

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

Reflections for the Closing Year Simplicity and Godly Sincerity

"Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward" (Luke 16:2).

READER, if the closing year should in effect proclaim these words to you, say, what state of feeling would they produce, --- what would be the effect of such an announcement? "Is thine heart right in the sight of God?" thy lamp burning, thy loins girt, thy evidences bright, and thy soul prosperous? ---Hast thou laid out thyself for the divine glory, and devoted thy life to the promotion of the Redeemer's cause? ---

What does conscience say on this subject---is all well for eternity? but cast thou look forward to it with glowing hope, and say, **"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"** (Phil. 1:21)? If so, then rejoice that thy foundation is on the rock, ---the rock of ages: rejoice that the Lord Jesus will never suffer one of His sheep to perish. He Who has given you grace will surely give you glory. Rejoice that you have been called from death to life, ---from sin to holiness, from darkness to light,

♦ (Continued on page 2)

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward" (II Cor. 1:12).

In many ways, man has a tendency to complicate matters, and a tendency to deceive other men. The natural man is prone to make things difficult -- even simple



things. The natural man is also prone to lie or embellish or exaggerate -- even in every day situations. As you might

imagine, these tendencies of mankind are evident in the religions of man, and in the worship of man, which is rendered up to false gods and to man, himself. This can be seen in the way

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Get Ready for the Future

By Frank B. Beck
(1921 - 2007)

Proverbs 6:6-11

You are now to hear one of the greatest preachers speak who every lived! I refer to the lowly ant. Benjamin Franklin once said: "None preaches better than the ant. . ." The writer of the Proverbs penned the same long before Franklin. But the ant is not arrayed in the finery of the clergyman's comfortable cloth,



but is dressed in working clothes, and in order to find him you must go out to the fields, where he will preach to you while he labors.

He has one text, one theme, one tenet: "Get Ready for the Future!" Work while you can! To

♦ (Continued on page 6)

Present State of Religion

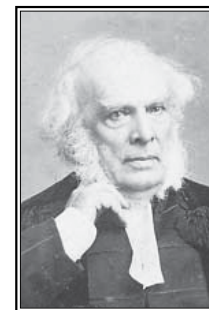
By Horatius Bonar
(1803 - 1889)

"Clouds without water; carried about of winds" (Jude 12).

Alas! we are a company of worn-out Christians; our moon is on the wane; we are much more black than white; more dark than light; we shine but little; grace, in the most of us, is sore decayed" (Bunyan).

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You ask me what I think of the



religion of the present day--its character as well as its progress. Instead, however, of attempting any lengthened answer to such

a question, I would merely point out a few things which lie upon the surface, which may help your

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**It is not everyone who looks like a Christian
that lives like a Christian.**

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

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Editor: Christopher Cockrell

Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia Cockrell

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

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

Reflections for

(Continued from page 1) ♦

---that you have a well founded hope of "the mercy of God through Jesus Christ;" and that "when this earthly house of your tabernacle is dissolved, you have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Yes, Christian, you may well rejoice, even in tribulation. Nothing can shake the foundation on which you are resting; not death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus your Lord.

"Nor death nor hell can e'er remove

"His fav'rites from his breast"

"In the dear bosom of his love

"They must for ever rest."

But, Christian reader, while you have reason to rejoice in your privilege, ---in the security and brightness of your prospects, bear in mind that your obligations are also great, ---that your labours for the Saviour ought to bear some proportion to the blessings you have received from Him. Ah! remember you owe all you have, and all you hope for, to Him. Have you yet done any thing commensurate to such a weighty obligation? "He was rich, but for your sake he became poor" (II Cor. 8:9): ---to what have all your sacrifices of this world's substance amounted, in comparison of this? He went about doing good; ---what does your experience testify in this way, as His professed follower? He suffered reproach and contempt, even the contradiction of sinners against Himself, for your sake. Have you rejoiced that you were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name's sake? Have you, in fact, surrendered a single comfort, or endured a single reproach, for His sake? Alas! alas! there is reason

to fear that we have all too much ease, comfort, and worldly respect, to manifest that "we are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world:" if we had more of His spirit we should have more of the world's scorn, and they would hate us as they hated Him. Now if such be the real state of the greater number of Christians to whom these reflections may be presented, let us then ask the question---Shall it be always so?

"Dear Lord, and shall we always live

"As this poor dying rate---"

"Our love so faint, so cold to thee,

"And thine to us so great?"

May we not devoutly say, **"God forbid;"** let us at this period renew our vows, redouble our efforts, and set out afresh in the way to Heaven; let us arise to the help of the Lord, and afresh consecrate our prolonged powers to His service. We are yet spared; ---many, many active servants of Christ have been removed from the land of conflict to that of eternal rest. They have ceased from their labours. Not a few who were valiant for the truth have been removed by the pestilence; they have exchanged their weapons of heavenly warfare for palms of victory, and they are now before the throne, singing the praises of redeeming love; and there, could a cloud again overshadow them, ---could a grief enter their perfect minds; could sorrow reach that peaceful abode where their glorified spirits are enjoying unalloyed and endless raptures, it would be at the thought of the little they did for the Saviour while here below, and that they have found so few in glory thither led by their instrumentality. ---their day of labour is for ever ended, but yours, Christian reader, is yet lengthened out. Oh! seek for grace to improve it well;

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Berea Baptist Banner
 PO Box 39

Mantachie, Mississippi
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(662) 282 - 7794

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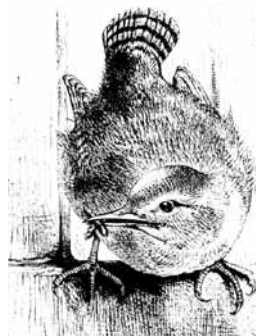
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Reflections for

(Continued from page 2) ♦

---lay out every hour of leisure for the Saviour; nay, more learn to deny yourselves; so that your opportunities of time, influence, and property, may be increased for the good of souls, and the glory of the Redeemer. Let the shortcomings of 1832, which is now past recall, lead to such an unreserved devotedness of your powers to the Lord, that the days of 1833, if prolonged to you, may bear a different record to Heaven of your improvement of them; let it be manifest in all you do and say, that you value time, love the Saviour; feel for precious souls; ---long for the divine glory; ---and are, above all things; concerned for the advancement of the Saviour's cause. Let this be manifested to the world and the church by increased diligence in the use of the means of grace, redoubled efforts to bring sinners under the sound of the Word, and a uniform consistency of conduct. And in private, ---oh! that the Lord may witness more time spent in secret prayer, reading of the Bible, and self-examination. Let the closet testify to your increased love of it; then will "your light shine before men," and you will go forth to meet your Lord with joy, when it shall be said, **"Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward"** (Luke 16:2). ---May the writer and the reader stand with acceptance in the day of trial; and may each revolving year find us better prepared for those approaching solemnities. **"The Lord grant unto"** each of us that we **"may find mercy of the Lord in that day"** (II Tim. 1:18).
(The Baptist Magazine, 1832)

Simplicity and

(Continued from page 1) ♦

that man will build lavish temples and places of worship; elaborate and beautiful idols; eloquent and expressive forms of religion. These characteristics of idolatry are present in most of religion – be it Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and even most forms of so-called Christianity. In many places, and in most of the history of mankind, the religions of man's own devising, are full of form and rituals, while being devoid of any real worship of the one true God.

As you are also aware, these beautiful and marvelous religions and worship places, are filled with deceit, hypocrisy, and a total lack of sincerity. Natural man, as he engages in religion of any sort, will tend to boast and build himself up; he will tend to resort to lying and cheating and stealing, in order to sustain his form of religion. And, typically, the religions of men will not have, as a realistic and continuing objective, the elevation or betterment of men. These religions of men will say some good things from time to time; but, their success and prosperity is based upon their abilities to lie and to trick and to deceive the general population and even their own converts.

True worship of God is not like this. True worship of God is based on the simple truths of God and His relationship with man. True worship of God is based upon a sincere desire to repent of our sins and to believe in Jesus Christ. Without this simplicity which is in Jesus Christ, and without this sincerity in repentance and belief which is granted to us by God, there can be no real salvation, and no true worship of God.

Today, I want us to consider the true worship of God, and how

that our worship and service unto God should feature "simplicity and Godly sincerity." Without these, we are in danger of promoting a religion that is no more than an attempt to beautify and glorify man; or, an attempt to deceive men, while we are only pretending to follow the Lord and be obedient unto the fulfillment of the words and commands of God.

SIMPLE

Paul tells us in our text passage, that he had his conversation (life-style or testimony of his life) in this world in **"simplicity and godly sincerity."** It seems that he was desirous of projecting an easily understood religion, and a transparent and simple manner of life. **"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ"** (Phil. 3:4-8). Paul's simple desire was to preach and proclaim Jesus Christ. He had the background and the abilities to impress men with his ancestry and with his education and with his dedication to the ideals of the Jew's religion. But, instead, he chose to take the simple path. He wanted to exalt Jesus Christ in simplicity and in truth.

It seems that very few men

today will share the desires of the Apostle Paul for simplicity in religion, and simplicity in our lives of witness. Instead, men always seem to think that they can improve upon the words and works of God. Somehow, wicked and finite men seem to think that they are better and wiser than the Holy and infinite God Who has made us, and Who has saved us, and Who has given us all that we have – both in this life, and the life to come. Remember what Aaron and the others did, while Moses was in the Mount, receiving the Word of God? Did they not seek to make their own gods, and their own saviors? Did they not seek to build some beautiful idols and desire some visible beauty that they could label as their god? **"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**

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Simplicity and

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burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32:1-8). These people of Israel, took the ways of men, and attempted to mix them with the ways of God. This was an abomination unto the Lord, and this was a corruption of the true worship of God. They took the simple truths of God, and sought to decorate them, and sought to make them something that would be a treat to their mortal senses. They wanted a religion that would appeal to the flesh.

The wiser and the better that men think they are, the less likely they are to be able to properly and simply serve the Lord God. **"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus,**

who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:26-31). The people of God should remove the accoutrements and the embellishments of the world, and practice a simple and sincere worship of God.

And yet, the world of men – even the world of religion – is full of those who follow after the things of the flesh, and who desire to glorify man and the beauties of this world, at the expense of the all-glorious God Who made them. **"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away"** (II Tim. 3:1-5). I believe that we live in these last days, when success in religion is based upon the carnal beauties and the mortal accomplishments of the religious. The form of godliness which might be seen in some religions and denominations, is complicated and covered up with the works of men, so that God is hardly visible if He is at all present in their worship.

I prefer the simple worship and the simple praise and the simple service which was proclaimed and taught by the Apostle Paul: **"Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: But I beseech**

you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's" (II Cor. 10:1-7). He was willing to abase himself, so that Christ would be exalted. He was willing to simplify things so that others could understand. He was willing to teach and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ – unaccompanied with the works and the wisdom of men. This should be our desire as well.

SINCERE

Further, as we consider the worldly religions of the current generation, and how that our worship of God should be different; I want you to know that "Sincerity" is of the utmost importance. There should be a genuineness to our worship of God. There should be an earnestness evident in our service unto God. Ours is a God Who loves us, and Who has given Himself for us. Therefore, we should willingly give ourselves unto Him and unto the worship and service that is due Him. **"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.**

For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7-8). To me, sincerity is very similar to truth. To me, the Word of God, and the truths and the doctrine found therein, should take the precedence, and should hold the priority in any attempts to worship and praise God.

Instead, in Christianity today, we find that there is a lot of fraud and pretense, and there is a lot of hypocrisy, and there are a lot of disingenuous folks. Most denominations within Christianity will use some measure of artificial means, through which the leaders hope to entice or even deceive the men, women, and children which they are trying to attract or retain in their congregations or denomination. **"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ"** (II Cor. 2:17). They will even go so far as to **"corrupt the word of God."** They will preach and teach from poor and inferior translations of the Bible. They will twist words and passages of Scripture. They will manipulate the teachings of the Holy Word of God to accommodate their own needs, and to further their own agendas. There are many who indulge in such deceitful practices, but Paul said that **"we are not as many."** Our teaching of the Word of God should be pure and sincere. We should seek to proclaim what is the truth – even if it offends ourselves or others.

