven, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had to die for us. He bore our sins, became a sacrifice and suffered as a curse for them, so that God forgives us for His sake. If we repent and believe on Jesus Christ--but only then---we shall be saved from sin, and those who remember that will never make a mock of it.

Then, again, people often make light of sin, and are not careful to avoid it from a mistaken idea that if they repent and are forgiven their sin will not again trouble them, and that they will be as blithe, as buoyant, and as joyous as if it had never been committed. God’s mercy is indeed wonderful, and the man who is made one with Christ, however guilty he has been, cannot be a stranger to the joy of God’s salvation. But we ought to remember that while God has promised pardon to the penitent, He has nowhere promised penitence to men who are bent upon sin and who sin willfully or against the light. To sin deliberately is, in fact, to court impenitence and hardness of heart. Then if repentance ever should come after such sin, it will come with sorrow and anguish, and after we are truly penitent we shall have a keener sorrow for our wrong-doing, and shall loathe ourselves more utterly than we did before (Ezekiel 36:31). The memory of sin is always distressing in a godly man, and in many instances the scar remains. This truth is strikingly expressed in a poem said to have been written by a convict in the Joliet (Ill.) Penitentiary: ---

*“I walked through the woodland meadow,  
Where the sweet thrushes sing,  
And I found on a bed of mosses  
A bird with a broken wing.  
I healed each wound, and each morning  
It sang its old sweet strain;  
But the bird with its broken pinion  
Never soared so high again.”*

*“I found a young life broken  
By sin’s seductive art,  
And, touched with a Christ-like pity,  
I took him to my heart.  
He lived with a noble purpose,  
And struggled not in vain;  
But the life that sin had stricken  
Never soared so high again.”*

*“But the bird with the broken pinion  
Kept another from the snare,  
And the life that sin had stricken  
Raised another from despair,  
Each loss had its compensation,  
There is healing for every pain;  
But the bird with the broken pinion  
Never soars so high again.”*

A.C.M.

(Baptist Magazine, Feb. 1893)



## Stand in Thy Lot

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of human duties cannot all be discharged by the same person. For different duties there must be different men. Thus it is, in the order of Providence, that to different men different lots are assigned, not necessarily better or worse one than another, but different. And in his own lot, and not in another man’s, must each one accomplish the true purpose of his existence. He must not dream of some impossible condition, but with a manly heart be content to labor in his appointed lot, ---content to find in that, so long as it is his, his usefulness, his happiness, and his virtue. Do not crave what is another’s and not yours, but stand in your own lot, be grateful for its privileges, and faithful to its obligations.

The lesson has not lost its significance for our restless, impatient, grasping age. It points to a view of life and duty which it greatly concerns us to consider. There are two principal things for which life is worth living, ---personal growth in goodness, and social usefulness. For both these things there is a constant tendency to look beyond the means and opportunities furnished in our appointed walk in life. We rely for goodness and usefulness on opportunities which are rare and exceptional, but neglect as valueless those which come within our actual lot.

Thus in theology we hear of common grace and special grace, of ordinary and extraordinary means of grace; and yet while it is on the ordinary means of grace that the moral life of man mainly depends, they are neglected and forgotten in the anxiety for those that are extraordinary. And certainly the tendency to overvalue what is unusual is quite natural. That which is extraordinary, though comparatively of inferior moment, strikes the imagination, and for the time makes a great place for itself in the mind. A

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miracle preserves the life of one man, and the world turns in wonder and reverence to view it, and acknowledge the hand of God; and it is right and well. Yet at the same moment the ordinary providence of God, moving calmly as the stars, lights up the heavens, gives fertility to the earth, and spreads the table at which the human race sits down, and by which it lives; and it is not well for us to forget that this ordinary providence of God is a more stupendous manifestation of His glory and goodness than any single miracle can possibly be. A whole country collects to see an illuminated city, and yet the glare of the torchlight which blinds us to the stars hides and makes us forget the more wondrous illumination of the heavens. The throng traverses with unsalted gaze the illuminated street, because the spectacle is rare. As it withdraws into the open country, and morning breaks in splendor above the seas, its beams kindling from cloud to cloud till earth and sky are flooded with light, the weary multitude is scarcely conscious of standing under an illuminated universe. This spectacle for the angels is unheeded because it is common.

Just so in morals and religion. Men would do good, and think that the means must lie outside the common course of life. The need of a more religious spirit is felt, and it is sought from extraordinary and ever-varying means of excitement. And certainly we will not undervalue these means. Through them deep invasions and permanent conquests have been made in the realms of ignorance and sin; but they mark the tendency to rely on the novel and the extraordinary. We see the same tendency in the low estimate which men place on the moral opportunities of that sphere of life in which their daily lot is cast. The merchant says, "I have peculiar temptations: it is very difficult for me to be a Christian"; and he thinks if he is to become one, it must be in some changed condition of life. The sailor says, "I have peculiar temptations: it is very hard for me in my place to be a Christian." And every man thinks that his lot is peculiarly exposed and difficult and destitute of moral opportunity. For the attainment of the Christian character, and the practice of Christian usefulness, he thinks he must look beyond his common sphere of labor and duty to exceptional and extraordinary opportunities. And yet the daily lesson of Providence is to rely on what is common, ---made common, indeed, because the most valuable. Thus Almighty God does not rely for lighting the world on the momentary glare of an occasional meteor, but on the perpetual and equal illumination of the sun. And man, while thankful for every extraordinary aid, must look for his

goodness and usefulness chiefly to his use of the common means and opportunities which belong to his special lot.

The point which I would urge on your reflections is, the value of the opportunities for attaining the two great ends of life---Christian growth and Christian usefulness---furnished in the ordinary round of each one's daily cares and duties. There is infinite moral opportunity in every lot, there is a general moral equality in the different lots of mankind. Through these considerations I would enforce the duty of meeting heartily, cheerfully, and faithfully the requirements of your lot, so long as it is yours. "Stand in your lot"; while it is yours, be content with it. Set a just value on its opportunities for improvement and usefulness. Look not chiefly to extraordinary means, but to those arising in your daily walk, out of the daily duties of your calling, both for doing good and being good.

A man is dissatisfied with his religious state. He desires more religious life. Where shall he look for it? ---I answer, from Christian fidelity in the circle of his daily cares and duties. A Christian principle is established in the soul by being obeyed in practice, and his place of obedience is of course where his duties and temptations lie. He may derive from other sources occasional impulse and instruction, but the obedience must be along the daily path of life. The husbandman goes abroad sometimes to gain information, he tries experience; but he depends for his harvest on his steady labor.

And where there is fidelity, so far as they are concerned with whom we are likely to compare ourselves in a moral point of view, there is great equality among the various lots of life. There is not a calling which does not supply incipient opportunities for the attainment of Christian excellences. These opportunities are not to be found solely nor chiefly in the church, in the religious meeting, nor on religious occasions. In them one may be quickened or instructed; but that practical application of religious truths which alone establishes them in the heart must be made in the midst of the daily cares of life. There is not a man, whatever his calling, who before tomorrow night will not be placed where he must obey or disobey every Christian principle. His sense of justice and disinterestedness, his truthfulness and kindness, his self-control and patience, his faith in goodness, his reverence and fidelity to God, ---not one of us but will, before tomorrow's sun sets, have a trial in all these qualities. And it is not by previous feeling and speculation, not through daydreams of what we might do on extraordinary occasions, but by our fidelity in the actual trials of the common life, that these excellences will grow. And because all places furnish these trials and

opportunities, there is moral equality among those lots which socially are most unequal, ---so that the lowliest cabin among the hills is as near to Heaven as are the august palaces which overlook the capitals of empires.

So with regard to usefulness. Men are apt to think that usefulness requires extraordinary opportunities, conspicuous exertions, ---something peculiar, ---some great thing, ---something aside from and beyond the common sphere of life. We will not undervalue these more extraordinary means of usefulness. But still the progress of the world in good does not depend chiefly on these conspicuous and exceptional efforts. They are but babbles that show the direction in which the common private Christian fidelity and thought and sympathy and effort are setting. Without the private fidelity in private spheres, the public enterprise and all engaged in it would be but a feather in a tempest.

The great instrument by which a moral influence is exerted is personal character. He that communicates knowledge may do it by words, by writing, by loud and conspicuous means. But he who would make men good must do it by being good himself. And leaving out some peculiar cases, too few to be regarded, it is surprising what equality there is among men in their power of doing good. A man's character has influence only so far as it is understood, and it can be understood and felt only by the little world in which he lives. Now, every man's world, that in which he lives, is of very much the same size with that of every other man. It is composed of the ten or twenty or hundred individuals or families with whom he is brought into close connection in the relations of business or friendship. This constitutes his world. In the crowded city it will rarely be large, in the retirement of the country it will hardly be smaller. The moral influence which a man exerts on the world at large depends on the moral influence he exerts on this circle with which he is thus connected. It is so with the greatest man. It seems, at first, as if he stamped himself on the age. But it is rarely so. By sympathy he communicates his character, his views of duty, his moral feelings and aims, to a few friends, and they, in turn, each to his own little circle; and thus it spreads in ever-changing circles, ---lamp kindled from lamp, the light is finally spread over the earth. And it scarcely matters where the influence begins. Wesley's influence, rising at first from the common people, is as great now as that of the great conqueror, descending down through princes and marshals and statesmen. With the humblest man it is the same. There is a circle in which there are young persons to whom his character is a standard to which they appeal, and older persons, too, all whose views of life and duty are influenced by him. And through them his influence extends

to others. This is the way in which the world is morally improved. It seems as if Almighty God had determined that the moral good of the world should depend on the fidelity of individuals in the little spheres in which they are placed, in order that for this great work men should have almost equal opportunities.

A man must not look, for his means of doing good to others, to making a few addresses on this or that great reform, ---to entering great organizations, ---to great, conspicuous, and exceptional acts, ---not to occasional acts of generosity. These are indeed necessary to their place, but the great good which he may wish to do must be done by his habitual life spent amidst its common cares. A man promotes by word and act some great moral enterprise, and yet, after all, to how little will it amount. But behold him to his daily walk. Here, every day, he comes in contact, in his business, with various persons, in a way which shows the real principles on which he acts, ---children, young persons, or those of mature years, like himself. He may say nothing, but it is seen that he will not do a questionable act for the sake of personal gain. He will practice on no man's ignorance. He will take no advantage of men's necessities. Where it is to his loss, he is seen to be as strictly just and true and faithful as when it is for his gain. In all his dealings he is governed by Christian principle. Perhaps he does not at all attempt directly to make others better; he is only a good man himself. And yet, were he to devote himself to some great and extraordinary moral or religious enterprise, he probably would not do so much to raise the moral condition of man as he will by this practice of Christian principle amidst those common duties and temptations where the characters of men are tried. The little child sees his course, and involuntarily respects it, and it becomes a standard by which he will judge of the propriety of actions. The young man, whose principles were not bad, but unsettled, takes courage for the right. Those that do business with him, if for nothing else except that he may respect them, will more or less adopt his principles. Unjust and hard and discreditable customs are shamed away, and grow obsolete. Thus, often, the silent lives of individuals in time raise the character of a whole community.

Trace the influence of a really good man, first in his family, then among his friends, then spreading on every side and descending from one generation to another, and who shall declare the sum of it? It is to this that we are to look chiefly for the world's regeneration. The progress of the world in good is dependent chiefly, not on great public efforts, but on this individual fidelity in the common walk of life.

Let no one say that he has no opportunities or means of usefulness. He

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# Stand in Thy Lot

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may not be able to give money, or by his eloquence sway the feelings and passions of crowds, or control great organizations, and yet he has in his reach those means which God has made to be the greatest with which he instructs the children of men.

If one thinks that the great object of life is to gratify ambition, vanity, the love of power, he may naturally pine for exalted and conspicuous spheres of action. But if he really believe, as we all profess to believe, that the only great objects for which life is worth living are the establishing of one's own soul in Christian excellence, and the doing of good to man, he will not greatly trouble himself about the sphere of duty in which his lot is cast. For these objects, the most conspicuous sphere is not always the most favorable. For the growth of good in ourselves, and for the promotion of moral good in others, obscurity and shade are sometimes the most propitious. It is in obscure caverns and hidden clefts and dark recesses of the earth that the diamond slowly kindles its spark of fire.

"Stand in your lot"; recognize that lot which in the way of duty has come to be

yours, as one providentially appointed, and be content to stand and labor there. The lesson deserves to be considered, not more perhaps by man than by woman. She too often pines for a more favorable sphere in which mind and soul may be under more propitious influences, and where she may find greater opportunities and aids for self-improvement. In the midst of wearing details, it is said, day after day goes by without fruit, mind and heart are squandered, time runs to waste, and nothing is done for one's self or for others. Petty cares, petty trials, eat out the life and choke the soul.

But is it not the same mistake, the undervaluing of the ordinary lot, the overvaluing of that which is extraordinary? Here I do not ask whether society might not be organized on a better model. Doubtless it might be, and ought to be. But at the present time, as a matter of fact, woman as well as man finds herself in a certain position. It may not, in all respects, be what it ought to be; but no one will deny that the sphere which she occupies is an important one. She has long occupied it, and for the present she will doubtless continue to occupy it; and while she does so, it is of vital moment to her that she should estimate its opportunities and duties aright. To her the lesson comes, "Stand

in your lot," ---trust in Providence, and "stand in your lot"; be satisfied, while there, to labor in it; serve God by fidelity in its duties; believe that, while it is your lot, there are your best opportunities both for goodness and usefulness. Look not abroad for extraordinary opportunities: the best, God has also made the most common. Just as with men, --if she would be good or do good, she will most certainly attain her end by fidelity in the common walk of life. Nay, it is by fidelity in the common duties that she best opens the way to the larger and higher ones for which she pines.

She thinks that there is some sphere more propitious to the growth of mind and heart. But is it so? Is there any more favorable discipline for personal improvement in the highest sense, than that furnished in the common routine of daily duties? The duties and responsibilities of the humblest home, ranging from the most trifling cares to the nurture of the souls of children, ---are they not sufficient to task every faculty? When are fore-thought and self-control called forth, if not here? When are self-denying affections more needed? Or can there be motive for virtue wanting to those whose virtues become so speedily the life of their off-spring. Or does Religion ever speak in more tender and

winning tones, than when from among the joys and hopes of home she calls on you for gratitude to Him who guards and blesses it and you? Has virtue any greater helps than are to be found in the mental sympathy and aid and prayers of those most dear to you? Or with what more touching words can piety raise the thoughts to Heaven, than with those that come from the death-beds of children, when with the last fond smile, the last lingering look, they seem to say, "I go before thee, but cannot, O mother, forget thee, or cease to watch and wait for thy coming!" She who cannot amid such scenes, such duties, such responsibilities, find motive and aids for personal improvement, where will she be likely to find them?

