

The Berea Baptist Banner

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Mantachie, Mississippi, February 5, 2003

Whole Number 287

Why Some People Come to Church

By Jeff Short

(in transition)

"Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to



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pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them." (Ezek 33:30-33)

In the book of Genesis, the fourth chapter and twenty-sixth verse, we have these words, "Then began

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An Old Disciple

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941 - 2002)

"There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge" (Acts 21:16).

We know nothing of Mnason save



Milburn Cockrell

what can be gleaned from this single verse of Scripture. Mnason is a Greek name. This suggests that he was a Hellenist like Paul, a Jew born on Gentile soil and who spoke the Greek tongue. He had been born at Cyprus, the native island of Barnabas (Acts 4:36), who may have been a friend of his. For reasons unknown to us, he has moved to Jerusalem and is well known to the disciples at Caesarea. These disciples introduced Paul to this old disciple.

The expression, "an old disciple," has been given various interpretations. Some suppose that he was converted by Paul and Barnabas on their visit to Cyprus (Acts 13:4). This is an improbable supposition, for he is here represented as unacquainted with Paul. Also the visit

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Berea Calls New Pastor

By Christopher Cockrell

Mantachie, Mississippi

On January 5th, 2003 the Berea Baptist Church extended a call to Brother Jeff Short to be pastor of the Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, Mississippi. Brother Short accepted the call and is in the process of moving here to Mantachie. I, and the members of our church, would like to thank all of those who have been in prayer with us and give thanks to God for His gracious mercy during this trying time.

First, I will give you a little information about Brother Short so

that you, our readers, will be better acquainted with him. Brother Jeff is twenty-eight years old and for the past two years has been pastor of the Indore Baptist Church in Indore, West Virginia. He was baptized and ordained by the Heritage Landmark Baptist Church of Given, West Virginia. He has a wife, Stacy, and two children, Levi and Cassia. Brother Jeff has a desire to continue the works that my father started and enjoys much time in the study of God's

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100 World-Known Witnesses to the Second Coming of Our Lord

Part 4

Dr. F. B. Meyer, the popular Minister of Christ Church, London, world-known Teacher and Author.

"The Greek word translated *Coming*--'the Coming of the Lord'--is, literally, *the Presence*. It is a very beautiful word! Of course He is always present, but a time is coming when His Presence shall be manifested in great power and glory. 'Every eye shall see Him and they which pierced Him.' There will then be an open vision of the Eternal. And 'when Christ, Who is our life shall be manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory.' 'The earnest expectation of the

creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.' Already the veil, which has been cast by sin over the efface of all creatures, is being thinned. The spiritual is becoming more apparent. The light behind the curtain is becoming more brilliant. *It cannot be long before, to those who love, His manifested glory will be revealed.*"

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, the distinguished Bible Expositor, Author of many Biblical Works.

"To me the Second Coming is the perpetual light on the path which makes the present bearable. I never lay my head on the pillow without

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The Pulpit, The Press and The Government

By J. B. Hawthorne

(1837 - 1910)

(Delivered before the Georgia Legislature)

"Let no man despise thee" (Titus 2:15).

In these words, addressed to a young minister, Paul asserts a moral obligation which is binding upon the whole world. "Let no man despise thee." By that he means that the true minister of Jesus Christ should be respected and supported in his sacred vocation.

The true ministry is sent of God. In that great intercessory prayer with which our Lord closed His ministry, He said: "As Thou hast sent Me. . . so have I also sent them into the



J. B. Hawthorne

world." He said to His disciples: "I send you out." "Go ye therefore." Paul says: "How shall they preach except they be sent?" "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ." "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

Every true minister is an accredited

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"THOU HAST GIVEN A BANNER TO THEM THAT FEAR THEE, THAT IT MAY BE DISPLAYED BECAUSE OF THE TRUTH" (PSALMS 60:4).

The Berea Baptist Banner

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Berea Calls Pastor

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Word. He has a love for writing and we feel that God can greatly use him here to help further the works of the church.

Second, I would like to quote from the letter my father wrote for the man that would follow him. "Please be patient with the man who may follow me. It took me many years to get to where I am ..." Brother Short is coming into a very busy and laborious work. He will need time to adjust and become familiar with all the jobs and the people associated with it. Many who support the works here will not know Brother Jeff, but I ask that you give him time to get moved and a period of learning before making any judgments. I am sure he will make mistakes as we are all imperfect, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Third, I will be remaining as temporary editor of the *Banner*. This was thought to be best at present, to give Brother Jeff time to adjust and not to overload our new pastor with



Jeff, Stacy, Levi and Cassia

too many jobs at once. I will be relying on him to help select and review articles for publication, as well as make suggestion on other items. There is much work that goes into each issue of the *Banner*. It requires a lot of work and many late hours to bring each issue to completion.

Fourth, it has been quite hard on me trying to keep things going. I now have a better understanding of the many things that my father was doing and have a better respect for all that he was able to accomplish in a month's time. Before my father's death, he had expressed many concerns over some of the problems facing the mission works here. Now I have some of those same concerns. I pray that the Lord will help guide and direct me and others as to the decisions that will have to be made in the future months ahead.

Great confidence has been placed in those of us here and we will not knowingly do anything to be unworthy of that trust. Our records have, and always will be open to any supporter without any advance notice.

Once again brethren, I ask that you be in prayer for all here, the works, and our new pastor. This is a time of great transition and it will take much work, patience, prayer, and our Lord to make everything continue.

An Old Disciple

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of Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus had been only fifteen years earlier, scarcely long enough to constitute Mnason "an old disciple." Others say he was converted on the Day of

Pentecost when the church was baptized in the element of the Holy Spirit. This could be so, but I doubt it. It is best to make him either one of the seventy missionaries chosen by Christ (Luke 10:1-16), or a personal follower of Christ. It would seem to me that in order for him to be an old disciple he would have had to be one of the early disciples of Christ, a disciple from the beginning, one of the original group of believers at the beginning of the Christian Era. He had long been a Christian and is now old and full of years.

HE HAD PERSEVERED IN THE FAITH

Mnason was a relic of the original disciples, a survivor of the primitive band, one of the rapidly diminishing persons who had seen Christ in the flesh and been drawn to Him by His own words. He is now privileged to meet and converse with some of the second generation of the church. Mnason had held fast to his early faith and to the Christ he had known from the beginning. He had seen much happen since he first became a disciple—Calvary, Christ's resurrection, Pentecost, and the beginning of world missions. His body had passed from youth to old age. Most of his friends were gone. James, John, and Peter remained. His feelings have changed, but not his faith in Christ. He realized that one generation comes and goes (Eccl. 1:4), but that Christ abides for ever.

Perseverance is found only in the regenerate. Superficial professors fall by the wayside; they do not endure to the end. There must be an inward change in the soul of a man, if he is to continue in his profession of faith. A house built on loose earth will not stand the storm of time long. Even so, if the principle of grace is not firmly established in the soul, one's service to Christ will not be firm and constant. Mnason was a man who had been seasoned by grace. His being "an old disciple" proved he was truly a righteous man. In Job 17:9 it is written: "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." Mnason was no stony-ground hearer (Matt. 13:20-21). Tribulation and persecution because of the Word had not caused him to be offended, for his heart was deeply rooted in the grace of God.

This old gentleman had seen many be persecuted and put to death for their faith, and he had resolved to be faithful unto death. He remembered the words of Christ: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). Perhaps he also remembered hearing

James declare: "We count them happy which endure" (James 5:11). During his many years as a disciple he had endured chastisement for his sins even from His Lord. But this had only made him to be in subjection to the Father of spirits and to be made a partaker of His holiness (Heb. 12:5-13). Mnason knew only hypocrites fail to endure the tears, turmoils, trials, and tribulations of the Christian life (I John 2:19).

This dear old disciple had made all his days as one. His love, his hopes, his treasures, his aims, and his joys, had all centered on Christ. He lived to abide in Christ and, in the main, throughout his life he had been in fellowship with Christ. No doubt Mnason had learned much more about Christ as the years had passed. Surely he had grown much in the grace and knowledge of Christ his Lord. He had not grown away from Jesus; he had grown up in Him. This old disciple had not left behind his first convictions of the Savior. Through much experience he had verified his faith and deepened and perfected his convictions of things. His faith had grown and brightened because his was the path of the just (Prov. 4:18). Health is gone and time is crumbling away, yet he holds firmly to the Lord he loved and served all his days.

What a lesson to all of us this old disciple is! Whether you be near the starting point, or near the finish line of your Christian course, don't cast away your confidence. The Book of Hebrews often stresses the need of endurance in the Christian life. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. 10:35). "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6). "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14). "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Heb. 6:11). Like Mnason, let us "continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23). The example of Mnason exhorts us all that with purpose of heart we should cleave unto the Lord.

HE HAD LEARNED TO SHOW HOSPITALITY

This old disciple received Paul and his companions into his home in Jerusalem. Without a doubt, he heard of the trouble that Paul was likely to

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An Old Disciple

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come into, which might endanger his own life and household. Nevertheless, he welcomed these missionaries into his home, regardless of the consequence. Here was not only a man **“given to hospitality”** (Rom. 12:13), but also a man who would endanger his own life in order to show kindness to God’s ministers. He gladly received the missionary team that he might be a fellow-helper of the truth they taught. Perhaps he remembered the words of His Lord: **“He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward”** (Matt. 10:41).

Here was a man who felt it was an honor to be able to have missionaries to visit in his home. He was not mad because they dropped by to see him. He was not silently praying that they might depart at a very early date to go some other place. The rite of hospitality was shown in a distinguished manner by this old disciple to God’s men. The example of this old brother should cause us to be **“given to hospitality”** (I Tim. 3:2) and to **“use hospitality one to another without grudging.”**

HE WAS NOT A NEW LIGHTER

This man had continued in the faith of Christ. No false teacher had been able to lead him astray; his faith had not been shipwrecked by some new theory. While he had obtained much more light on old truths as the years went by, he was no new lighter. No one had deceived him and caused him to embrace another gospel. He was not tossed to and fro of every wind of doctrine. There were many false apostles in the land in his day, but none of them had moved him one inch from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. In his latter days he had not succumbed to any new-fangled ways. He was acquainted with the old paths and was too old to change; yea, he had no desire to change.

This wishy-washy generation could learn a great lesson here! It is the characteristic of this age that both pastor and people seem to be going after some new doctrine. Our generation is disposed to rend apart what ought never to be separated. There is little faithfulness to the truth. Anything goes if money can be had by believing it and if it makes it possible to get large numbers into the church. God help us! The man who welcomes new light holds to no settled

truths and has no root of conviction. He is like a leaf in the wind, a lost traveler without a roadmap, a ship without a rudder. May the Lord give us some old men who have not forsaken the old paths and the good old way. May He raise up some young men who will live to be old men and who will hold a firm grip on the old truths!

I have been in the ministry for forty-five years. At the beginning of my ministry I believed in sovereign grace. As the years have passed, my knowledge has increased in this area a hundredfold, and I trust it shall increase more. But my studies have never made me an Arminian! All of my ministerial life I have believed in the local church to the exclusion of the universal, invisible church. Having heard and read much to the contrary in forty-five years, and having seen many desert this worthy fortress, I still believe in church truth. I still don’t believe in the spooky church. I believe in a local body of baptized believers! Instead of obtaining new light on the subject I have become more and more convinced of a Baptist bride. Throughout my ministry I have believed in the pretrib, premillennial coming of Christ. Having heard much to the contrary, seeing many go from premillennialism to amillennialism, I still remain pre all the way. I started out over forty-five years ago a Missionary Baptist Preacher, and I am still one.

On the doctrine of sovereign grace, on church truth, on premillennialism, and the need of missions, I have learned many things over the years. I have obtained much more light than I originally had at the beginning of my ministry, but I have obtained no “new light” in the sense that I have repudiated my former positions. I am not now an Arminian. I am no universal, invisible church man. I am no amillennialist. I am no Hardshell Baptist. I can not speak for others. I know not what course of action they may choose to take. But I can speak for myself. I have no desire to be a new lighter! I seek only to live and die **“an old disciple,”** a Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Premillennial, Missionary Baptist!

I will gladly give up error for truth, if one can demonstrate to me that what I hold is error. But no new book or silver-tongued preacher will move me from the truth as it is in Christ. To give up the old paths of Divine truth for the new paths of error is not spiritual growth; it is to become a heretic and a traitor to the truth. Please spare me the new light teaching. I care not for it. I prefer the good old way. I prefer to be a defender of the

faith, not a denier of it.

NOTHING BUT A DISCIPLE

As I look at the obscure life of Mnason, I see another precious truth. The stress in my text is not so much on his being an old man as it is upon his being an old disciple. We are not told in the text of the other great things that he did, if there were any more than what is in my text. He not may have been a teacher or a preacher. He had no eloquence or genius. He had performed no heroic deed. No saintly thing is recorded of him in the Bible. We know only that he loved and followed Christ. Is that not all we need recorded? Is it not enough to know that he served the Lord in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life? The world will for ever remember him with one word attached to his name—a disciple.

This old world will in general remember very little of us when we are gone. The histories of men my not even mention our names. The world of tomorrow may never know that we existed. We may only for a time be remembered in some narrow circle of loving friends and family. But what difference does it make? If our names are in the Lamb’s book of life, that is all that is important. If we are owned by Christ before the Father in Heaven, that is all that really counts. Let our epitaph read merely that we were **“an old disciple.”** A hero? a millionaire? a great man? No! **“An old disciple.”** That says all that needs to be said. May it be your epitaph and mine!

WHAT A BLESSING!

How blessed was this old disciple! Like Caleb, he had fully followed the Lord. He had not disgraced his profession of faith by drunkenness like Noah. He had not ruined his testimony by disobedience like Moses. He had not shamed his Lord by the sin of adultery like David. He had not dishonored his God by cursing like Simon Peter. Few men end their life in this wonderful fashion. Mnason is the exception, not the general rule. But by God’s grace we all could be like him! We don’t have to be backsliders!

How tragic to see so many young people today ruin their testimony for Christ so early in life. Fornication, shot-gun weddings, and divorce are doing it. Drunkenness and drug are doing it. How sad to see a blot on the character of some who are just beginning in the Christian life, a blot that will follow them throughout their journey in this world to their grave and to the Judgment Seat of Christ. A bad start generally means a bad ending. Oh, be sure to remember your Creator in your youth. Give him the best years of your life.

Youth are not the only ones who disgrace their profession. It also happens to people in the middle years of life. How often after many years of a happy married life divorce comes to hurt the testimony for Christ of married Christians. The husband and wife get so involved in making ends meet that they turn their backs on the Bible, on prayer, on the church, and the cause of Christ in general. The desire for worldly things causes them to rob God of His tithes and offerings. They waver in their profession; they fall in the day of adversity because their strength is small. Failure in the middle of the race also means a bad finish.

But the greatest horror of all is to see **“an old disciple”** disgrace his testimony in his latter years. How often I have seen some bravely fight the good fight for many years, then drop their shield, and be pierced with one of the fiery darts of Satan. How tragic to see an old soldier finally defeated, a mighty man now become weak, a brave man now given to cowardliness! How it hurts the cause of Christ! How it discourages the young and those in middle life to see one forsake the faith of his youth in his latter years. Be strong in the Lord for the race is not finished, dear old disciples! **“The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness”** (Prov. 16:31).

LODGE WITH AN OLD DISCIPLE

What an encouragement Mnason must have been to Paul and his companions! How privileged they were to be in the presence of a tried and trusted old disciple. The multitude of years had taught him much wisdom. Job 32:7 says: **“Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.”** This old gentleman had the advantage of long observation of the course of events, and he was acquainted with the beginning of the Christian Dispensation. He may have been privileged to see and talk with Christ face to face.