Joshua told the children of Israel, **"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods**

♦ (Continued on page 5)

Simplicity and

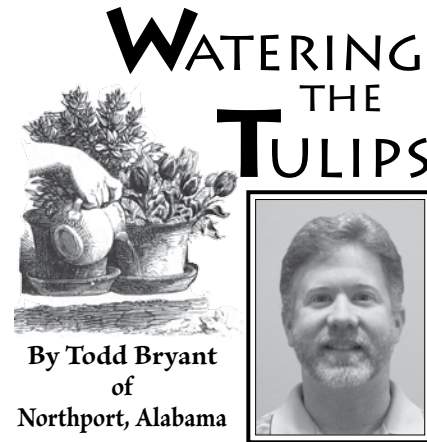
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which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:14-15). I believe that there is a price to pay – on the part of each of us – if we are to properly serve Jesus Christ. We will be persecuted on some level, when we stand for the truth, and when we forsake the idols and the idolatry of the world. There will be friends and family members who will be offended at the truth of God's Word. But, we should not refrain from proclaiming that truth. There will be persons in the world who will grow angry at us, when we preach and teach Jesus Christ in a sincere fashion. But, we must not grow fearful to the extent that we will compromise any of these wonderful truths which are found in God's Word. The world and God's people need to hear the Word of God. We are not doing them any favors if we are too afraid to give them the very gospel of salvation which they stand in need of!

In the end, our service unto God should be based upon a sincere and heart-felt desire to please God, to see souls saved, and to see the saints of God edified and built up in the most holy faith. **"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but**

by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Cor. 4:1-7). The world may try to twist things about, and may try to hide the truth from others. There are many who will dare to handle **"the word of God deceitfully."** But, we should (and must) speak the clear truth which is proclaimed in the Word of God. If some will not hear nor understand, let it be the fault of the **"god of this world"** who hath **"blinded the minds of them which believe not;"** rather than being the fault of us, who might have twisted or hid the truth of the Gospel, in an attempt to appease the world around us.

I want the **"light of the knowledge of the glory of God"** to shine forth in my life and in my ministry. I want to be sincere and honest in my portrayal of the Word of God. I hope that you will strive for this attitude and this type of life as well. Let us simply and sincerely proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, and work out our salvation in the sight of the world.



By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

The Importance of the Gospel

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

Oh, the many thoughts that come to mind as we meditate on this verse. The gospel truly is the power of God unto salvation (II Thess. 2:14). How many in the world have forgotten this blessed truth? How many today believe the Gospel is not sufficient to save? Oh, how many believe we must dress up the Gospel to make it appealing to the lost? How many think God's way of salvation is no longer enough? How many churches have found a way to make the lost comfortable in church and now their churches are full of lost people? We shudder to think that many today believe they are secure because they have fun at church and they know nothing of real salvation in Christ!!

Then, the thought arises, am I ashamed? Have I shared the Gospel with anybody recently? How many children of God have never shared the Gospel with one soul? Proverbs 11:30 says, **"... he that winneth souls is wise."** How many of the Lord's own people are so entrenched in the

things of this world that they never share the good news with their friends and family? How many are embarrassed to share the message of the Gospel? Did not Jesus bare our shame on the cross? Are we unwilling to be a little uncomfortable considering all that He has done for us? How will we feel when we watch as our lost friends and family are cast alive into the Lake of Fire?

Even more sad, how many today believe the Gospel is unimportant? How many have put their stock in church membership, or baptism, or turning over a new leaf, or repeating a prayer? As important as those things are, salvation is not to be found in any of those things. We are saved by the message of the Gospel alone – faith in Christ alone. We must believe in Jesus plus nothing!! He absolutely finished the work that the Father gave Him to do. He saved His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Child of God, seriously consider the verse before us today. Are you presently attending a place where the Gospel of Christ is not the focus? Is your place of worship little more than a country club where people gather for more of an "experience" than real worship? Has the worship of God been pushed aside for programs that suit everybody? Even more, do you believe it is necessary, as a believer in Christ, to share the Gospel in your daily life? Is not this the command of our Lord? The most serious question is, "are you trusting in Christ alone?" Or, is your hope in something other than the Gospel?

Take this moment to consider the seriousness of the verse before us today and all of the implications that go along with it. May the God of all grace help us all!



Get Ready for the

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this agreed Jesus Christ our Lord, when He was upon earth, when He said: **“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work”** (John 9:4).

This is not a contradiction of the teaching of the Saviour in Luke 12:16-34, where we are not to lay up material blessings selfishly as if there were no God to account to, nor any poor to minister to; or where we are not to lay up physical goods on earth in unbelief, as if there were no God to provide for us. This is often overlooked. It is the attitude here that is condemned, not the action itself of working and providing. It is apparent that even Christ's company of disciples carried money about with them (John 12:6; 13:29).

LET THE ANT TELL US ABOUT PREPARATION (v. 6)

This demands action on our part. **“Go to the ant.”** If not physically, at least so mentally--- which is harder for most of us!

The direction is explicit, **“Go to the ant.”** You will find ants most everywhere in the world, especially at picnics. God does not say: “Go to the eagle.” One might have to climb a high mountain to get close to this bird of the heavens. Few could obey this injunction. No! God's commandments are not so grievous (I John 5:3). The Word of God is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and heart. You need not climb Heaven to bring it down (Rom. 10:6-9). Instruction is all about us if we will but stoop in humility and learn of the lowest.

The description is exacting, **“Go to the ant, thou sluggard”!** Sluggard! Do you know that there are many sluggards in our nation

who think that the world owes them a living? Do you know that there are many who desire to live on charity and welfare rather than work? And there are sluggards galore in our Churches! To the one, Paul the apostle says: If a man will not work, neither should he eat (II Thess. 3:10). To the other, James the apostle says: If any man have no works his faith is vain, worthless (James 2:14-20).

Are we sluggards, or even just a bit sluggish? Then let us act now upon this sound advice, and go to the ant to be wise.

But our attitude in going must also be right. “Look at her ways, learn sense” (Moffatt). Look at her ways, learn of her wisdom. What! from an ant? thus as you enter this school you must put on the frock of humility. So Christ calls: **“Learn of me. . . I am meek and lowly in heart”** (Matt. 11:29). Only then can you bear His yoke and serve Him (Matt. 11:28-30).

Alas, says one, I have no power to do this. That is true.

ASK THE ANT ABOUT POWER (v. 7)

The ant has no guide, foreman, or ruler (v. 7). If man did that you would have the Book of Judges again (Judges 21:25), or worse! Contrast that with the fine Holy Spirit organization of the New Testament Churches, as in I Corinthians chapter 12, and Ephesians 4:11! No, you have no power in yourself, but the Holy Spirit gives power! Now, if the ant having nothing in the way of organization works and provides, there is no reason for the lazy, good-for-nothing sluggard to exist on earth, much less in the Church of Christ! for there we have a Leader, in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14), and overseers and rulers in the elders and bishops and pastors, the Holy Ghost has appointed (Acts 20:17 and 28), to

lead the Churches.

THE ANT WILL PREACH TO US ABOUT PROVISION (v. 8)

She believes in saving. She stores her food in the summer. God has taught her that winter and want is coming. She gets ready for it. Christians ought to learn to save, or invest their money wisely for the winter of old age. Christians ought to store up the Scriptures in their mind and memory in the summer of ability. I have seen aged Christians cut off from Bible and radio in institutions. Blessed are they who have gone to the ant and laid by them the precious golden grains of Scripture for such a cold and bleak hour! Let the lost be warned! **“Prepare to meet thy God”** (Amos 4:12)! **“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him”** (Matt. 25:6)! Today! in the summer of sweet Gospel preaching, hear and heed the message, and turn to Christ in real repentance of sin and true trust in Jesus Christ to save you forever (Rom. 10:13)! The awful winter of want is coming at judgment day! Do not wait till then to buy the oil of salvation, for the stores will all be shut and emptied (Matt. 25:1-13). It will be too late! too late!

The ant believes also in substantial savings. She works right up into the harvest. There is no let up. Tell me, when the Apostle Paul ever let up on his labors? Surely not when he was first saved by Christ. Did he not start straight out preaching that **“Christ. . . is the Son of God”** (Acts 9:20-29), so that he labored more abundantly than all the other apostles, yet not he, but the grace of God (I Cor. 15:9-10). And at the end, the harvest of his ministry and life, he could claim: **“I have finished my course”** (II Tim. 4:7).

POVERTY WILL SURELY COME, IF WE REFUSE THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE TINY ANT (vv. 8-11)

O but we must rest! “What rest! Nothing except death brings rest to the servants of Christ!” said one of the leaders of the Reformation (Farel, Emanuel Stickelberger, Calvin, A Life, A Life, p. 47). “Sunday is a day of rest,” a shopkeeper told me, when I urged him to attend church. “I stay in bed and rest.” That is not rest. It is rust! A whole church asleep! The lost sinner asleep! **“Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty”** (Prov. 20:13). “Let me sleep for a little, a little!” (Moffatt, v. 10). Do you hear it in your house on Sunday mornings? There are a lot of sinners who are taking a sleeper right into Hell! They are sleeping the sleep of spiritual death! (Eph. 2:1).

Such idle, sinful rest will lead to sure and sudden and sound ruin! (v. 11). “Yes,” Moffatt renders it, “and poverty will pounce on you, want will overpower you.”

This poverty of soul at judgment day will come surely, for God has decreed and declared it. **“He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”** (John 3:36). **“Then shall he say. . . Depart from me”** (Matt. 25:41).

This poverty will come suddenly. Pounce on you! Death and judgment will come suddenly (Prov. 29:1). Christ will suddenly appear the second time to judge the world (Mark 13:34-37).

This want of soul will come soundly. It will overwhelm you! **“Depart from me, ye cursed,”** Christ the Judge will say to the unsaved, **“into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”** (Matt. 25:41). Thorough judgment. Intense. Unending.

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Get Ready for the

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I can but ask you to go to the ant, and from thence to the Almighty, through Jesus Christ and His sacrificial cross-work, to be saved and to be made ready and prepared for the wintry winds of God's judgment. And made ready you will be, then, for **"the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin"** (I John 1:7); and where sin is put away, judgment is no longer existent, and the soul is awakened and alive and rich in God for ever! Amen.



Free-Will

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)



It is a worthwhile thing to read the writings of great men. There have been numbers of men who made it a life's work to study the Bible, and to write about it and teach or preach. Among Baptists especially, it would be hard to find men of the past who taught in seminaries, wrote books, or became famous as preachers of the Word, who held the light, world-conforming views, of election held so often today. Many of these have left writings behind them which make clear their beliefs. It is our purpose in this chapter to quote from some of these. First, let us hear from the greatest preacher that Baptists have produced since the days of the Apostle Paul. We refer to ---

CHARLES H. SPURGEON

The following quotation is taken from a message on LIMITED ATONEMENT found in The

Park Street Pulpit, Vol. 4, pages 70, 71.

"Many divines say that Christ did something when He died that enabled God to be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly. What that something is they do not tell us. They believe in an atonement for everybody; but then their atonement is just this: They believe that Judas was atoned for just as much as Peter; they believe that the damned in hell were as much an object of Jesus Christ's satisfaction as the saved in Heaven; and though they do not say it in proper words, yet they must mean it, for it is a fair inference, that in the case of multitudes, Christ died in vain, for He died for them all, they say; and yet so ineffectual was His dying for them, that though He died for them, they are damned afterwards."

"Now SUCH AN ATONEMENT I DESPISE --- I REJECT IT. I may be called Antinomian or Calvinist for preaching a limited atonement; but I had rather believe a limited atonement that is efficacious for all men for whom it was intended, than universal atonement that was not efficacious for anybody except the will of man be joined with it."

It is often charged that strong Calvinistic beliefs tend to dampen Christian ardor, and to ruin missionary and evangelistic effort. Spurgeon was a complete denial of all such charges. He had what was perhaps the largest and most thriving Baptist church in the whole British Empire. No man preached more fervently to lost sinners, or was more missionary than he. His church continues to this day, and it was our privilege to attend a service there several years ago. The intense conviction of a man who knew the Bible so

thoroughly; who preached it so wonderfully, and upon whose life and ministry the blessings of God so marvelously rested, are worthy of consideration.

He was a thorough-going believer in unconditional election.

When the author was a boy there was a small book that was to be found in almost every Baptist home. It told how business should be carried on in a Baptist church, and like-wise gave all sorts of information needed by Christians and church members. The author of this manual was J. M. Pendleton. He was a scholar and writer, and the author of a number of books. Since he was so highly respected, and his views concerning the Bible were held in such high regard, let us next consider the doctrine of election as held by---

J. M. PENDLETON

From his writings we quote a paragraph under the heading, "GOD'S ETERNAL CHAIN."

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30).