Or you would be useful to others, and feel yourself cramped and hindered and fettered by daily cares. May not these cares be the very avenues to the highest usefulness? Certain is it that much depends on them, ---much more than the supply of the mere bodily wants of those that meet around the same table. These daily cares, these unnoticed and obscure duties and labors, ---if nothing else, this much depends on them: fidelity and a right spirit here make the comfort and happiness of home, and determine nearly all its influences. They make all the difference between a home without peace, ---to which its members return without joy, and which they leave without regret, where they merely live, where the joy of life is sought in vain, ---and that home which its members leave with regret, and to which they return from the storms of the world, as to a haven of peace, ---a home which is the center of affection and happiness and hope.

And what a difference is this! A happy and Christian home! How much of all that is good in life is bound up in these words. Out of the happy and Christian home rises the light of the world. What is it that gives cheerfulness to the mighty toil by which the business of the world is carried on, ---that toil which builds cities and cultivates the fields and explores the seas? What but this, ---that each one of this toiling multitude is laboring for a home, where affectionate hands prepare for his coming, and eyes full of love shall greet his return? Patriots have encountered every peril, ---on the bloody deck, in midnight camps, in besieged cities, in the deadly front of battle, ---because they knew that the prayers of wives and children followed them, and the memory of happy home threatened by unholy feet was in their hearts. Great men, the heroes of great contests, reformers and saints that have blest the world, have brought back their crowns of honor, and fitly laid them at the feet of mothers who had trained them to high thought and heroic enterprise. Dying men in their prayers have given God thanks for those

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Covering Central Louisiana

## Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

| STATION                          | TIME                           | DIAL       | WATTS     |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....            | Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....    | 95.9.....  | 3,000 FM  |
| WCTT, Corbin, KY.....            | Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....    | 680.....   | 5,000 AM  |
| WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....            | Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....    | 101.9..... | 3,000 FM  |
| KARI, Blaine, WA.....            | Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.... | 550.....   | 5,000 AM  |
| KCNW, Kansas City, KS....        | Saturday 10:00 - 10:30 a.m.... | 1380.....  | 2,500 AM  |
| KLNG, Omaha, NE.....             | Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.....    | 1560.....  | 10,000 AM |
| KWDF, Alexandria, LA.....        | Wednesday 2:30 - 3:00 p.m....  | 840.....   | 8,000 AM  |
| DXUM, Davao City, Philippines    | Sunday 2:30 - 3:00 p.m.....    | 819.....   | 10,000 AM |
| DXDS, Digos City, Philippines... | Sunday 12:00 - 12:30 p.m....   | 1161.....  | 1,000 AM  |

In November the Berea Baptist Broadcast began airing on three new radio stations. If you live in these areas we invite you to listen to the program.



Coverage in Nebraska and Iowa



Coverage in Missouri and Kansas

## Stand in Thy Lot

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who taught their infant lips to pray. And the youth, amidst strangers, weak within, tempted without, is held back from ruin by the thought of the bitter tears, the breaking hearts, which his vices would bring to that never-for-gotten home of childhood.

A happy, affectionate Christian home! From its blessed retreat go forth with cheerful feet useful labor and philanthropic enterprise; go forth the humanizing influences that save men from the tyranny of selfish and savage passions; go forth the motives of virtue that take hold of all that is most generous and self-forgetting in man; go forth the guardian memories which protect the youth, and rest like a halo around old age; go forth the spirit, that, reappearing in other spheres in humble places, and in high, uttered in words made manifest in deeds, becomes the virtue and hope of the world.

Such is the difference between the happy and unhappy home, that I believe, if by some terrible sorcery these homes that dot the earth, these centers of affection, these green islets of peace and shade and calm in the great desert of life, were broken up, or if the happiness in them were extinguished, scarcely a generation would pass away before the most civilized state would sink into barbarism. Men would cease to labor, or labor only for means to indulge the appetites and passions; the charities of life would no longer soften the intercourse of the world; disinterestedness and virtue, robbed of many of their purest motives, would disappear; Religion, whose holiest altar of worship and most impressive instructions are at the domestic hearth, would mourn her scepter broken and her power departed. Children born into a homeless world, orphaned of the holiest influences, would grow up without natural affection, and die without hope.

It is hard for us to appreciate the importance of happy and Christian homes. We see the current of virtuous motive, and disinterested enterprise, which is the life of the social world, and forget its source. As with the ancient Egyptians, though no rains fell during the whole year on their thirsting plains, yet every year the Nile rose and swelled and overflowed its banks and covered them with fertility, and the multitude looked, and, forgetting the Source of all this, worshipped the rich and abounding river as a god. Yet for their swelling river and fruitful shores they were indebted to sources far distant and to them unknown. Far away under an equatorial sky, across unknown tribes, amid unexplored mountains, the clouds

gathered, the rains fell, the fountains gushed out of the earth's heart, and the rills trickled in silver threads down the sides of the mountains and collected in streams, till, reuniting, they formed the river that washed the base of the Pyramid, and on whose banks mighty cities and dynasties rose and flourished. Dry up the mountain showers, dry up those distant, unnoticed fountains, and the valley of Egypt were a desert. Yet the negro panting under a tropic sun, as he sat down beneath a palm that overhung one of those mountain springs, the fainting caravan that encamped by the side of the narrow stream, dreamed not that here, were the sources of the harvests of Egypt, and were they to disappear millions must famish for bread. Just so, out of unnoticed homes flows nearly all the good that blesses the world. Blot out the home, those fountains so many streams of moral influence and religious faith; and the sands of the desert would be but a feeble type of the moral waste that would envelope the world.

Yet the existence of these happy Christian homes---their very existence---depends mainly on woman, ---on her fidelity to the common duties of home, on the spirit with which she meets its daily cares and bears its daily trials, on affections that make sunshine in a shady place, on her faith and piety breathed insensibly into those around her. Is not this a usefulness to which one may worthily devote a life?

Say not then, those whose lot is cast in this sphere, that life runs to waste amidst petty cares, that mind and heart are squandered on trifling duties: "**Stand in thy lot,**" and be content to stand in it. Recognize its dignity. Look at the result of thy fidelity in it. See it as it is. See how much the highest good of those dearest to thee depends on these very things. See how these little things of the home are the great things of life. See how a pure and Christian and affectionate purpose dignifies the lowliest acts and cares, how thy fidelity in these common duties becomes the source and the primal fountain of the best part of the holiest influences that bless the world. You need not seek extraordinary means and opportunities of influence. Where could you, though you sought them over the world, find greater than those which come to you in this common walk of life? The best and highest are already in your hands. She who does her part in making one Christian and happy home, has done her part in a work which, were all to do it, would make earth as Eden. Nor this alone. In making the home happy, she reaches out over the whole domain of life. The influence exerted at the center spreads out like rays of light to the circumference. Almost without a figure, through the natural influence of such homes woman may build up the prosperity of cities, and the virtues of

citizens; her voice speaks through the lips of patriots and reformers; her heart gives its life-pulse to the hearts of martyrs and saints.

Let us be persuaded, then, that the common and daily walk of life furnishes the best opportunities and means for the growth of goodness in the individual heart, and for the promotion of good among others. He who seeks them, need not go far to seek them. They are near him, even to the door. Extraordinary means can be profitable only for extraordinary occasions. Be governed by Christian principle in the performance of your daily duties, at home and abroad, be faithful to these, and though you never step beyond the sphere in which your lot is cast, your souls shall daily grow in goodness and your life be a perennial fountain of usefulness.

Be content to stand in your lot. Whatever it may be, there is work in it enough for "one" to perform. It is "your" work, and if done in a Christian spirit there is ample opportunity to build up faith and piety in your own soul, and to bless your fellow-men. If you aspire to what you think a better lot, the way to reach it is by being faithful where you are. But be sure, that no lot to which duty calls you can in its essential nature be excluded from the highest good. A noble spirit ennoble the humblest condition, and a mean spirit alone makes the lot mean. A wonderful fact! It seems as if it had been to disabuse the world, and to exorcise it of its false views of human conditions, that the Saviour of man was born in a manger; that His ministry was in the obscure land of Judaea; that by the way-side, along the lake-shore, among humble men, He subjected Himself to poverty; that He washed His disciples feet; that He died on a cross; and in all places lost not His own divinity, but made the event divine.

Whatever then your lot may be, so that it come to you in the simple way of duty, do not contemn it, but honor it, and by your fidelity in it make it honorable. All real duties come in the order of a providential appointment, and take their character, not from the measurement of human vanity, but from God Who appoints them. He can be worshipped as devoutly in the humble way-side church, as in the great cathedral; and so also He may be served as truly in the obscurest duty as in that whose performance wins the plaudits of the world. Leave to others to labor in their lot, and for yourself be satisfied to stand in your own; fulfilling its duties; enlarging it by your fidelity; contented to stand there while it is your lot; there to serve God, and to be useful among men.

(Editor's Note: The author of this article was a Unitarian, but after reading it I felt there was much good in it, and it would be a beneficial article for all.)



## The Blood of Jesus

(Continued from page 461) ♦

Old Testament types and shadows and promises and prophecies pertaining to the salvation of the sinner by the shed blood of Jesus Christ; remove the New Testament parables and doctrines related to the same, and you have very little of the Holy Bible left.

"**The life of the flesh is in the blood**" (Lev. 17:11). A person cannot live without blood. Take the blood out of the body and it is dead. A denomination, or religion, or pulpit that withdraws the blood of Christ from its theology is dead. It ought to be buried in the burning caverns of Hell. It ought to be cremated.

Why is the shed blood of Jesus Christ so important?

### FIRST, CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

What kind of blood did Jesus Christ have in His body, as He sojourned here among men?

First, let me say that He had physical blood, human blood. He is called the "**Son of Man**" (Luke 19:10, and, even now is designated as, "**The man Christ Jesus**" (I Tim. 2:5), though risen from the dead, and ascended to Heaven. Now, if He was, and is a real man, then He must have human blood coursing through His veins.

Second, Christ had pure blood, though He had physical blood. Though He had human blood, yet it was holy blood, of this we are certain, for of Him it is written, that He was "**without sin**" (Heb. 4:15); and also that "**in him is no sin**" (I John 3:5). Had Christ a human father His blood would have been tainted with Adamic sin. He would have been a sinner, as all other men. But by means of the virgin birth, the body and the blood of Jesus Christ were created in the womb of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1:18). It was prepared of God (Heb. 10:5). Therefore, it was holy (Luke 1:35). And thus it was with His blood, as with His body. No wonder Jesus' blood is called "**precious**" (I Pet. 1:19).

Third, Christ had powerful blood. Of this, I shall speak more later. It is more powerful than the blood of the best of men. In Genesis 4:10 the blood of the martyred Abel cried out for punishment, for vengeance. But in Hebrews 12:24 "**Jesus. . .and. . . (His) blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel,**" for it cries out for pardon! Reject the blood of Christ and you reject pardon.

That precious blood of Jesus is the "**blood of the new testament,**" or covenant (Mark 14:24). Yes, it is the "**blood of the everlasting covenant**" (Heb. 13:20). Reject that blood and

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## The Blood of Jesus

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you reject the only covenant God has made with sinners whereby they may be forgiven. **“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace”** (Heb. 10:28-29)?

The blood of Jesus Christ is like the body of Jesus, it is incorruptible, it is eternal (Acts 2:31). Where, then, is that blood now? Actually the blood was poured out on the cross and fell to the ground at the foot of the cross, and soaked therein. Legally it “sprinkles now the throne of grace” and covers our sin (Lev. 4:6). Spiritually it continually cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

Is there blood in the body of Jesus Christ now? In the face of such popular scholarship I must confess that I am forced to believe from what I read in the Holy Scriptures, that Jesus Christ does have a resurrection body of blood, as well as **“flesh and bones”** (Luke 24:39). The fact that blood is not mentioned in Luke 24:39 is probably due to the fact that blood cannot be felt, as could the body, and the bones of the risen Redeemer. The argument that **“flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God”** (1 Cor. 15:50) means that it cannot do so in its present, mortal condition. That is proved from the context (see vv. 47-54). It must be **“changed”** (v. 51). I believe Christ has physical blood in His body of glorified flesh and bone, human blood and sinless, because He is still a Man, as well as the eternal God (1 Tim. 2:5). And He is coming again as the Son of Man (Matt. 25:31) to judge the quick and the dead (John 5:27-29).

### SECOND, CONSIDER THE NEED OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

What does that precious shed blood of Jesus do? Upon the altar it makes atonement between God and the sinner (Lev. 17:11). By that blood we are purchased by God (Acts 20:28); we are justified, or made righteous (Rom. 5:9); we have redemption (Eph. 1:7); we are made nigh to God (Eph. 2:13); have peace (Col. 1:20); have remission, or forgiveness (Heb. 9:22); enter into the presence of God in worship, and prayer (Heb. 10:19); are sanctified (Heb. 13:12); are cleansed from all sin (1 John 1:7); washed from our sins (Rev. 1:5), making our garments white in its crimson flow (Rev. 7:14); and by that blood we overcome the devil (Rev. 12:11).

My friend, apart from this blood you are a complete stranger to these eternal

blessings. The gospel bells sweetly chime, but they are all tuned to the keynote of Calvary. These joys I have just mentioned are precious jewels indeed, and rich is the one who possesses them, but these precious pearls are strung on the red cord of blood atonement (Leslie Greening). Listen, **“The best robe, and the only robe to cover a sinner, was made in the loom of Calvary”** (Winifred Sterett). Martin Luther was never more right than when he said: **“The Cross is a pulpit from which the Father preaches repentance and remission of sins unto a fallen race.”**

What good is all this if you do not appropriate it? If you do not believe it? The blood must be applied. Let me illustrate. You are in a darker Egypt than the children of Israel were ever in (Ex. 1-12). Also the warning goes forth without end, over pulpit, radio, and press; death is coming! (Ex. 12:12; Heb. 9:27). But God has a remedy for His people. An innocent lamb is to be taken and slain. Its blood is to be poured out into a basin. That blood is to be sprinkled upon the doorpost of the house, and God said: **“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you”** (Ex. 12:1-13). Sinner friend, the Lamb has already been slain. Christ was that Lamb (John 1:29). The blood has already been shed. By faith place yourself under the protection of Jesus’ blood! Believe God’s Word, when He says: **“When I see the blood, I will pass over you”** in the judgment. But I warn you, the blood must be applied!