An old disciple should speak words weighty and worthy of his years. “. . . **multitude of years SHOULD teach wisdom,**” but, in some cases, they do not. This is why we have hard the old slogan: “There is no fool like an old fool.” The older are to teach the younger (Tit. 2:4), but how can they teach if they are mere babes in Christ themselves? It is a terrible thing to be old and ignorant. Paul upbraided the Hebrews for this: **“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first**

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principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. . . But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:12, 14). It should be the case that the oldest would be the wisest and strongest spiritually. At the sunset of life the shadows of twilight should grow broader and deeper upon the understanding.

Our modern world pays little or no attention to the wisdom of old men. It has little respect and reverence for the writings, works, and worthiness of the distinguished sages of the past. It is a mark of true politeness and good breeding, of fine morals and true piety, when we see one showing respect to the aged. These old disciples have seen the results of certain courses of conduct. Age and experience have given them great advantage in judging things. They have arrived at a period of life when they can look at the reality of things and are uninfluenced by passion. In this generation there needs to be a return to the counsels of old men and old women and a veneration for their persons. There is scarcely any thing in which we have deteriorated from the simplicity of the early ages as in the lack of respect for the aged. Of Rehoboam it is written: **"But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him"** (I Kings 12:8).

CONCLUSION

1. Hospitality has a taint of immortality attached to it. The kindness of Mnason to Paul and his missionary companions has everlasting remembrance in the Book that abides for ever. This reminds us that the smallest service done for Christ is remembered and treasured by Him. Fame-seeking men have spent their lives to win a line in the world's chronicles, which are written on the shifting sands, and they have died heart-broken because they failed to attain their goal! But this small act of an old disciple has made history. It has made his name a possession for ever.

2. **"And seeketh thou great things for thyself? seek them not"** (Jer. 45:5). What folly it is to seek things for ourselves in this world where every thing is temporal and uncertain. Let us fill our little corners,

doing unnoticed work because the love of Christ constrains us. May we disregard the praise, or criticism of men, and seek the praise of Christ, whose praise is the only fame and whose remembrance is the highest reward.

3. There is a lesson in my text for the young. Become a disciple of Christ early in your life; otherwise, you shall never be **"an old disciple."** It is better to become a disciple late in life than not at all, but how awful to give

the Devil the best years of your life. The wise man said: **"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them"** (Eccl. 12:1). Christ, in whom is all the wisdom of God, declares: **"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me"** (Prov. 8:17).

JOHN MARK

By Alexander Maclaren

(1826 – 1910)

"Mark. . . is useful to me for ministering" (II Tim. 4:11 R.V.).

The outlines of Mark's life are familiar—his relationship to Barnabas, his desertion of his post in Paul's first journey, the years of eclipse that followed, his reappearance with Paul during the Roman imprisonment, his presence with Peter when in "Babylon," wherever that is, and Paul's last affectionate commendation of him, which reinstates him in the very office which he had formerly given up.

His story suggests the possibility of overcoming and obliterating the memory of early faults.

Mark was probably a Cypriote, as Barnabas was, and would therefore be quiet willing to go among known faces and on familiar ground, but when it was proposed to stretch further afield and to cross to the Asiatic mainland, his courage oozed out at his fingers' ends and he slunk back to his mother's comfortable house in Jerusalem. Paul's enthusiasm felt the ignominy of such dereliction, as the writer of the Acts emphatically shows, by the very order of his words, when he tells that the apostle *though not good to take with them* (on the second journey) *him that withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.* Paul's severity was kinder than Barnabas's indulgent proposal. The best way of waking Mark's conscience was to say, "No, he would not do the work before, and now he shall not do it." That is often God's way with us. It brings us to our senses as it brought Mark to his.

How long it took we do not know, but the cure was thorough. The man that had shrunk from possible dangers and disagreeables in Asia became brave enough to stand by Paul the prisoner, and not be *"ashamed of his chain."* So far had he won his way to Paul's renewed confidence, and made himself indispensable by service and sweetness that the lonely apostle, with the headsman's sword in prospect, feels that he would like to have him at

hand once more, and bids Timothy bring Mark with him, *"for he is useful to me for ministering"*; he can do a thousand things that a man like me cannot do for himself, and he does them "all for love and nothing for reward." So he wants Mark once more. Not only Paul's generosity, but Mark's patient effort had pasted a clean sheet over the page that told of his desertion, and he became useful for the very service which he had petulantly and with cowardice flung up.

We need set no limits to the possibilities of curing old and ingrained defects and faults. Hope and effort should be boundless. There is nothing that a Christian man may not reach in the way of victory over his worst self, if only he will be true to Jesus and use the renewing grace which He gives. We sometimes feel as if yesterday must set the tune for today, and as if we had been so often baffled that to try again was useless.

But the field on which Israel reared "Eben-ezer," the Stone of Help, to commemorate decisive victory, was the field on which Israel had before fought the same foes and been utterly fouted. We too may conquer on the ground where we have been beaten. A spar, broken and lashed together with spun yarn tightly drawn and well tarred, is stronger at the point of fracture than it was before. Christ with us will make anything possible for us, in the way of restoration, of cure of old faults, of ceasing to repeat former sins.

Mark's history may teach the greatness of small service. He was no apostle or evangelist. His business was much humbler than these had to do, being simply to attend to Paul's comfort, and to look after the thousand and one trifles which someone had to be burdened with, if the apostle was to do his great work. And he kept to his role, never wishing that the apostle would send him to Crete to ordain elders as he did Titus, or bid him stay behind at Ephesus to

deal with teachers of false doctrine, as he did Timothy. He did his entirely "secular" work as Paul's private attendant, amanuensis, factotum and sometimes perhaps valet, with no hankering after more conspicuous service.

All sorts of work which contribute to one end are really of one sort. When he had not Mark to look after him, the great apostle left cloaks behind him here and books and parchments there, and sorely needed some one to keep things together. So Mark helped to diffuse the Gospel as much as if he had been its preacher. The organ-blower who took credit for the grand performance because "I blew it," was not so far wrong. If it had not been for him at the bellows, the artist at the keyboard would have made little music. Jesus Christ said, **"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward."**

Mark's subsequent career may remind us that enlarged service rewards small service faithfully done. He ended as the writer of a gospel, and so became an evangelist in the noblest sense. No doubt his years of faithful service in the humbler capacity moved Peter to take him as his "interpreter" in preparing that oldest record of our Lord's life. "He that is faithful in that which is least!" will have the opportunity given in due time of being "faithful also in much." The tools do come to the hand that can wield them. The reward for work is more work.

It is so, as a rule, in this world, sometimes too much so, for, as they say is the case at the English bar, so it is sometimes in God's Church: "There is no medium between having nothing to do and being killed with work." But the law will be exemplified most blessedly when Christ shall say, "Well done! good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

So the story of the renegade who came back and toiled so well, bids us be of good cheer, because it is possible for us, as he has proved, to recover ourselves after any fault or failure. Christ is not less generous than Paul was, and even we may be declared by Him to be *"useful to Him for ministering."*

(*Leaves From the Tree of Life*, pp. 226-230, 1899 edition)

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A Wider Fellowship

By Curtis Pugh

Bocsa, Romania

I enjoy fellowship with other believers! I really do. I mean that I enjoy talking about the things of God specifically with Brothers and Sisters who are honest and sincere in their love for Christ and their belief that the Scriptures are the Word of God. I want my circle of fellowship and cooperation to be as wide as the Scriptures will allow.

But I do not enjoy being around people who seek to maintain ideas that are unscriptural. I believe that **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”** (2 Timothy 3:16). I believe that the Bible is God’s revelation of all that He wants man to know about spiritual matters. I believe it contains all we need to know in order to be saved and to serve God in His acceptable way.

I believe this is the same view of Scripture as was that of the apostles and other first century preachers. I believe this is the view of Scripture that the Bible itself teaches us to hold. I believe this is the historic, mainstream view of the Baptists. But this view implies limits. First of all we are limited by the Bible as to what we must believe. We are not free to pick and choose among the various doctrines as to what we are to believe. Neither are we free to pick and choose among the practical instructions we are given – those instructions which tell us how to live so as to please God.

From the most ancient of times, this view limits us also to the Bible alone – that is we who hold this view are not free to go beyond the Scriptures. Deuteronomy 4:2 says, **“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”** We must be, if we would be Biblical in our doctrine and living – we absolutely **MUST** be as wide as the Bible in our fellowship and cooperation, but not one whit wider!

Probably most of us are gregarious. We like for people to like us. We want the approval of our peers. I confess that I am distressed when people don’t like me for one reason or another. And yet there are sincere, honest, upright people who don’t like me because of what I believe. And so I feel the pressure to capitulate – to give in – and go along with the

crowd. I think most of us feel this pressure. For that reason there are some things I wish I could believe so as to have a wider fellowship. I do not mean a wider fellowship with the world, but with sincere people who profess to believe the same Bible I believe.

For instance, I wish I could believe in celebrating Christmas. Now hold on, this is not an article about Christmas. Please allow me to give some valid examples as to how I could have a wider fellowship. The Christmas season is filled with pagan practices, comes from a pagan origin, and cannot be the celebration of the birth of Christ as it claims for it is not observed anywhere near the date of His birth. Beyond that, we have no instruction or example in the Bible which would lead us to observe this day. But there is a lot of emotional exhilaration about Christmas. (Even allowing for the post-Christmas depression syndrome, the pre-Christmas “rush” includes an emotional rush as well as hectic rushing about.) But more than that, I am shut out of much of my extended family circle during this time of year. My more distant relatives are busy with the season and as I cannot have a part in it, I am an exile – especially when they know I believe the season and all its traditions to be sinful.

But IF I could go along with Christmas I would have a wider fellowship. Not only would the circle of fellowship be wider in my own family, it would be wider among professing Bible believers. Face the facts. Most people calling themselves Baptists observe all sorts of non-Biblical holidays. So, in one way, I wish I could celebrate Christmas. But my honest understanding of the Bible just will not allow me to participate in such a mixture of lies and supposed reverence for the Son of God. I am constrained to worship **“in spirit and in truth”** (John 4:23). Yes I could have a wider fellowship, but it would not be based on the Word of God.

Now if I could just be a Freemason, I would have a wider fellowship and perhaps a more powerful one as far as the affairs of this life are concerned. I know a little about the Masons. I have researched their organization and have been invited a few



Curtis Pugh

times to consider seeking membership in their vast organization. Now when I was a boy I liked getting dressed up in costumes. I would play cowboys, Indians, pirates, soldier, etc., etc. So the wearing of costumes and special clothing would not be a problem to me. I also liked clubs and secret organizations when I was a boy. And there are many people in the Masonic Lodge who profess to believe and follow the Bible. IF I could just be a Mason I would have a wider fellowship. But the same Bible that made me a Baptist will not allow me to be a Freemason. The same paganism that pervades all the traditions of men is found in the Masonic Lodge.

Again, if I could be a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, I would have a wider fellowship. My! How much wider it would be! And many who profess to believe the Bible are in this man-made monstrosity and seem to be quite content there. They have great crowds and seem assured that they are following the Bible. Now that some are returning to the doctrine of free and sovereign grace among the Convention churches – at least we are assured by them that they have returned – I could probably find considerable fellowship among them. But the same Bible which keeps me from other things keeps me from this man-made organization.

Well, the Bible does not exactly forbid joining up with such an organization of well-intentioned men. But it does forbid compromise. And it does not give men any instruction to form such a union nor to join such a thing nor does it give me any example of any New Testament preacher doing so. Having neither example nor precept, I cannot join the S.B.C. (or similar organization) and believe that I am following the Bible, even though I would have a wider fellowship if I was not so constrained by God’s Book.

And lately we have seen the coming out of some Brethren who say that the only true churches are self-constituted ones. IF I could believe this doctrine, I could have a much wider fellowship. I could fellowship with a much wider group of Baptists and perhaps even some Bible Churches and other interdenominationalists. I notice in one of the articles promoting this spontaneous combustion theory of church origin that the writer appeals to the idea of a wider fellowship.

But Brethren, when I read my Bible I see saved, baptized, ordained men being sent out of a pre-existing New Testament Church to do the work of evangelization, baptizing, and what today is called “church planting.” I never read anywhere in the Bible about a church that just “happened”

to come into existence nor have I ever read about a church being “self-constituted.” Just how do you go about “self-constituting” a church? Does the Bible tell us how to do it? I cannot find such a thing at all in the Bible so I don’t know how to do it.

To me, this “self-constituted church” idea is like infant baptism. In fact, if I could believe in self-constituted churches I could believe in infant baptism – and vice versa. The same principles of Bible interpretation that keep me from infant baptism also keep me from the self-constituted-church theory. I have neither precept nor example of either infant baptism OR self-constituted churches anywhere in the New Testament.

For whatever reasons – perhaps some seek a wider fellowship – some self-destructive Baptists continue to write and otherwise promote this self-constituted church doctrine. For a while I read the stuff put out by their most able men – and some among them are good men who profess to believe and follow the Bible. But I soon found out that they have not yet come up with even one Scriptural example of a New Testament Church self-constituting itself NOR have they any Biblical command to do so NOR have they come up with instructions in the Word of God as to how a church can be self-constituted and know that they are correctly constituted. They talk about something called “covenanting together,” but, alas, I can find nothing in the Bible about this either! So they don’t know how to do it and know that they have done it and I don’t know how to do it and know that I have done it. No church that is self-constituted knows whether they did it right because they have not valid instructions as to how to do it. Sounds to me like they are playing with fire – and I, for one, don’t want to get burned!

So, even if my fellowship and cooperation must stay restricted, I aim to follow the Bible as I understand it. That means in the matter of church organization that a baptized, ordained man, being a member in good standing of a previously existing sound Church and sent out of (authorized by, if you please) such a Church is the Bible way of doing missionary work. Until these Brethren with the new light can furnish Scriptural precept or example for their loose ideas, I intend to continue as I have learned Christ. I do not require history, human reasoning, the opinions of some Baptist “Doctor,” or a long thesis: just furnish me with with a Biblical example of a church self-constituting itself or instructions telling us to do such a thing, or even instructions telling us

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how to do such a thing. All I ask for is Bible! And I don't think this request for Bible proof is unreasonable.

Such Biblical evidence has NOT been forthcoming nor do I foresee any such Biblical proof on the horizon. So, while I may wish for a wider fellowship and circle of cooperation, I do not expect to have it as long as I find myself restricted to strict Biblical doctrine and practice.

But the fellowship with Brethren of like minds is sweet. But sweeter yet is the fellowship with Christ as we walk in obedience to Him and His Book. I remember the words of one preacher who said, "Now we are not the only Church that believes these things, but if we were, we could handle it." There was once only one Church that believed and practiced the truth and while I may wish to enlarge the circle of Christ's Churches, I do not have that authority. I am satisfied that the number of Christ's Churches is larger than some of us may believe, but it is certainly smaller than many would have us believe.

And so, Beloved of the Lord, let us be content with HIS fellowship and the fellowship of kindred minds. Amen.

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men to call upon the name of the Lord." I believe what we have in this verse is the relation of the time that men began to assemble to corporately and publicly worship God. God is to be worshipped privately in the closet. God is to be worshipped openly in the home. God is also to be worshipped publicly in the assembly. Through the process of time, God gave greater revelation of Himself and with it more explicit instructions of how He should be worshipped. He did not begin in the beginning with worship in the church as Jesus Christ established it. Rather, He revealed Himself more and more until the full revelation came in Christ (Heb. 1:1-2). This was a main point in Stephen's sermon before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:2-53).