"In this verse we have, if I may call it, a golden chain of four links, and this chain reaches from eternity to eternity. The first link is PREDESTINATION, and the last GLORIFICATION, while the two intervening links are CALLING and JUSTIFICATION. The first link has no connection with the last, except through the intervening links. That is to say there is no way in which the purpose of God in predestination can reach its end in justification glorification, if calling and justification do not take place. But calling and justification are inseparable from **'repentance toward God, and**

faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

"There are some who make faith and good works the ground of election. That is, they suppose that God elected His people because He FORESAW their faith and good works. This view transposes cause and effect, for it makes election dependent on faith and good works, whereas faith and good works are Scripturally dependent on election. When we read, **'chosen. . . that we should be holy'** it is obvious that the election is NOT BECAUSE of holiness, but IN ORDER TO holiness."

There is another quotation that we should like to share with you from Pendleton. It is this: "As to the much controverted passage in Acts 13:48, **"And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed,"** the only natural interpretation is that they believed because of their ordination to eternal life. The Arminian view is without foundation in the Word of God; for election is the source, the only source, whence spring faith, holiness, and good works."

There is a temptation to quote further from this able man whose name was a household word in most Baptist homes, during our boyhood, but we will pass on to share with you a quotation from--

JOHN A. BROADUS

Years ago we attended the Southern Seminary at Louisville, and eventually graduated from that institution. We often heard the name of Dr. Broadus mentioned. He had been one of the teachers there, and was a theologian of great renown. One of the books we studied, was a commentary on Matthew, written by Broadus. In this famous commentary we find the following quotation:

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"From the divine side, we see that the Scriptures teach an eternal election of men to eternal life simply out of God's good pleasure."

As we prepare to make our next quotation we have a picture before us. It is the picture of---

JOHN BUNYAN

He was one of the greatest Christians that we have ever read anything about. We remember an experience we had in England, as we stood on a bridge, and looked down through the clear water in the ruins of the foundation of the old Bedford jail. John Bunyan spent years in that jail for preaching the gospel. People gathered outside the jail, and he preached to them through the bars, and many were saved through his preaching. What kind of beliefs did this man, the author of "Pilgrim's Progress," have concerning election? From his writings we make the following quotation:

"I believe. . .that election was before the foundation of the world; and so before the elect themselves had being in themselves. For God who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17), stays not for the being of things, to determine His eternal purpose by; but having all things present to Him, and His wisdom, He made His choice before the world was. (Eph. 1:4, II Tim. 1:9). I believe that the decree of election is so far off from the making works in us foreseen the ground of choice; that it containeth in the bowels of it, and not only the persons but the graces that accompany their salvation. And hence, it is, that it is said that we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of

His Son, not because we are, but that we SHOULD BE holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4).

Here is a statement of conviction made by a man who was willing to spend his life in jail for the sake of what he believed. He was no mamby-pamby weakling like many of today, but a believer in the great God who planned time away back in eternity.

Let me cross the Atlantic, and hear from a most able and fearless man who wrote and spoke with conviction. We refer to---

B. H. CARROLL

He was the founder and the first president of The Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Likewise he was a great teacher and scholar, who wrote a commentary on the whole Bible. Was he a freewillite? Let us read from his writings and see:

"As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed." When I was a young fellow, and had not imbibed the doctrine of predestination, I wanted to read, 'And as many as believed were ordained to eternal life.' Perhaps that is the way you want to interpret it. . .settle in your mind that salvation commences with God and not man."

"What is election? Choice towards individuals. When was that choice made? Before the world was. As we were not there then, in whom was it made? In Christ. According to what? According to the good pleasure of His will. To what end? To the praise of the glory of His grace."

We pass on now to one of the truly great men of a couple of generations ago. He was editor of the Tennessee Baptist, which had a tremendous circulation in that day, and he wrote a number of books, some of which are still in circulation. Let us see what he has

to say about election. But first, to whom do we refer? The answer is---

J. R. GRAVES

The following quotation is from his book, "Seven Dispensations."

"If His atonement was limited, and to Adams race only, did it include ALL, or only a PART of the human family? All denominations, with the exception of Universalists, hold and teach that only a part, and comparatively a small part, of Adam's race will be saved; and if not, then must it not be because they were not included in the COVENANT of Redemption, and given to Christ to save?"

"It is quite impossible to bring an unprejudiced mind and balanced reason to the examination of these questions. All Bible readers have taken position; and the verdict of the world is made up: and how difficult to reverse or modify it. They involve the sovereignty of God in the bestowment of His favors. All men are by nature Arminians, and the absolute sovereignty of God is a doctrine hateful to the natural and depraved heart. False teachers have taken the advantage of this natural feeling, and have for ages inflamed the prejudices of Christian men and women against any exercise of sovereignty on the part of God in this Covenant, either as to His determinate counsel, His electing love, or His distinguishing grace. They presumptuously and impiously assert, that unless God extended the same grace to all the lost that He did to those who are saved, He is justly chargeable with partiality and injustice, and, if He saw fit in the dispensation of His grace, when none would, if left to themselves, except or desire it, and, indeed, all have rejected it, to so influence the wills of some

that they would seek His grace, He is guilty of forcing some men to be saved, and others to be lost. But we know that the Omniscient God is incapable of doing wrong, and if it plainly revealed that He passed by all the fallen angels, who will charge Him with sin or wrong had He passed by ALL of Adam's race? How then, can He be charged with injustice, if He saw fit to save a portion of it?"

"If any are saved, it must be because God, in the exercise of His sovereignty, willed that some should be saved, and these He quickens from their death in trespasses and sins, and gives to them repentance and remission of sins. The brazen serpent was uplifted on the pole in the very midst of the camp, and the proclamation of life for a look was made, and urged upon all, and yet, doubtless thousands died within sight of it through willful unbelief, as sinners do now, with salvation's offer in their ears and the cross before their eyes.

Turning from the above things so eloquently said by Bro. Graves, let us turn to another man of high repute among Baptists, as well as others. We refer to---

JAMES P. BOYCE

He was the founder and first president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Ky. He was the author of a large book on systematic theology, which was used as a text book in the seminary for many years. He was a man who believed thoroughly The Five Points of Calvinism, and so taught without apology. He summed up such a belief in the following words:

"This theory holds as to election, that:

(1) It is an act of God, and not in any sense the choice of the elect.

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(2) It has been with God an eternal purpose.

(3) It is an election to salvation, and not to outward privileges.

(4) This election or choice is one of individuals and not of classes.

(5) It was made without respect to the action or merits of the person elected.

(6) It was made simply according to God's own good pleasure."

In giving some Scriptures to back up his belief, he mentions among others, the following:

John 13:18, **"I know whom I have chosen."**

John 15:16, "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, that ye should go and bear fruit."

Rom. 8:33, **"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"**

Rom. 9:15, **"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."**

Eph. 1:11, "Having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will."

II Thess. 2:13, "God chose you from the beginning unto salvation."

Matt. 25:34, **"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."**

Rev. 17:8, "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, and they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world."

But let us consult another theologian, a man who was likewise the president of a theological seminary, and we refer to the Rochester Theological Seminary. That was back in the

time when the seminary stood for the truth of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. He was also the author of Systematic Theology, a text book formerly in wide use among seminaries. Let us see what he thought about election. But first let us indicate who the man is to whom we are referring. Our reference is to---

AUGUSTUS H. STRONG

Here are his words, taken from his book on theology:

"In eternity God foresaw that the creation of the world and the institution of its laws would make certain its actual history, even to the most insignificant details. But God decreed to create and to institute these laws. In so decreeing He necessarily decreed all that was to come. In time, God foresaw the future events of the universe as certain, because He had decreed to create; but this determination to create involved also a determination of all the actual results of that creation; or in other words, God decreed those results."

Only knowledge of that which is decreed is foreknowledge. . . God therefore foresees creation, causes, laws, events, consequences, that is, because He has embraced all these in His plan. The denial of decrees logically involves the denial of God's foreknowledge of free human actions; and to this Socinians and some Arminians are actually led."

We turn now from the noted writer whose words we have just quoted, to a man known throughout America for his ability in dealing with the Scriptures. We refer to---

ARTHUR W. PINK

He says, "When the solemn and blessed subject of Divine foreordination is expounded, when God's eternal choice of certain ones to be conformed

to the image of His Son is set forth, the enemy sends along some man to argue THAT ELECTION IS BASED ON THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD, and this foreknowledge is interpreted to mean that God foresaw certain ones would be more pliable than others, that they would respond more readily to the strivings of the Spirit, and that because God knew they would believe, He, accordingly, predestinated them to salvation. But such a statement is radically wrong. It REPUDIATES THE TRUTH OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY, for it makes the decree rest upon what He discovers in the creature. It completely TURNS THINGS UPSIDE DOWN, for in saying God foresaw certain sinners would believe in Christ, and that because of this, He predestinated them unto salvation, is the very REVERSE OF THE TRUTH. Scripture affirms that God, in His high sovereignty, singled out certain ones to be recipients of His distinguishing favors (Acts 13:43), and therefore He determined to bestow upon them the gift of faith. False theology makes God's foreknowledge of our believing the CAUSE of His election to salvation; whereas God's election is the cause, and our believing in Christ is the EFFECT."

We could go on and on, quoting from this earnest student of the Bible, but we have already quoted enough to wreck the foreknowledge theory of any Freewillite who will do a little thinking.

Suppose that we now cross the Atlantic again to England, where lived the great preacher---

ANDREW FULLER

He was perhaps the greatest helper of William Carey, the

man who went from his town to labor as a missionary. It was our privilege when in England some years ago, to visit the church building where Fuller served as pastor, and also to visit the old home of William Carey. We have often read Fuller's sermons with great delight. We are not surprised to know that Fuller was a believer in unconditional election. Let us share a few lines taken from his writings:

"The doctrine of election, as taught in the Scriptures, is of humbling and holy tendency. The whole difference between the saved and the lost being ascribed to sovereign grace, the pride of man is abased. . . Election, while it places no bar in the way of any man which would not have been there anyway without it, resolves the salvation of the saved into mere grace. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." Such a view of things tends to humble us in the dust. It is frequently the last point which a sinner yields to God. It is the giving up of every other claim and ground of hope from his own good endeavors, and falling into the arms of sovereign mercy. . . A Christian minister also, if he takes his views simply from the Scriptures, will find nothing in this doctrine to hinder the free use of warnings, invitations, persuasion, either to the converted or the unconverted. Not that he will found his hopes of success on the pliability of the human mind, but on the power and grace of God, who, while he prophesieth to the dry bones, as he is commanded, is known to inspire many with the breath of life.

Turning now from the more lengthy quotations, lest we extend this chapter to undue length, we

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shall give some brief but very cogent statements:

J. W. PORTER, editor of the Western Recorder for years, in a letter to a friend of ours said: "1. Election took place in eternity. 2. It was an individual election. 3. It was based wholly on the good pleasure of God, and not on the foreseen merit of the elect."

J. B. MOODY. He was the author of more than 40 books. It was our privilege to know him and to visit him when he was over 90 years of age. Concerning election he wrote:

"Election to salvation is sovereign, eternal, unconditional, with predestinated means and agencies to secure the betrothal of a bride to become the Lamb's wife, vicariously redeemed."

E. C. DARGAN. In his book, "The Doctrines Of Our Faith" he says, "Are there conditions to God's choice? Does He choose because He foresees that men will repent, or on the condition of faith? No, in choosing men to save men, God is sovereign, free, untrammelled, gracious, acting on His own initiative."

ROBERT WATTS, in his book, "Sovereignty of God," says: "In relation to the Arminian notion that election is based on foreseen faith:

"Is it not manifest that it takes the government of His moral agent out of the hands of God? And does it not represent Him as occupying the position of a mere spectator, whose line of action is determined by the creatures of His hand?"

R. A. VENABLE, former President of Mississippi College, has this to say:

"I cannot agree with them (Methodists) as to the doctrine

of election and predestination. They hold that God's election unto salvation was based upon His foreknowledge; and God foreknew that some would believe and as many as He knew would believe, He elected to salvation. The sovereign will of God had nothing to do in deciding His electing grace. THIS I BELIEVE TO BE CONTRARY TO REASON AND REVELATION."