Read Joshua chapter 2, and see how Rahab the harlot of Jericho received the messengers of Israel, and also their God (Heb. 11:31). Warned by the two spies that her city was doomed she had only “one hope” of escape. She was to hang a scarlet thread (Josh. 2:18), or cord (v. 15) in the window of her home. She and all she had who hoped to be saved must remain in that home shielded by the scarlet thread. That is all she had to depend upon. The word of those men, and the scarlet thread. Read Joshua 6, and see how Rahab and her people were saved (6:21-25).

I hardly need tell you that this world, like Jericho of old, is condemned. If you will not believe the Word of God, believe your newspapers, believe your scientists. Read the Book of Revelation. Read II Peter 3. Is there no hope? Yes, there is a scarlet thread of blood that runs from Genesis to Revelation. It is the blood of Jesus Christ. Believe in His blood, and God will be merciful to you in propitiation (Rom. 3:24-26). Trust in the scarlet thread of Christ’s redeeming blood, and when this world falls at the last trumpet, though you be as great a sinner as Rahab you shall sing with those who stand before the Lamb in the holiness and the happiness of Heaven

(Rev. 7:9-17).

In an old German city there is a sight that attracts the attention of every passer-by. Way up on the top of a certain house there is a statue of a lamb. A curious story is connected with it. When the owner was building the house he lost his balance and fell from the roof. He would have been dashed to pieces except that he fell on top of a pet lamb grazing on the grass below. The man fell with his whole weight upon the lamb. It was crushed to death, but he arose with little hurt. He found the little lamb at his feet in blood and death. Therefore he raised this statue on the roof as a memorial of the lamb that died for him. Friends, I want to turn your eyes, as I close, up to the throne of God. There is the Lamb Who willingly died in my place (Rev. 5:6). I had lost my way. I was slipping, falling fast into Hell; but that precious Lamb stood in my place. **“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29).

Friend, will you trust the blood of Jesus Christ to wash your sins away now? Will you do it now? Remember, you can never go to Hell trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ! Amen.



## From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



### The Cause, Evidences and Necessity of Repentance

“Salvation without repentance would fill Heaven with people who hate God and love sin. It would perpetuate rebellion by transferring rebels from earth to Heaven. Salvation is deliverance of a person from sin, not merely from a sinful environment. Faith toward Christ without repentance toward God would make Christ nothing more than a fire escape---nothing more than a Deliverer from Hell. But Christ is the Savior from sin as well as from the punishment of sin” (*Definitions of Doctrines* by C. D. Cole, p. 80).

#### REPENTANCE BEFORE FAITH

For centuries, theologians have sought to determine whether repentance precedes faith, or faith repentance. It appears from the Scripture that such an argument is needless, as the Bible teaches that repentance is preparatory to belief in the gospel. **“For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him”** (Matt. 21:32).

These words of Christ teach that

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repentance precedes faith; they reveal that there can be no saving faith without repentance first. The verse also discloses that real repentance is followed by faith. Christ will never enter a soul where the herald of repentance has not been! To urge an impenitent sinner to trust Christ is like urging a well man to take medicine. A person must first be convicted of sin, made sorry for it, and caused to want deliverance from it, before he can trust Christ Who put away sins of penitent souls.

In five distinct passages of the New Testament (Matt. 21:32; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21; 19:4; Heb. 6:1) where repentance and faith are joined together, repentance is always mentioned before faith. Why did God confuse us by putting repentance before faith, if faith precedes repentance as Puritans and Campbellites claim? If repentance follows faith, what does the person repent of? Does he repent of his faith in Christ?

“The Divine order, when repentance and faith are used together, is repentance and faith; not faith and repentance. In

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## Cause, Evidences

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repentance the sinner takes the place of a sinner; in faith he takes Christ as Saviour. In repentance one sees himself as a sinner before God; in faith he sees Christ as Saviour from the wrath of God. In repentance the sinner is helpless; in faith Christ is mighty to save. In repentance there is sorrow for sins; in faith there is joy for salvation. In repentance the sinner distrusts himself; in faith he trusts the Lord Jesus Christ" (DEFINITIONS OF DOCTRINE by C. D. Cole, p. 77).

### FAITH ALWAYS FOLLOWS REPENTANCE

There is a very close connection between repentance unto life and faith in Christ. Article 8 of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith reads: "We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour."

Repentance which is not followed by saving faith needs to be repented of. There must be an unreal faith where there is no repentance, just as there must be an unreal repentance where there is no faith. John the Baptist called upon men to repent and believe on Christ (Acts 19:4). Jesus Christ said: "**Repent ye, and believe the gospel**" (Mark 1:15). The Apostle Paul preached "**repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 20:21). There can be no true repentance which is not accompanied by faith in Christ.

It is not only said that "**the men of Nineveh. . .repented at the preaching of Jonas**" (Matt. 12:41), but it is also recorded that "**the people of Nineveh believed God**" (Jonah 3:5). Repentance and faith are inseparable graces. Every true believer is a true penitent and every true penitent is a genuine believer. An impenitent believer, or a penitent unbeliever, have no existence but in the vain imaginations of some men.

### THE CAUSE OF REPENTANCE

Bible repentance is not the work of nature but of grace; not of a man's own spirit but of the Spirit of grace. The primary cause of repentance is owing to the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. In Zechariah 12:10 it is said: "**And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and**

**shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.**"

Here the sinner's mourning over his sins which crucified Christ is the fruit of the Spirit of grace, and the evidence of a work of grace in the soul. The true penitent weeps over his sins in love to Him Who in love suffered for him. He mourns because his sins necessitated the death of Jesus Christ.

The sinner by nature cannot repent, even though he is responsible before God to do so. It is written in Romans 8:7: "**Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.**" The unrenewed mind could never be subject to the law of God, or realize its condition before God, apart from the work of the Spirit of grace. Man by nature is "**carnally minded**" (Rom. 8:6) and can never be "**spiritually minded**" until he is "**renewed in the spirit of his mind**" (Eph. 4:23), by the Holy Spirit.

Before regeneration he is the enemy of God (Col. 1:21). He walks in the vanity of his mind (Eph. 4:17). His mind is corrupt (I Tim. 6:5; II Tim. 3:8), defiled by sin (Titus 1:15), and blinded by Satan (II Cor. 4:4). The fleshly mind is "**corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ**" (II Cor. 11:3).

The carnal minded person can only have another mind by the working of the Holy Spirit. "**I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God**" (Jer. 31:18).

Here Ephraim is seen bemoaning himself because of his sins. The Spirit had awakened a holy indignation in his breast. Ashamed and confounded, he cries out: "**Turn thou me and I shall be turned.**" This implies he can never be changed in mind and actions unless God changes him. In this statement he acknowledges his utter dependence upon converting grace.

Then he adds: "**Surely after that I was turned, I repented**" (Jer. 31:19). He could have never repented until God gave him another mind. All the pious working of our hearts toward God is the fruit and consequence of the powerful working of the Spirit of grace.

### THE GIFT OF CHRIST

Repentance is the gift of God to the sinner: "**Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins**" (Acts 5:31). In this verse the ascended Christ is seen as the Dispenser of the grace of repentance. All that embraces the change of mind, which issues in the faith, which secures forgiveness comes from the Prince of life. He alone can grant "**repentance unto life**" (Acts 11:18). This is so that grace may reign in every stage of man's

salvation.

Jesus Christ is sovereign in the dispensing of the grace of repentance. Some are denied certain signs which would bring their repentance. Jesus said in Matthew 11:21 that if the mighty works which He did in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done in Tyre and Sidon, "**they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.**" Others are given the means to repent. It is written in II Peter 3:9 that the Lord is not willing that any of the elect perish, "**but that all should come to repentance.**"

God gives some space to repent who never repent. Of the woman Jezebel in the church at Thyatira Christ said, "**And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not**" (Rev. 2:21). Such action on the part of Christ leaves an impenitent sinner without excuse. It shows His forbearance to the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

The judgment of God does not bring repentance (Ex. 11:10; Amos 4:6-11; Rev. 16:8-11). Preaching alone cannot produce repentance. There was never a more powerful preacher than John the Baptist, yet the Pharisees repented not at his preaching (Matt. 21:32). No one but Christ can give repentance!

### THE MINISTER AND THE WORD

The Bible makes it plain that in producing and directing the exercise of the grace of repentance the Spirit of Christ is pleased to employ the preaching of the written Word. The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. The three-thousand on the day of Pentecost repented upon hearing Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, preach about Jesus. There would have been no need for Christ to have commissioned His church to preach repentance (Luke 24:47), if He was not going to use such preaching to bring men to repentance.

In II Timothy 2:24-26 it is written: "**And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.**"

The servant of the Lord is responsible to instruct the impenitent who are the willing captives of Satan. He deals with people whose mind is opposed to God. Repentance is needed as antecedent to the knowledge of the truth. Only God can give the sinner this change of mind. But the minister of the Word must labor patiently, knowing it pleases God to use his message in producing this change.

As I stand and preach the Word of God from week to week, I preach it boldly and faithfully, praying that God will give the elect hearer repentance unto life. Only then can the sinner acknowledge the truth which I preach unto him. I

can never bring a sinner to repentance, but I can preach a Christ Who gives repentance. I can point men, not to the mourner's bench, but to a Christ Who has the power to give repentance. I am encouraged in this preaching of the gospel, "**knowing that the goodness of God**" leads men to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

### THE EVIDENCES OF REPENTANCE

Evangelical repentance has fruits and evidences. John the Baptist commanded the Pharisee and Sadducees: "**Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance**" (Matt. 3:8). He who professes to be penitent must act as becomes a penitent. He must through grace forsake all sin and cleave to that which is good.

To King Agrippa Paul said: "**But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance**" (Acts 26:20). As a tree is known by its fruit, so repentance is known by good works. He who professes repentance must practice it. Penitent words call for penitent deeds.

### A CAREFULNESS NOT TO SIN

The penitent believer is careful to keep himself from the practice of sinning (I John 3:6-7) and to abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thess. 5:22). The Apostle Paul declared: "**Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity**" (II Tim. 2:19).

Evangelical repentance is being sorry enough over sins to forsake them. Proverbs 28:13 says: "**He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.**" Sin is forsaken by the penitent without any thought of returning to it. The penitent says: "**If I have done iniquity, I will do no more**" (Job 34:32). He forsakes the wicked way for ever (Isa. 55:7). He who claims to have repented while continuing in sin is a liar and a hypocrite. To pretend to have turned from iniquity with bitter remorse, and yet to feed sweetly on the fruits of it, is vain.

### RESTITUTION

Zaccheus sought to show the sincerity of his repentance and faith by making restitution for past evil acts. He told our Saviour: "**If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold**" (Luke 19:8). Zaccheus did not say, "If I be sued and compelled by law, I will restore what I have taken by unlawful means." He promised to restore fourfold as far as he could recollect, or find by his books, those he had overcharged. He did this to testify of the change of mind he had experienced.

The truly penitent person will make reparation for injuries done to other persons in their reputation, influence,

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Were all of the people baptized by John the Baptist in the first church, or only the apostles?

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My reading and studying of this subject has been quite rewarding over the years. The people baptized by John Baptist indeed were the original twelve that made up the first church. When Christ first called His disciples to follow Him was the start of the first church. Notice they only had John's baptism and no other baptism did they have. So to answer the question, yes, the first church had only those baptized by John Baptist.

**"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized"** (John 3:22) Now when the first church began to baptize converts, no longer were all the members of the first church only baptized by John Baptist.

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This is an excellent question but one I am not sure I have an absolute definitive answer for. Here are the facts that I gathered regarding the baptism of John the Baptist as it relates to the Lord's church:

1. We know that John the Baptist was sent by God to baptize those who brought forth fruits meet for repentance (Matt. 3:1-12; Mark 1:4-8; Luke 3:3-21; John 1:6).

2. We know that the baptism of John the Baptist was the only one authorized, ordained, and validated by the Lord (Matt. 21:25; Mark 11:30; Luke 7:29-30; 20:4).

3. We know that John baptized some believers (the number is not stated) prior to baptizing the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:26-28).

4. We know that Jesus Christ, the founder and foundation of the New Testament Baptist church was baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan (Matt. 3:13-17).

5. We know that Jesus Christ, the

founder and foundation of the New Testament Baptist Church called out the twelve apostles to be the first members of the church (I Cor. 12:28). All of the apostles had the baptism of John the Baptist (Acts 1:20-22). John had prepared the materials that Christ used to start the church.

6. We know that there were at least two others John baptized who were qualified to be apostles named Joseph and Matthias (Acts 1:23). Matthias was selected to replace Judas Iscariot as an apostle (Acts 1:24-26). We know for sure that John the Baptist baptized at least 15 members of the first church. We arrive at this definite number in the following manner: John baptized the twelve (12), he baptized Jesus Christ (1), he baptized Joseph and Matthias (2) bringing the total to 15.

7. We know that there were at least 120 members of the first New Testament Baptist Church after the ascension of Jesus Christ assembled for a prayer meeting in an upper room (Acts 1:13-15).

8. Once Christ established the foundation of the first New Testament Baptist Church with the 12 apostles as members, He gave them authority to baptize new converts (John 4:1-2). The exact number of people they baptized is not stated in Scripture.

9. We know that not all saved people were added to the first church, only some according to I Corinthians 12:27-28.

So, to give an absolutely definitive answer we know for sure that John the Baptist baptized at least 15 people (including the Head of the church, Jesus Christ, see #6 above). To go beyond that number would be speculation because we do not have the exact numbers stated in Scripture.

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The question is really two questions to me. #1- Did John the Baptist baptize all the members of the first church, or just the apostles? #2- Were all of those baptized by John the Baptist included in the first church, or just the apostles? I'll attempt to answer both...

John didn't baptize folk into the church, as his ministry was a precursor

to the Church as an Institution. The Founder of the church is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Christ took the material prepared by John the Baptist (baptized believers) and built His church. **"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"** (Matt. 16:18).