In the time of Nehemiah, we have the beginning of the preaching of God's Word, much like the preaching of Christ and the Apostles and the true preaching today. The people were gathered together and Ezra the scribe brought out the book of the law. Nehemiah 8:8 tells us, "**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the**

reading." We see here the public reading of God's Word and the expounding of what was read. This was preaching and teaching that took place in the assembly of the people. It was not mere oratory or exercise. It was for understanding. True preaching is always for the understanding of the people. It is not for the preacher to display his knowledge or eloquence. The pulpit is not a platform for a man to air his personal grievances or pet peeves. The preaching is to be of God's Word for the doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction of the hearers. In Ephesians we read that God has given the ministry of the Word "**For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ**" (Eph. 4:12). Preaching is for a purpose. It is not an end of itself. When Christ preached, He asked, "**Have ye understood all these things?**" (Matt. 13:51). It seems He was not satisfied to merely wax eloquent.

Now in the time of our text, a portion of Israel was carried off into captivity. They had no temple to attend. They had no tabernacle pitched among them. There were no synagogues at that time. The people would gather at the prophet's house for worship. There they would hear the Word of God preached. There they would receive instruction together. However, God had a complaint against them. He was unimpressed with their performance and spoke a sobering warning to them.

In examining this instance, I shall endeavor to show firstly that the mercy of God is apparent in the people's lives. I also hope secondly to uncover the bad manners of the people before God. Lastly, I wish to discover the awful result of their bad conduct. Let us turn to the Word and receive instruction.

I. Firstly, the mercy of God is readily apparent in the lives of the people. The mercy of God is that attribute by which God is long-suffering and forbears giving sinners immediately what they richly deserve. His temporal mercy is exercised upon all mankind "**seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things**" (Acts 17:25). Whether saved or lost, if you have life and breath today, it is a token of divine mercy. In fact, what time we have allotted to us on this earth is space that God gives for repentance according to His mercy. Have you experienced His goodness and yet rejected Him? "**Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that**

the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). Such mercy was manifest upon the children of Israel at this time.

God's mercy is apparent in that greater difficulties did not attend their trials. They were in Babylon in captivity. However, the yoke was not as heavy upon them as it was upon others. Their fathers were sorely put upon in the bondage of Egypt. Other generations could testify of famine, pestilence, and sword. These people were spared many of these sorer trials. They did enjoy some measure of liberty. They were not detained from their families. They were permitted religious exercise. The captivity was a chastisement from God, but it could have been much worse. Therefore, their yoke was not as heavy as some had in past similar experiences.

Mercy is exhibited in the fact that God rebuked them. Our proud rebellious hearts do not welcome rebuke. It is our nature to resist and struggle against reproof. The pride of man can admit of no errors. The Israelites had strayed from the commandments of God. They went whoring after idols. God sent chastisement in the form of captivity.

The rebuke of the Lord is really an act of mercy and the right understanding of it will generate thankfulness. David confesses that God's rebuke had not come to him without warrant. He says, "**Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.**" (Psa. 119:67). The hand of the Lord was not heavy upon him without reason. The children of Israel had solicited God's reproof by their rebellious ways. David also shows wisdom and a right understanding when he declares, "**It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.**" (Psa. 119:71). David graciously accepts the divine correction and is happy to be put right. For the child of God, chastening is a token of God's love. "**For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.**" (Heb. 12:6). For the

unsaved, a rebuke is a token of mercy and a guide into the path of righteousness. "**The rod and reproof give wisdom**" (Pro. 29:15). I thank God that in His mercy He showed me my sins. He not only showed me my sins, but He also showed me the Savior. His rebuke broke my selfish will and led me to Jesus Christ. Praise God for divine mercy shown to sinners!

The people were shown the mercy of God, seeing that they had a place to assemble for worship, fellowship, and instruction. It has not always been the case that God's people have had a place for public worship. Some have wandered in the earth destitute and afflicted. David had none with him to offer united prayer when he was hiding in the cave of Adullam. To have a place to worship freely, no matter how humble, is a blessing and a token of divine mercy. It does not have to be a large fancy building. The place could be a house, hut, cave, or under a tree. The blessing is in having a designated place to assemble with others and worship God. The Israelites had a designated place for worship. They assembled at Ezekiel's house. Even in captivity, far away from Jerusalem, they had a place.

Mercy is manifest by the fact that the people had a faithful ministry of the Word. A faithful ministry in a location is a blessing to that people. The Lord said of His people in His Word, "**And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.**" (Jer. 23:4). Man has many needs. He needs food, water, and shelter. Nevertheless, if he gain all these and lose his own soul, he has lost it all. Man's greatest need is for his soul to be fed with God's Word, "**the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**" (II Tim. 3:15). The Israelites had this sign of God's mercy because they had a faithful preacher in Ezekiel. He was the man of God ministering faithfully to the people.

Just as a faithful ministry in a location is a blessing, the lack of it is a curse. This lack can be in two ways. First, there may be no preaching of Christ whatsoever. The case is miserable where Christ is not named. Second, the lack of a faithful ministry may be in the existence of an unfaithful ministry, "**Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof**" (II Tim. 3:5). Often, the presence of a false ministry is worse than having no ministry at all. God said of unfaithful shepherds, "**My**

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people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting-place." (Jer. 50:6). The Lord denounced the religionists of His day that professed to be teachers of the people saying, "**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.**" (Matt. 23:15). He said the people's condition was worse for having attended their ministry. In reality they had "**shut up the kingdom of heaven against men**" (Matt. 23:13).

II. **Secondly, we witness the bad manners of the people before God.** The people were speaking "**by the walls and in the doors of the houses.**" They were out of earshot of the preacher. They felt safe in airing their superficial opinions and carnal criticisms. We notice that even though Ezekiel did not discover them, God knew exactly what was happening. He knew their speech and their thoughts in and out of the sight of Ezekiel. God is here relating the situation to Ezekiel.

God does not charge them with open and gross sins. At different times, the Israelites were guilty of open heinous sin before God. He would charge them with idolatry, immorality, drunkenness, and such like. However, in our text, He does not complain of such things. The people are not even charged with unfaithfulness, as far as attendance to public worship is concerned. They were not causing disruptions in the meetings. They were not sleeping during the preaching of God's Word. They were not even like one woman that was a church member, which I saw a few years ago. She came into the service carrying a manila folder. She sat down a couple of pews back from the front. I noticed her later, sitting there, balancing her checkbook during the service. I have seen many things, but that was a first. These people were not chargeable with any of these infractions.

They were equal to their peers in the externals of religion. "**They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words.**" They were present when they were supposed to be present. They did not attend the preaching only every now

and then when they had nothing else to do like some others. They listened to the preaching. They even seemed to enjoy the services and the messages. They would shake the preacher's hand and tell him how they enjoyed the sermon, "**with their mouth they shew much love.**" They could probably be overheard afterwards talking with others about what a great blessing the message was and singing the praises of the preacher.

However, later, when they were amongst their own element God reveals to Ezekiel, "**the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother.**" Oftentimes, someone will flatter the preacher after he has preached and the preacher knows that one is not being honest. The preacher has a good vantage point. He can see everyone in the congregation. He can tell if someone is really enjoying the message or not. It seems it was difficult to ascertain in the case of these people. They really seemed to enjoy the messages.

God charges the people with hypocrisy. They listened with interest and showed "**much love**" with their mouths. However, they were consistently "**talking against**" Ezekiel "**one to another, every one to his brother.**" This is the height of hypocrisy. They were putting on a show and a convincing one at that. Ezekiel was not aware of the situation until God informed him.

Their hypocrisy was evidenced by the fact that the preaching of the Word, they seemed to enjoy, produced no lasting affect upon their lives. They were like the thorny ground hearers of Matt. 13:22, "**He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.**" They were barren. They spoke very well of Ezekiel and his sermons, but their hearts were far removed. "**They hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.**" For all their outward shows, they were more concerned about their houses, gardens, clothes, businesses, money, families, etc. than they were about the Living Word. They would sit under the preaching with smiles on their faces while their minds were busy in the affairs of the world. They were not worshipping God. They were not growing spiritually.

No true man of God is satisfied to be congratulated by his congregation.

He will not be content to have their praises if he has not their hearts. The Word of God should ever be making a difference in our lives.

The people's performance was strictly for vainglory. They were well satisfied in hearing only. They enjoyed hearing the Word preached, but it remained abstract to them. They did not find in the Word how they might better their lives of service. They did not make a personal application of what they heard and were likely uncomfortable with the applications made by the preacher. Paul warned the Romans, "**For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.**" (Rom. 2:13). We are instructed in God's Word, "**But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.**" (James 1:22-25).

The people's enjoyment was more of an entertainment. God told Ezekiel this saying, "**And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.**" They were pleased with the preaching much like someone is pleased with a fine performance concert. The prophet had a "**pleasant voice.**" They appreciated his skill in crafting sermons and delivering them passionately. He was one that could "**play well on an instrument.**" Their fancies were delighted, but the consciences were not pricked. Their ears were tickled, but the hearts were not changed. They were no better for their faithful attendance to worship than if they had faithfully frequented the shows, something they likely did as well for all such people manifest an appetite for the superficial.

The people were also charged with disrespecting God's man. God informs Ezekiel, "**The children of thy people still are talking against thee.**" "**With their mouth they shew much love,**" but out of earshot of the prophet, they talk against him. The people were very free with their criticisms and carnal opinions. It is a fearful thing to lightly bring railing accusations against God's man. Often people will have some ideal preacher in their mind by which everyone else

rises or falls. They have no use for a preacher that does not copy their ideal. They have revered this fine old fellow, probably through no desire of his own, until they have come near to Romish practices. If this model preacher were the Lord Jesus Christ, I could almost understand such thinking. However, most frequently, the model is some beloved party leader and sometimes it will be an endeared old pastor.

The Lord has many different preachers with vastly different abilities. He has different fields of labor where they are needed. One preacher may excel where another would falter and the reverse would be true were the roles switched, even though both were earnest and godly men. This was a part of the situation Paul faced in the Corinthian church. They began to be divided, exalting one preacher above another and refusing those not cut from their preferred narrow cloth.

Let us recall the time the Lord fed the great multitude with the fishes and loaves. The people were seated orderly on the ground and the Lord gave the food to the disciples to distribute. Suppose some said, "I will only have John to feed me." Perhaps others said, "I will not suffer Peter to serve me. I will have only Andrew." Even others said, "I do not want any fish. I only want bread." On and on we could go. This is completely absurd and yet many are just this way with preachers today. It is absurd to refuse to be fed by God's man because his brogue, mannerisms, sermon construction, or the like do not sound like our favorite. Paul even said that some men preached "**Christ of contention, not sincerely**" (Phi. 1:16). Nevertheless, Paul rejoiced in that Christ was preached. Let us be careful of lightly setting aside God's preachers. If they be faithful and godly men "**who labour in the word and doctrine,**" (I Tim. 5:17) they should be esteemed "**very highly in love for their work's sake.**" (I Thess. 5:13).

III. **Thirdly, we see the consequences of the people's bad conduct.** Each of us should be certain that the Lord says of us, "**I know thy works.**" "**All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.**" (Heb. 4:13). God took note of these people's ways. Whomever they might have fooled, they did not fool God. He promises to reward them according to their deeds.

The veracity of God's Word is not affected by the dereliction of the people. God told Ezekiel, "**And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will**

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come.) His Word is sure. No matter how many mockers and gainsayers arise, the Bible is still true and outlives its fiercest opponents. Just as the Word is not shaken because some doubt, neither is true Christian religion vain because it has some hypocritical attendants. Though these people had not regarded the Word, God's Word shall come to pass in their midst. God promises, **"It will come."**

In the main, they did not appreciate what they had. We have already noted the divine favor that attended their way. Though blessed by God, they did not appreciate their situation. They were much like Ephraim of old. God complained of Ephraim, **"I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing."** (Hos. 8:12). They did not treasure the Word. Their interest was more like a literary connoisseur instead of a Berean student. They counted the Word as a common thing. They did not look there for their necessary food. **"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."** (Matt. 4:4). The promises, precepts, reproofs, and warnings had nothing to do with them.

Their case was similar to Esau. Esau did not appreciate his birthright, his inheritance. He had so little respect for it that he sold it for a mess of pottage. Esau's God was his belly. These people's **"heart goeth after their covetousness."** They were more interested in the worldly things than the things of God. They had no respect to blessing of God and sold it for their worldly enjoyments.

God promises to reward their conduct by removing their blessings. God said, **"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."** He says that they will be made to know that a prophet had been among them. They will lose the faithful ministry that was a blessing to them. God promises to take it away from them.

The Lord sent out His disciples to go and preach in the various cities. He gave them instructions concerning the cities that did not receive them. He told them, **"But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you:**

notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (Luke 10:10-11). Rejecting His word would be a testimony against that city. They would know that the kingdom had come nigh. The people in Ezekiel's day were going to suffer the loss. Their rejection of Ezekiel's ministry would be a testimony against them and they would know that a real prophet, a true man of God, had been among them. They would understand the value of the blessing until it was removed, and as a reward for their conduct, it would be removed.

In conclusion, we see that the goodness of God should have made the people thankful. They should have manifested their gratitude with humble service. Their hearts were hard and rebellious. Much like a spoiled child, they did not appreciate what they had and felt that they deserved a good deal more.

Why do you come to church? What we do when we come to church is not like anything else that we do. It is the place where God's honor resides. **"LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth."** (Psa. 26:8). It is a place where a special presence of Christ is manifested to His people. **"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."** (Matt. 18:20). It is a place where God is to be glorified. **"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."** (Eph. 3:21). Do you come to meet with and worship God? On the other hand, do you come to meet with your friends and be caught up on the latest happenings? Do you come to learn more of Christ to be conformed to Him? On the other hand, do you come to put on a show or appear respectable? We should come to meet with and worship God. We should come to learn more of Christ and to glorify Him through our service. If we come for any other reason, we come for vainglory. Usually our actions speak the loudest concerning our intentions. In most churches after the Word has been preached, immediately folks start talking about the weather, business, their garden, their plans for the upcoming week, the ballgame scores, etc. The Bread of Life has broken to us. The eternal Word of God has been proclaimed and all we can think about is the dinner waiting in the oven or what time we have to get up in the morning. May God help us to have a holy regard for His Word and a reverence for His house.

Lastly, we see that the people

suffered loss because of their unfaithfulness. What loss shall we sustain because of our unfaithfulness? What if God removed from us the blessings that we do not appreciate? May God give us grace to appreciate His divine mercies and that we may avail ourselves of the blessed ministry He has given to us.

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representative of his Divine Master. For his support and protection the Master has said, **"He that receiveth you receiveth Me."** I do not mean that the obligation is upon you to respect every man who claims to be a minister of Jesus Christ. It is your privilege to discriminate between the true and the false, the worthy and the unworthy. Since the days of Judas Iscariot, there have been in the Christian ministry wolves in sheep's clothing—s a n c t i m o n i o u s mountebanks, with a devil's purpose, but with an angel's face. Such it is a virtue to despise.

There are men who have gone into the ministry for a mere livelihood. They have no deep conviction of duty. They have no profound sense of responsibility. They have no burdens. They make no sacrifices. They are simply making a convenience of God's altars.

I do not say that the obligation is upon you to respect and honor such men as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. I believe it to be your duty to repudiate their claims, and to rebuke their sordid and irreverent spirit. But God has a ministry. Christ has His accredited ambassadors in the world. They are in the pulpits of every denomination of true Christians. **"By their fruits ye shall know them."** They are men whose lives adorn the doctrines they profess. They carry their credentials in their Christ-loving hearts, and exemplify them in their deeds of devotion to God and humanity. These are God's anointed; and let no man despise them.