We could go on indefinitely with quotations from leading Baptist preachers, teachers, and scholars, concerning election. They were straight-out unconditional electionists, and this doctrine characterized Baptist people in general. If you are loose and modernistic on the question of election and predestination, you are just not a Baptist in the old-time, orthodox sense. Perhaps someone who reads this will say, "I can't believe it. You have quoted from some well-known men, but I can't believe that Baptists in general held these Calvinistic views." Well, let us prove it to you. All along through the centuries, groups of Baptists have issued Confessions of Faith, with a view to letting the world know what they believed. Back centuries ago, there was a group of people called WALDENSES. Dr. John T. Christian in his "History of Baptists," says, "Many details marked the Waldensians and the Baptists as of the same origin." These people issued a Confession of Faith in 1120 A. D. That's a long time ago. What did they believe, for instance, about foreknowledge and election? Let us give you the exact words:

"God saves from corruption and damnation those whom He has chosen from the foundation of the world, not from any disposition, faith, or holiness that He FORESAW in them, but

His mere mercy in Jesus Christ His Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reason of His own freewill and justice."

FROM THE LONDON CONFESSION (1689)

AND THE PHILADELPHIA CONFESSION (1742)

"Although God knoweth whatsoever may come, or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass on certain conditions. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to Eternal Life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious justice."

PARTICULAR BAPTISTS OF ENGLAND (1697)

In Article 8 of this group's Confession of Faith; we read the following: "We believe that the work of regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and faith, is not an act of man's freewill and power, but of the mighty, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God."

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION (1833)

From Article 9 of this Confession, we read, "We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free-agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end."

Other Confessions of Faith could be cited, but this would be wholly unnecessary for the ones just given are sufficient to indicate the beliefs of Baptists along the line that we are writing.



The Present State

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own judgment upon this point, and may tend to establish you, in the midst of so much instability and conflict.

The religion of our day has a very mixed complexion. Its nature is rather of an indefinite kind, and its progress not easily ascertained. Our present state is not a healthy nor a natural one. It is doubtful and unsatisfactory. There is much to rejoice in, but much to grieve over. There is bustle, activity, zeal, and liberality; yet all these may exist, and still spiritual life may be low. There may be much blossom and little fruit; and even the little not of the rich, mellow kind, that, in other days, drew our Beloved into His garden "to eat His pleasant fruits."

Religion among us lacks the intense vitality of other days. It intermits, fluctuates, and then, not seldom, evaporates. It lacks depth and strength. It lacks natural warmth, and too often seems to make up for the want of it by friction and excitement. Hence it is sometimes wan and pale, relieved by hectic glows which soon depart. It has not the healthy complexion of more primitive times. And in evidence of this, we find it continually turning in upon itself, feeling its own pulse, watching its various symptoms--a sure sign of disease, for health is unconscious of itself.

It bears about it many marks of man's handiwork. The finger of Jehovah is not so visibly impressed upon it, that one looking at it would be constrained to say, This is the doing of the Lord. There is much that is hollow and superficial. It is too hasty, too easy, too light and frivolous. It is wanting in the freshness, the calmness, the

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simplicity of primitive times. We desire something more solid and more solemn; peaceful, but not stagnant; earnest, but not feverish; energetic, but not unstable.

On the one hand, we have some zealous for orthodoxy, tenacious of old forms and phrases, and making an idol of their ancestral creed. On the other, we have men reckless and headstrong in their innovations; rushing from doctrine to doctrine, in the feverish love of change; rash in judgment, and shallow in intellect, despising creeds, confessions, catechisms, and old divinity of every kind; setting themselves up as those who alone preach or know the gospel---the people with whom alone wisdom can be supposed to exist, and with whom it is almost certain to die.

On the one hand, we have men preaching the gospel, and, at the same time, hedging it about with terms, conditions, restrictions, prerequisites, as if afraid of the very freeness which they preach; telling men to come to Christ, yet enjoining humiliation, sorrow for sin, prayer, etc., as qualifications, without which they cannot be received as if disliking the idea of our having to deal with Christ absolutely and simply as sinners, and as nothing else. On the other hand, we have men, in their zeal for a free gospel, reducing it to a mere form of words---a current set of phrases; talking of it with flippancy and irreverence, as if the process of receiving it were a mere mechanical one, like the learning of the alphabet.

On the one hand, there are those who keep the gospel in the background, and dwell continually on conviction of sin, and repentance, and certain

preparatory graces, the depth, and amount, and kind of which are pointed out; as if afraid that men should come to Christ too soon, and have peace. On the other hand, we have men making light of convictions, as if they were but hindrances, disparaging repentance as inconsistent with the peace of the gospel.

On the one hand, we have some dwelling upon evidences, and experiences, and feelings, continually turning the eye backward and inward, in quest of something there to rest upon. On the other, we have men spurning everything of the kind; not merely rejecting them as the ground of peace with God, but utterly contemning them as nothing but self-righteousness and pride.

On the one hand, we have some giving no counsel to an anxious soul, but merely to go on praying and waiting; speaking of "the pool of ordinances," at which they instruct the sinner to wait till the troubling of the water, as if he were doing right in continuing in unbelief, and if they themselves shrunk from proclaiming the commandment of God, that men should immediately believe and turn, and that it is infinite guilt as well as unutterable peril to remain one moment longer in unbelief. On the other hand, we have men forbidding such to pray at all, because God has commanded them to believe, as if prayer were not oftentimes the first utterance and expression of faith.

On the one hand, we have those who think assurance nothing else than presumption, and the inlet to Antinomian licentiousness; who speak of it only as a thing attainable at the close of a saint's career; as the result of a summing up of evidences; who make doubts a proof of faith, and a mark of humility, and who

look suspiciously upon any who are rejoicing in the Lord. On the other, there are men who make a God of their assurance, and a Savior of their faith, and an idol of their peace; who will hear of no struggle with an evil heart of unbelief; no warfare between the flesh and the spirit; no deep self-loathing and mourning over indwelling corruption, as if all these were but the symptoms of the weakness or the non-existence of faith, instead of their being certain indications of its presence and power. For it is where faith is in its strength that the conflict is often most desperate.

On the one hand, there are those who make the work of the Spirit in them a resting place for their soul, and the ground of peace between them and God, instead of singly and steadfastly looking to Christ and His work for them, as the one resting place, the foundation of peace and joy. On the other, we see men ridding themselves of the Spirit's work almost entirely, and in professing to make the gospel simple and faith easy, explaining away the office and operation of that very Spirit, without whom, "gospel" and "faith" are, to the sinner, but empty and unmeaning names.

Thus far I have stated the two opposite extremes. But it is only with one of these that I have at present to do. And it is only of the latter that I would speak in the remainder of this letter.

The individuals referred to are certainly very zealous for the propagation of their opinions, and spare no pains in persuading others to join them. They "**compass sea and land to make one proselyte**" (Matt. 23:15). Wherever an inquiring sinner is heard of, he is immediately searched out, and drawn along with them to attend their meetings and to hear their

minister. Books and tracts are thrust upon him; all manner of attention is shown him, and visits paid to him; and the means are plied so perseveringly, that he finds it not very easy to shake himself free. They think it very uncharitable in him to refuse to attend their place of worship, but they do not at all deem it so never to enter his. They seem to think that every denomination should join them, while they themselves are to stand aloof from all.

They are very censorious. A great part of their religion appears to consist in judging others, and pretending to determine their spiritual state. They talk flippantly about conversion, and seem to have no difficulty in settling who are converted and who are not, by some peculiar tests of their own. Those who have a single doubt, or who shrink from their language of assurance, are pronounced to be upon the way to hell. They will have it, that nobody preaches a free gospel but themselves, and that it is scarcely possible to hear the gospel out of their meeting place, or beyond their sect. Their self-confidence is amazing. They boast much of the progress of their sect, and of all their doings in advancing their cause. If they have contrived to raise a little excitement in a place, immediately they announce a revival of religion, number up their converts, and proclaim abroad their success.

They are harpers upon one string; what they call the gospel. One would suppose that there was nothing else in the Bible but this. They never seem to get farther than the first principles of the oracles of God. Those passages or chapters out of which they cannot extract this gospel are passed over. Many portions

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. How are Christians to worship God? Are we just to read our Bibles, pray, and attend church services?

Matthew Stepp
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570

Pastor
Big Creek
Baptist Church
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570



Worship is an attitude, not necessarily an action. Ritualism can do everything that the Bible physically demands of God's children, yet not have an impact on either God, or our lives. **"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice"** (Pro. 21:3). **"But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"** (Matt. 9:13). Not that we don't Sacrifice many things in our lives for God, but we need to make our sacrifices joyfully and emphatically with ardor and passion! (In essence, we GET to go to church, not we GOT to go to church) Selah! Think about it!

The most important aspect of true worship is making Jesus Christ the LORD, the preeminent person in our lives. Worship is to be reserved for deity, and God alone is to be our preeminent focus for devotion and adoration. Preeminent worship is giving due reverence and fear to Jesus Christ. More than the Hebrew children feared Nebuchadnezzar and his fiery furnace, they FEARED the almighty God of the Heavens. **"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said**

to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3:16-18). More was the reverence to their ultimate sovereign (God) and fear to depart from the commandments of their Holy God, than was the fear of being burned alive.

Reading our Bibles and praying are important aspects of worship. **"My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"** (Job 23:11-12). Again, I want to emphasize that the ATTITUDE of worship, made the Bible reading and direct communion with God by Job (and all who truly desire it) acceptable worship to God. Without making it more important than our **"necessary food,"** we are relegating God to "backseat worship," or a "God that is only SOMEWHAT important." Selah! Think about it!

Preeminent worship as we come together in church cannot take place if the assembly is a mere social gathering. Only as we give due awe and marvelling wonder to the person and work of Jesus Christ will our worship be acceptable. In Revelation 5:2,

the question is asked in the halls of Heaven: **"Who is Worthy?"** The Apostle John wept much, because no worthy personage was found in all of Earth or Heaven until the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ emerged from His glorious throne, after which is recorded, **"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."** Can you imagine the thunderous accolades of the remainder of this WORSHIP passage? **"...And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. ...And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever"** (Rev. 5:9-14).

The pictures of acceptable worship in Heaven are to be examples to us here on Earth. Truly as we more fully understand what Jesus Christ has done for us as we listen to the preaching each worship service in our churches, it will ENABLE us to properly worship God, preeminently. As we study more deeply in our Bible reading and in our ever-expanding prayer life, we will

have no choice but to shout out His marvelous name in song and rejoicing. Jesus Christ was PERFECTION in tribulation for us. Living a PERFECT life, that might be imputed to OUR account, as the righteousness of God, Himself. **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (II Cor. 5:21). And the marvel of the PERFECT death that He came to suffer; that we might live forever. Hallelujah! Praise His name in true worship, love and adoration. **"And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind..."** (Luke 10:27). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH
45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH
45619



Jesus declared: **"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"** (John 4:23-24). We are to worship God in a spiritual manner led by the Holy Spirit, directed by the example of Christ the Living Word who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and according to the precepts of the inspired written Word of God. Jesus is making it clear in the context of John 4 that worship is not to be confined to a place, a posture, or religious traditions. Worship is

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What good Christian or Baptist publications would you recommend for reading?

Roger Reed
20 Ledgewood Dr.
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Missionary of
West Jefferson
Missionary Baptist
Mission
90 E. Main St.
West Jefferson, Ohio
43162



First and foremost is the Bible, of course that should go without saying. The second is "Pilgrim's Progress!" The late Milburn Cockrell left us with many great publications. Some other personal favorites are; Rosco Brong, T. P. Simmons, Tom Ross, O. B. Mink and Doyal Thomas, C. D. Cole, etc. If you go to the Berea Baptist Church Bookstore on line they have plenty of good publications available. Also you can go to the Philadelphia Baptist Church web site for publications as well. Here is their web address: <http://pbcofdecaturalabama.org>.

I hope that helps, there are others, but between what I have listed, should bring you to others as well. God Bless!

ROGER REED

Matthew Stepp
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570

Pastor
Big Creek
Baptist Church
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570



Obviously, you have the information on the *Berea Baptist Banner*, if you are reading this answer, but just to keep them all together: PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855 is their mailing address

for getting a monthly subscription from them, just in case this is a gifted paper!

If you like the *Berea Baptist Banner*, and their Baptist articles concerning the Gospel, Doctrinal teachings, Current Events affecting Christians today and Godly Instructions, then I wholeheartedly recommend the *Voice in the Wilderness*, a similar newspaper printed by the Dessie Baptist Church and edited by her pastor, Elder Mark Minney. This sound Baptist paper is a 12-page, monthly periodical that you can subscribe to at: 1430 Briery Lick Rd, Rosedale, WV 26636. Each issue of both the *Banner* and the *Voice* contain articles from current writers and also our Baptist forefathers. The writers (and editors) of these papers are not afraid to put into print religious, social and even political instruction and information that is invaluable to Americans today.