As we witness the calling of the apostles, we must understand that they were already saved and also had been baptized by John. They are in fact, called the disciples of John. But as he mentions in John 3:28-30, **"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."** Notice this willingness to decrease in the actions of giving (John's) disciples to the Lord to become His (the Lord's) disciples! **"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ...One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother"** (John 1:35-37, 40).

So, were all of the apostles baptized by John? Yes! According to the requirements of the Apostle Peter when the church voted to replace Judas, they had to have John's baptism! **"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection"** (Acts 1:21-22).

But were all of the members of the first church baptized by John? No, I think not. First, we have to determine the time of the organization of the Lord's church. We have already determined from His own words that Christ is the Founder and Bridegroom of the Church, not John. It is already in existence by Matthew chapters 16 & 18, so its origin is earlier. The church (defined scripturally as a local, visible, called-out assembly) came into existence as the Lord 'called-out' men and women unto His service in Matthew 4 & John 1. However, I believe it was officially turned from a mission unto an organized church in Luke 6:12-13 & Mark 3:13-14, where the Lord prayed all night and came down off the mountain to His disciples and set first in the church the ordained apostles (I Cor. 12:28).

Since the church, after its establishment was given the authority to baptize folk into their membership,

many members of the first church were baptized by Peter, Andrew, Thomas, or even Judas Iscariot. In fact for a very short period of time before John the Baptist was removed from the scene, both the church and the original Baptist were performing this God-authorized ordinance concurrently. See John 3:22-23, **"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."**

Lastly, not all of those baptized by John can definitively or scripturally be said to have been in the Lord's first church. Many were scattered throughout the world, already, and may have been under John's ministry, but not stayed long enough to either see Christ, or be added to the church. Acts 19:1-7 gives us some insight into these circumstances, where some disciples of John the Baptist had taken upon themselves a 'flawed authority' to baptize. The Apostle Paul corrected them, by adding them to the church of his origin- Antioch - through Scriptural, water baptism.

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First, let it be understood by the questioner and the reader, in order for John to baptize people into the first church, John would have had to be a member of that first church and it is apparent by the following Scripture that this was not the case, **"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled"** (John 3:29). We can see by John's statement that he was a friend of the Bridegroom (Jesus Christ) and was not in the Bride (the Church). So it would have been quite impossible for him to baptize any people into the first church!

I do however believe that all the apostles were baptized by John. This is apparent also by those men who were considered to be the replacement for Judas Iscariot, who had been the treasurer, **"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection"** (Acts 1:21-

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Please explain John 20:9.

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If the Questioner and the reader would bear with me, I would like to answer this question in two ways, first humanly speaking, and secondly spiritually speaking.

We have all, at one time or another lost either a loved one or a close friend in death. Either way we seem to lose our perspective about things, that's just the way we are made. Some grieve and mourn, others seem to be bitter, but either way, we are not ourselves, nor do we think in a rational way sometimes, until the mourning time is over.

I believe, humanly speaking, this was the case with our early brothers and sisters. After all they had just lost their Friend, Teacher, and Master. How devastated and confused do you think they were? I believe they were so confused and bewildered that they were actually blinded by grief as are we so many times when one dies. Mary was so grieved that she was begging, (who she thought was the gardener) to tell her where he had laid Him (John 20:15). Peter and John just ran out the door (v. 4) not thinking about anything they had been taught by Christ (I'll speak of this again in the second part). We see even after Jesus appears to them a couple times that Peter said, "I go a fishing" and the others said, "We also go with thee" (John 21:3). Wow! What were they thinking? "That's it, what can we do now, the Lord's gone and we have no direction, oh well, let's go fishing." This reminds me of those today who think they can do things without the Lord, it's not going to happen, is it? That is very evident with the picture before us, the Lord must be the leader and revealer in our life if we are going to work for Him, and keep His commandments. Aren't we glad He said in Hebrews 13:5, "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." What a blessing that is to us today, He will never leave us or forsake us!

Now let's look at the Spiritual application of our text. Remember, I said Peter and John just ran right out the door and never stopped to think about what Mary had told them, "Then she runneth,

and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him" (John 20:2). I had one Brother tell me years ago that they knew where Jesus was, but I think this chapter shows they didn't, at least not yet. What Peter and John could have replied to Mary was, "Mary, remember our Lord said that He would rise from the dead?" "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:13), and in Psalms 16:10, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." I believe that at this time in John 20:9 neither Peter nor John had any realization that the Old Testament Scriptures had to be fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. But this knowledge would come later, in spite of the evidence of the empty tomb, which I hope to show next. But first let me ask the reader a question! How many times have you read a passage of Scripture over and over and then one day you are reading the same passage again and a light goes off in your head and you say with tears running down your cheeks, "Why didn't I ever see that before?" Or when we are going through trials and tribulations in our life and are unable to get ourselves out of a certain situation until a brother or sister shows us the very Scripture we already know, but are unable to apply to our lives because we are so distraught? Well, such is the case here!

The "Key Scripture" to answer the question asked by the Questioner is found in Luke 24:44-46, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Their first real knowledge of the Scriptures is found here in verse 45, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." They had no understanding until then, and I might add, neither do we until the Lord is pleased to reveal it to us.

When the Lord in resurrection power (meaning, He already had been raised from the dead and showed Himself to

the disciples) explained to them from the Old Testament that He had "to rise from the dead the third day." Shortly afterwards, Peter was a changed man as he handled the Old Testament in a way that had not been possible before. The proof of this is in the verses that follow.

In Acts 1:20, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take." Do you see it? Peter quoted from Psalms 69:25, "Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents." And Psalms 109:8, "Let his days be few; and let another take his office."

In Acts 2:25-28, "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." Peter here quotes from Psalms 16:8-11.

In Acts 2:30, "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Peter quoted, "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne" (Ps. 132:11).

The reader can also read Acts 2:34 where Peter quoted Psalms 110:1; Acts 3:22 he quoted Deuteronomy 18:15, 19; Acts 3:25 he quoted Genesis 12:3; 22:18; and in Acts 4:11 he quoted Psalms 118:22. Wow! Peter was a changed man wasn't he? He went from going fishing to a great man preaching the whole council of God, all because Jesus "opened his understanding, that he might understand the Scriptures."

I pray that the Lord would more and more open our understanding of His precious Word that we might handle it in a way to tell others of His glorious resurrection, praise His Name. Also, let us all remember we are nothing, and have nothing without Him! "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). God Bless!

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"For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9). The grace of God

thru the eternal Spirit internally gives us an understanding of the will of God and the hidden mysteries of His holiness. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:11).

The Disciples of Christ were not understanding of His resurrection. "And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean" (Mark 9:10). Even after the Mount of transfiguration were some of His apostles ignorant of the resurrection of Christ, although they had been instructed prior to this event. Furthermore were the apostles taught on this very subject and still understood not, see Mark 9:31, 32.

Thru the Scriptures above we see that all are unable to understand the Word of God until God opens the understanding as Christ did. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day" (Luke 24:45, 46).

The moment the disciples looked into the tomb was a moment of understanding or still yet a furtherance of ignorance. The divine record says Christ showed Himself and the disciples were scared, after He gave them further evidence of His resurrection, we read they were happy and still some were unbelieving. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

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"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). The Scriptures are very clear, and yet millions do not believe the first verse in the Bible. They can read it, but they don't 'understand' it; don't 'comprehend' it; don't 'know' it! It's not the first time that Peter and John had heard the Word of God with their ears, but not their heart! Check out Mark 9:9-10, "And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead

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## Cause, Evidences

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or family. James 5:16 says: **“Confess your faults one to another.”** Under the mighty agency of the Holy Spirit, a penitent believer is disposed to employ every proper means to counteract his former bad conduct. Woe to the person who lays claim to repentance, who yet will on no account condescend to make the smallest reparation for injuries done. Such repentance is no better than that of Ahab, who humbled himself but neither restored Naboth’s vineyard nor turned from any of his sins.

### AN ABIDING GRACE

Real repentance is a permanent and abiding grace in the soul of man. It is a lasting disposition, not a passing act. It is an attitude which belongs to the whole Christian life.

As the new born babe grows in grace, sin becomes increasingly hateful. More and more he sees the need of exercising repentance daily. He continually laments the great imperfection of his heart and life. Each hour on earth he finds unbelief, hypocrisy, inordinate affections, vain thoughts and evil inclinations that he cannot but groan under (II Cor. 5:4).

The penitent soul does not want to dishonor God: **“But the evil which I would not, that I do”** (Rom. 7:19). He does not desire to put a stumbling block before the unconverted, or a weak brother (I Cor. 8:13). He seeks to never bring reproach on the doctrines and ordinances of his Saviour. The least act of disobedience is more than he desires in the inward man to commit.

### A ZEAL FOR GOD’S GLORY

The evangelical penitent, under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, will perform Christian duties with speed, activity, and perseverance for the glory of God (Micah 7:3; Deut. 6:17; I John 5:2-3). Both John and the Apostle Peter enjoined water baptism upon penitent believers to declare their remission of sins (Matt. 3:8; Acts 2:38). Real repentance will lead to the performance of all good works. Christ charged the Ephesian Church: **“Repent, and do the first works”** (Rev. 2:5).

### THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE

The necessity of Bible repentance was emphasized by Christ when He said: **“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”** (Luke 13:3). Men deserve to perish eternally because of sin. Repentance is the only sure way to escape perishing: **“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin”** (Ezek. 18:30). Those who do not repent are certain to perish; they will become monuments of the judgment of Heaven. Therefore, it concerns all men

to be sorry for what they have done amiss and to do so no more.

A man must repent because he is a sinner. If he were not a sinner there would be no need to repent, and if God were not gracious it would do no good to repent. Since all men are under sin, they all stand in need of repentance. Even those who feel they need no repentance really need to repent.

Men in all nations, Jew and Gentile, are commanded to repent: **“God. . . now commandeth all men every where to repent”** (Acts 17:30). The message of **“repentance and remission of sins”** (Luke 24:47) is being preached **“among all nations”** by His churches.

Repentance is something for this life. There is no space for repentance after death. The wicked in Hell are incapable of repentance. They weep and wail, yet they never repent. Repentance must not be procrastinated.

No one has ever repented of real repentance, and they never shall even when Heaven and earth are passed away. But refusal to repent is worse than the sin for which one ought to repent! To delay repentance is infinitely perilous. It is to live in imminent danger of eternal death. Can you, a worm of the dust, stand before the omnipotent Jehovah, whose vengeance is intolerable and whose indignation will burn to the lowest Hell? **“Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it”** (Ezek. 22:14). Don’t be so foolish as to suppose you do not need to repent! Such deceitful thoughts shall issue in unutterable and eternal torment!



## Forum #1

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22). Also, it should be well known that John was sent by God, **“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John”** (John 1:6), to be the forerunner of Christ to prepare the way for Him;

**“The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe”** (John 1:7).

**“John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me”** (John 1:15).

**“He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias”** (John 1:23).

**“John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose”** (John 1:26-27).

We also read in John Chapter 3 and verse 30, John’s statement about Jesus that **“He must increase, but I must decrease.”**

And surely John did decrease and was taken out of the picture, which I believe was after the church was fully established (organized) by Christ **“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor”** (Luke 6:12-16). And we can see by the account in the Gospel of Mark that they were sent out (given authority) which could only be done if the church was in full swing (organized), **“And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach”** (Mark 3:13-14). Note, too, that the church (A Sovereign Grace New Testament Missionary Baptist Church) is the only Ecclesiastical Organization that can ordain men to the ministry.

In closing I would also like to point out to the questioner and reader that there were others that were scattered abroad that came in contact with Paul and his company that knew nothing of the church and that only had John’s Baptism, and that when they believed Jesus whom Paul preached to them, were baptized into the church, **“in the name of the Lord Jesus”**; **“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve”** (Acts 19:1-7). We should learn from this portion of Scripture, the order in which things were done and continue to do the same in our churches today. God Bless!

ROGER REED



## Dangers of Sin -

(Continued from page 461) ♦

Testament account of Lot’s life, we might question the man’s salvation. However, I believe that the New Testament proof of Lot’s salvation does at least two things for us. First, the fact that the New Testament refers to Lot as being saved, proves to us that God can and will save men and women as He sees fit – and His salvation is not dependent upon the goodness of men; nor is His salvation subject to the approval of other men. Second, the fact that the New Testament confirms the salvation of Lot identifies Lot as a saved man – but one that was not an effective testimony or witness to the cause of God. This second point is what I want us to mainly consider today. That is, that not everyone who is saved by the grace of God is effective in their witness and testimony for Christ. And, just because someone has faltered or stumbled in their service to God, does not necessarily mean that they were never saved in the first place. Remember, Lot didn’t have a good or effective witness at all, and yet the New Testament refers to him as **“just”** and **“righteous”** – at least in the sight of God.

(As far as the series of sermons that I am preaching on the dangers of sin, I believe that we can place this particular Danger (or phase), somewhere between the Seared Conscience and the Useless Servant.)

So, let’s think about how dangerous sin is in the lives of those that are saved by God. In particular, let us think about how sin affects our judgment; how sin affects our wants and desires; how sin affects our habits; and, finally, how sin affects our witness.

### SIN AFFECTS OUR JUDGMENT

In a previous sermon we have noticed how that sin can taint and ultimately destroy the consciences of men. Sin can even adversely affect the conscience of those who are saved, and might otherwise seek to serve God and be a testimony for Him. And this is basically what I want us to begin with today: sin affects our judgment.

How many times do we find in the Scriptures that the men and women of this world will mistake right for wrong, or will pass judgment in an evil or false way? Mankind that is in this world cannot escape the limitations of the flesh; a part of this limitation seems to be the inherent corruption of the judgments of men. Without God in this world, we cannot judge aright, nor can we properly determine the way we should go, or the decisions we should make.

There was a time in the Old Testament when the man Aaron made a mistake in judgment in which he obeyed the will of the people, and of the flesh – rather

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## Dangers of Sin -

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than obeying the will of God. We read in Exodus 32:1-6, "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play."

### SIN AFFECTS OUR WANTS AND DESIRES

What is it that you want? What is it that you desire? Here in this life, and here in this wicked world of flesh, it seems that our wants and our desires are so often tainted with sin. In fact, once sin affects our judgment, we may not even know or understand when our wants and desires are wrong or sinful. Our perception of goodness and evil may not be what it ought to be. We may sometimes confuse worldly wants or desires with something that we think we really need. But, these wants and desires are often only meant to satisfy the flesh.