Every true minister is a watchman, "a Heaven-appointed sentinel." The poet pencils his duty and his danger when he represents God as appearing to him and saying:

*"What of the night, what of the night,
what of the night?"*

*The myriad foe in close array,
come on to try their might,
A night assault,*

*and if thy trump mistake a single sound,
I'll have upon these battlements the
watchman on his round."*

He who stands in such a place and

faithfully performs the difficult duties of his sacred office has a right to the world's respect and homage. He who despises *him* despises the Master, but he who loves and honors him puts the diadem on the brow of Christ.

The function of the Christian minister is to preach the "Word." To do that, his preaching must compass and cover a vast field. The "Word" includes not only the revelations of God's love and mercy toward sinners—not only the plan of redemption—but God's laws for the regulation of human conduct—the everlasting distinctions which He makes between right and wrong. If he preaches "the Word," he must preach morality, because that constitutes a very large and essential element of the Word.

In Nehemiah's time the minister read the law in the hearing of the audience and gave the sense distinctly. The law was read and expounded to keep the consciences of the people alive, and that they might be made familiar with God's standard of rectitude. **"Preach the Word."** Well, "the Word" says: **"Them that sin rebuke before all."** "The Word" says: **"Comfort My people, but show Jerusalem her abominations."** "The Word" says: **"Put a difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean."** "The Word" that came out of Christ's own mouth says: **"Thou shalt not lie," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not commit adultery."** "The Word" says that, no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. "The Word" says: **"Woe unto him that putteth the bottle to his neighbor's mouth."** Christ's Sermon on the Mount is a part of "the Word," and the whole of that sermon is devoted to morality.

If you will look through the writings of the Apostles, you will find that about one-fifth of them is exposition of the plan of salvation, and the rest instruction as to the manner in which men should live.

My brethren, I would not hastily and harshly judge any man on God's footstool. I do not believe that I am disloyal to the law of love in calling your attention to the character of the men who oppose the preaching of morality from the pulpit.

There are a few so-called ministers who would make you believe that preaching against dishonesty, or drunkenness, or licentiousness, or lying, or ballot-box stuffing, is a desecration of the pulpit. As I have had to meet the opposition of such men—as I have been loaded with their anathemas—I have looked into their lives, to see if they were practically

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Outlines for Country Preachers by a Country Preacher

Sermon Outlines by Milburn Cockrell

PAUL'S LAST LETTER

II Tim. 4:6-18

There is always something special about the last words of any man. These are frequently a revelation of the inner character and life. It is so with this final message from the pen of our beloved apostle. His last words speak volumes of truth. They speak of—

I. PERFECT RESIGNATION (v. 6).

1. The Greek reads: "I am already being poured out."
 - (1) He anticipated a violent death. Perhaps his trial was about ready or may have already started.
 - (2) The shedding of his blood was to be an offering poured out like some costly wine upon the altar in a drink offering (Num. 15:5; Phil. 2:17).
 - (3) His death would be a sacrifice to God, for he would yield up his will to God's will.
 - (4) He had offered the Lord his life; now he offers Him his death.
2. Years before he had received Christ's offerings for his sins, then he offered himself as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).
3. His whole life had been sacrificed. Now he is ready to be offered as a martyr for the faith.
4. At one time he was in a strait about life and death (Phil. 1:23), but now he is ready to die.
5. "The time of my departure is at hand."
 - (1) Death is going away, a change of place or state.
 - (2) Paul had everything packed up and was ready to board the ship which was to take him to a better country.
 - (3) His life had been one long series of departures.
 - (4) Death is a release from earth and the passage to the heavenly land.

II. ASSURED SERVICE (v. 7).

1. Paul speaks as a soldier: "**I have fought a good fight.**"
 - (1) Like every Christian, he was a soldier, and he had fought against the world, the flesh, and the Devil.
 - (2) As a warrior, he had fought and conquered (I Tim. 6:12). Life is a battlefield, not a reclining experience.
 - (3) He had fought heresy and the corruptions of his nature.
2. Paul speaks as an athlete—"I have finished my course," likening life to a race.
 - (1) He had run well and long over a marked-out and well-defined track.
 - (2) The race was just about over, and the goal post was in sight (Acts 20:24).
3. Paul speaks as a Trustee or steward: "**I have kept the faith,**" likening life to a sacred trust. I have been laid to my trust.
 - (1) He had held to the true system of doctrines to the end. He had not denied the faith.
 - (2) Many preachers of today cannot say this.
 - (3) He was about to seal his testimony by a martyr's death.

III. JOYFUL HOPE (v. 8).

1. The Lord, who was his righteous Judge, had a crown laid up for him, although Nero, the unrighteous judge, had laid up for him a sword.
2. This crown was won in the cause of righteousness, and it would be conferred on him by Christ as a reward for his conflicts.
3. The crown was kept in a safe place until the Judgment Seat of Christ.
4. Such a righteous crown is for all who long, love, and look for His appearing.

IV. PAINFUL EXPERIENCE (vv. 10, 14, 16).

1. Demas had forsaken Paul and gone after the world (v. 10). He deserted Paul when the apostle needed him most.
2. Alexander, the coppersmith, had done Paul much wrong (v. 14).
 - (1) He may have been one of Paul's accusers before the imperial court.
 - (2) Paul left him to the judgment of God.

3. All his friends had forsaken him at his trial (v. 16). Like Christ, no one stood with him in his hour of need.

V. FORGIVING LOVE (v. 16).

1. Paul had obeyed the teachings of Christ (Matt. 5:44) and followed His example (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).
2. He overcame evil actions by good actions (Rom. 12:21).
3. He is saying, "May God forgive them as I do."

VI. DIVINE FAITHFULNESS (v. 17).

1. Paul's last testimony was of the faithfulness of God (Josh. 23:14).
2. Forsaken of all earthly friends, he was not alone (Matt. 10:18-20).
3. Man may forsake us; God never forsakes His people (Ps. 27:10; Isa. 43:1-2; Heb. 13:5; John 6:37).

VII. UNFAILING CONFIDENCE (v. 18).

1. He believed God would keep him from all evil. He would be kept from final and total apostasy.
2. He took great satisfaction in knowing he was sure of the kingdom of glory.
3. He knew God's grace would never fail him. He trusted in the Lord's faithfulness and power.
4. Those kept from evil shall reach the heavenly kingdom. Man needs assurance when he stares death in the face.

CONCLUSION.

1. Believers love His appearing, for this is the time of our rewards.
2. Grace will keep us all the way to Heaven.
3. Are you ready for your departure?

The Pulpit, Press

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better than the men whom they so bitterly denounce. I am happy to say that I have discovered the secret of their hostility to the discussion of Christian morals in the pulpit. It is due to a disgraceful immorality in their own conduct. I have gone to the bottom of a number of cases. In one, I found an incurable habit of lying. In another, secret drinking and drunkenness. In another, a refusal to pay honest debts. In still another, a crime too revolting to be even mentioned in this presence.

But, *out of the pulpit*, who are the people that reprobate ministers for preaching against the sins of the day? They are immoral church-members, who cannot listen to such preaching without feeling the pang of an evil conscience. They are men who are engaged in some business that fosters and spreads immorality. They are drunkards, and gamblers, and libertines, and swindlers, and political demagogues, who know that their security depends upon keeping the public conscience quiet concerning the things of which they are guilty.

Now, what consideration should we give to opposition which comes from such sources? None whatever. The man who can be silenced, or frightened from the path of duty by the howlings of such malcontents is unfit to stand between the living and the dead as a teacher and exemplar of God's truth.

If it be true that immorality, vice and crime imperial social order and the existence of free government, then every observant and thoughtful man of this land feels that we have cause for serious apprehension. There are some, I know, who are not troubled. To them all things wear the tint of the rose-light. They laugh at the apprehensions of their neighbors as nothing more than symptoms of dyspepsia, or incipient hypochondria. When the age—this glorious age—is mentioned, they go off in a ecstasy. Such is their volubility of praise, it is only when they are out of breath that you can edge in a word. They tell us that "the age is golden, perfectly auriferous in all its development, transcending all others in immediate advantage and in auguries of future good." We are pointed to the "kindling love of freedom, to the quickened onset of inquiry, to the stream of legislation, broadening as it flows, to the increase of hereditary mind, and to the setting further and further back of the old landmarks of improvement."

I would not undervalue these and other signs of encouragement. And yet, I see, as distinctly as I see the sun in the heavens, things which ought to alarm us. Much of our boasted liberty is nothing but the liberty of lust; much of our intellectual eminence is folly; much of our liberality is simply indifference. Crime does not diminish. The records of our offices of police and courts of justice are perfectly appalling. Intemperance,

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Was Adam saved? Eve? Why are they not listed in Heb. chapter 11 which begins with Abel? --- Mississippi



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of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19).
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time just studying those I do not have the time or wisdom to question His secrets. Therefore we are willing in our finite minds to leave such things to the wisdom and purpose of God.
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to give an offering which followed the type given by God. The offering of Abel still testifies to the sufficiency and worthiness of the offering of Christ Who gave Himself! I believe this is the reason Abel's name is the first one given in Hebrews 11.

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Adam is presented in the Scriptures as the federal head of the human race. When he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he died spiritually; and because he was our federal head, the human race died in him (I Cor. 15:22). Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, but very little more is said in the Scriptures about him or how he lived. He represents the fall of mankind and was not given as one of the elders of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven.

God preached the first gospel message by symbol when He shed the blood of an animal and made coats of skin to cloth Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21). Blood was shed in order to provide a covering. By His actions, it appears to me that God revealed to Adam that ". . . **without shedding of blood is no remission**" (Heb. 9:22). The seed of the woman that would bruise the head of Satan and provide salvation for lost man was first preached by God to Adam. God had covered their shame and given them the promise of a redeemer.

Adam and Eve were instructed by God as to how they were to worship Him. There is no record that Adam gave an offering unto the Lord, but we do find that their sons had a knowledge of how God was to be worshipped. They knew of God's promise that He would send a redeemer of the seed of the woman; and in order to worship Him, there must be a sacrifice. In Hebrews 11:4 we are told that it was by faith that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Faith can only come by hearing (Rom. 10:17). Abel offered a blood offering revealing his hope in the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.

I believe that Adam and Eve were saved and that they instructed their children on the only way that lost man may approach God. "**Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood**

In Genesis 3:20-24 we see the provision of God and the faith of Adam. God provided a sacrifice for Adam and Eve's sin. Adam's faith is demonstrated in his naming his wife Eve "liberally naming living." This signifies that Adam knew that there was future blessing rather than immediate death for he and Eve.

Eve's faith is shown in Genesis 4:1 when she named her first son, Cain "meaning she had received a promise for the future from God." For there to be a future for Eve it would have to mean that she had been forgiven her sin by God.

God clothed Adam and Eve's, their now known, nakedness, the result of their sin, by sacrificing an innocent animal in their stead. This was a type or picture of their coming Savior or Messiah that would literally pay for their sin as promised in Genesis 3:15. Later all Israel followed this practice as a sign of their faith in God's promise His provision for their sins. It is the same basis of faith in God's sacrifice that God clothes believing sinners in Christ's righteousness today.

Why Adam and Eve's names are not in Hebrews chapter eleven is the plan and purpose of God. I do not have the slightest idea why God did not place their names there except it pleased Him not to do so. I do not question or even wonder about the secret things God has kept to Himself (Deut. 29:29). I can not even grasp all that God has been pleased to give us in His Word and if I spent all my

I have not found a statement in God's Word which would lead me to say with certainty that Adam and Eve were saved after their fall into sin. Some teach that they were saved because God made unto them coats of skin, and clothed them (Gen. 3:21). However, we must ask the question, was this covering spiritual or only a physical clothing? It appears to me that the covering was given to hide their physical nakedness only. Adam's expulsion from Eden and the Cherubims and flaming sword preventing his return took place after he was covered with skins, not before.

I do not doubt for a second that their covering with skins is a picture of God providing a covering for the sins of His elect; resulting in their redemption and salvation. But we must remember that it is not the picture or type which saves, it is the One who was pictured or typified. In this provision Christ is clearly seen.

Abel's offering pictures the salvation God provides for His people. Cain's pictures man's attempt to gain salvation by human merit and so-called good works. God had respect unto Abel and his offering, but rejected Cain and his offering.

Adam and Eve did not make the first offering typifying Christ, it was Abel. God pictured the offering to Adam and Eve when he clothed them with skins, but Abel was the first man

There is no definite statement in Scripture clearly indicating that Adam and Eve were saved. However, I believe that God, in His grace drew them to Himself in the effectual call and justified them by clothing them with the righteousness of Christ. Even though Adam was estranged from God, it was God Who came to Adam (Gen. 3:8-10) and made him aware of his condition. Later in the chapter (3:21) we read that God Himself clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of animals. This is the first record of blood being shed in the Bible and I believe it is a picture of the sacrifice of Christ. The blood of innocent animals had to be shed in order for Adam and Eve to be clothed. Christ, the Lamb of God, was undefiled, innocent, and absolutely righteous. He had to die in our stead as a perfect sacrifice in order for us to be clothed with His righteousness throughout eternity.

To answer the second question concerning the omission of Adam and Eve from the hall of Faith in Hebrews 11, I offer the following opinion. The immutable law of sowing and reaping is at work. Because Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden, their names will forever be associated with sin and shame (Rom. 5:12; I Tim. 2:11-14). Adam, as the federal head of the human race, will always be remembered for his plunge into sin and depravity. Though I believe God forgave him of his sins, he reaped what he had sown. Just because someone is forgiven it does not make them exempt from the laws of sowing and reaping.

TOM ROSS



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

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Are believers right now adopted into God's family or are we waiting for the adoption? -- Mississippi



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This is an excellent question because many people entertain mistaken ideas concerning the doctrine of adoption. I believe there is a three fold answer to this question.

First, there is an eternal aspect to the doctrine of adoption. Before the world began, God in His sovereign grace made a determinate choice to adopt some of Adam's fallen race into His family. The doctrine of adoption is closely linked to God's election and predestination of certain individuals to be saved (Eph. 1:3-6). In the eternal Covenant of Grace, God drew up the adoption papers that legally united His elect positionally in Christ.

Second, in time, God brings His adopted sons and daughters into the realization that they were His by sovereign decree. Adoption is an eternal decree, whereas regeneration is the experience of spiritual life implanted by the Holy Spirit. At the point of regeneration God's children receive the spiritual nature of their Father, which makes them fit to love him and commune with Him. Regeneration is in fact a result of the doctrine of adoption according to Galatians 4:5-6 which states: **"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And BECAUSE YE ARE SONS (emphasis mine-TWR), God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."** Once the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in God's elect they begin to realize the privileges secured for them as adopted members of God's family.

Third, there is coming a day in which God's adopted children will be conformed to the image of Christ, their Head (I John 3:1-4). This is the adoption we are presently waiting for as sons and daughters of God. There is coming a grand and glorious day when the purpose of God's predestination will culminate in the redemption of our bodies, whereby

we shall be forever conformed to the image of the One who is Altogether Lovely. Romans 8:23-25 states: **"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."**

In light of the above we can say that yes, believers are right now adopted into God's family, and yes they are presently waiting for the adoption.

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The Greek word for "adoption" is from the word for son, and a setting or placing. "The placing one in the position of a son" (*Word Studies in The New Testament*).