A third newsletter, authorized by the Grace Baptist Church of Gladwin, MI and her pastor, Elder Sam Wilson, is *The Landmark Baptist*. This bi-monthly paper is edited by Brother Robert Belanger and all requests for subscriptions or article submission should be sent to him at: PO Box 1205, Goose Creek, SC 29445. The *TLB* is a pamphlet-sized production of 28 pages, with an emphasis on historical Baptist writings and truths.

Elder Bill James is the pastor of Shallowford Baptist Church and puts out a simple periodical called *Gathered Fragments* several

times a year. I love Brother Bill's writing style and his articles are thought-provoking and spiritual. The address to subscribe is: PO Box 118, Pfafftown, NC 27040.

The above four periodicals are strictly Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist papers. I strongly endorse them to any Christian that wants to saturate their lives with Biblical literature and Bible study. If you do not get these in your home, quite frankly, you need to, Beloved Reader. Your family needs to have the reinforcement of these godly sermons and devotionals, along with a Baptist perspective on Current Events and Bible Prophecy being fulfilled before our very eyes. (P.S. If any readers know of other sound Baptist periodicals, please let me know and return the favor and send me their address!).

The rest of the "Christian" periodicals that I currently subscribe to (or read online) are not in the same category as the foregoing. There will be some doctrinal error and some disagreement in the following. I can only recommend these with the understanding that there are some bones that will need to be spit out, as you find meat to eat. However, these conservative magazines and newsletters are far superior to anything else found, compared to the majority of the trash out there.

The Institute for Creation Research puts out a free monthly news magazine promoting a Bible-based ideology concerning Creation. *Acts & Facts* is full of top-notch information about the Genesis Creation and Flood, along with loads of information on Archaeology, Biology and all those other "ologies" of Science. True Science, based on God's Word is what you'll mostly find in these pages. It is a GREAT resource for pastors and parents wanting

to teach their children and flocks about the evils of Evolution and Humanism, while building a sound foundation on God's Holy Word and Jesus Christ. Their address is: PO Box 59029, Dallas, TX 75229.

Also, I would highly recommend *The Voice of the Martyrs*. Founded by Richard Wurmbrand, the organization puts out a free monthly magazine updating us about the world-wide persecution of God's people around the globe. Highly poignant and heart-breaking stories, will yet bring resolution and joy as we see God protecting and strengthening these saints that stand on the battlefield against Satan's armies. Subscription information is: PO Box 443, Bartlesville, OK 74005.

Politically conservative magazines I recommend are: *Imprimus*, put out by Hillsdale College, 33 E. College St., Hillsdale, MI 49242 and *American Rifleman*, which comes with your NRA subscription (Andrew's in my case!). Online I have enjoyed many articles from *The New American* (John Birch Society) and for Inspirational reading, *Guideposts* has a long history of Christian publishing. May God bless your reading!

MATTHEW STEPP

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH
45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH
45619



There is only one publication that is absolutely pure, inspired, and inerrant. That would be the Holy Scriptures (Prov. 30:5). You ought to read the Word of God each and every

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Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

the response of a heart that has been changed by the power of the Spirit, cleansed by the blood of Christ, and overwhelmed by the everlasting love of the Father. As such, worship must be a perpetual attitude of God's people encompassing all of life, not merely artificial partitions of our lives that someone has identified as "spiritual." We are to be surrendered to the Lordship of Christ every moment of every day, not just for a few hours on Sunday. I Corinthians 10:31 declares: **"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."** Colossians 3:16-17 states: **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."** Interestingly enough the exhortation in Colossians 4 follows a series of practical admonitions regarding godly living, separating from evil, and maintaining gracious attitudes marked by a loving disposition. The exhortation also extends to our home life, the duties of husband and wife, parents and children, and also our work life culminating in a command: **"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men"** (3:23). All that we are, all that we do ought to be done for the glory of God and therefore must be viewed as a consistent attitude and action of worship.

If all of life is to be considered an

act of worship then each day must be consecrated to the Lord in what we eat, where we go, how we speak, etc. Certainly we ought to read the Word, pray, and attend church services. However, that is just a portion of our worship. When we are in the workplace others ought to see us serving God by doing the very best job possible without complaint because we want to honor God and obey His Word. In our homes we ought to read, study, memorize, meditate and apply the Word of God. We ought to teach it to our children and grandchildren throughout the day wherever we are and incorporate it into whatever we are doing (Deut. 6). Godly women, as you care for your children and your home you should not view those activities as mere duties to perform, but rather as an act of obedience to Titus 2 which makes it worship. As an act of worship we ought to declare to others the glories of the Gospel of Christ and His power to save poor sinners! We are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature! Certainly witnessing to the lost and preaching the Gospel to others must be viewed as an act of worship aimed at obeying God and glorifying His worthy Name! Worship is declaring the worthiness of God each and every day as the Psalmist declares: **"Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods...O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall**

judge the people righteously" (Ps. 96:2-4, 9-10). Please don't compartmentalize your Christian life! Determine to make all of life and every day one of declaring the worthiness of God.

TOM ROSS



Roger Reed
20 LedgeWood Dr.
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Missionary of
West Jefferson
Missionary Baptist
Mission
90 E. Main St.
West Jefferson, Ohio
43162

This question sounds like a comment someone made to me one time years ago, "You mean all we are going to do in Heaven is praise God and forever learn" ah, yes, he replied, "that will be boring won't it?" Excuse me, are you truly saved? I want to praise God for electing me before the foundation of the world! I want to praise God for keeping me from the horrible **"Lake of Fire."** I want to praise God that He sent His Son to die for my sins! I want to learn how He created the universe! I want to learn of His love! I want to learn how He can be everywhere all the time! I want to learn how He formed the worlds and made the stars! I can not remember if it was A. W. Pink or C. H. Spurgeon that said, even in all of eternity yet to come we may never learn all there is to know about God (paraphrased). Is that not exciting, does that not stir the soul?

No, we are not just to read our Bibles! We are to read our Bibles and study the Word of God. **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15).

No, we are not just to pray, but we are to pour out our hearts and souls to God and thank Him for

saving us from the wrath to come. **"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come"** (I Thess. 1:10).

No, we are not to just attend church services, but to sing praises unto His Holy Name, preach the Gospel to the lost, serve Him with reverence and learn of Him, in His house. We are to teach, we are to be examples to others how to live Holy lives. We are to do as Paul wanted to do, **"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ"** (II Cor. 11:2).

Dear reader, how are Christians to worship God? God told the woman at the well how to worship God, **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"** (John 4:24). If the Christian will strive to do all that has been mentioned here he or she will not have time to ask such a question.

"God is a Spirit" - can the reader define that statement? **"They that worship Him"** - can the reader explain that without faltering? **"Must worship Him in spirit and in truth"** - does the reader know the full essences of that statement?

David asked the question, **"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him"** (Ps. 8:4)? Please read all of Psalms 8. When the question is asked "Are we just to" is like saying "is that all there is for a Christian to do?" The answer is a definite NO! When we reach sinless perfection in this life, then maybe we can ask, "Is that just all there is to do as a Christian!" God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

day. You ought to memorize verses, meditate on its truths, and apply its principles. The Word of God ought to be the single most important book you own. Jesus said: **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”** (Matt. 4:4). Paul the apostle exhorted Timothy: **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth...All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly finished unto all good works”** (II Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17). When I was first saved my pastor challenged me to read 10 pages of the Bible every day, a practice I have continued more or less for several years. I adopted a philosophy I heard Elder Bill James call BBB, meaning Bible before breakfast. Every day I read my Bible before I do anything else echoing the principle of Job 23:11-12: **“My foot hath held his steps, his ways have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.”** Read, study, and memorize the Scriptures first and foremost!

When it comes to uninspired publications there are many that I have read with great spiritual profit through the years. I love good books and sound publications. However, even the very best of them are subject to errors and contradictions. That is why it is absolutely essential that

the study of the Bible must be your constant employment. God will give you spiritual discernment to be able to “eat the meat and throw away the bones” when it comes to uninspired publications. Certainly, the Berea Baptist Banner, the Voice in the Wilderness, and the Pioneer Baptist are all worthy of diligent study. I am sure there are many others. I have profited greatly from the writings of C. H. Spurgeon, J. R. Graves, J. B. Moody, A. W. Pink, John Gill, Milburn Cockrell, C.D. Cole, and T. P. Simmons. I love reading Baptist histories. I enjoy the devotional fervor of the Puritans, understanding that they were in error when it comes to the doctrine of the church.

TOM ROSS



The Present State

(Continued from page 11) ♦

of Scripture are left unread. We have heard of such contempt for the Word as omitting in family reading such chapters as the ninth of the Romans, or the first of the Ephesians. As for the **“sure word of prophecy”** (II Pet. 1:19), they turn away from it. None of them seem to know aught about it. The second coming of the Lord is little thought of, little preached upon, as the Church’s BLESSED HOPE. To the millennialian views they have a very strong hostility; for their idea is, that, they will ere long be able to convert the world, and thus the thought of Christ’s speedy coming, and of the world’s waxing worse and worse until He comes, are sad interruptions to their magnificent plans.

They sit in judgment upon what they hear, not so much caring to be fed, as to criticize and discuss the subject afterwards; to be able

to say whether the minister knows the gospel or not. **“They will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts, they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears”** (II Tim. 4:3).

With these things before me, may I not be permitted to question the reality and solidity of much that is called religion in the present day?

I see careless men taking an easy way of getting to Heaven by saying that they believe; and making their own confidence their Savior: No wrestling with flesh and blood, or with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places! I see troubled souls saying peace to themselves when there is no peace, by resolving to be quite sure that all is well with them, though their hurt be not healed, but only skinned over, and their conscience remains unpurged by the “blood of sprinkling” (I Pet. 1:2). I see men intent upon widening the strait gate and the narrow way, making what they call faith a substitute for everything, superseding conviction, repentance, self-abasement, by their own act of faith. I see men, instead of trembling at the Word, taking it into their lips as they would do song or a proverb, with all the easy flippancy of men who were above being solemnized and over-awed with the majesty of the voice of Jehovah. I see men turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, boastful of their conversion, forward to speak of it, yet living much as others live, and holding it bondage or legality to be strict in Sabbath observance, or days of fasting, or similar forms and duties; nay, some are already denying the authority of the Sabbath. I find men holding the doctrine of “perfection” (some

having attained it and some not), yet still censorious, proud, uncharitable, sectarian. I see men mistaking indifference to sin and ignorance of their own deceitful hearts for holiness---making a merit of not mourning for sin, as if that were unsuitable to one who is forgiven---not seeking for pardon, nor confessing sin in their prayers---thus combining the vileness of Antinomianism with the mock-sanctity of perfectionism. I see some even, whom I believe to be at heart Christians, running from doctrine to doctrine, from book to book, from church to church, attracted by every novelty in the man or the message. Having lost the glow of their first love, they are seeking it in change and excitement, or the bold asseveration of their assurance. Miserable exchange indeed, for the loss of their first love! Vain device to recover the fresh life and glow of other days by having recourse to something else than the living Christ Himself! Sad delusion of the false spirit, to which some seem to be given over, in righteous recompense for having rejected the unction of the Holy One!

They have brought reproach upon the freeness of the gospel by the false doctrine with which they encircled it. They have made many suspicious even of the very name of the gospel. But this is only Satan’s old device. He wants to make the gospel odious; and he has, to no small extent, succeeded. But shall this hinder us from proclaiming it as before? Shall this lead us to hedge it about and guard it, and affix conditions to it, because of such abuses? No; let us grasp it entire. Let us lift up our voices as loudly as ever, **“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. . .”** (Isa. 55:1).

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The Present State

(Continued from page 15) ♦

Let us not limit the gospel, nor abate aught of its absolute and unconditional freeness. Let us not cast any stumbling block in the sinner's way, nor tell him that he is not at liberty to come and be forgiven, just as he stands this very instant. Let us not tell him that he must get quit of his sins, and repent, and pray, and wait, and do his best, in order that after all this he may be qualified for coming to the Savior. Let us not allow him to suppose that there is any one thing required of him before coming, or that he is not welcome to his Father's house and his Father's arms, even now, poor prodigal as he is.

We may be accused of inconsistency and self-contradiction---one sermon may be contrasted with another---one statement may be held up as the antagonist of the other. But still let us not be moved away, either from the gospel or its hope. We believe in a gospel free to all, and we preach it as such---going up to every man with the message of peace on our lips, and the blessings of salvation in our hands, saying, **"Be ye reconciled to God"** (II Cor. 5:20).