In the Old Testament there was a time when the children of Israel wanted a king, in the flesh, to rule over them. This seemed, to many, to be a legitimate or proper desire of the people. But, God understood that this was really an act of rebellion against His rule over the people. We read in I Samuel 8:4-22, "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city."

I know without a doubt that you and I (and all of those who are saved by the grace of God) have a great desire and a want (even a need) for Jesus Christ and for the ways of God. But, still, in the flesh, there is an innate desire and a want for the things of the world. This is something we must strive against. And yet, we know this is something that afflicts us all. We read in Romans 7:14-25, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,)

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

### SIN AFFECTS OUR HABITS

The habits that we have in our lives – whether they be good or bad – are really only manifestations of the working out of the fulfillment of our wants and our desires. So, it goes to follow, that the time or effort we spend on the fulfillment of our wants and desires; and the objects that are our wants and desires; works together to form the habits that rule our lives.

If we tend to follow after the sins of the world, then there is no doubt that the habits that we will form in our lives will be sinful, and will be dominated by the wants and the desires of the flesh. However, on the other hand, if we tend to follow after God and the ways of righteousness, then the habits that we will form will be good and godly and righteous in the sight of men and of God.

"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:7-8).

### SIN AFFECTS OUR WITNESS

Once our pattern of life is established in the sight of men, this becomes the body or fulness of our witness. In other words, the witness that we show forth or live out before the world (and before heaven), can be (and is) the sum of our habits that rule our lives.

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood" (Prov. 1:10-16).

We ought not to walk with the

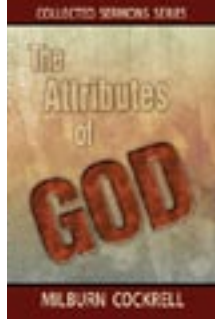
wicked, or follow after foolish men. We read in Psalm 1, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of the sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

### CONCLUSION

Sin is dangerous. The curse of sin is such that it can even adversely affect the witness and testimony of those that are the saints of God. I know that in our spirits we would prefer to be out of this world, and in the presence of God. I know this because the flesh, and this world, can be such a burden and obstacle to the desires that we have to serve and love God.

However, God has ordained that we must work and live in this world to the glory and praise of God. Paul told the Philippians, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil. 2:12-16). It is our obligation, and our privilege, to stand out as witnesses and lights of truth in these wicked last days. I pray that God would give us all the strength and the resolve to resist the sin which is all around us, and to shine, untainted, as the servants of God.





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## Forum #2

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**should mean.”** See also Matthew 16:21-22, **“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”**

I believe you can substitute the word ‘understood’ for the word ‘knew’ in our text. They simply hadn’t connected the dots concerning our Lord’s actions in the purpose of redemption. And we won’t until the Lord opens our understanding like He did for the two disciples en route to Emmaus later that fateful day... **“And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he (Christ) said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself... And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”** (Luke 24:24-27, 31-32).

We are slow of heart to believe in the flesh! God must open up the Scriptures unto us! If we are foolish enough to believe that we are ‘smart’ enough to comprehend God’s Word on our own, we’ll find ourselves with the Apostle Peter in Matthew 16:23, **“But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”**

**“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:5-8). **“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”** (I Cor. 2:14).

One more picture we can get from our text. John saw the evidence in the tomb and then believed. That’s what Thomas also required in John 20:25, **“The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto**

**them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”** Unless I (see/understand/know for myself), I won’t believe!

What’s wonderful is that you and I have never seen the tomb, yet we know it is empty! You and I have never seen the print of the nails, or the jagged hole in our precious Saviour’s side- yet we know they exist! Why? Maybe the better question is ‘how?’ By the Grace of God! **“Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed”** (John 20:29, 31). And by His grace, ye also, Beloved Reader, can believe and know! **“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”**

MATTHEW STEPP



John 20:9 declares: **“For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.”**

The simple answer is that the disciples did not always understand the truth about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ because they were often slow of heart to believe. In spite of all the times that Jesus plainly told them He would rise from the dead they did not fully comprehend His sayings and the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies regarding His First Advent until after the resurrection. Even then, Jesus had to correct some of their thinking regarding the establishment of the Millennial kingdom upon the earth (Acts 1:1-8). Israel’s restoration and regeneration would be a future event associated with the Second Advent of Christ to establish His millennial throne upon the earth.

John Gill, the Baptist expositor gave an excellent explanation of John 20:9:

“Meaning not some particular passage of Scripture, but the writings of the Old Testament in general, and the various places in it, which spoke of the resurrection of Christ, either in a way of type, or prophecy; such as Gen. 22:3-4, Jonah 2:17, Psalm 16:10, Hosea 6:2, Isaiah 26:19, and though our Lord had often referred to some of them, at least as in Matt. 12:40, 16:21, and 20:16, yet such was the dulness of the disciples, or such their prejudices in favour of the Messiah being to continue, and set up a temporal kingdom, that even John, who leaned on His breast, and Peter, who was

so inquisitive and desirous of knowing our Lord’s meaning in every thing, did not understand the sense of His words, nor of those places of Scripture He had reference to: that he must rise again from the dead: so it was determined, thus it was predicted, and the justification and salvation of God’s elect required it; and yet they knew not the thing, nor the necessity and importance of it.” (Gill’s Expositor Vol. 8, p. 123).

TOM ROSS



## Rich Man Opened

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**forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.”**

3. Religion: The religionist says, “There is a God, but He is a God of love and therefore He would not nor could not send anyone to Hell.” This is the position of all the cults and of the liberals. **“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”** (Matt. 10:28).

Jesus Christ was the greatest hellfire and brimstone preacher in the Bible. Of the 162 references to Hell and eternal judgment in the New Testament, 70 were spoken by the Jesus Christ, Himself.

Luke 16:19-31 is the greatest example in the Bible that shows us the reality and torment of this place called Hell. Jesus literally opens the door to Hell and allows us to look at the things that are happening there.

This place is not the Lake of Fire. The Lake of Fire is where the lost will go after the Great White Throne Judgment. The place we are looking at in this text is where lost men go the moment they take their last breath in time and enter into eternity. It is a temporary holding area for the lost person. When a person leaves this world without Christ as his/her Savior they go to this place and stay there until they are called out to face God in judgment. They are then cast into the Lake of Fire. This place is called Hades, the other is called Gehenna. Both are places of horrific pain, suffering, and torment.

In this place called Hell the rich man could still see, hear, speak, and he could feel, he still had desires, needs, and the ability to express his thoughts.

To those who are reading this article never let anyone mislead you at this point. If you die with your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or if you die lost, your soul and spirit will not spend even one second in the grave. Instead, at the very instant of your death, you will either go to Heaven to be with the Lord, II Corinthians 5:8, or you will go immediately into Hell if you die lost, Luke 16:22-23.

Never believe for an instant that death is the end, or that man is no different than a dog, which dies and ceases to exist. Man

was given an immortal soul and spirit that will live on forever whether in Heaven or in Hell.

In verse 26 we see one of the greatest torments of being eternally separated from all the joys and wonderful things that life itself has to offer. For instance, there will never be a sunrise or sunset in Hell. There will never be heard the laughter of a child, the gentle blowing of a spring breeze, nor the smell of beauty of flowers. There will be no one to tell you they love you. There will be none of the little things that make life worth living. Hell will be void of the good things of life. No family, friends, nor fellowship. There is nothing, but endless isolation and eternal separation.

In Hell the lost sinners will never hear another sermon, another Gospel song, nor will anyone ever witness to them again. They will never be handed a tract, nor be able to see or read a Bible. There will be no churches in Hell. None of the things that point the lost to Jesus will make their appearance in that place called Hell.

But, of all the things the sinner will not see in Hell, the worst will be eternal separation from the presence of God, II Thessalonians 1:8-9. Imagine being in a place where there is no mercy, grace, love or presence of God.

This passage makes the fact very clear that Hell is a place of severe suffering. Verses 24-25, 28 paints a stunning picture of what Hell is like. The word **“torment”** is literally the word “torture”. The rich man is in a place of extreme pain and torture. The verb **“tormented”** in verse 24 is in the “present” tense and reminds us that the torments of Hell do not cease. Man does not simply burn up as some of the cults teach, but he endures the pain and torment of Hell eternally.

If this was the only place the Bible speaks of Hell as a place of suffering, we might be able to ignore this passage and consider it as nothing more than a mere story. However, the Bible tells us in many different places that Hell is a place of torment and suffering. Note: Mark 9:43; Luke 16:24-28; Revelation 14:10-11; Luke 13:28; Matthew 24:51; Revelation 21:8.

Of all the agonies of Hell, perhaps the worst one of all is shown by the word **“remember”** in verse 25. This word tells us that those who end up in Hell have the capability to remember the events of this life and are made to deal with those memories forever. Each sermon they heard and the many times God manifested Himself to them will be remembered. They will have no one to blame but themselves!

What will you remember when you get to Hell, my lost friend? Will you remember this article? Will you remember all the children of God who witnessed to you and prayed for you? Will you remember how you wasted your life with foolish things and condemned

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## Rich Man Opened

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your own soul to the fires of Hell? Will you remember how the mercies of God were bestowed upon you and you ignored Him?

Some people believe that there will be a second chance after death to repent while burning in the flames of Hell, and after they have paid for their sins they will be permitted to enter Heaven. The Bible shows beyond any doubt this thought is not true. Hell and the Lake of Fire will be for all eternity. Revelation 20:11-15.

Please do not let that happen to you! If you have never been saved by the grace

of God, you need to take care of the need today. Do not hold onto the foolish idea that there will be hope after death! Nothing could be farther from the truth. If you die without Jesus, there is nothing waiting on you but the flames of Hell!

The good news is that no person reading the article has to go to Hell! Jesus Christ died on a cross, shed His blood, and rose from the dead to pay for your sins. If you will place your faith in Him, He will save you and you will go to Heaven not Hell when you leave this world (I Cor. 15:1-4).

(Bro. Ellis is pastor of the Richland Baptist Church of Livermore, KY. For more information visit [www.richland-baptist-church.com](http://www.richland-baptist-church.com).)



**THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER**

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

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

### FORMER FEDERAL RESERVE CHAIRMAN TO GOVERNMENT: "CUT ENTITLEMENTS"

(EP News)--Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan ignited a firestorm – and liberal rage – when he said the federal government should cut entitlements. During a Bloomberg TV-sponsored foreign exchange conference in New York, which aired on Oct. 4, Greenspan said the U.S. is involved in a "dangerous game." "Everyone says 'Let's wait for a couple of years, keep the stimulus going and then we'll solve the problem,'" Greenspan said. "That's a very risky strategy." Greenspan said austere measures, starting with government entitlements cuts, are critical steps to re-stimulate the economy and re-establish certainty in the business sector. Even Ben Bernanke, the current Fed chairman, said it is critical for U.S. fiscal policy to get back on a sustainable path. "The only real question," Bernanke said, is whether tax and spending adjustments will come from a "careful and deliberative process" or from a "rapid and painful response to a looming or actual fiscal crisis."

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### FEDERAL COURT KEEPS 'DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL' POLICY IN PLACE

(EP News)--The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in early November granted the government's request to indefinitely stop a lower court's repeal of the controversial "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy. The indefinite stay blocks U.S. District Judge Virginia A. Phillip's order that served as a global end to the 1993 law that affirmed that homosexuality is incompatible with military service. Her decision would also bring an end to President Clinton's DADT policy that effectively dodged enforcement of the law.

President Obama and his staff met with gay activists in an effort to reassure them of their support.

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### MULTI-STATE LAWSUIT AGAINST HEALTH CARE GETS GREEN LIGHT

(EP News)--A multi-state lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of President Obama's overreaching health care law was allowed to move forward by a Florida federal judge in early October. A hearing is set for Dec. 16. U.S. District Judge Roger Vinson rejected a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) request to dismiss the case and denounced the government's "Alice in Wonderland" defense. Vinson allowed two of the eight counts brought by the states to move forward. The first count that survived focused on the constitutionality of the government's mandate to buy insurance. The second count zeroed in on states being coerced to accept even more Medicaid recipients, which they partially fund, when the system is already bankrupting state coffers.

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### FEDERAL JUDGE: "UNDER GOD" CAN STAY IN TEXAS PLEDGE

(EP News)--The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Oct 14 that the use of "under God" in the Texas state pledge does not violate the U.S. Constitution. David and Shannon Wallace Croft filed a lawsuit after the Texas Legislature amended its pledge to include the words "under God," in order to mirror the national Pledge of Allegiance. The Crofts claimed the amended state pledge harmed their children – even if they were allowed to leave the room during its recitation. The court wrote: "Neither Texas's state pledge nor the provision of its educational code requiring its recitation by school children violates the

Establishment Clause."

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### STAND4MARRIAGEDC APPEALS SAME-SEX MARRIAGE RULING TO THE HIGH COURT

(EP News)--A group of family advocates filed a petition in October with the U.S. Supreme Court, asking it to intercede on behalf of D.C. residents who are being denied the right to vote on the definition of marriage. The D. C. City Council – using shrewdly added so-called human rights regulations – has voted in favor of same-sex marriage. Gay activists also have used the regulations to block efforts to appeal the decision through a resident-driven petition initiative. Bishop Harry R. Jackson, chairman of Stand4MarriageDC, said, "Twelve hundred ministers have signed on with us in Maryland, Virginia and D.C. – people who live, work or worship in D.C. What (the court does) will have far-reaching consequences."

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### DOJ FINALLY DEFENDS MARRIAGE, FAMILY GROUPS FEAR MEDIOCRE EFFORT

(EP News)--The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) on Oct. 12 appealed two rulings by a lower court that deemed unconstitutional a portion of the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), as it applied to Massachusetts same-sex married couples. On July 8, federal District Court Judge Joseph Tauro of Massachusetts struck down in two separate opinions, Section 3 of DOMA – which requires that all federal benefits programs define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The DOJ appeal – filed with the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals – comes one week after Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, acted on behalf of the U.S. Congress to intervene and defend the law. The reason: The DOJ had failed to properly defend DOMA. The U.S. Department of Justice's lackluster defense of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), prompted Smith to take action. Smith, represented by the Alliance Defense Fund, filed motions arguing that DOMA, the federal law that defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman, was not properly defended by the Justice Department.