Adoption may have its beginning in the purpose of God before the world began. It was before the foundation of the world that God chose His people in Christ (Eph. 1:4); however, the adoption (placing as a son) takes place when the Spirit of adoption places them into the family of God. Just as a man is born into his physical family by the natural birth, he must be born into the family of God by the spiritual birth (John 3:3,5). A man must receive Christ as his Savior before he becomes a son of God (John 1:12-13). The sons of God are led by the Spirit of God and are said to have received the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:14-15). God sent His Son to redeem them that were under the law that they might receive the adoption of sons and be enabled to cry **"Abba, Father!"** (Gal. 4:4-6).

Believers have already received adoption into the family of God, but we have not received the completion of this adoption. We have not received the glorious redemptive body that will

allow us to stand in the very presence of our Father. Paul speaks of this in Romans 8:23, **"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."**

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The term adoption does not appear in the Old Testament, however, the idea of the use of the term may be present in the Old Testament description of Israel as a son of God. **"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son. . ."** (Exodus 4:22). Paul speaks of the Israelites and says, "To them belongs the adoption" (Rom. 9:4).

In the New Testament the term "adoption" appears in Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5 and Ephesians 1:5. The Greek word translated adoption means "Placing as a son." The word adoption shows us that we are not the children of God by nature. It emphasizes the free grace in salvation, by which one is adopted into God's family.

Israel's adoption (Rom. 9:4), and our adoption, planned from eternity, is on the basis of God's free grace alone.

The Scriptures reveal four things when we consider our adoption. (1) Adoption was determined by God before creation on the basis of free grace alone (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4-5). (2) Adoption was made sure by the sending of God's Son (Gal. 4:5). (3) Adoption is received when by faith one is brought into union with Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26-29). (4) Adoption is completed with the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23).

Our adoption was planned in eternity past, received by the elect through faith in time, and brought to completeness when we are in glorified bodies.

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Adoption takes in the legal side of salvation. Believers are both born into the family and adopted into God's family. The adoption into God's family is an act of the sovereign grace of God. Ephesians 1:5 says: **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."**

By nature all sinners are strangers to God's family and have no right to be called a son of God nor be an heir of God. Therefore adoption would of necessity be of God's choice.

I believe the actual adoption comes as a result of being born again or regenerated and given faith to believe in Christ as Lord and Savior and with faith comes adoption. John 1:12 states: **"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (the privilege) to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."** When the sinner believes he becomes the subject of God's adoption.

Adoption gives to the believing sinner sonship, heirship, and liberty from the servitude of sin and Satan (Rom. 6:17-18; Rom. 8:14-17).

There are some proofs or signs of adoption (Gal. 4:5); Obedience (Rom. 16:26), the abiding of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14), and love for the brethren (I John 3:7-14).

The Scriptures teach that believers are now already adopted into the family of God (Rom. 8:14-18; I John 3:1-2).

GARNER SMITH



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like a mighty gulf-stream, is sweeping away its tens of thousands. Within the borders of our country seventy thousand annually sink to the darkness and horror of the drunkard's doom. Every year the despotism of monopoly increases. Every year the power of organized knavery over elections, and courts, and legislatures, increases. Socialists and anarchists are multiplying at a fearful rate.

Verily, in this state of things there is cause of alarm. And if we do not bestir ourselves and uproot these evils, the day is not distant when yonder sun will look down upon our government and country in ruins. What is the duty of the pulpit in the face of these evils? Silence? Read this Book, and answer. Read what God says about the duties of His ministers, and answer. **"If thou give them not warning, their blood will I require at thy hands."** Read the history of the pulpit, from the days of the ancient prophets, and answer. Consult your own consciences, and answer. Get upon your knees—look God in the face, and answer. Should the living ministry be silent, or should it lift up its voice against the rapidly growing abominations which threaten the peace and sanctity of every American home, and all that is best and greatest in American civilization?

There is, and there can be, but one honest opinion upon this subject, and that is, that it is the solemn and imperative duty of God's ministers to declare God's displeasure against the sins and vices of this land, and to educate our people to a higher standard of morals. This is what the pulpit of this country is trying to do. In its toils and struggles to accomplish this end, it deserves, and should receive, the sympathy and practical support of every lover of truth and virtue, and home and country. To despise and oppose it, is unpatriotic and criminal.

Permit me to occupy a few moments in giving special emphasis to the duty of the Press and the Civil Government to co-operate with the Pulpit in the great work of eradicating vice, and of lifting the country to a higher plain of virtue. You will support me in saying that, generally, the most formidable opposition to the Pulpit comes from the secular press and the civil government. Some of our secular newspapers, I am proud to say, are not chargeable with this sin and folly. They are as bold and uncompromising in their hostility to the supporters of immorality and vice as the Pulpit. Every effort on the part

of iniquitous rings and monopolies to subsidize them has failed. To every insidious representative of the unrighteous mammon, they have said, "Thy money perish with thee." To every seducing vender of public offices, they have indignantly replied, **"Get thee behind me, Satan."**

I have no words to express the pride and satisfaction which I feel in being able to say, that of such political newspapers there are more within the precincts of this dear old State, in proportion to her population, than can be found in any other spot of this great globe.

There are some papers which maintain a neutral position in reference to moral questions. They will publish a strong sermon, or a well-written communication in support of moral reform, but their columns are also open to every denunciation of the Pulpit or defense of popular vice. The editors of such papers doubtless have convictions upon the moral questions agitating the country, but they are buried in the impenetrable solitude of their own breasts.

There are other newspapers which are habitually on *all* sides of every such question. They have one editor to write up prohibition and another to write it down; one to describe the perils, and another the pleasures of the wine cup; one to execrate the liquor-license system and another to defend it; one to deprecate the obscene exhibitions upon our theatrical boards, and another to depict them in the most sensuous style for the delectation of the vulgar and vicious; one to write lamentations on Wall-street gambling, and another to glorify the feats of Wall-street gamblers; one to laud the moral heroism of certain preachers, and another to stigmatize them as cranks and fanatics; one to extol the work of temperance reformation, and another to denounce it as a revival of Puritanism, and an effort to re-enact the old sumptuary laws. There is still another class, that are openly, uncompromisingly, defiantly, and all the time, on the side of evil-doers. They despise the Pulpit, and all of its fulminations against the corruptions of the age, and they make no effort to conceal it.

Now, my friends, we all know the power of the Press. It does more to create and control public sentiment, and public policy, than any agency in existence. A man may be as pure as an archangel, and come before the public with a cause as high and holy as Heaven itself, but if the political newspapers combine against him, they can load him and his cause with infamy, and drive him into starless,

hopeless oblivion.

Let the secular press of this country stand out boldly and zealously on the side of reform; let it unite with the Pulpit in reprobating fraud, corruption and uncleanness, and in a few years there will be such a moral cleansing of society as man nor angel ever saw.

In spite of the tremendous opposition from the Press, the Pulpit has accomplished much toward the overthrow of some of the most hideous forms of immorality. It has certainly wrought wonders in this section of our country. The organs of the rum-despotism have denounced us as disturbers of our country's peace. They have charged us with inflicting injury upon her material interests. But why will they not tell the people how much we have done toward the removal of their greatest curse?

In a village upon our western frontier, a man rushed into a crowd gathered upon the common, and said: "Early this morning a bear came into Mr. Perkin's yard and began to claw and bite his children, and Mr. Perkins shot him, but the wad from the gun set the barn on fire, and his corn and hay, and four cow and two horses have been destroyed." "That is very bad," replied an impatient auditor, "but did Perkins kill the bear?" They say that we have kindled a conflagration that has done mischief to the business interests of the State. If that be true, it is to be regretted. But have we killed the bear? Have we saved our children from the clutches of a devouring monster? The soul of the humblest child of Georgia outweighs the whole of Georgia's gold!

I am sure that no right-minded person will deny that the civil government ought to respect and befriend the Pulpit. There is not an intelligent office-holder in the land who does not know, that without the support which it receives from the Pulpit, our civil government could not stand even for one year. There is not one who does not know that the Christian ministry is doing a thousand times more to restrain lawlessness and to educate the masses for the responsibilities of citizenship than all the police of the country.

We do not ask and we would not have the support of the government in establishing a religious creed or any form of religious worship, but we do ask its countenance and co-operation in our efforts to educate the people in those great moral principles written upon the very constitution of man, and recognized by men of all creeds and also by men of no creed. It is not the function of government to establish religion; it can rightfully

do no more than protect religion. But it is both the *right* and the *duty* of government to uphold *morality*. It is the legitimate function of government not only to punish vice, but to remove, as far as possible, the causes of it.

I know that I risk nothing in saying, that, as a rule, the national, state and municipal governments of this country have done but little in aiding the Pulpit in developing the people in the love of moral integrity. The private conduct of the majority of men, in any department of the government, is equivalent to a perpetual declaration of war against the Pulpit and against everything which men are accustomed to recognize as virtue.

Here, my countrymen, is a specimen of your national legislature: In the Atlanta *Constitution* of a recent date there is a communication from Washington, written by a man whose heart is as brave and whose *character* is as noble as his face is handsome. In that communication he tells the eighty thousand readers of his paper that there is a gambling club in that city composed of four senators, sixty-one representatives and twenty-two ex-congressmen, and that the four senators received \$3,700 for defeating the bill against pool-selling. What must be the moral influence of a government in which such men are conspicuous factors?

But it is mainly by their *official* acts that executive officers and members of legislative bodies antagonize the work of moral reform. Whence comes our crime? I repeat the question, whence comes our crime? Our bureaux of statistics, the records of our police justices and the judges of our supreme courts tell us, that nine-tenths of the crimes in this country are traceable to the traffic in intoxicating drinks. In the name of reason, virtue, humanity, and God, I ask, is it not the duty of government to uproot and destroy this evil? Is it not as much the function of government to *prevent* crime as it is to *punish* crime? But our government, so far from exercising its right to suppress this curse, makes itself the protector and supporter of the men who are engaged in the crime-making business. The government not only gives to them its permission to make crime and criminals, but while they are doing it, throws its great protecting arms about them, and says: "These men have vested rights, and you must not disturb them."

God's Word says, that rulers are a terror to evil-doers; but what sort of rulers? Certainly not those who legalize the worst forms of evil-doing and shield from justice the vilest element of evil-doers. Under God's

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government, the Legislature of Georgia has no more right to authorize a man to keep a doggerly, than it has to authorize him to commit a felony. "Oh, but the doggerly is an institution—it is an institution of our fathers, and therefore must be protected." My countrymen, the biggest thing, the grandest thing, the most sacred thing, under yonder blue vault of Heaven, is man—man made in the image of his God. Institutions are made for men, and not men for institutions. The first and highest function of government is to protect and ennoble and glorify man. With a conviction that stirs very drop of the blood in my veins, I assert, that any law-maker who would sacrifice a man for a doggerly is a traitor to his race.

A nation is supposed to grow—to grow, not in territory, population and material wealth only, but in wisdom and virtue. Goethe, the great German poet, says, that if you plant an oak in a flower vase, either the oak must wither or the vase crack. Some men are for saving the vase, but wisdom says, truth says, virtue says, God says: "Save the oak, and let the vase go." This country must get out from some of its environments, or it must wither and perish. Save the country; open the way for progress in virtue and manhood, even if it requires the sacrifice of a thousand institutions hoary with age. Save your homes, save your children, save your neighbors—save man, and let the vile doggerly, freighted with the execrations of every virtuous being

in God's great universe, sink back into the black, bottomless hell from which it sprang.

Georgia has stepped into the arena of the world's great amphitheatre, and said, "We will show you a State that has the manhood to put down the doggerly power." The contest is going on. The chief actors, at this hour, in this great drama, are the members of the State Legislature. What will they do? Will they "quit themselves like men?" Will they stand against the powers of darkness? Will they blot this era of oppression out and lead a blessed freedom in? Humanity, with all its fears, and all its hopes of future years, looks on to see what will be the issue of the struggle.

*"Blest, thrice blest, the Roman,
who saw Rome's brightest day,
Who saw that long victorious pomp wind
down the sacred way,
And through the bellowing Forum,
and round the suppliant's grove,
Up to the everlasting gates
of Capitolian Jove."*

But a thousand times blest the son of Georgia who lives to see her brightest day—the day when her people, old and young, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, native and foreign, Christian and Jew, white and black, shall move up in one glad, harmonious, triumphant procession, to take their places under the sheltering arches of a temple of government, whose foundation shall be virtue and whose topmost stone shall be freedom.

(The Pulpit Treasury, Vol. IV, No. 12, April 1887, pp. 719-726)

examined the legislation and have concluded that it is filled with vague and broad language that will allow the Hong Kong government enormous latitude to arbitrarily suppress basic freedoms. "Even if never applied, the law as outlined would create a hostile environment in Hong Kong for the exercise of freedom of expression," said a Freedom House statement.

Freedom of religion will also be in danger; concluded Merv Knight, executive director of Voice of the Martyrs-Australia. "Under Article 23 religious groups will be liable to be deemed a 'National Security Risk' and appropriate action be taken," said Knight.

A recently released Consultation Document outlines the government's approach to the new legislation, but at this time the government has refused to release a more detailed "white bill" to the public. Dec. 24 was the deadline for the public to provide its feedback. Final passage of the legislation is scheduled for July 2003.

"Since the July 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China, there has been a slow but steady erosion of the protection of civil liberties accorded to the residents of Hong Kong," noted Jennifer Windsor, executive director of Freedom House. "We concluded that this new, overly broad legislation will serve as a mechanism to further restrict the protection of basic freedoms within the territory."

Hong Kong democracy – including students, journalists, human rights activists, religious groups, and business organizations – have denounced the law, calling it a direct threat to fundamental civil liberties guaranteed for Hong Kong residents after the territory was handed over to China from the United Kingdom five years ago. Critics of the law have appealed to members of the international community to analyze the Consultation Document and to register their views with the Hong Kong government.

"The government of Hong Kong must abide by international norms as it proposes new legislation that, as currently outlined, profoundly threatens freedom of expression and other basic rights," said representatives of Freedom House.

COLUMBIA, SC (EP)—A federal judge has ruled that South Carolina's "Choose Life" license plates are unconstitutional. Senior U.S. District Judge William Bertelsman ruled that the pro-life tags, approved by South Carolina's legislature in 2001, violate the First Amendment because they provide a forum for pro-life advocates that abortion supporters are denied. Bertelsman's decision conflicts with an earlier ruling by a federal appeals court that abortion advocates could not sue the state of Louisiana over its "Choose Life" license plates. Planned Parenthood had challenged the plates and won an injunction that kept them from being issued. Tracey Green, an assistant deputy state attorney general,

argued the license plates represent government speech "and communicate the state's oft-expressed preference for childbirth over abortion."

ORLANDO, Fla. (EP)—Florida's Walt Disney World theme park has dropped its 28-year tradition of offering weekend religious services to its Christian guests. The park, which began the Sunday services in 1975, said it could no longer accommodate the 1,500 or more Catholic and Protestant families who want to attend them. Lou Sheldon of Traditional Values Coalition, told the Cybercast News Service (CNS), "I'm sure Walt Disney is crying from his grave when he sees what the current owners are doing to his basic belief system by saying, 'the inn is full. There's no more room for the baby Jesus.'" CNS noted that the famous animator and creator of many classic cartoon characters and movies, once said, "Whatever success I have had in bringing clean, informative entertainment to people of all ages, I attribute in part to my Congregational upbringing and lifelong habit of prayer." Sheldon speculated that the decision by Disney executives to pull the plug on the services was an attempt to appease their non-religious guests – including a vocal homosexual contingent. "I see this as a very clear, clear way of becoming more politically correct," said Sheldon. "They do not want to have to deal with the fact that they are accommodating Christianity, Catholic, or Protestant, or any other group that has a strong religious faith as their basis."