Or, perhaps, we may be accused of an ignorant attachment to antiquated creeds, and of blind veneration for the straitened theology of other days. Now, though wishing to draw direct from the fountainhead, and to call no man master, yet we do confess a liking to those doctrines which, in life and in death, were grasped so strongly by our fathers---those much-praying, much-believing, deep-thinking, hard-toiling, sore-suffering men, whose eyes grew early dim, and whose hair grew early gray. We

are not ashamed to confess a satisfaction in sitting at the feet of such men, and listening to their solemn teaching, in preference to seeking instruction from men whose shallowness and self-confidence make us feel, that instead of teaching others, they have need that one teach them again what be the first principles of the oracles of God (Heb. 5:12).

Yours, etc.

THUS SAITH THE LORD

"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace"

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.

CALIFORNIA PREGNANCY CENTERS FIGHT NEW ABORTION-REFERRAL MANDATE

(WNS)--Two suits filed Oct. 10 in California federal courts claim a new state law violates pro-life pregnancy centers' constitutional rights by mandating the centers tell clients about abortion. The law, signed by California Gov. Jerry Brown on Oct. 9 and set to take effect in January, forces private religious pregnancy centers to inform every woman entering their doors about state-sponsored public programs providing immediate and free abortions for qualifying women. Under the law, centers are required to provide a phone number where clients can get more information about abortion services.

CHURCH KEEPS SINGING DESPITE NOISE COMPLAINT, THREAT OF FINES

(WNS)--After initially threatening

(Jer. 6:14).

"They are prophets of the deceit of their own heart" (Jer. 23:26).

"I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal My words every one from his neighbor" (Jer. 23:30).

"A voice of a multitude being at ease was with her" (Ezek. 23:42).

"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:7).

"Beguiling unstable souls" (II Pet. 2:14).



a day until they complied.

CALIFORNIA CHURCHES CHALLENGE ABORTION

MANDATE IN FEDERAL COURT
(WNS)--Three California churches are suing the state in federal court over last year's mandate that all employee health insurance cover abortions. In August 2014, Shelley Rouillard, director of California's Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC), ordered seven insurance companies to cover elective abortion in group plans. The mandate affects churches in California with 50 or more employees because they must provide health insurance for employees under Obamacare. The lawsuit, Foothill Church v. Rouillard, challenges the constitutionality of the mandate. About one year ago, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and Life Legal Defense Foundation filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services after already filing a complaint with the DMHC. Now ADF has taken the churches' complaint to district court on behalf of three plaintiffs: Foothill Church in Glendora, Calvary Chapel Chino Hills in Chino, and The Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch.

CHRISTIAN GROUPS CHEER STATE DEPARTMENT'S LATEST RELIGIOUS LIBERTY REPORT

(WNS)--Groups focused on persecution of Christians around the world welcomed the Oct. 14 release of the U.S. State Department's latest report on international religious freedom, calling it an important official record of religious minorities' suffering around the world. The 2014 edition of the report labeled Islamic extremist groups the most severe religious persecutors, noted the "major problem" of increased anti-Semitism, and expressed concern

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an African-American church with large fines because its choir rehearsals allegedly violated a city noise ordinance, the city of Oakland, Calif., backed off due to public support of the small congregation. "This is strange," Thomas Harris, pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, told the San Francisco Chronicle. "[It's] quite unheard of for a church to be fined because of joyful noise." Established in 1951, the small church has served the community for over six decades. Harris recently received a letter from the City of Oakland stating someone had filed a noise ordinance violation against the church due to a "nuisance activity, namely excessive noise in the form of choir practice with live musical instruments ... and amplified voices." The letter accused the choir of spoiling "the use and quiet enjoyment of the surrounding community's property." If they refused to stop the offending noise, the city threatened to levy a \$3,500 fee and charge \$500

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about some governments using the threat of extremism “as an excuse for unreasonable religious restrictions.” “There is an absolute and unequivocal need to give voice to the religiously oppressed in every land afraid to speak of what they believe in; who face death and live in fear, who worship in underground churches, mosques or temples, who feel so desperate that they flee their homes to avoid killing and persecution simply because they love God in their own way or question the existence of God,” said Rabbi David Saperstein, who heads the State Department’s Office of International Religious Freedom as an ambassador at large.

HIGH SCHOOL COACH PUT ON LEAVE AFTER REFUSING TO STOP ON-FIELD PRAYERS

(WNS)--The high school football coach who refused to stop praying on the field after Bremerton, Wash., school district officials ordered him to, has been placed on paid leave until his contract runs out in December. Joe Kennedy, represented by Texas-based Liberty Institute, is considering his legal options. “We’re prepared to take the necessary legal actions to defend Coach Kennedy’s religious freedom,” Liberty Institute senior counsel Mike Berry told The Seattle Times. “His religious expression is not something he should hide or be ashamed of.” Kennedy, a former Marine, began working at Bremerton High School as an assistant coach in 2008. He soon started praying on the field after games. The single, personal prayer sessions eventually attracted players, fans, and other coaches—all joining in voluntarily. Earlier this month, school officials ordered him to stop. When he refused, they benched him.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Union of the Two Natures of Christ

“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:3-4).

The controversy concerning whether Christ had a genuine human nature as well as a Divine nature is no novelty. Very early in the history of the church heretics attacked the Person of Christ. These assaults upon our Savior are being perpetuated by modern liberals and the various false cults in our generation. But it is a well-known historical fact that there have been true churches from the beginning of the Christian Era who believed the orthodox doctrine about the Person of Christ. This is seen from their writings, hymns, and confessions of faith.

The union of the two natures of Christ continues to be an area of discussion. Theologians still ask, “How can the same person be both God and man?” Some seek to avoid these difficulties by denying either His Divinity or humanity. This accounts for the various Christological errors across the centuries. The cause of such heresy may be traced to the failure to clearly distinguish between the two natures, or failure to hold tenaciously to the unity of His Person.

Some churches and pastors

would lay great stress upon the humanity of Christ, while others would do just the reverse. Some of these errors about the Person of Christ deserve a brief study from church history.

EARLY ERRORS

One of the first errors to disturb the early churches was Ebionim which appeared in the first century. The word “Ebionism” is supposed to have originated from a Hebrew word which means “poor.” These ancient heretics denied the Divine nature of Christ. They entertained a low, humanitarian view of His Person.

This error came from a fraction of Judaic Christianity. These people could not reconcile Christ’s Godhood with their doctrine of monotheism. While they believed Christ was distinguished from other men by holiness and the fullness of the Spirit, the virgin birth was looked upon as a heathenish fable. This error died out about the close of the first century.

As the Ebionites denied Christ’s Divinity, so the Gnostics denied His humanity. This sect arose in the first century (I John 4:1-3) and flourished during the second century. In later times it was called Docetism and Manicheism.

These heretics held that all matter is inherently evil, an idea borrowed from heathen philosophy. Since Christ was pure and holy, they reasoned He

could not possess a human body. They maintained Christ merely appeared in fashion as a man; His earthly manifestation in human form was a phantasm.

ERRORS IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES

In the fourth century Arius, a bishop of the church at Alexander, Egypt, denied the deity of Christ and His eternal generation from the Father. This error arose from a misunderstanding of the Scriptural account of the incarnation. Some consider Arianism a reactionary movement to other heresies. This dogma was condemned at the Council of Nice in A.D. 325.

Also in the fourth century Apollinarius, bishop of the church of Laodicea, denied the completeness of Christ’s human nature. Justin Martyr preceded him in this view. Apollinarius admitted Christ had a true body and animal soul, but no rational spirit or mind. In Him the eternal Logos supplied the place of human intelligence. The Council of Constantinople condemned Apollinarianism in A.D. 381.

In the fifth century Nestorius, bishop of the church at Constantinople, made the two natures into two distinct persons. This was a reactionary theory to Apollinarianism. Nestorius made Christ into a defied man. This heresy was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 481.

Also in the fifth century Eutyches, an abbot of Constantinople, denied the integrity of our Lord’s two natures by combining them so as to form a third nature. This doctrinal error was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451.

MODERN ERRORS

Modern errors are very

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numerous. The false cults of our time have revived and revamped many of the old heresies of the church. Unitarianism is a revival of the old Arian heresy, for it denies the Deity of Christ.

Then there is Christian Science, a religious group which does not follow either Christ or the facts of science. This group has revived Docetism which denies the humanity of Christ.

Millennial Dawnism or Russellism denies the present and personal existence of Christ. Charles Taze Russell, its founder, wrote: "The human Christ is dead, and forever dead" (*Studies in the Scriptures*, V. 454). This error reduces Christ to a myth. They would properly be called "Jehovah's False Witnesses."

Let us continually bear in mind that the great body of people from the beginning of church history believed that Christ was truly a man, was truly God, and in one Person. They could not read and believe the Bible without having these truths engraved on their hearts. Even in the Dark Ages there were true believers and active churches who did not succumb to any of these heresies.

Thank God, even today we still have true churches who contend that in the one Person, Jesus Christ, there are two natures, each in its completeness and integrity, and that these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TWO NATURES

Jesus Christ is a true man, not a phantom or abstraction. He is not the complex of properties without the substance of humanity. He is in every sense of the word a

true man. In like manner He is truly God with all His Divine attributes.

These two natures, so widely different as to their attributes, are brought together into a personal union which will last forever. This is the overwhelming testimony of the Holy Scriptures. This is what is called by theologians the hypostatic union, meaning personal union of the two natures.

In thinking, preaching, and writing upon the Person of Christ, we must be careful never to consider Christ as a dual personality. Christ's Divinity is never objective to His humanity, nor His humanity to His Divinity. Christ uniformly speaks of Himself as a single Person. Others spoke of Him in the same manner. There is no interchange of "I" and "he" between the two natures in Christ.

Jesus Christ is the God-man. Students of Christology speak of His theanthropic Person. This word is from "Theos," the Greek word for "God," and "anthropos," the Greek word for "man."

THE RELATION OF THE TWO NATURES

Christ by assuming the human nature united it to His Divine Person. He who became flesh was still the eternal Word (John 1:14). Being in the form of God, He took to Himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6-7). Christ gave up no Divinity when He became a man. He merely laid aside the manifestation of His glory. He could not cease to be God. The properties of each nature remained distinct notwithstanding this union. The human nature is no loser in not being a person subsisting of itself, for it had a superior subsisting in the Person of the Son of God.

Jesus Christ is one indivisible Personality throughout, but His

human nature always remained human and His Divine nature always retained its Deity. These natures were united but never mingled or confounded. Peter tells us that He "was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Pet. 3:18). He **"was made of the seed of David according to the flesh"** and remained **"the Son of God with power"** (Rom. 1:3-4).

Divinity cannot cease to be. It is impossible to make an infinite Being into a finite creature or to make a finite creature into an infinite Being. To rob the Divine nature of Christ of one single attribute would result in the destruction of His Deity, or vice versa. No attribute of one nature was ever transferred to the other.

HIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THESE

Liberal theologians entertain the idea that it was very late in the life of Christ that He suddenly discovered His Divinity. I reject such reasoning as unscriptural. I believe the Divine nature of Christ was fully operative even when He was a babe in Bethlehem.

My Savior was conscious at all times of His Deity. There was no point in His life when He suddenly realized He was God. At the age of twelve He knew God was His real Father (Luke 2:49). Self-consciousness developed only in the human nature. He had both a Divine and human self-consciousness. He sometimes spoke and acted from the Divine and at other times from the human.

CONSEQUENCE OF THE HYPOSTATICAL UNION

One of the most obvious consequences of the hypostatical union is the communion of attributes. He so partook of the attributes of both natures that whatever may be affirmed of

either nature may be affirmed of His Person. Christ was finite and infinite; ignorant and omniscient; He was less than God and equal with God; He existed from eternity and was born in time. Many Scriptures explain this truth.

There are some passages which use titles of Him that apply to His whole Person. Some of these are Redeemer, Lord, King, Prophet, Priest, Shepherd, and Mediator. These titles speak of the actions and work true of the God-man.

Second, other Scriptures make His Person the subject, but the predicate is true of the Divine nature. Our Master said: **"Before Abraham was, I am"** (John 8:58). In John 17:5 He spoke of the glory He had before the world was.

Third, there are texts in which the Person is the subject, but the predicate is true only of the human nature. On the cross He said: **"I thirst"** (John 19:28). It is written in John 11:35 that Jesus wept over the death of Lazarus. All of those verses which speak of the Savior walking, eating, and sleeping fit into this category.