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### MORE COMPANIES SPONSOR GLBT DINNER, HELP UNDERMINE MARRIAGE, RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES

(EP News)--Mainstream corporations increasingly want to be viewed as "friendly" to the GLBT (Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender) community – and, by doing so, helping to undermine marriage and religious liberty. Case in point; the following are just a few of this year's corporations, that sponsored the 2010 fundraising dinner for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) – the largest gay activist organization in the country: Accenture, AARP, Bank of America, Chase, Chevron, CITI, Comcast, Dell, Google, Hershey's, Hyatt, IBM, Lockheed Martin, Microsoft, Macy's, Marriott, Metlife, Northrop Grumman, Nationwide, NEA, Nielsen, Nike, Planned Parenthood,

Prudential, Shell, Starbucks, UPS, Verizon, Wachovia, Waste Management, Wells Fargo, and others. The HRC strongly advocates for same-sex marriage and parenting, as well as the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the overturning of the Defense of Marriage Act and demanding tolerance and acceptance – often at the expense of religious liberties.

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### NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH—OR FREE HEALTHCARE

(EP News)--A few days ago, I received an email from the daughter of our congresswoman -- a mass email, of course. She explained that because of healthcare reform, which her mother supported, she no longer had to pay a \$25 copayment for each prenatal appointment. This will save a family "that lives paycheck to paycheck" over \$500 per year.

Such savings make healthcare reform sound like a wonderful gift until you stop to reflect: Who pays the \$25 that the consumer no longer pays each time she visits the doctor?

The answer: Someone. Specifically, for those who have health insurance, the elimination of co-pays will mean higher premiums. In other words, paychecks will become smaller as insurance rates rise to cover this new government mandate.

Proponents of this new rule emphasize that if people do not have to pay for preventative care, they are less likely to require more expensive hospitalization or treatment in the future. Thus, mandating no co-pays on preventative care may reduce healthcare expenditures in the long run.

Unfortunately, this line of argument is fundamentally flawed. It assumes that the government knows or can find out how much preventative healthcare each person needs and mandate insurance companies to pay for the required number of visits. The number of doctor visits covered as preventative healthcare will be a political decision, and self-interested medical professionals will undoubtedly play an important role in that decision. Thus, we should not be surprised if the government mandates more free preventative care than would be cost effective for most patients.

We live in a world of scarcity. Money spent on healthcare cannot be spent on something else. If an insurance company provides a certain number of "free" doctor visits, each person covered by insurance will pay for the number of times the average person visits the doctor, regardless of how often the person visits the doctor.

One person's visit to the doctor has an imperceptible impact on the per-capita cost of healthcare borne by a large insurance company. Thus, the monetary cost to each patient for a doctor visit for "preventative care" is effectively zero. The quantity of healthcare demanded will be greater at a zero price than at a \$25 price. Since almost everyone will demand more healthcare at the zero price, insurance premiums will rise for everyone, and because more healthcare is

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## Bible & the Newspaper

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being consumed, the total cost of healthcare will be greater than if everyone had to pay a \$25 (or higher) co-pay.

If you are covered by a typical health insurance plan which requires you to pay part of the cost of each doctor visit, Congress has not saved you money by passing healthcare reform. Instead, it has mandated that you spend more than you might choose to spend on so-called "preventative" healthcare. If you don't pay for it up front with co-pays, you will pay for it through higher premiums. The only way to keep premiums from rising is if the "free" care is taxpayer funded, and then someone still pays for it.

There is no free lunch, and there ain't no free healthcare either.

Instead of "Obama Care," which takes away our freedom, what we need is healthcare reform that gives the consumer more freedom to decide how much healthcare to purchase with his own money.

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### GLOBAL ABORTION-EXPANSION BILL FAST-TRACKED IN HOUSE

(EP News)--Both chambers of the U.S. Congress plan to take up what purports to be an innocent bill to help women around the world. Unfortunately, the proposed International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) also would promote worldwide access to abortion services and export a hostile, anti-family, pro-gay agenda on nations, by using it as a bargaining tool. The House Foreign Affairs Committee took up its version of the measure (HR 4594) in October during a markup hearing. The Democrat-controlled committee could try to slip-in the billion-dollar abortion program and get it passed without a recorded vote – a preferred scenario before any election.

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### FEDERAL JUDGE UPHOLDS MICHIGAN STUDENT'S FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

(EP News)--A federal judge upheld on Oct. 26 the rights of a Michigan second grade student to hand out invitations to a youth summer camp. Judge Gerald E. Rosen, of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, ruled that the Patterson Elementary principal was wrong to ban the student from distributing the religious material on school grounds. In his opinion, the judge reasoned: "(S)uch a blanket prohibition upon a student's distribution of materials on the basis of religious viewpoint is not constitutionally permissible. The school district cannot reasonably be viewed as having imposed time, place, or manner restrictions upon J.S.'s distribution of these materials; instead, it has flatly forbidden him from giving such materials to his classmates anywhere on school grounds at any time during the school day." Rosen further ordered the school district to stop enforcing such a ban "on the sole ground that she seeks to distribute materials promoting religious

activities" – especially while allowing other groups to distribute their flyers.

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### RESEARCH UNDERSCORES IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY STRUCTURE

(EP News)--Research from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows the importance of marriage, family structure and faith. Dr. Pat Fagan, senior fellow and director of Family Research Council's Marriage and Religion Research Institute and Dr. Paul Sullins, associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America, explored the findings of the government-funded National Survey of Family Growth. Fagan and Sullins concluded that women who grow up with married parents – and who now worship on a weekly basis – are the least likely to get pregnant unintentionally. Sullins said they were able to correlate sexual activity and pregnancy history with religious attendance.

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### GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTS SAME-SEX BENEFITS, FURTHERING END-RUN AROUND MARRIAGE

(EP News)--Federal agencies are implementing a directive from President Obama that extends even more health care benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees – undermining the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). DOMA defines marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman for purposes of any federal rules, regulations or interpretations of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States. The president unilaterally ordered a change to the 1997 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) passed by Congress to include a 24-hour "leave without pay" (LWOP) benefit to domestic partners.

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### INDIANA COUNCIL SAYS "NO" TO SPECIAL RIGHTS BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

(EP News)--City council members in South Bend, Ind., have defeated – for the fifth time – a so-called nondiscrimination measure that was based on perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. In front of an overflow crowd of concerned citizens, five Democrats and one Republican voted against providing special protections for certain individuals. Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia have passed laws providing special rights based on sexual orientation, while 12 states and D.C. add protections based on gender identity. Federal legislation has also been introduced by Democrats in Congress.

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### REJECTED VOTER REGISTRATIONS, DISENGAGED DOJ HIGHLIGHT NEED FOR ALERT CITIZENS

(EP News)--The election season is over, but the lawsuits over elections might continue for months or even years. Reports of suspected voter fraud are surfacing from New York to Washington state, with cases ranging from questionable voter registration

schemes to "missing" or inaccurate absentee ballots. Many have a common characteristic: union-backed groups working with the Democrat Party. Under the guise of names like "America Votes," "One Vote" and "Project Vote," liberal groups and labor unions have targeted 10 states with nearly 600 individual voter contact programs – some of which are now under investigation. Conservatives fear that liberal groups will take advantage of the noncompliance of at least 16 states that have yet to remove dead and illegible voters, as well as felons from voter rolls.

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### PRAYER "PROTEST" BEFORE TENNESSEE FOOTBALL GAME IN RESPONSE TO BAN

(EP News)--Friday night, Oct. 23, was not a typical night for high school football fans in one Tennessee town. Hamilton County School administrators announced that the normal practice of praying over the loud speaker before games had been banned due to a legal letter from the secularist group Freedom from Religion Foundation. Scores of students and fans -- along with football players from both teams -- descended onto the field to pray. Rhonda Thurman, a school board member, said she was proud of the students. "I think that's wonderful," Thurman said. "I think that's their absolute right, and praise God."

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### PRESIDENT OBAMA ADMITS ELECTIONS WERE "A SHELLACKING," YET REMAINS UNDETERRED

(EP News)--After the Nov. 2 election sweep by conservatives, President Obama admitted that Democrats received a "shellacking" and took responsibility for the loss. Pundits immediately noticed that he did not apologize. Rather, when pressed, he remained resolved that he would stick to his agenda. When asked repeatedly by various networks whether he thought his administration was going in the wrong direction, he deflected blame and said he was merely responding to emergency situations.

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### DENVER JUDGE RULES IN FAVOR OF NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

(EP News)--Secularists were dealt a decisive blow on Oct. 28 when a Denver judge ruled that a gubernatorial proclamation recognizing the Day of Prayer was not unconstitutional. District Judge R. Michael Mullins ruled the Gov. John Ritter did not violate the state constitution's religious freedom clause. The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), which has won a similar district-level lawsuit aimed at the National Day of Prayer, said it would appeal Mullins' decision. The National Day of Prayer was established by Congress in 1952. The law was amended in 1988 to recognize it the first Thursday in May.

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### DEAD PEOPLE RECEIVE \$1 BILLION IN FEDERAL BENEFITS

Our federal government has paid over \$1 billion to dead people over the last ten years.

Over 250,000 dead were helped with prescriptions and wheelchairs, subsidizing their farms, and paying their rent, and even chipping in for heating and air conditioning. Among this was \$18 million in stimulus funds from Social Security, \$92 million in Medicare claims paid for treatments prescribed by dead doctors and \$8.2 million for medical supplies

Congress is to blame as much as the administration. Congress has failed to give Social Security the ability to rescind electronic payments in the failed stimulus bill, which sent \$18 million in payments to 71,688 dead people. Not to mention Congress is to blame for rules that required dead farmers to receive benefits – more than \$1 billion, sent to nearly 173,000 deceased farmers over seven years. Of that, nearly a fifth of the money went to farmers who had been dead at least seven years.

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### INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS FRENCH RIOT AGAINST REALITY

(EP News)--Garbage piled up, airlines canceled flights, and gas stations ran dry across France, as workers railed against a modest change to the country's debt-ridden pension system: President Nicolas Sarkozy proposed raising the retirement age from 60 to 62. Sarkozy's plan came as the nation's mandatory, state-run pension system faces a budget shortfall that could reach \$44 billion this year. The French president said that raising the retirement age in an already generous pension plan was a critical step to bridging the gap and bringing the country's ballooning deficit under control. French unions balked, setting off weeks of protests and rolling strikes that crippled sanitation and transportation systems: Garbage collectors let trash pile high, airports canceled nearly a third of flights, and gas stations ran out of fuel. Truckers staged "escargot" protests: driving in packs—at a snail's pace—to snarl traffic. Some protests grew violent as youth clashed with police in several cities, throwing bottles and setting fires.



## Scoffing At Religion

By Hugh Blair  
(1718 – 1800)

"There shall come in the last days scoffers" (II Pet. 3:3).

As the Christian religion is adverse to the inclinations and passions of the corrupted part of mankind, it has been its fate, in every age, to encounter the opposition of various foes. Sometimes, it has undergone the storms of violence and persecution. Sometimes, it has been attacked by the arms of false reasoning, and sophistry. When these have failed of success, it has at other times been

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## Scoffing At Religion

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exposed to the scoffs of the petulant. Men of light and frivolous minds, who had no comprehension of thought for discerning what is great, and no solidity of judgment for deciding on what is true, have taken upon them to treat religion with contempt, as if it were of no consequence to the world. They have affected to represent the whole of that venerable fabric which has so long commanded the respect of mankind; which for ages the learned have supported, and the wise have admired, as having no better foundation than the gloomy imagination of fanatics and visionaries. Of this character were those scoffers, predicted by the Apostle to arise in the last days; a prediction which we have seen too often fulfilled. As the false colors which such men throw on religion, are apt to impose on the weak and unwary, let us now examine, whether religion affords any just grounds for the contempt of ridicule of the scoffer. They must be either the doctrines, or the precepts, of religion, which he endeavors to hold forth to contempt.

The doctrines of the Christian religion are rational and pure. All that it has revealed concerning the perfections of God, His moral government and laws, the destination of man, and the rewards and punishments of a future state, is perfectly consonant to the most enlightened reason. In some articles which transcend the limits of our present faculties, as in what relates to the essence of the Godhead, the fallen state of mankind, and their redemption by Jesus Christ, its doctrines may appear mysterious and dark. Against these the scoffer has often directed his attacks; as if whatever could not be explained by us, ought upon that account to be exploded as absurd.

It is unnecessary to enter, at present, on any particular defense of these doctrines, as there is one observation which, if duly weighed, is sufficient to silence the cavils of the scoffer. Is he not compelled to admit, that the whole system of nature around him is full of mystery? What reason, then, had he to suppose, that the doctrines of revelation, proceeding from the same author, were to contain no mysterious obscurity? All that is requisite for the conduct of life, both in nature and in religion, divine wisdom has rendered obvious to all. As nature has afforded us sufficient information concerning; what is necessary for our food, our accommodation, and our safety; so religion has plainly instructed us in our duty towards God, and our neighbors. But as soon as we attempt to rise towards objects that lie beyond our immediate sphere of action, our curiosity is checked; and darkness meets us on every side. What the essence is of those material bodies which we see and

handle; how a seed grows up into a tree; how man is formed in the womb; or how the mind acts upon the body, after it is formed; are mysteries of which we can give no more account, than of the most obscure and difficult parts of revelation. We are obliged to admit the existence of the fact, though the explanation of it exceeds our faculties.

After the same manner, in natural religion, questions arise concerning the creation of the world from nothing, the origin of evil under the government of a perfect Being, and the consistency of human liberty with divine prescience, which are of as intricate nature, and of as difficult solution, as any questions in Christian theology. We may plainly see, that we are not admitted into the secrets of Providence, any more than into the mysteries of the Godhead. In all His ways, the Almighty is a God "that bideth himself. He maketh darkness his pavilion. He holdeth back the face of his throne; and spreadeth a thick cloud upon it." Instead of its being any objection to revelation, that some of its doctrines are mysterious, it would be much more strange and unaccountable, if no such doctrines were found in it. Had everything in the Christian system been perfectly level to our capacities, this might rather have given ground to a suspicion, of its not proceeding from God; since it would have been then so unlike to what we find, both in the system of the universe, and in the system of natural religion. Whereas, according as matters now stand, the gospel has the same features, the same general character, with the other two, which are acknowledged to be of divine origin; plain and comprehensible, in what relates to practice; dark and mysterious, in what relates to speculation and belief. The cavils of the scoffer, therefore, on this head, are so far from having any just foundation, that they only discover his ignorance, and the narrowness of his views.