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—The United States is still the most religious of the world's wealthy nations, according to a 44-nation poll conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project. The survey found that America's tradition as a nation of believers gives it more in common with poorer countries than with other industrial societies. "Wealthier nations tend to place less importance on religion – with the exception of the United States," the study said. "Americans' views are closer to people in developing nations than to the publics of developed nations." The survey found that Americans are about twice as religious as Canadians and much more inclined to faith than people in Western Europe and Japan. According to the study, France is Western Europe's most secular country, and Czechoslovakia the most secular country in Eastern Europe. Like their American cousins, the English are the most religious people in Western Europe, noted the survey.

BEIJING (EP)—It is uncertain if the religious rights climate in China will get any warmer in 2003, despite the fact that communist President Jiang Zemin will be stepping down in March. Zemin will be replaced by Vice President Hu Jintao, 60,

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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.

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT PROPOSES LEGISLATION TO RESTRICT FREEDOM

HONG KONG (EP)—In 1997, the government of the United Kingdom handed control of Hong Kong to China in accordance with an agreement made 50 years prior. At the time, commentators speculated at how long citizens of Hong Kong would retain the economic and social freedoms that had made the province an oasis surrounded by the desert of totalitarianism.

Only five years since the transfer of

control, there is strong evidence that Hong Kong's government will take decisive action to limit the personal freedoms of its citizens in 2003. According to representatives of Freedom House, the U.S.'s oldest human rights monitoring organization, the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is currently preparing national security legislation required by Article 23 of the territory's Basic Law, which assigns penalties for acts of treason, sedition, and subversion.

Freedom House representatives have

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who was installed as general secretary of the Communist Party in November 2002. Jintao was instrumental in quelling rebellions in Tibet in 1987 that resulted in the deaths of several Buddhist monks. Former leader Jiang will remain an influential figure in a government that arrested and tortured Christians and destroyed religious property during his time in office. While there has been talk in the Chinese press that the government will become more lenient on matters of religion and will explore ways to "make socialism and religion adapt to each other," large numbers of Christians are still in prisons, many of whom were sentenced without trials. Chinese Christians told Compass Direct they do not expect any religious reforms or "liberalization" of laws on religious freedom with Jintao's presidency.

DALLAS (EP)—John F. Walvoord, long-time president of Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS), died Dec. 21 at the age of 92. Walvoord was considered one of the most prominent and respected evangelical scholars of the 20th century. "Dr. Walvoord was a spiritual statesman who had a profound influence on conservative evangelical theology," said Charles Swindoll, chancellor of DTS. "During his long tenure at Dallas Seminary, he trained thousands of pastors, missionaries, and seminary and Bible institute professors who have served in ministry around the world." Walvoord earned his Bachelor and Master of Theology degrees from then-Dallas Seminary in 1934, and his Doctor of Theology from there in 1936. In 1953 he became president of DTS, serving in that capacity until becoming the seminary's chancellor in 1986. During his tenure, enrollment at the institution increased from 250 to 1,700 students. It also gained a reputation worldwide as the premier institution in evangelical, dispensational, and pre-millennial theology. Walvoord, who authored 30 books, continued to teach, speak, and write until several weeks before his death.

COLLEGE SENIORS SCORE NO HIGHER ON TEST OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES OF MID-1950'S

PRINCETON, N.J. (EP)—A survey commissioned by the National Association of Scholars (NAS) showed that today's college seniors scored on average no higher than high school graduates of nearly 50 years earlier on a battery of questions assessing general cultural knowledge. . .and significantly worse than 1955 college graduates. The 15 questions, which were originally posed to high school graduates

by the Gallup polling organization in 1955, covered literature, music, science, geography, and history. They were asked again of a random sampling of American university seniors by the polling firm of Zogby International during the spring of 2002.+ The study noted that while the number of high school graduates entering college rose from around 2.3 million in 1947 to over 14 million by 1995, there has not been a corresponding increase in knowledge among those Americans graduating from college. While today's college seniors did better on questions pertaining to literature, music, and science, and about the same as the '50s high school graduates on questions of geography, they sunk below on questions dealing with history.

For example, 35 percent of today's college seniors correctly identified Handel as the composer of the Messiah, as compared to 20 percent of 1955 high school graduates (and 56 percent of 1955 college graduates). In geography, 63 percent of today's college seniors knew that Madrid is the capital of Spain, similar to the 61 percent of 1950s high school graduates (but much lower than the 89 percent of 1955 college graduates who knew the answer).

In historical knowledge, however, today's college seniors trailed the high school graduates of a half-century ago. Only three percent knew, for example, that the Battle of Waterloo was fought in Belgium, as compared to 44 percent of the 1955 high school graduates who knew the answer (and 64 percent of the 1955 college graduates).

For the entire survey of general knowledge, today's college seniors got 53.5 percent of the questions correct, the 1955 high school graduates got 54.5 percent correct, and the college graduates of 1955 got 73.3 percent correct.

All in all, the college seniors of today seem only as knowledgeable as high school graduates of the 1950s, and much less informed than the college graduates of that era.

The study's administrators admitted that a large pool of questions (they used only 15) would have provided a better indication as to whether today's colleges are doing a better job of educating students than did the nation's high schools of 50 years ago. Nonetheless, they argued, "the questions we used suggest that the addition of general cultural knowledge [from today's universities and colleges] has probably been only modest and spotty. On the whole there does not appear to be any impressive advance beyond previous levels of high school attainment, nor an approximation of what previous college graduates appear to have mastered."

NAS president Stephen H. Balch said that the survey's results "are hardly reassuring. America has poured enormous amounts of tax dollars into expanding access to higher learning. Students spend, and pay for, many more years in the

classroom than was formerly the case. Our evidence suggests that this time and treasure may not have substantially raised student cultural knowledge above the high school levels of a half-century ago."

Balch also noted that "the high cultural interest and aspirations of today's college seniors are neither consistently nor substantially more elevated than yesteryear's secondary school graduates. Creating such interests and aspirations has traditionally been considered a core element of the collegiate experience. If the last 50 years have, in fact, witnessed few gains in this respect, it represents a real disappointment of once widespread hopes."

IF TRENDS CONTINUE, MORE ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS IN 2003

EDMONDS, Wash. (EP)—The world should prepare for a growing number of attacks against Christians in 2003. That is the conclusion of a new report from the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). According to Elizabeth Kendal, a researcher for WEA, present trends point to an escalation of attacks targeting foreign Christian workers.

"This is particularly true in Muslim majority nations and regions, especially the Middle East, Northern Nigeria, Indonesia, and Pakistan," said Kendal. "However, it is also the case in nations where other religions are striving to regain their historic dominance and influence, and where religious nationalism is being used as a political tool. This is so with Hinduism in India and Buddhism across much of South East Asia. Christian work in these regions will become increasingly dangerous."

Even Europe isn't immune to the rise of Christian persecution in the coming months. Bulgaria, Belarus, Moldova, and other countries have approved or are considering laws that favor Orthodox nationalism and ban or restrict religious activity of Christians from other denominations.

What is the West doing about the rise in persecution? "What is most surprising is that religious freedom is being denigrated in the West by people who enjoy it, expect it as their right, and take it for granted," said Kendal, who provided examples from journalists in the U.S. and abroad who added an anti-Christian slant to their reporting of persecution against Christians.

"There is little doubt that the issue of religious liberty will play an increasingly significant role in domestic and international politics in 2003 and beyond," said Kendal. "It will be interesting to see how the Western world, with its rich Christian heritage and ethic, manages to defend religious liberty now that it is not 'enlightened' and driven by secularism."

DALLAS (EP)—NBC's "Dateline"

television news program claimed that it conducted a two-year undercover investigation of controversial TV healing evangelist Benny Hinn and his extensive ministry empire. "Dateline" reporters interviewed former Hinn employees who said the evangelist is using millions of dollars from the ministry to finance an opulent lifestyle which includes plans for a \$3 million home on the West Coast. The program included stories of people who died shortly after claiming to have been healed at Hinn crusades. A spokesman for the ministry dismissed the "Dateline" report as inaccurate, and argued that the television program had uncovered nothing incriminating against Hinn or his ministry practices.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—President Bush has renominated two appellate court candidates who were rejected by the democrat-controlled Senate last year because of their pro-life views. The nominations of Charles Pickering of Mississippi and Priscilla Owen of Texas were returned to the Senate along with 28 other Bush judicial nominations which the full Senate did not consider last year. Pickering and Owen were the only two who were specifically rejected by the Democrat-controlled Senate Judiciary Committee. With a Senate controlled by the GOP this year, it is thought the duo will have a much better chance of confirmation. But some Democrats promised to do their utmost to block the appointments this year also. "I am going to do everything I can to stop the Pickering nomination from going forward," said Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), an ally of the abortion lobby.

SALT LAKE CITY (EP)—A Utah state senator is asking state attorneys to draft legislation requiring all junior and senior high school students in Utah to recite the Pledge of Allegiance daily. "Kids ought to know what our pledge says," Sen. Chris Buttars told the Salt Lake Tribune. "This is America. They ought to know what their government is about. And the pledge tells you what that means definitively, plainly and simply." But Dani Eyer, director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah, has vowed that the organization will fight the patriotic move. "Students cannot be forced to salute the flag or recite the pledge," Eyer told the Tribune. "It's clearly a violation of the First Amendment to require you to say something. Students have the right to remain silently seated if they do not wish to recite the Pledge of Allegiance." Buttars said he isn't worried about a challenge to his measure. "Let them have at it," he told the Tribune. "It blows me away that someone would be against any American kid having to say the Pledge of Allegiance to his country. That includes 'under God.' He can have

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his own God in his own way as long as he says it.”

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Officials of the nation's largest pro-abortion group are planning an extensive campaign to renew the group's image and make abortion a major issue of the 2004 presidential race. The National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), one of the most aggressive abortion advocacy groups since the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, is changing its name to Naral Pro Choice America, reported the New York Times. "Through our name change we are underscoring that our country is pro-choice," Kate Michelman, NARAL's president, told the Times. "It is the right name for this moment in history." But Ken Connor of the Family Research Council said the name change is just a marketing ploy. "They want to isolate the rhetoric from the reality," Connor told the Times. "They want to talk about pro-choice, but it's not choosing between chocolate and vanilla. We are talking about the right to choose to kill an unborn child."

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—At least 100 churches were destroyed or vandalized in Kaduna, Nigeria by Muslim vandals. Nineteen of the churches were Baptist and four pastors from those churches were killed in the attacks, reports the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). Other Christians were severely injured and over 100 were hospitalized. This is the sad story reported to the Baptist World Alliance by the leader of Baptists in Nigeria, Solomon Ademola Ishola, general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. "We have come to a point in Nigeria where serious decisions have to be made," said Ishola, who is not convinced that the government is doing enough to put a stop to the wanton destruction of Christian lives and properties. "The Nigerian government will bear the responsibility if Christians begin to react strongly in their own self-defense," Ishola reported to the BWA. Some Baptists have relocated to other parts of Nigeria but the indigenous people and those who live in some Muslim-dominated areas cannot move. "There is need for strong determination under God to embrace the spirit of martyrdom so that the Churches will not be destroyed as it was done in North Africa and Turkey," Ishola said. Baptist World Aid is sending aid to help churches rebuild and are asking for prayer for the persecuted Christians in Kaduna.



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thinking that, maybe, before the morning breaks, the final Morning may have dawned! I never begin my work without thinking that, perhaps He may interrupt my work, and begin His own! This is now His Word to all believing souls, 'Till I come.' We are not looking for death, we are looking for Him! . . . If He should come ere the day is done, will there be any we have won for Him? In the hour of the Advent, not the amount of this world's goods amassed, not the name we have won for ourselves, but the souls will count."

"Christ's Second Coming will be Pre-Millennial. It is *imminent*. We wait for the Advent, according to His will, by living, by serving, by loving, by hoping, by persevering."

D. L. Moody, the Prince of Evangelists, known world wide.

"I heard Mr. D. L. Moody ask in the presence of 2000 people: 'Why do you Ministers not preach the Second Coming of Christ? There are 260 chapters in the New Testament, and 318 references to the Lord's Second Coming, and yet how little we hear about it!' There is not a Christian doctrine that receives more attention in the Word of God than the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; it comes in at every point of Christian life, is associated with every Christian doctrine, and is constantly brought to bear upon the motives and actions of the Lord's people, and is set forth as a warning to those who are not His by redemption"—*Prophetic News*.

W. R. Moore, Esq., B. A., Barrister, Oxford.

"It is difficult to conceive that any Christian who believes that the statements contained in the Bible are Divinely inspired can deny the personal and Pre-Millennial Coming of our Lord. His statement is clear, '**I will come again, and receive you unto myself**' (John 14:3), and is confirmed by the two heavenly Messengers at the Ascension: "**This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven**' (Acts 1:11). There is one fact that needs to be remembered, however, countless numbers of believers have passed by death into the presence of their Lord since He ascended into Heaven. "This being so, surely we should take more earnest heed of our Lord's warning, '*Watch*,' for we none of us know whether we shall be among those who fall asleep in Jesus or among those who are alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord."

Dr. Handley Moule, Bishop of Durham, Author of Commentaries on Romans, Colossians, Philippians, and other works.

"The future contains days and hours dark and drear, no doubt, but with supreme certainty it contains this great felicity. At some time, probably at no distant time, is to dawn and beam upon us this *personal arrival of the Altogether Lovely; turning midnight into morning*, winter into heavenly summer, age into immortal youth, indeed a life of holy happiness and happy holiness for ever. . . We are nearing the closing days of this age."

Thos. D. W. Muir, a well-known Teacher in America for many years.

"This present Church Age began with the advent of the Holy Ghost of God on the Day of Pentecost (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:1-4; I Cor. 12:13); it will continue until the Second Coming of Christ for His people (I Cor. 15:50-58; I Thess. 4:13-18). It will be personal and Pre-Millennial, and Pre-Tribulation (John 14:3; I Thess. 4:16; II Thess. 2:3-8); in fact, it may be at any moment that the Church is complete. Then the living saints changed, the dead raised, will be caught up together, to be with and like Christ for ever (I John 3:2)."

Dr. L. W. Munhall, one of the greatest evangelists the Methodist Church has had in America.

"I have known personally every prominent Evangelist in America and Great Britain and Ireland in the last fifty years, and every man of them, with possibly a single exception, was an ardent Pre-Millennialist. There is no such incentive to evangelism as an intelligent Scriptural belief in the personal Pre-Millennial advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Dr. Alexander M'Laren, the famous Expositor, Manchester. 32 Volumes of his Exposition have been published.

"Paul's Christianity gathered round two facts and moments: one in the past, Christ has come; one in the future, Christ will come. For memory, the Coming by the cradle and the Cross; for hope, the Coming on His throne in glory; and between these two moments, like the solid piers of a suspension bridge, the frail structure of the present hangs swinging. In this day men have lost their expectation of the one, and to a large extent their faith in the other. But we shall not understand Scripture unless we seek to make as prominent in our thoughts as on its pages that Second Coming as the complement and necessary issue of the first. It colors all the New Testament views of life. It is used as a motive for every duty, and as a magnet to draw men to Jesus Christ by salutary dread. In the

Epistle in which 'Maran-atha' occurs Paul writes: '**Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**' (I Cor. 1:7)"

J. H. McConkey, Author of the many booklets, which have been circulated extensively.

"**'Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come**' (Matt. 24:42). We look for no signs. We know of no event between us and the Coming of the Lord. We know not the hour He will come, but we know not any hour at which He may not come. It may be years from now. I may be tomorrow: it may be today. It may be at morn, at noon, or at eventide. . . . It matters not: no man knoweth. But the Lord is at hand. The Judge standeth at the door."