Fourth, there are Scriptures in which the Person is denominated from the human nature when the predicate is true only of the Divine nature. Observe the words of John 6:62 which reads: **"What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"**

At other times the reverse is true. In these the Divine nature is denominated when the predicate is true of only the human nature. In Revelation 1:12-18 there is a revelation of Christ's glory and Deity. Yet in verse 18 He is called the One Who **"was dead,"** an attribute possible only for the humanity of Christ.

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Such Scriptures can only be explained by the mystery of the union of His two natures. The attributes and powers of both natures are ascribed to the one Christ. The work and dignities are ascribed to one Person in a way inexplicable, except upon the union of the two natures.

THE VALUE OF THIS

Jesus Christ was not two separate persons. All His acts were ascribed to the whole Person. It is this truth which gives merit and efficiency to His work. This is distinctly seen in the New Testament writings.

The sufferings of the Savior at Calvary were the sufferings of a Person Who was Divine. Those who put Him to death **"crucified the Lord of glory"** (I Cor. 2:8). Such a title as **"the Lord of glory"** is too great for any creature to bear. This title implies the inseparable connection of Christ's humanity and Deity. The One Who had a glory with the Father before the earth was created was nailed to the tree (John 17:4, 24).

The blood which was shed at Mount Calvary was the blood of God. Acts 20:28 speaks of **"the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."** Jesus Christ is God. The union between the two natures was so close that the blood He poured out is called the blood of God. This is what really put dignity and worth to the atonement which He made.

It is because Christ was possessed of an eternal Spirit that He by one offering perfected forever those who are sanctified (Heb. 10:13-14; 9:14). This is why His sacrifice never needs to be repeated and why it is infinitely more efficacious than those in

the Old Testament times. Let all redeemed men eternally cry: "Jesus my God, thy blood alone has power sufficient to atone."

If only a mere man died on the cross of Calvary, then we have no Savior and are yet in our sins. It was no martyr who died at Mount Calvary. It was God the mighty Maker, Who died for man's sins. If a real atonement has been made for our sins, then Divinity suffered in our place. Away with the modern notion that Divinity could not suffer, even if It desired to do so. The full penalty of the sins of the chosen people could only have been borne by a Divine Being. To deny this is to rob the cross of its Divine Christ.

Our justification before God is a product of the union of the two natures in Christ. Believers are **"made the righteousness of God"** in Christ, for the righteousness of Christ is the righteousness of the great God. The gospel of Christ reveals **"the righteousness of God"** (Rom. 1:17). By the obedience of the God-man all who believe are justified from all things (Rom. 5:19).

If it were not for the union of the two natures in Christ, He could not be the object of worship. To worship a mere man would be blasphemy and idolatry, He whom Thomas worshipped was both Lord and God. The saints in Heaven worship the God-man (Rev. 5:9). To deny the Deity of Christ is to dethrone the Slain Lamb from the throne in Heaven and fill the vacant seat with a man for the homage of the redeemed and the adoration of the elect angels.

*Jesus, my God, I know His name,
His name is all my trust;
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.*



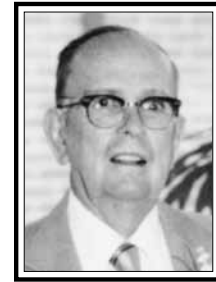
Our Great Omnipotent God

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said, **"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."** In the light of that statement how can we have the right conception of God, unless we think of Him as being all powerful as well as all-wise? If He cannot do everything He wants to do, if He is unable to perform all His good pleasure, how can He really and truly be God? The very term "God" implies that the One who wears that name can do anything and everything He wants to do. So then, if the One we call our God is unable to do just one little thing that He really wants to do, we do not really any truly have a God.

It has been said, just as holiness is the beauty of all His attributes, so power is the thing that gives life and action to all His Divine perfections. What would all the wonderful counsels of the eternity of the past have amounted to, unless the wonderful counselor had the power to bring those counsels to pass?

Unless He has power to do what it pleases Him to do, His mercy would be no better than my feeble pity. I may see some old drunk on his road to hell whom I have the ability to pity. But that is as far as I can go. But God, if He so desires, can lift this old drunk out of the gutter and place his feet upon a rock. He can put a new song in his mouth to take the place of the accursed bottle. And He can do all that simply because He is God. And furthermore, He does not have to stammer and stutter around like a timid boy asking for his first date in order to get that old drunk to let Him save him.



"He quickeneth whom He will" (John 5:21).

Unless He has power to do whatsoever He will, His precious promises would

be but sounding brass or a tinkling symbol. He has said, **"I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish"** (John 10:28). He has said **"I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"** (John 14:3).

Are you not glad that He has the power to make those precious promises good?

He has power over the elements. **"For He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of His strength"** (Job 37:6). **"He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold"** (Ps. 147:16-17)? He said **"Peace, be still"** (Mark 4:39) to the stormy, wind tossed sea. The wind ceased, and the boisterous sea became as calm as a kitten. Job tells us in 9:8 that God **"walketh upon the waves of the sea."** In Matthew 14:25, His disciples saw Him doing just that. Again Job tells us in 22:14 that **"He walketh in the circuit of heaven."** And the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 104:3 that **"He treadeth upon the wings of the wind."** Please note, the Psalmist does not say that God flies upon the wings of the wind. Neither does he say that God runs upon the wings of the wind. But rather that He walks upon the wings of the wind.

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Though the winds are the most impetuous of all the elements, though they change their speed and their direction without a moment's notice, still God has the power to just leisurely walk upon the wings of the wind.

We are told that water covers three-fourths of the earth's surface. But, if water was permitted to do so it would cover the whole earth. There must be some restraining power that keeps the oceans within their bounds. And in Job 38:8-11 we learn what that power is. There we read **“. . . Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves to stayed?”** Have you ever stood upon the seashore and watched the mighty waves as they rushed toward you as if they would cover the whole earth, but when they reached God's appointed place they brake up and the water began to creep back as if it were ashamed of something?

Then our great God has power over disease. He said to the leper **“I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed”** (Matt. 8:3). He touched the hand of Peter's mother-in-law, and she was healed immediately. He made the blind to see, the lame to walk and the deaf to hear. He said to the widow's son **“Young man, I say unto thee, Arise”** (Luke 7:14), and he that was dead sat up in his coffin. He said, **“Come forth,”** to the one who had been dead for four days, and

Lazarus came forth from his tomb without a moments hesitation.

O, how little we really know about the power of our Almighty God. Though we may have known Him as our personal Saviour for half a century, still we have never been able to scratch the surface when it comes to understanding His marvelous power. Man must have tools and materials in order to make a simple chicken coop. But our all-powerful God took nothing and made the universe. **“He spake, and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast”** (Ps. 33:9).

Who can look up into the sky on a beautiful summer night and really and truly believe that what he sees up there just happened to be? O, the power that had to be exerted in order to bring to fruition the beautiful canopy above us. But still God just spoke the word, and there it was.

“By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps. 33:6). And not only did He speak the heavens into existence, He upholds them, or keeps them by the word of His power (read Hebrews 1:3).

When we stop to think of the immensity of the universe; when we stop to think of the intricate movements of the earth and of the heavenly bodies; and when we stop to think of the enormous speed at which at these bodies travel through space, we can only stand in awe and in amazement. The sun, which is some 333,000 times the size of the earth, rotates once in about 27 1/2 days. While the sun is rotating at this enormous rate of speed, the earth revolves around the sun once a year at the rate of some 68,000 miles per hour. While the earth is revolving around the sun at this awful rate of speed,

it is also rotating upon its axis once every 24 hours. Then while all this is going on, the moon is revolving around the earth every 27 days, 7 hours, 43 minutes and 1 1/2 seconds. Then, if to all this rapid and varies movements you add that of all the other planets, their satellites, the constellations and stars, you should be forced to admit that nothing short of a great omnipotent God could possibly keep order in the universe. Beloved, just think of the power it takes to keep all these innumerable bodies at their prescribed speed and on their prescribed course.

When I was a boy my father bought me a large, beautiful top that was powered by a strong spring. When I would wind this spring tight and then release the top, it would spin so rapidly and so smoothly that its movements could not be detected. But after a time the power generated by the spring would begin to give way. The top would begin to waver, then to wobble, and eventually it would fall over on the floor and roll about like mad. Now why did my top do that? Simply because it had no power within itself to spin, and the power generated from without by that spring had been used up. So my top was just as helpless until I wound that spring again, as an old log lying out in the forest.

Beloved, I tell you this afternoon that the sun, moon, this earth and all the other bodies in the universe are just as helpless within themselves to revolve and rotate as my top was to spin of its own accord. If you think for one moment that this earth has the power within itself to revolve and rotate at the enormous speed it does, beloved, it just shows that you are mentally unbalanced, or in other words, just about crazy.

Yes, I am aware that scientists tell us that all this terrific revolving and rotating is brought about by the attraction the different bodies in the universe have for each other. Now that theory is, for those who do not know any better, rather easy to believe. They tell us the earth's attraction for the moon is the thing that causes the moon to revolve around the earth. Now since when does the attraction of one object for another object cause this second object to begin revolving around the first object? When an apple turns loose from the apple tree it does not start circling the earth. It hastens down to the earth because of the pull of gravity. So if the earth exerted any gravitational pull upon the moon, it would tend to pull the moon down to the earth just as it does the apple. But the truth of the matter is, the gravitational pull of the earth does not even begin to reach to the moon. I saw a man, by means of TV, step out of his space ship something like 100 miles up from the earth sometime ago and there was absolutely no pull of gravity exerted upon him. Had his buddy in the space ship cut the rope that he held on to, and had he gone on and left this fellow outside the ship, his body would still be floating around up there somewhere, simply because there was no force of gravity up there to pull him down. And since there is not enough of gravitational pull at 100 miles up from the earth to pull a man's body down to earth, how could anyone really think the gravitation of the earth causes the moon which is some 238,000 miles away from the earth to revolve at such breathtaking speed?

When we stop to think of all the breathtaking movements of the innumerable bodies in the universe, some of them going in

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one direction while the others are going in another direction, and still others are going in two directions at the same time, we stand in awe at the great precision with which the universe operates. The earth, for instance, while it turns over (rotates) at the rate of about 1,000 miles per hour, it is also revolving around the sun at the same time at the rate of some 68,000 miles per hour. And while the earth is going in two directions at such enormous rate of speed, the moon just leisurely revolves around the earth with such regularity that astronomers can tell you the exact year, month, day, hour and minute of the eclipses of the sun and moon for many years to come. And not only can they tell you when these eclipses will occur, they can tell you in what part of the earth they will be visible. And they are able to do this because of the precise regularity of the movements of all these bodies.

When I stop to think of all the innumerable bodies in the universe, several of which are much larger than this earth; when I stop to think of all their rapid, but regular movements, I am made to think that a poor fellow who can really believe that the attraction all these bodies have for each other is the force that keeps them moving so rapidly and so regularly should go to a good brain specialist for a major tune-up job. And the poor fellow who can really and truly believe that all this just happened to be, that all this came about by blind chance called evolution, it is too late for him to go to a brain specialist. His brain is good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.

O, beloved, God is power. One of His wonderful names is **"power."** In Mark 14:62 Jesus said, **"Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power."** How I would like to see some of these benighted, God hating, and Bible-denying evolutionists trying to answer the questions we find in Job 38:4-6. There God says, **"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the cornerstone thereof?"**

In the light of all this we are not surprised when Job says in 42:2, **"I know that thou canst do every thing,"** nor when God says **"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure"** (Is. 46:10).

Beloved, if I were to say that there is just one person here today, or if I should say there has ever been just one person throughout the centuries of time that God wanted to save but could not do so, I would be accusing Him of being a liar, and I do not believe He would like it. He says, **"I will do all my pleasure."** He says, **"The Son quickeneth whom He will"** (John 5:21), and Job says, **"I know that thou canst do every thing."** O, that Baptist preachers of our day could know as Job knew 3,500 years ago. Nebuchadnezzar learned some things about God more than 2,500 years ago. We hear him saying in Daniel 4:35, **"He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"** It seems to me that it would be good for a lot of these Baptists, if they were turned out

to eat grass with the cows, and to sleep under the dew of heaven, and to have their finger nails and toe nails grow out like bird's claws until they learned something about our wonderful God. But it may be that He does not want them to know about His mighty power---just yet.

Yes, Paul says in Ephesians 1:5, **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."** He does all this just because He wants to do it. And He can do anything and everything He wants to do, simply because He is our great, omnipotent God.