Let us next proceed to what relates to practice, or the perceptive part of religion. The duties which religion enjoins us to perform towards God, are those which have oftenest furnished matter to the scoffs of the licentious. They attempt to represent these as so idle and superfluous, that they could owe their birth to nothing but enthusiasm. For, is not the Deity so far exalted above us, as to receive neither advantage nor pleasure from our worship? What are our prayers, or our praises, to that infinite mind, Who, resting in the full enjoyment of His own beatitude, beholds all His creatures passing before Him, only as the insects of a day? What but superstitious terrors, could have dictated those forms of homage, and those distinctions of sacred days, in which vulgar minds delight, but which the liberal and enlarged look upon with scorn?

Now, in return to such insults of the

scoffer, it might be sufficient to observe, that the united sentiments of mankind, in every age and nation, are against Him. Thoughtless as the bulk of men are, and attached only to objects which they see around them; this principle has never been extinguished in their breasts, that to the great Parent of the human race, the universe, though invisible, benefactor of the world, not only internal reverence, but external homage, is due. Whether He need that homage or not is not the question. It is what, on our part, we undoubtedly owe; and the heart is, with reason, held to be base, which stifles the emotions of gratitude to a benefactor; how independent forever He may be of any returns. True virtue always prompts a public declaration of the grateful sentiments which it feels; and glories in expressing them. Accordingly, over all the earth, crowds of worshippers have assembled to adore, in various forms, the Ruler of the world. In these adorations, the philosopher, the savage, and the saint, have equally joined. None but the cold and unfeeling can look up to that beneficent Being, Who is at the head of the universe, without some inclination to pray, or to praise. In vain, therefore, would the scoffer deride, what the loud voice of nature demands and justifies. He erects himself against the general and declared sense of the human race.

But, apart from this consideration, I must call on him to attend to one of a still more serious and awful nature. By his licentious ridicule of the duties of piety, and of the institutions of divine worship, he is weakening the power of conscience over men; he is undermining the great pillars of society; he is giving a mortal blow to public order, and public happiness. All these rest on nothing so much, as on the general belief of an all-seeing witness, and the general veneration of an Almighty Governor. On this belief, and this veneration, is founded the whole obligation of an oath; without which, government could not be administered, nor courts of justice act; controversies could not be determined, nor private property be preserved safe. Our only security against innumerable crimes, to which the restraints of human life cannot reach, is the dread of an invisible avenger; and of those future punishments which He hath prepared for the guilty. Remove this dread from the minds of men; and you strengthen the hands of the wicked, and endanger the safety of human society.

But how could impressions so necessary to the public welfare be preserved, if there were no religious assemblies, no sacred institutions, no days set apart for divine worship, in order to be solemn remembrancers to men of the existence, and the dominion of God; and of the future account they have to give of their actions to Him? To all ranks of men, the sentiments which

public religion tends to awaken, are salutary and beneficial. But with respect to the inferior classes, it is well known, that the only principles which restrain them from evil are acquired in the religious assemblies which they frequent. Destitute of the advantages of regular education; ignorant, in great measure, of public laws; unacquainted with those refined ideas of honor and propriety, to which others of more knowledge have been trained; were those sacred temples deserted to which they now resort, they would be in danger of degenerating into a ferocious race, from whom lawless violence was perpetually to be dreaded.

He, therefore, who treats sacred things with any degree of levity and scorn, is acting the part, perhaps without his seeing or knowing it, of a public enemy to society. He is precisely the madman described in the book of Proverbs, "**who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death. . . and saith, Am not I in sport**" (Prov. 26:18-19)? We shall hear him at times, complain loudly of the undutifulness of children, of the dishonesty of servants, of the tumults and insolence of the lower ranks; while he himself is, in a great measure, responsible for the disorders of which he complains. By the example which he sets of contempt for religion, he becomes accessory to the manifold crimes, which that contempt occasions among others. By his scoffing at sacred institutions, he is encouraging the rabble to uproar and violence; he is emboldening the false witness to take the name of God in vain; he is, in effect, putting arms into the hands of the highwayman, and letting loose the robber on the streets by night.

We come next to consider that great class of duties, which respect our conduct towards our fellow-creatures. The absolute necessity of these to general welfare is so apparent, as to have secured them, in a great degree, from the attacks of the scoffer. He who would attempt to turn justice, truth, or honesty, into ridicule, would be avoided by every one. To those who had any remains of principle, he would be odious. To those who attended only to their interest, he would appear a dangerous man. But though the social virtues are treated in general as respectable and sacred, there are certain forms and degrees of them which have not been exempted from the scorn of the unthinking. That extensive generosity, and high public spirit, which prompts a man to sacrifice his own interest, in order to promote some great general good; and that strict and scrupulous integrity, which will not allow one, on any occasion, to depart from the truth; have often been treated with contempt by those who are called men of the world. They who will not stoop to flatter the great; who disdain to comply with prevailing manners, when they judge them to be evil; who refuse to

♦ (Continued on page 478)

## Scoffing At Religion

(Continued from page 477) ♦

take the smallest advantage of others, in order to procure the greatest benefit for themselves; are represented as persons of romantic character, and visionary notions, unacquainted with the world, and unfit to live in it.

Such persons are so far from being liable to any just ridicule, that they are entitled to a degree of respect, which approaches to veneration. For they are, in truth, the great supporters and guardians of public order. The authority of their character overawes the giddy multitude. The weight of their example retards the progress of corruption; checks that relaxation of morals, which is always too apt to gain ground insensibly, and to make encroachments on every department of society. Accordingly, it is this high generosity of spirit, this inflexible virtue, this regard to principle, superior to all opinion, which has ever marked the characters of those who have eminently distinguished themselves in public life; who have patronized the cause of justice against powerful oppressors; who, in critical times, have supported the falling rights and liberties of men; and have reflected honor on their nation and country. Such persons may have been scoffed at by some among whom they lived, but posterity has done them ample justice; and they are the persons, whose names are recorded to future ages, and who are thought and spoken of with admiration.

The mere temporizer, the man of accommodating principles, and inferior virtue, may support a plausible character for a while among his friends and followers; but as soon as the hollowness of his principles is detected, he sinks into contempt. They, who are prone to deride men of inflexible integrity, only betray the littleness of their minds. They show that they understand not the sublime of virtue; that they have no discernment of the true excellence of man. By affecting to throw any discouragement on purity and strictness of morals, they not only expose themselves to just contempt, but propagate sentiments very dangerous to society. For, if we loosen the regard due to virtue in any of its parts, we begin to sap the whole of it. No man, as it has been often said, becomes entirely profligate at once. He deviates, step by step, from conscience. If the loose casuistry of the scoffer were to prevail, open dishonesty, falsehood, and treachery, would speedily grow out of those complying principles, those relaxations of virtue, which he would represent to be necessary for every man who knows the world.

The last class of virtues I am to mention, are those which are of a personal nature, and which respect the government to be exercised over our

pleasures and passions. Here, the scoffer has always considered himself as having an ample field. Often, and often, have such virtues as sobriety, temperance, modesty, and chastity, been made the subject of ridicule, as monkish habits, which exclude men from the company of the fashionable and the gay; habits, which are the effect of low education, or of mean spirits, or of mere feebleness of constitution; while scoffers, walking, as it is too truly said of them by the Apostle, "after their lusts," boast of their own manners as liberal and free, as manly and spirited. They fancy themselves raised thereby much above the crowd; and hold all those in contempt, who confine themselves within the vulgar bounds of regular and orderly life.

Infatuated men! Who see not that the virtues, of which they make sport, not only derive their authority from the laws of God, but are moreover essentially requisite both to public and to private happiness. By the indulgence of their licentious pleasures for a while, as long as youth and vigor remain, a few passing gratifications may be obtained. But what are the consequences? Suppose any individual to persevere unrestrained in this course, it is certainly to be followed by disrepute in his character, and disorder in his affairs; but a wasted and broken constitution; and a speedy and miserable old age. Suppose a society to be wholly formed of such persons as the scoffers applaud; suppose it to be filled with none but those whom they call the sons of pleasure; that is, with the intemperate, the riotous, and dissolute, among whom all regard to society, decency, and private virtue, was abolished; what an odious scene would such a society exhibit? How unlike any civilized or well-ordered state, in which mankind have chosen to dwell? What turbulence and uproar, what contests and quarrels, would perpetually reign in it? What man of common understanding would not rather choose to dwell in a desert, than to be associated for life with such companions? Shall, then, the scoffer presume to make light of those virtues, without which there could be neither peace, nor comfort, nor good order, among mankind?

Let him be desired to think, of his domestic situation and connections. Is he a father, a husband, or a brother? Has he any friend or relation, male or female, in whose happiness he is interested? --- Let us put the question to him, whether he be willing that intemperance, unchastity, or dissipation of any kind, should mark their character? Would he recommend to them such excesses? Would he choose, in their presence, openly, and without disguise, to scoff at the opposite virtues, as of no consequence to their welfare?

---If even the most licentious shudders at the thought; if, in the midst of his loose pleasures, he be desirous that his own family should remain untainted;

let this teach him the value of those private virtues, which in the hours of dissipation, in the giddiness of his mind, he is ready to condemn. Banish sobriety, temperance, and purity, and you tear up the foundations of all public order, and all domestic quiet. You render every house a divided and miserable abode, resounding with terms of shame, and mutual reproaches of infamy. You leave nothing respectable in the human character. You change the man into a brute.

The conclusion from all the reasoning which we have now pursued is, that religion and virtue, in all their forms, either of doctrine or of precept; of piety towards God, integrity towards men, or regularity in private conduct; are so far from affording any grounds of ridicule to the petulant, that they are entitled to our highest veneration; they are names which should never be mentioned, but with the utmost honor. It is said in Scripture, "Fools make a mock at sin" (Prov. 14:9). They had better make a mock of pestilence, at war, or famine. With one who should choose these public calamities for the subject of his sport, you would not be inclined to associate. You would fly from him, as worse than a fool; as a man of distempered mind, from whom you might be in hazard of receiving a sudden blow. Yet certain it is, that, to the great society of mankind, sin is a greater calamity, than either pestilence, or famine, or war. These operate, only as occasional causes of misery. But the sins and vices of men are perpetual scourges of the world. Impiety and injustice, fraud and falsehood, intemperance and profligacy, are daily producing mischief and disorder; bringing ruin on individuals; tearing families and communities in pieces; giving rise to a thousand tragical scenes on this unhappy theatre. In proportion as manners are vicious, mankind are unhappy. The perfection of virtue which reigns in the world above is the chief source of the perfect blessedness which prevails there.

When, therefore, we observe any tendency to treat religion or morals with disrespect and levity, let us hold it to be a sure indication of a perverted understanding, or a depraved heart. In the seat of the scorner let us never sit. Let us account that wit contaminated, which attempts to sport itself on sacred subjects. When the scoffer arises, let us maintain the honor of our God, and our Redeemer; and resolutely adhere to the cause of virtue and goodness. "The lips of the wise utter knowledge; but the mouth of the foolish is near to destruction. Him that honoureth God, God will honour. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and he that keepeth the commandment, keepeth his own soul."

(Sermons, Volume 3, 1792).



### BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 10-1-2010 to 10-31-2010

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Beginning Balance .....                   | \$8,423.26 |
| <b>RECEIPTS:</b>                          |            |
| Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....          | 225.00     |
| Berea B. C., Westpoint, TN .....          | 50.00      |
| Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ..... | 100.00     |
| Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....             | 100.00     |
| .....                                     | 475.00     |
| <b>TOTAL</b> .....                        | 8,898.26   |

|                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| <b>EXPENDITURES:</b>            |            |
| Radio Time .....                | 710.00     |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b> ..... | 710.00     |
| .....                           | \$8,188.26 |
| Interest .....                  | + .32      |
| .....                           | 8,188.58   |
| Less Corbin, KY des. ....       | -1,043.72  |
| <b>ENDING BALANCE</b> .....     | \$7,144.86 |

### CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Beginning Balance .....     | \$1,203.72 |
| <b>RECEIPTS:</b>            |            |
| <b>TOTAL</b> .....          | 1,203.72   |
| <b>EXPENDITURES:</b>        |            |
| WCTT .....                  | 160.00     |
| <b>ENDING BALANCE</b> ..... | \$1,043.72 |



### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 10-1-2010 to 10-31-2010

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Beginning Balance .....                      | \$1,523.80 |
| <b>RECEIPTS:</b>                             |            |
| Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....             | 200.00     |
| Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....            | 60.00      |
| Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN .....         | 150.00     |
| Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....             | 100.00     |
| Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID .....     | 50.00      |
| 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      |
| 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 .....       | 135.00     |
| Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM .....         | 100.00     |
| Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....     | 100.00     |
| New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN .....       | 10.00      |
| New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....        | 50.00      |
| Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....        | 100.00     |
| Portland B. C., Plumersville, AR .....       | 50.00      |
| South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA .....       | 25.00      |
| Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....            | 25.00      |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL .....   | 100.00     |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....     | 30.00      |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC ..... | 100.00     |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH .....      | 75.00      |
| Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....           | 25.00      |
| Subscriptions .....                          | 118.00     |
| Dividing checks .....                        | 150.00     |
| Anonymous .....                              | 2,241.00   |
| Sub Total .....                              | \$4,879.00 |
| <b>TOTAL</b> .....                           | \$6,402.80 |

|                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| <b>EXPENDITURES:</b>            |            |
| Printing .....                  | 581.00     |
| Postage .....                   | 730.81     |
| Wages .....                     | 2,300.00   |
| FICA .....                      | 175.90     |
| Dividing checks .....           | 150.00     |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b> ..... | \$3,937.71 |
| .....                           | 2,465.09   |
| Bank Service charge .....       | -13.00     |
| <b>ENDING BALANCE</b> .....     | \$2,452.09 |

## Added to the Church? --- What Next?

By Roy Mason  
(1894 - 1978)

**"But grow"** (II Peter 3:18).

Let me suppose that some time has elapsed since you read the last chapter. During the interval you verify the statements contained in that chapter, by the Scriptures, and unite with a Baptist Church. At the present time you are, according to my supposition, a full fledged member of a Baptist church. The question with you now is---"What next?" Have you done all that the Lord expects of you? Can you take a good easy seat and spend the rest of your days in indolent contentment? Let me answer these questions by asking another one. When a civilian has come to the military camp and has doffed his civilian attire for the uniform of his country, and has enlisted in the service, does he sit down as though there is nothing else to be done? Does he regard his uniform and his enlistment as an end in itself? No. His army life has only just begun. He has become a member of the national military organization in order that he may do service. Now a church may be thought of as a band of baptized believers, organized for the purpose of obeying the commands of Christ, and of doing service for Him, and when one unites with it their period of service has just begun.