Dr. Robert M'Killiam, Founder and Editor of *The Morning Star*, well-known Teacher.

"Maranatha! Maranatha! This was the comfort of the Christian in sorrow, his strength in service, his slogan in conflict. It maintained the pilgrim character of the Church. It incited to an out-of-the-world love and purity. It filled the heart with a glad bravery in the bitterest persecutions. It was the well-spring among them which sent the little band from Olivet. . . to the city (Acts 1:11). Evidences come to us of a widespread movement to proclaim the truth that He is Coming, and that the *event is near* (1912). If He is Coming soon, it is a cruel thing not to preach it, speak of it, sing about it, spread it."

John G. M'Vicar, Teacher, Dublin and London.

"I remember that one of the first things in Scripture that struck me on this subject was, the mistake made by the early Christian about John not dying at all. The report went abroad that John would not die, because our Lord had said, "**If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?**" I know a person who has told me that I am not to die, but to survive till the Lord comes. Well, of course I shall be very glad if he is right, though I have no faith in anything but the written Word of God; but if he has made a mistake, observe, it is a mistake no post-Millennialist would make. The very mistake that the early Christians made, that John would live till the Lord came, and so not die at all, shows that there were no Christians in those days who put a Millennium between them and the Coming of Christ. They were all Pre-Millennialists in those days. And certainly throughout the whole of the New Testament we find the writers speaking, not as persons who would live till Christ came back, but who *might*. '**We which are alive and remain. . . . We shall not all sleep,**'

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100 World-Known

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etc. Thank God there is no wide gulf between us and the Coming back of our Lord Jesus."

Dr. Thomas Neatby, Author of "Our Lord's Coming Again," a devout student and speaker.

"**I will come again.**' Simple word, sure word, upon which the heart stands in triumph and waits for Christ! Circumstances around may be trying; the path may be difficult; the Saviour's absence may be felt—ought to be felt; it is night whilst He is away; but He has said in faithful love, **'I will come again.'** He has not said when, but He has bidden us to watch. He has said that it might be **'at even, or a midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.'** He has left room for a delay; but He has encouraged and bidden the heart of His beloved disciples *to wait for Him from the moment He left them.* And this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. He would have our hearts *ever waiting* for Him to come again in the same love which brought Him down to die for us."

Wm. P. Nicholson, the Popular Irish Evangelist.

"The Second Coming of the Lord is a promised reality. It is more, it is a fact. He is Coming again. It isn't some cunning devised fable, but a blessed truth, not a theory. It is not a fad of some fanatical faddist, but a real fact. The Second Coming of Christ is not only promised by Christ, but predicted by all the Old Testament prophets, confirmed by the testimony of the angels, proclaimed by all the apostles, believed by the early Christians, acknowledged in all the Church creeds, sung in all the Church hymn books, prayed about in all the Church liturgies. Few, comparatively, believe it. Fewer still lay it to heart. Many sneer at it. Nevertheless, it is the immutable truth of God. **'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself'** (John 14:2).

"If we deny the Bible to be the Word of God, then we can honestly deny the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, but if we say we believe the bible to *be*, not *contain*, the Word of God, then we are neither fair nor honest, if we either deny the Second Coming of the Lord, as a *visible, personal, imminent* reality, or try to make the words mean something else. He *is* Coming again. The very same Jesus. As His Church—His Bride—we have His *promise*. **'I will come again.'** We have His *ordinance* of His supper, **'Till**

He come.' We have His *command*, **'Occupy till I come.'** We have the *attitude* we are to be daily in, **'Waiting for His Son from Heaven.'** We have the *prayer* we are to pray, **"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."**

Henry Ostrom, Author, Bible Teacher, and Evangelist, a man whose scholarly attainments and power as a preacher have given him favor with the churches for many years in all parts of America and abroad.

"Formerly a strong post-Millennialist, Mr. Ostrom has changed his position, reversing his teaching in books that he wrote a number of years ago, and has been teaching the *Pre-Millennial* and *imminent* Coming of the Lord at many Bible Conferences. He was led to see this truth because of its power in the lives of the most successful evangelists and missionaries of the world."

"Preb. H. W. Webb-Popleo, a London Clergyman, well-known Keswick Speaker, and diligent Bible Student.

"That the Lord Jesus has promised to return to this world is a fact that no human being can deny, and one that every true Christian delights to dwell upon; it is the goal of his hopes—the object of his ambition—the close of his trials—the opening of his glory. How, then, can he do otherwise than cry, **"Even so, Lord Jesus come quickly?"** And have we not ample and soul-satisfying reasons to expect that the *Lord's Return is indeed nigh at hand?*"

Dr. A. T. Pierson, Editor of the *Missionary Review of the World*, known world-wide as a Bible Teacher and Author.

"The Personal Second Coming of Christ is distinctly and repeatedly mentioned throughout the entire Scripture. It is declared to be imminent."

"To be a true missionary we must be emptied of self—give to those from whom he cannot hope to receive, and bid to the feast those who are not likely to have any feast to invite us to; and so the miser dies when the missionary is born; the carnal is cast out if the spiritual is to come in; only he who loses himself can save others. But just here the Hope of the Lord's Coming supplies exactly what is needed. It gives us a loftier level than this world affords, from which it takes our survey. Once let this conviction, this consciousness flood the soul of the believer, that the risen Lord is Himself Coming back, and may *at any time* turn His promise into His presence—and this outpouring of consecrated gifts and devoted lives for the sake of the lost becomes a breaking of the alabaster flesh upon Jesus' feet,

and there is 'purpose' in this 'waste.'"

Hy. Pickering, Editor of *The Witness*, Author of "The Believer's Blue Book," "Chief Men Among the Brethren," "Fresh-minted God," etc.

"When we speak of 'the Lord's Coming,' the 'Second Advent,' or the 'Coming Again of Christ,' we mean that He who came into the world to save sinners, who died, was buried, rose again, and ascended to the right hand of God, will leave that sphere, descend into the clouds above London, Paris, New York, Melbourne, and every other place. When He descends all the dead in Christ shall be raised, all the living saints on earth changed in a moment, and every true child of God, dead or alive, will be caught up to meet Him in the air, with Him enter Glory, and thus be for ever with the Lord.

"The main reasons for believing thus are:

"1. *The Saviour's Own Declaration.* **'If I go. . . I will Come again'** (John 14:3). He has gone, He is Coming, and He places nothing between.

"2. *The Angelic Confirmation.* After His Ascension God sent two men with this special message: **'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go'** (Acts 1:11). He went from the midst of His only, He went privately, He went secretly, He went surely. He **'shall so Come.'**

"3. *The Apostolic Revelation.* A special revelation given to the Apostle Paul, as detailed in I Thess. 4:15-17, which please read.

"Then some time after He will Come *with* His saints, take His great power and reign **'King of kings and Lord of lords'** (Rev. 19:16).

F. W. Pitt, Secretary of the "Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement," and Author of many books, thus places the order of events:

"First, *The Parousia*, which may happen at any moment.

"Then *the Antichrist*, who will reign for 3 ½ years in apparent peace.

"Then *the Great Tribulation*, continuing 3 ½ years to the end of Antichrist's 7 years' reign.

"Then *The Millennium*, beginning with the destruction of Antichrist, and lasting 1000 years.

"Then *The Last Judgment*. The end of man's 7000 years of probation.

"Then *The New Heavens and the New Earth*. **"Behold I make all things new."**

"Then *Cometh the End*. The Ages of the Ages when God will be all in all throughout Eternity.

Bishop J. C. Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool, 1880-1899, Author of Commentaries, numerous books, and

innumerable tracts; one of the most Evangelical ministers in the Church of England.

"I believe that the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will be a real, *literal, personal, bodily Coming*; and that, as He went away in the clouds of Heaven before the eyes of men, so in like manner He will return. I believe that, *after* our Lord Jesus Christ comes again, the earth shall be renewed and the curse removed; the devil shall be bound; the godly shall be rewarded; the wicked shall be punished; and that before He comes there will be no Millennium, and not till *after* He comes shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."

Walter Scott, Bible Teacher, known on both Continents, Author of "Exposition of the Revelation," "Coming Events," "At Hand," "Future Glories," other books, and numerous pamphlets. Died at 94.

"This commanding subject occupies about a third of the contents of the Sacred Volume. Its important place in Biblical teaching is second to none. From Gen. 3:15 to Rev. 22:20 the truth of the Lord's Coming or Presence is like a silver cord running through all Scripture. It is the main burden of the 16 prophetic books of the Old Testament—from Isaiah to Malachi. The book of Psalms is full of it, especially Psalms 90-106. The Revelation treats of it almost exclusively; while in the two Epistles to the Thessalonians the Coming is unfolded in every chapter. It formed the special theme of the Lord's discourse on Mount Olivet on the eve of His crucifixion (Matt. 24:25). This prophetic sermon in its bearing upon Israel, the professing Church, and the nations is undoubtedly of immense value, and of great practical profit to students and readers alike. Then the Coming again was the first subject to which the Lord called the attention of the disciples in His touching farewell discourse (John 14-16). I come again and receive you unto Myself. It was also that to which the angels directed the thoughts of the disciples, as with rapt gaze they beheld their departing Lord go up to Heaven. **"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go unto Heaven"** (Acts 1:11).

"Carefully compare two distinguishing portions—I Thess. 4 and Zech. 14. In the former He is seen Coming into the "air" for His saints; in the latter, He is witnessed descending to Mount "Olivet" with His saints."



Weekly Devotionals

By Jeff Short
(In transition)



I Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. (I Cor. 15:10)

A party spirit had developed in the church at Corinth that grieved Paul. **“Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.”** (I Cor. 1:12). The church was divided into different factions that touted their favorite preacher. They cried up the passion of Paul, the eloquence of Apollos, or the boldness of Peter. They pitted Paul against Apollos and Peter against Paul. Paul wrote to rebuke them for their carnality. **“For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”** (I Cor. 3:4). None of these preachers strove for preeminence over the other, so why should the church argue over the greatest?

In our text, Paul speaks about his own case. **“But by the grace of God I am what I am.”** Paul readily owned that Apollos was a great preacher. Luke said of Apollos, **“And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.”** (Acts 18:24-25). Apollos was a very able speaker. He had a great command of the scriptures. He was diligent and passionate in preaching. After Aquila and Priscilla helped to complete his knowledge, **“he mightily convinced the Jews.”** I believe that Paul rejoiced in Apollos and the fact that he used his great gifts in the service of the Lord.

However, Paul states, **“But by the grace of God I am what I am.”** Apollos was many things but Paul says, “I am not him.” Paul said, **“My preaching was not with enticing words.”** (I Cor. 2:4). He admits that his own speech was rough and plain. He was not the polished preacher that Apollos was, but his preaching was **“in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”** (I Cor. 2:4). It would be a mockery to try to imitate Apollos. Paul says, **“I am what I**

am.”

No doubt, Paul would commend the ministry of Peter. Peter had accompanied with the Lord during His earthly ministry. He was drawn into an inner circle of fellowship with Jesus along with James and John. Peter could be fiery and wax bold in preaching. He possessed a great ability in the ministry. Paul would rejoice in these things and would not seek to copy Peter. Paul says, **“I am what I am.”**

Paul condemned the over-comparison that led to division. Each minister has his own work. **“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”** (I Cor. 3:6). Often one man enters into the labors of another **“reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strowed”** (Matt. 25:24). It is foolish to heap praise on the laborers and set them up as some great one. **“So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”** (I Cor. 3:7). Paul’s goal was to exalt Christ not Paul. All true preachers want Christ to be exalted and lament if they themselves are lifted up. They say with the Baptist, **“He must increase, but I must decrease.”** (John 3:30).

As every one has his own work, every one has his own gifts to suit his work. **“If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ”** (I Pet. 4:11). Paul could not use the eloquence of Apollos or the boldness of Peter. He recognized **“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”** (I Cor. 12:11). Every one has their own gifts of the Lord. Paul said, **“But by the grace of God I am what I am.”**

In the last place, we see that Paul did not seek credit for all his labors. Paul states the facts saying, **“I laboured more abundantly than they all.”** He is not bragging, just stating the truth. However, Paul does not glory in himself. He says, **“Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”** Paul rejoices in the grace of God. But for the grace of God, where would you be today? You and I might be the worst lot of sinners the world has ever known, but for the grace of God. Instead of seeking to

do His will and glorify Christ with our lives, we could be serving the flesh and wasting our substance with riotous living. Praise God! Who saved me and washed me from my sins in Jesus’ blood! What do you know of the grace of God at this hour? Flee from the wrath of God to come and seek to lay hold of Christ through faith!

Acts 21:13

“Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus”(Acts 21:13).

Paul had set his face to go to Jerusalem. He had been spending a lot of time receiving an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem and he was determined to deliver it personally. He was hoping to relieve some of the afflictions of the church and to show the generosity and gratitude of the Gentile churches, which, he hoped, would go a long way in easing the strained relations between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. This task could have been taken care of by one of his fellow laborers, a point obvious to most of those that had contact with Paul. In our text, the disciples at Caesarea, along with his traveling companions, have sought to dissuade Paul from going to Jerusalem himself, and Paul makes his response to their plea.

Paul says, **“What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?”** The disciples were persistent and sought to persuade Paul to leave his present course. Paul questions why they would seek to weaken his resolve. Why would they want to hinder him from finishing the course that has been marked out for him? He could understand their sorrow; no doubt, he had some sorrow himself. However, he does not understand why they would try to overrule the leadership of the Spirit. Let us consider this verse and receive instruction.

The Holy Spirit gave a revelation concerning Paul’s trip to Jerusalem on at least three different occasions. Once in Miletus the revelation was given to Paul himself, **“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.”** (Acts 20:22-23). The second revelation came to the disciples in Tyre, who spoke to Paul **“through the Spirit”** (Acts 21:4) concerning his visit to Jerusalem. The third revelation came to the prophet Agabus and he related it to all those that were at Caesarea, **“And when he was come**

unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.” (Acts 21:11). We are not given the content of the revelation in the second instance. We are told that the disciples acted on the revelation of the Spirit. However, we have every reason to believe that it was consistent with the other two. These three instances were essentially the same revelation. We have the same message, but at least two different interpretations.

The disciples at Tyre reacted in much the same way that the disciples at Caesarea did when they heard the message. Of the disciples at Tyre, it is said, **“And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.”** (Acts 21:4). Of the disciples in Caesarea, we are told, **“And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.”** (Acts 21:12). They heard the same message and interpreted it in the same way, although those at Caesarea were more fervent in their persuasion responding to the dramatic presentation of Agabus. These parties all agreed, after hearing the message that Paul should not go to Jerusalem.

Several different factors had an affect on the groups. Their intentions were good and sincere. They had a great love for Paul and wanted him to continue to be with them. The Ephesian elders at Miletus experienced the same emotions when Paul departed from them, **“Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.”** (Acts 20:38). They were concerned for Paul’s safety and well-being. Still yet, the Holy Spirit never said that Paul should not go. Why were they so insistent that Paul was wrong? What the Spirit did reveal was that the way was extremely difficult and fraught with hardships. They believed that it was too hard and Paul would be risking his life. Like many Christians, upon understanding that the way was difficult and would involve personal sacrifice, they assumed that that meant he should not go.