The Short Pews



Brief
Articles
by Curtis
Pugh

THE LORD'S EIGHTY TWO MEN

Probably everyone knows that the Lord Jesus called and ordained twelve men as His apostles. Mark 3:14-15 says, **"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils."** They were ordained (set apart or separated) for the first purpose of being with Him. He taught them by word and by example. They were learners, or disciples. In the common Romanian Bible, the translator used the word for "apprentice." John 6:70 records that, **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"** So then, the Lord

knew full well that one whom He had chosen was a lost man and would betray Him. Nevertheless, the Lord had twelve disciples who were with Him and to whom He gave power to work miracles.

Luke 10:1 tells us, **"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come."** He gave them power to work miracles as well. When they returned from one such mission trip they were rejoicing over the power they had enjoyed. The Lord Jesus said to them, **"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven"** (Luke 10:20). So, the Lord had a total of eighty two "ordained" or "appointed" disciples whom He empowered to work miracles.

These last (the seventy) were sent out as kind of "mini-forerunners" although they are not called that – the distinction of forerunner being given to John the Baptist. The thing we need to see is that all that the Lord did was open and well known. His visits to various places were advertised ahead of His arrival. When Paul appeared before Festus and Agrippa he spoke of Christ and His sufferings and said, **"For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner"** (Acts 26:26). If this thing was not done in a corner, it was done out in the open. We may safely conclude that from the least to the greatest, poor and rich, country folk and city dwellers, common people and nobility – all in Israel knew of the Lord Jesus

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Christ and His forerunner, John the Baptist as well. They all knew about baptism, too, for while John himself baptized, the Lord Jesus did through His disciples.

Besides these eighty two men, there were certain women which followed the Lord and His twelve disciples. When the Lord was hanging on the tree were are told, **“There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem,”** (Mark 15:40-41). So besides the eighty two men the Lord had “many” women who followed Him. Luke, in 8:3 of his gospel mentions others, evidently wealthy women, **“...Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.”** In addition to these, there were most certainly others, three of whom were Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha who lived very near to Jerusalem.

What is the point of all this information? Several things can be gathered from these facts. Subtracting Judas from the twelve, we can identify eighty one men who were probably among the one hundred and twenty who were gathered in Jerusalem when the church there had its first business meeting in Acts chapter one. Since the qualification for Judas’ replacement had to be a man that had **“...accompanied 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...,” (Acts 1:21-22) we will not be far wrong if we conclude that **“Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias”** were probably among the seventy ordained by the Lord Himself (Acts 1:23).

This also affords insight as to just who was scattered from the Jerusalem congregation. In Acts 8:1 we read: **“And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”** There is evidence that the “all” in this instance does not mean all without exception, but rather, all without distinction. That is, all sorts of people who were members of the Jerusalem congregation were scattered – except the apostles! Loose Baptists and others try to say that this “all” requires us to believe that men without ordination preached, baptized and organized churches in various places since the twelve remained in Jerusalem. But if the sixty nine men (seventy minus Matthias who replaced Judas and was numbered with the apostles) were scattered abroad, there were plenty of men among those who were scattered - men trained and ordained by the Lord Jesus Himself.

The evidence that not all “ordinary” believers were included in the “all” that were scattered is seen in the verse that follows the last quote. Acts 8:2 says, **“And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.”** If all the Jerusalem church (all without exception) except the apostles were scattered, who were

the “devout men” who carried Stephen’s body to be buried? There must have been some men left in the Jerusalem church! Besides this there was a man named Philip who, it seems was left in Jerusalem.

And what shall we do with Philip? He “went down” which always means leaving Jerusalem which was higher in elevation. In Acts 8:5-7 it is written: **“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.”** We do not discount the previous ministry of the Lord Jesus in that place when He dealt with the woman at the well and others in John chapter four. But does this account of Philip’s ministry not sound exactly like the ministry given to the seventy by the Lord Himself? They were given power to heal and Philip had that power. And if this is the case, then Philip was a Christ-ordained man who was also a member of the Lord’s church in Jerusalem.

In Acts chapter six, when deacons (servants) were needed in the Jerusalem church, we read that the twelve said, **“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business”** (Acts 6:3). The Jerusalem church had enjoyed great growth with an influx of new people – new members. Who among them would be well known as honest men and who among them would be known to be full of

both the Holy Ghost and wisdom more than those sixty nine men who had been ordained by the Lord? Many of these may have by this time returned to Jerusalem – indeed some of them may never have left that city. We think it likely that of the seven deacons most, or perhaps all of them, may have been of this number of men ordained by the Lord.

Later in Acts chapter eight Philip was sent down to meet the Ethiopian eunuch and to baptize him. These facts may answer the questions and objections of some. We think Philip met the qualifications required to administer valid baptism. We have no reason to think otherwise! We think he was probably numbered among the seventy of the Lord’s ordained and specially empowered disciples. It is a true statement that of all the people in the New Testament that baptized with a valid baptism about whom we know, each one was (1) a man, (2) a baptized man, (3) an ordained man, (4) and in good standing with a previously existing church. Those are the four requirements for a man to serve as an administrator of valid baptism. We understand, of course, that the congregation has the authority in baptism, but the actual baptism is done by one called by the Spirit and separated for the work of the ministry by the man’s church. This is the pattern set for us in Acts 13:1-4 and nowhere abrogated in Scripture.

These are all conclusions in harmony with what we know of the Scriptures, the method of the Lord Jesus in His work, and the ways by which the Spirit works in the Lord’s congregations. We know of no valid objections to these things. Let us rejoice that the Lord works – and that He works

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through His servants – unworthy though they be.

Does Jesus Really Save?

The slogan “Jesus Saves” is often seen and heard. But does He really? Is He just a potential Savior standing idly by waiting on sinners to save themselves or does He really save? Did He really accomplish anything by His death? Did His blood really pay for anybody’s sins? Did Christ do all that is necessary to secure salvation to those for whom He died?

The angel of the Lord appeared unto Mary’s husband and said: **“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins”** (Matt. 1:20-21). The name Jesus means Savior. So what the angel said was this: call His name Savior **“for he shall save his people from their sins.”**

Notice the angel did not say that Jesus would make salvation possible to everybody. He did not say that Jesus would try to save His people from their sins. He did not say that Jesus would make it possible for His people to save themselves from their sins. He did not say that Jesus would save His people from their sins if they would let Him. In fact, no condition or limitation of any kind whatsoever was put upon what Jesus would accomplish. Honesty demands that we admit this. If this truth ever really reaches your heart, the result will be joy, assurance and the giving of glory to God for **“his unspeakable gift”** (II Cor. 9:15). Unless the angel of

the Lord lied, or was mistaken, Jesus saves His people – all His people – from their sins. He does nothing less than that. He actually saves sinners!

In this great truth – the truth that Jesus really saves all His people – is made clear by the Lord Jesus in John 6:37-40 where He said, **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”** You may say that Jesus was wrong or that He was a liar if you wish. But Jesus said it is God’s will that not even one of all those people given to Him by the Father shall be lost. They will be saved and their bodies raised up when the last day of this present age comes. Have you come to Christ?

SMELLY CHRISTIANS

There is an interesting contrast regarding the reaction of people to those who are genuine children of God. It has to do with the “savour,” or smell, of those who are born again. Proof: **“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life...”** (II Cor. 2:15-16). Genuine Christians (not hypocrites or false professors) have a smell. Unto God this smell is a sweet

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Baptist Church and Pastor Andy Proctor of Rural Hall, NC is offering Bible Studies, weekday services or Sunday Late Afternoon or Evening Services, or open air services to any who receive this paper that are within an approximate 100 mile radius of the Winston-Salem, NC area.

This is an outreach effort to help churches, missions, families without pastors, or without a sound church nearby, or other outreach / evangelistic needs. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Pastor Proctor on his cell phone at (352) 895-1437.

A new mission work has begun. The Providence Baptist Church located at 1115 Jones Mill Road, Cartersville, GA 30120, is an outreach of the Tibet Baptist Church of Ludowici, GA. Service times are Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., Morning Worship at 10:45 a.m., and Evening Worship at 5:00 p.m.

For more information please contact Bro. Bruce Allen (502) 468-6563, Email: providencebc30120@gmail.com or on Facebook under Providence Baptist.

The Windsor Baptist Church of Windsor, IL is seeking a qualified candidate for pastor. They are small in number but rich in truth. Candidate should meet the qualification in I Timothy 3. For more information please contact Brother John Gregory at (217) 728-9966 or Email windsorbaptist.grace@gmail.com.

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street,

Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

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

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church’s website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com for more information.

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS is seeking a pastor. Any interested brother may call at (662) 282-7794 or Email: bbchurch@nexband.com for a pastoral questionnaire.

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. We also welcome any upcoming meeting or conference announcements.

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one. We know this because Paul wrote **“we are unto God a sweet savour [smell] of Christ.”**

Humanity is divided into two groups. Paul wrote of **“them that are saved”** and **“them that perish.”** These are the two groups: saved people and perishing ones. These two groups react differently to the smell given off by those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. Remember the Holy Spirit of God dwells permanently in those who are born again. We know this because the Bible says, **“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”** (Rom. 8:8-9). Those who never experience the indwelling Spirit are among **“them that perish.”** They are **“none of his.”** It is this Holy Spirit within the true believer that causes him or her to give off an odor. Such people are different. They live different lives from those around them. They follow holiness. They persevere in righteousness. God’s Word says, **“The righteous also shall hold on his way...”** (Job 17:9). This is not because of what the believer is in and of himself, but rather because the Spirit of God is operative in him from his new birth forward.

So to **“them that perish”** genuine Christians smell like death. Not only do they smell like death, they smell like **“death unto death.”** That means that the child of God is a death-conveying odor leading to the death of **“them that perish.”** They want nothing to do with genuine Christianity although they may love their

religion. The idea of salvation by grace alone is not reasonable to them. They think they are saved because of their works and trust in what they have done: praying, ‘speaking in tongues,’ having been baptized, ‘going forward,’ etc.

In contrast to **“them that perish”** are **“them that are saved.”** To them genuine children of God smell like life. The children of God are a life-conveying odor leading to life of **“them that are saved.”**

The all important question is this: what do genuine Christians smell like to you? Children of God do indeed give off an odor. Is it pleasant and inviting, or do you find the true children of God offensive by the odor they give off? Will you live or will you perish?

SCIENCE DARWIN AND THE BIBLE

In such a brief article as this it is impossible to deal with all the issues between so-called science and the Bible. However we will try to point out a few important things. First of all let us define science. A standard dictionary definition of science is this: “knowledge about or study of the natural world based on facts learned through experiments and

observation.” Bible believers have no quarrel with science as thus defined. It is only when “scientists” leave off being scientific and promote their theories and philosophic ideas as fact that their errors are objectionable to Bible believing folk. As long as scientists stick to knowledge “based on facts learned through experiments and observation” - true science - Bible believers do not disagree.

Charles Darwin is acknowledged as the father of evolutionary science (so called). His book, originally titled *“On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life”* later had its offensive title changed. Darwin’s first title seems to expose him as a racist. What is even more revealing is this: Darwin often wrote in the subjunctive mood. Now most of us have forgotten our high school English, but what that means is that Darwin often made statements such as “Let us assume,” and “We may well suppose.” How often did Darwin make such statements in his book? Some 800 times Darwin makes such statements! How can such statements be scientific? They cannot! Assumptions and

suppositions have nothing to do with “knowledge about or study of the natural world based on facts learned through experiments and observation.” Experiments do not prove evolution. And no evolution has been observed. Darwin’s theory is mere philosophy.

Darwin’s theory and all modern adaptations of it are contrary to the Bible. Both logic and the Bible teach that a design requires an intelligent designer. From the tiniest of computer components to the largest man made things, designs are necessary as are designers. The Bible teaches that **“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”** (Gen. 1:1). That such a well designed universe functioning according to established natural laws could just happen is unreasonable. The problem is this: men do not want God to exist. If there is a God then men must someday give an account of their actions to Him. And so it is that men are motivated by their wicked rebellious hearts. So they deny the existence of God. That is what the Bible says: **“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”** (Ps. 53:1). It is not man’s head (intelligence) that motivates him to say there is no God. It is his heart! His emotions and will militate against the existence of God. And so man, motivated from within, leaves true science and veers off into philosophy and theories in an attempt to salve his conscience and ease his uneasy mind regarding his accountability to the God who created all things. True science and the Bible stand together. It is the theories of science falsely so-called that demonstrate the sinful and deceptive hearts of fallen human beings.



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