Still thinking along the line of army life, the first thing that must take place is the development of the new recruit. His muscles must be toughened. He must give up the habits that hamper his efficiency. He must undergo a transformation until he is in spirit and morale a courageous soldier. When he first enters the camp, he is not in condition to be placed in a company of trained men. He would not be able to suitably co-operate with them. After he receives personal training and development, then he is able to fit in anywhere that he may be placed.

Likewise the first thing that should happen in the life of a new Christian recruit is personal growth and development. If you are a new church member, one of the things that you owe to your church and to your Lord is to develop from spiritual babyhood to strong manhood or womanhood in Christ. One of the great needs of our churches today is Christians who have gotten out of the juvenile stage. Spiritual pigmies can never accomplish much no matter how well organized they may be. Is not that the thing that explains the powerlessness of many churches today? They have splendid plans of organization, they have all sorts of new and improved methods, yet failure to function properly proves that something is wrong. Does not the trouble lie in the fact that outer organization and planning has been relied

upon, when the inner spiritual life of the people is undeveloped? Personally I had rather be connected with a church where Christians are spiritual and where they have made some spiritual growth, even if their organization is very simple, than to be connected with a church organized to the very highest point and filled with a lot of spiritual dwarfs.

A GREAT MISTAKE. One of the most common mistakes made by Christians, is the *mistake of closing their experience at conversion*. Many times persons are saved, and unite with a church, then they apparently heave a great sigh of relief and think, "Well now, it is all over and settled. I am a Christian. Hell no longer looms as a menace on the horizon of my life; I can just take it easy from now on." So they take a seat among the "do-nothings," to sit until death calls, when they expect to get up and leisurely stroll in through the Pearly Gates. I have heard persons well along in years relate their Christian experience, and they went away back thirty or forty years to the time of their conversion. It seemed that their experience began there and---ended there! They had had no delightful and blessed experiences with the Lord since that time. How pathetic to hear a testimony like that! Why, the experiences of years ago can no more suffice for the present, than can the food eaten years ago. We cannot live on the heart throbs and pulse beats of yesterday, we must live on the heart throbs and pulse beats of today. Oh, the spiritual pigmies in Christ's Kingdom! Many will go into eternity white headed and wrinkled faced, but babies in spirit. It is nothing less than a spiritual tragedy, the way in which so many permit their souls to atrophy and shrivel up. Years roll on and they are just the same---the same besetting sins, the same infirmities of disposition, the same weakness in trial, the same chilliness of heart, the same apathy, the same faint resemblance to Christ---but no new knowledge of Christ, no increased interest in His Kingdom, no freshness, no new strength, no new fruits.

And this is the thing that you as a new Christian and church member must avoid at all costs! God never intended that any Christian should remain a baby throughout life. **"But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,"** is the apostles' admonition. No human being was ever born into this world full grown. Every person in this world was born as infant. It is the same in the spiritual realm. Every new born soul is a babe in Christ. That is but normal, but it is not normal to "remain a babe." I have known cases where persons lived to the years of adult life, but never developed in mentality beyond a child. On the other hand, there

have been those who through the years of time never grew in body beyond a child. How sad are such cases? Yet not so sad as to see a spiritual deformity; a person who has been a Christian for years, but is still in his spiritual babyhood.

There is only one way to avoid this, and that is to grow. With this thought in mind, I want to offer a few practical suggestions looking to this end:

The first thing necessary to growth is, PROPER NOURISHMENT; THE RIGHT KIND OF FOOD. If we cease eating, our physical bodies will waste away. Not only are our bodies nourished by the food we eat, but the quality of the food has much to do with our nourishment and growth. I have read of a certain tribe of Indians, "Digger Indians" they are called. This tribe partly subsists on a certain kind of clay which is found in the country which they inhabit. The members of this tribe are stunted and dwarfed, because their food has little nourishment. In New Mexico I became acquainted with the Mexicans who lived in and around the town where I was pastor. For breakfast many of the men drank a cup or two of black coffee, and smoked a cigarette. Lack of proper nourishment leaves its mark on these people. Many of them look as though they had been smoked and dried by the time they are thirty years of age. The kind of food we eat has much to do with us. I read once of how some men caught a sea gull. They took this sea gull that was used to digesting only soft food, and fed it on grain. When the bird was killed it was found that its stomach had degenerated into a gizzard.

Now if the food has that much to do with the physical body, what about the food needed to develop a strong spiritual life? Your soul needs to grow, your character needs to develop, and proper nourishment is an absolute necessity. You cannot grow a strong Christian character on movie magazines, popular periodicals, light, trashy novels, and the daily newspaper. Light trashy reading simply will not grow the bone and sinew of strong Christian manhood and womanhood. The divinely appointed food for Christian growth is God's Word---the Bible. The Apostle Paul speaks of the "Milk of the Word," by which he means the simple, rudimentary things pertaining to Christian doctrine and life. Again he speaks of the "Strong meat of the Word," indicating by that the great doctrines and the deep things of God. To the unspiritual Corinthians he lamented the fact that they were so immature that he had to keep them on a milk diet. They were such baby Christians that he was unable to feed them on the strong meat of the Word. Many today take their spiritual nourishment from the bottle, so to speak, when by reason of the time they have been Christians they ought to be feeding on meat. So many bottle Christians is what makes doctrinal preaching unpopular. Let a pastor announce a doctrinal sermon

and many will stay away on the plea that they "Don't like doctrinal sermons." Why? Simply because they, like the church members at Corinth, are spiritual juveniles unable to take anything stronger than "milk."

No Christian who studies his Bible as he ought, will remain in the juvenile class.

Every Christian ought to be a careful, regular, Bible student. **"Search the scriptures,"** is the admonition of Jesus our Lord. Paul tells us that the Scriptures are **"...profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (II Tim. 3:16). The Scriptures contain sufficient to enable you to know all that God deems necessary for you to know about doctrine and life. To bring the matter of Bible reading and study down to a practical standpoint, you ought to have a certain time set apart each day in which to read. Get your Bible and get off somewhere by yourself if you can, and let God speak to you. Make it a rule and habit of your life to take some spiritual nourishment just as regularly as you take nourishment for your physical body.

Too many Christians buy a big, cumbersome family Bible that is not really designed for use, and year in and year out lies on the table and is scarcely ever touched except as the housekeeper moves it in dusting the room. I have seen such Bibles that became a repository for the safe keeping of all sorts of keepsakes and souvenirs. Look in some Bibles today and you will find everything from four leaf clovers to a lock of little Johnnie's hair, between the pages. In many a home the Sears, Roebuck catalogue shows far more

♦ (Continued on page 480)

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

The Bethel Bible Baptist Church, PO Box 85, Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.  
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The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor.

Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.  
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Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.

## Added to the Church?

(Continued from page 479) ♦

use than the Bible. Let me advise you as a young church member who desires to develop in the Christian life, to get you a Bible of convenient size, if you have not such a book already, and make it the most used book around your home.

"But how," you ask, "should I go about reading and studying the Bible in order to get the most out of it?" This is a very sensible question, for it is the lack of any systematic plan on the part of many readers, that makes the Bible so uninteresting to them. Many feel that they ought to read the Bible as a sort of religious duty, hence they go through the exercise in a perfunctory sort of fashion, just reading at random any place that the Bible happens to fall open. One day they read the story of Eden; the next perhaps, a description of the New Jerusalem. Such reading with no sense of chronology or regard for the context, cannot be greatly beneficial to anyone. To pick up the Bible and read at random, is just as senseless as to pick up a book of any other kind and read after that fashion.

If one is to derive the most benefit and pleasure from the Bible they must follow some definite, sensible plan. With the thought of being helpful, I wish to make some suggestions along this line:

The Bible should first be read by every person "as a whole." Begin at Genesis and read straight on through. In this way you will get the connected story of the Bible, and you will get a grasp of God's great plan of human redemption. Then when you have gotten a grasp of the Bible as a whole, you can adopt some other plan.

One good plan is to *study the Bible topically*. You may select some topic and by means of a concordance compare Scripture with Scripture, until you have ascertained the complete teaching of the Bible on that topic. All of the great doctrines of the Bible should be studied in this way. In my own study I have found the Scofield Reference Bible of great help, as by its chain of references one may easily find the progressive unfolding of any doctrine that is taught in the Bible. Provision is also made in this Bible for a study of the great words of the Bible.

Another profitable way to study the Bible, is *by books*. I have a friend who centers his attention upon a certain book for a given period. He reads the book rapidly, then reads it a second and third time. After he has thoroughly familiarized himself with it, he procures some good commentaries on that book, and with their aid makes a detailed study.

Another plan is to study the *great characters* of the Bible, and yet still another is to study the *prophesies* of the Bible. Either study may be pursued with pleasure and profit.

From whatever angle you wish to study

have a *definite plan!* Then read and study the Bible, not merely as literature, but as the inspired Word and revealed Will of God. Read it prayerfully, remembering that the Holy Spirit, the Author, is the best Interpreter. Read it with the earnest desire to know God's will concerning your own life, and with the willingness to follow wherever its teachings lead you. It is only by reading in this way that the Bible will mean to you all that it should.

Another thing absolutely necessary to your spiritual growth is PRAYER. You can no more live the right kind of a Christian life without prayer than you can live your physical life without breathing. Indeed, it is as natural for a Christian to pray as it is to breathe. "**We have received the Spirit of adoption,**" says Paul, "**whereby we cry Abba, Father.**" Pray about everything, great or small. When in doubt pray, when in temptation pray, when in joy or sorrow, pray. You have the same God to pray to that Elijah and Daniel had. And the days of miraculous answer to prayer are not over either. I recall that the day I was converted, I began to pray. I did not have to be told to pray. I had received the "**Spirit of adoption**" that led me to look up and say, "Father." Prayer is to be our unending resource in every emergency of life. We are invited to bring every matter before the Lord. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your requests known unto God," is the instruction that we find in the Scriptures.

Form the prayer habit. Have a time and place for prayer each and every day of your life. Ask according to the will of God, as revealed in His Word, in the name of His Son, your Savior, with the full assurance that you will be heard and your prayer answered. I do not profess to be a person of super abounding faith myself, yet how richly God has rewarded my askings! Many, many, times He has given me far more than I asked. And it will be that way in your case, if you ask, "In faith nothing doubting." Prayer is one thing in which you are not limited save by your own unbelief.

The thing that you want most of all, if you are a sincere Christian, is a close walk and intimate acquaintance with the Lord. You can never have this without

prayer, for you need not expect to know God very well, unless you are able to talk to Him. You never had an intimate friend in your life to whom you did not talk intimately. And it is only to our very dearest, most intimate, heart friends, that we tell the personal secret things of our lives. Somehow when we have made a confidant of some one, and have laid bare our very souls before them, there is a closer bond uniting us to them than to others. And listen: God will never be as close to you as you may wish; you will never walk real close to Him, until you get to the place where you lay bare before Him the most secret things of your life. He knows them already of course, but that is quite different from your coming before Him with these things. When you get to the place where you tell God everything, take to him your problems, and look to Him for council in every matter great or small, then there will grow up between you and Him, a great friendship that will prove the most blessed thing this side of eternity.

God will become to you a partner, and you will be willing to enter into no business relation unless you first feel that you have His sanction. It will become as natural for you to consult with God as it is for a man to consult his wife about the things pertaining to their common interest about the home. God will come to be more to you than a great Being who lives away off yonder beyond the stars. He will be more to you than a name, which you expect to hear from the pulpit and in the class room of your Sunday school. He will become as real to you as that dearest earthly friend of flesh and blood is real. He will seem as much present to you as you walk through the path of every day as the clothing that you wear upon your body, and sometimes you will almost think to feel the touch of His hand upon your own.

ASCERTAINING THE WILL OF GOD. "But," says some one, "granted that I try to walk close to the Lord, and that I decide to take every matter to Him in prayer, how am I to be certain of His guidance? How may I know just what is His will about a matter? Let us suppose now that it is before me to pursue one of two different courses of action. I am in

doubt as to which to choose; how may I know God's will about what to do? In reply, let me say along this line. I do not recall who wrote them, but I do know that I have tried them out and they have been of great help to me. Let me give them to you, with the hope that they will prove as valuable in your case as they have in mine:

Following the suggestions spoken of, when there are several courses that I may pursue, and I am desirous of ascertaining God's will as to the right one, I proceed as follows:

1. I make the whole matter one of earnest, continued prayer.

2. I seek by the help of God to reach the place where I have no will of my own about the matter, but am willing to go in either direction, or pursue either course, that the Lord may indicate.

3. Having sought His guidance and gotten to the place where I am really willing for Him to lead, I then begin to look for an answer to my prayers. Sometimes the answer comes in the form of a mental impression. The thing just clears up in my mind, and I am clearly impressed to follow such and such a course. For instance, I remember a time when I decided a matter rather hastily, and decided it in accordance with my own preference, although there was apparently no reason as to why I should have made any other decision. That night I did not sleep until far into the night. I felt troubled about the decision that I had made, and by the next day I felt so definitely impressed that I had made a wrong one that I decided to change my decision and plans entirely.

It is not always that God leads in this way however. Often His will is made manifest by a chain of circumstances or events. So when we have diligently sought His guidance, we do well to keep a close watch to see if God is seeking to lead us in this way. For instance, let us suppose that there are two roads open before you. You do not know which to take. In your perplexity you go to the Lord for guidance perfectly willing to go either way He may indicate. During the time that you are praying about the matter, events become so shaped that one path is no longer open to you. May you not feel warranted in believing that God has shaped those events, so as to start your steps down the other way?

In any matter if you are really in earnest about knowing God's will, and will go about seeking to know it in the way suggested above, I have no doubt but that you will ascertain it. Our Father delights to answer the requests of His children. The thing that He most wants is for us to seek His will and guidance. And I for one, cannot say that I have ever sought it with my whole heart and failed to receive it.

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