Paul received the revelation from the Spirit and understood the same things concerning the hardships attending that course. However, he reacted very differently. Instead of being discouraged, he was resolute

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Weekly Devotionals

Continued from page 37

and convinced that this was the course marked for him by God. **“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there”** (Acts 20:22). Acknowledging the great difficulty, Paul said, **“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”** (Acts 20:24). Paul knew that the task was hard and he said, **“But none of these things move me.”** Paul sought to explain, **“For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”** Paul confesses that the way is difficult. He admits that he does not know what all will happen. He acknowledges that it will probably not end well. Despite all these things, Paul is determined to go, believing it to be the will of God. Long ago, Paul had resigned his own will, ambitions, and agenda in order to become the bond-slave of Jesus Christ. The Apostle that told others, **“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”** (I Cor. 6:19-20) was willing himself to be a living sacrifice.

In the end the disciples showed wisdom in conceding to Paul, **“And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.”** (Acts 21:14). They thought that Paul was making a mistake. They feared that he would fail, so they had tried to prevent him from venturing on the enterprise. However, when they saw Paul’s determination, they ceased trying to persuade him and left it to the will of God. Their intentions were good and they did what they did out of love and concern for Paul. However, on closer inspection, we find an evil in what they did. Peter had once sought to persuade Jesus not to go, and the Lord rebuked him calling him Satan. In essence, these well-meaning disciples were actually seeking to hinder the will of God and persuade another Christian not to follow his calling and were really being selfish. Let us be as Paul willing to go and to do whatever God bids us do and let us never put a stumbling block in the way of one who is seeking to do the same.

Ps 119:161

“Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”

Happy is the servant that can find blessings in the midst of trials. We are instructed, **“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;”** (James 1:2). David was suffering diverse temptations. Princes were his persecutors. These were men of high station and were supposed to be men of judgment and justice. However, they were persecuting David without a just cause. Where can one turn when the upholders of the law are the very violators of the law? Nevertheless, David found cause of rejoicing.

David’s trials had particular sharpness because of his persecutors. They were princes, men of high position. Yet, these were David’s peers. They gave him no respect, only reviling. **“Princes also did sit and speak against me:”** (Psa. 119:23). Those of his own stripe, physically speaking, afflicted him. Perhaps, he sought understanding from those of similar standing. However, he found no comfort among them. Often those that are closest to us and those that we believe should understand are the ones that smite us the worst. Let some worldly unknown speak against us and we hardly pay attention, but let one that is close speak ill words and we are cut to the heart.

He suffered grievous trials being put to it without a just cause. He was walking in the right way and his enemies were multiplied. **“Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.”** (Psa. 119:157). An honest man is ashamed when his accusers speak the truth, but when they accuse him falsely he is grieved. David had not solicited his present abuse. His enemies were malicious. Yet there is joy for David, even in the time of trial.

David found joy in the fact that his detractors were wrong. They had not anything true to say. They were reduced to make themselves liars. Jesus said, **“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.”** (Matt. 5:11). David was blessed in the false accusations of others. He had no reason to be himself ashamed. He was suffering for righteousness’ sake. **“But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;”** (I Peter 3:14). **“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him**

not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” (I Peter 4:16). In the midst of cruel mocking, David had reason to glorify God.

David was also blessed because his faith was increased. Though his enemies were multiplied, he said, **“Yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.”** He was persecuted without reason and said, **“But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”** He was resolved to hold to the Word of Life, regardless of his enemies. They may delight themselves in worldly endeavors, **“but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.”** He had looked into the face of afflictions and could say like Paul, **“But none of these things move me”** (Acts 20:24). He would not allow himself to be drawn off course by these distractions.

David found greater satisfaction in the meditation of the Word than in the strife of the world. Many are sidetracked by debates and arguments. Some lose their way through needless self-defense, becoming obsessed with turning everyone’s opinion. The scriptures prophesied of Christ, **“He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.”** (Matt. 12:19). He did not occupy His time with politics, trying to make everyone like Him and agree with Him. The blessed man of God finds **“his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”** (Psa. 1:2). His friends may speak vain things and engage in unprofitable debates, but he declares of God’s Word, **“Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.”** (Psa. 119:24). David had joy because he believed, **“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”** (Psa. 119:105).

Lastly, David said, **“But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”** He had a very high opinion of God’s book. He delighted in its precepts and feared its judgments. The opinions of worldly-wise men did not shake his faith in the right statutes and pure commandments of God. The Bible has many detractors and opponents today. Some, having become wise in the eyes of men, lead others astray through their criticisms of the scriptures. Others pervert the scriptures to conform to their determined doctrinal bent. The man of God approaches His Holy Word with awe. He prays, **“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”** (Psa. 119:18). Let us remain in awe of God’s Word and hold to His unchanging testimony.

Womens Veils 2003

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The Big Mistake of President Bush

By G. Russell Evans

Norfolk, Virginia

President Bush is a fine president. He is a brave man, a fine politician. He is a Christian man. Most people are proud of him as commander-in-chief.

There is one mistake, a huge mistake; handling the Runaway Immigration. He is buddy, buddy with Vincent Fox, his sidekick, President of Mexico.

The new Ambassador, Tony Ganga, went straight from his White House swearing-in ceremony to Mexico City and told the reporters that the legalization of the immigrants continue to be a top administration priority.

President Fox has stated that "he wants as many rights as possible for as many Mexican immigrants as soon as possible." This is playing with fire. He wants open borders to which Bush replies "that may be the best way."

The congressman from Colorado, Tom Tancredo has stated the following:

"The U. S. can bomb Afghanistan to dust but terrorism will remain. In some bizarre thought process understood only in Washington, D.C., the possibility of tightening up immigration laws paralyzes most politicians."

* The Democrats want the illegal immigrants for votes.

* The Republicans want them for the same purpose.

* Labor wants them for the membership and the union.

* Big business wants them for labor.

* The university wants them for higher education grants.

Who will protect the American interest? Greed is the creed, Yes, indeed!

President Bush seems to need to concern himself for the following measure among competing "security" concerns:

* The Immigration and Naturalization Service is unable to find half of the 4,112 registered immigrants to whom authorities wanted to talk after the 9-11 attacks.

* Up to 8.7 million illegal aliens now live in the United States, according to the Census Bureau.

* Immigrants, both legal and criminal, keep their noses in the taxpayers' trough in the amount of \$68 billion a year, according to Americans for Immigration.

* More than 400,000 foreigners now collect Social Security benefits without having worked a day in this country. Immigrants are 50 percent

more likely to collect welfare and 75 percent more likely to get food stamps, medial benefits and housing subsidies.

* Bilingual schooling doubles the cost of educating aliens. Schooling of immigrants costs an average of 90 percent more per family. Some parts of the country would have to build two schools a day to keep up with the immigrant wave.

* A Cuban-born economics professor, George Borjas, shows that immigration costs U.S.-born workers \$13 billion a year in job losses.

* More than 25 percent of federal prisoners are immigrants. In some areas, illegal aliens commit 12 percent of felonies, 25 percent of burglaries and 34 percent of auto thefts.

Our President can't be thinking when he promotes expansion of the "guest worker program" and amnesty for illegals that may be plotting the next terrorist attack against America.

- Right now and right in our own backyard.

The World Trade Towers-Pentagon nightmare should be a signature wake-up alarm against loose borders and undermanned and under trained security forces.

President Bush is about to make the biggest mistake he has ever made.

(Capt. Evans' columns are distributed by the Americanism Educational League, Mavis Harris, secretary, participated in preparation of this article.)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 11-30-2002 to 12-31-2002

Beginning Balance \$2,273.05

RECEIPTS:

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Faith B. C., Clarksville, TN	100.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL	100.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Gerald Price, Johnson City, TN	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. M, Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	90.00
Helen Milem, South Point, OH	100.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winton-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	200.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL	25.00
Landmark Sovereign B. C., Forth Worth, TX	100.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	75.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	200.00
Letson Farrell, Long Beach, MS	120.00
Lord's CHurch, Goose Creek, SC	100.00

Meadow Branch B. C., Millport, AL	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	2,300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM	25.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	50.00
Sam Byrd, Brooksville, MS	100.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Thurman Phillips, Beaver Creek, OH	5.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	200.00
Subscriptions	102.00
Anon.	1,780.00
Dividing checks	350.00
Sub Total	\$10,036.51
TOTAL	\$12,309.56

EXPENDITURES:

Wages	3,200.00
Printing	538.53
Postage	927.31
FICA taxes	244.81
Supplies	88.50
PO Box rent	66.00
Dividing checks	250.00
Total Expenditures	5,315.15
.....	6,994.41
Bank charge July & August	-15.16
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,979.25

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER YEARLY REPORT 2002

Beginning Balance	\$1,063.96
Receipts	60,181.35
.....	61,245.31

Expenditures:

Printing	6,095.42
Postage	11,205.62
Supplies	672.36
Wages	30,975.00
FICA	2,306.32
Dividing checks	2,651.99
Bank Charges	248.35
NSF check returned	45.00
PO Box Rent	66.00
Total Yearly Expenses	54,266.06
Balance	6,979.25

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 11-30-2002 to 12-31-2002

Beginning Balance \$1,287.33

RECEIPTS

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	400.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
John Otis, Agra, KS	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	226.33
Calvary Ind. B. C., Everson, WA	200.00
Berea B. C., West Point, TN	182.00
Dividing check	200.00
.....	1,708.33
TOTAL	2,995.66

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time	862.00
Postage	34.70
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,096.70
.....	\$1,898.96
Bank charge	-10.00
BALANCE	\$1,888.96

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$2,053.32
RECEIPT	
Total	2,053.32

EXPENDITURES:

WCTT	160.00
Total Expenditures	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,893.32

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST YEARLY REPORT 2002

Beginning Balance	\$1,932.63
Receipts	13,979.33
.....	\$15,911.96

Expenditures:

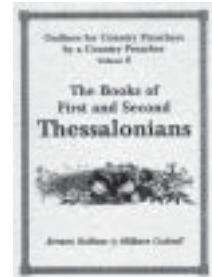
Radio Time	11,715.00
Tapes	170.00
Postage	306.00
Dividing checks	1,562.00
Bankcharges	70.00
Tape Duplicating	200.00
.....	14,023.00
Ending Balance	\$1,888.96

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WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

Adding Insult to Injury with Immigration



Politicians are proposing several bills to "win the vote." They think the vote will put them in the White House. They think there is no limit to benefit for the immigration vote. It is up to us to stop the bills: (1) Luis Gutierrez's H.R. 500 and Harry Reid's S.562 that would reward virtually every illegal alien in the country right now with full amnesty. (2) Orin Hatch's S. 1291 and Chris Cannon's H.R. 1918 that would give illegal aliens amnesty AND cut-rate tuition at taxpayer funded schools.

Today, *Virginian Pilot* (December 10, 2002) has several wannabe Presidents, Congressman Dick Gephardt and Senator Tom Daschele. The *New York Times* had an article preparing legislation that would grant permanent residency status to millions of illegal immigrants. Senator Tom Daschel has his own version.

Watch out for the politicians. They will sneak them through. There is no limit to the nerve of these politicians. Many politicians see right now as a great time to vote for illegal alien amnesties without being noticed by grass roots taxpayers like you. We simply cannot allow them to sneak these bills through Congress. (*Excerpt from Farm and Dairy, May, 2002*).

This creeping immigration disaster began in 1965 when President Lyndon Johnson, seeking glory for his legacy, signed the Immigration Reform Act—thereby scrapping America's traditional policy that limited immigrants to the number that could be assimilated in American culture and language.

He opened the floodgates for the most liberal, "easy-access" policy in history. Therefore, we can blame Johnson for our imbecilic slide—and all subsequent presidents for not stopping it. Certainly, immigrants were the founders and builders of America. Controlled immigration, however, before Johnson's grand stand play, made America so special and successful—through measured assimilation into our culture, history and language.

Critics can say, "Don't be greedy; let them all in." Controlled immigration is not greedy. Before Johnson, our leaders were dedicated to preserving the American nation.

The great Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson (1941-1954) once wrote: "Our Constitution is not a suicide pact."

Let us add: "Neither should our immigration laws be suicide pacts." The Monterey, VA-based Americans for Immigration control has released frightening updates on the continuing in actions and greedy handling of immigration.

Members of Congress know most of this. They look the other way. They want the votes, donations, and above all, reelections. Much of our immigration policy was developed behind closed doors, under severe political pressure and without informing voters of the proposals and their consequences.

So, we complain to the President and to our senators and congressman, and get an aide-dispatched form letter, thanking us profusely for our interest, promising to take it all into consideration and assuring us their desire to serve us in any way possible, and not answering our concerns at all.

Then they do nothing – even after follow-up letters. If enough people would flood the White House and Congress with data and demands, the wild, irresponsible immigration policies could be corrected—unless, already in America, we have enough immigrant-boosting voters to seal the deal for a New America.

Critics may call this column "racist." This column is an "American First" column, defending the America envisioned by our Founding Fathers and contending that no American policy must ever be a "suicide pact."

Civilization is stronger and freer with a strong and free America.

(Thank you for the cards and well wishes. They helped a lot with my recent illness.)

(*Capt. Evans lives in Norfolk, Va. His columns are distributed by the American Educational League of Buena Park, Calif.*)

(Mavis Harris, secretary, helped with preparation of this article.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PHILIPPINE MISSION UPDATE

Dan Stepp, Given, WV

Since my 1st trip to The Philippines, (in Nov. of 1994), I and the Heritage Landmark Baptist Church of Given, WV, have been much burdened for the Philippine Mission field.

The Lord has allowed us to see the work grow from five ordained Elders and four organized Churches to more than 100 Churches and missions throughout the islands of the Philippines.

I would like to emphasize that the Lord has been pleased to bring a great Gospel and Doctrinal Revival to the Philippines thru the initial Pastors and Churches that were set in order back in April and Nov. of 1994.

This work has been accomplished with the prayerful support of many of the Lord's Churches here in the USA, but with the actual "on the ground" evangelization and indoctrination being handled by the Filipino pastors and missionaries.

I, and several of our American brethren, have been privileged to travel to the Philippines and to take part in this great work of the Lord, thru conducting seminars and speaking at the various churches and missions and assisting in any way that we can.

I am writing this short note today to let the Lord's Churches know:

1. The growth of the work is tremendous; and to let you know that your prayers and financial support have been and are bearing much fruit.

2. Even though we have seen a great growth in the last (8) years, we believe the work is ready to grow even more rapidly in the next few months and years, (hopefully until the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!).

3. This growth has been such that it has out grown the financial capability of our Church with the present level of offerings from our congregation and those sister Churches that have been assisting us on a monthly basis.

4. Because of this financial shortfall, I have not been able to travel to the Philippines since I returned to the USA on Sept. 1st, 2002.

5. I have had to use my personal funds that I normally use to travel to the Philippines to support the Filipino Brethren in their labours.

My prayer to our Sovereign God at this time is that he will be pleased to raise up additional financial support thru the Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist Churches here in the USA.

All additional funds will go directly to our Filipino brethren so they may continue to be able to hold the Gospel and Doctrinal revival meetings around the 7,000 islands of the Philippines.

Another prayer, in which I ask you to join me, is that the Lord will bless my personal finances so that I may be able to travel to the Philippines, as is necessary, to continue to assist, monitor and report on the work to the supporting churches here in America. If any of the Lord's Churches would be interested in sharing in or learning more about this great mission work that is ongoing in the Philippines, please feel free to contact me, and I will gladly schedule a time to come and share the work with you.

May the Lord bless us all as we seek to exalt His blessed and Holy Name which is above all names!!

Contact Info: Email: dstepp@citynet.net Phone: (304) 546-7631 (cell ph.) (304) 372-1984 (home) Mailing address: Rt. 1 Box 270, Given, WV 25245.

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 Mother Churches and Daughter Churches

By Henry A. Griesemer
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Churches of God

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